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Equality Concept of the Doctoral School NRW (July 4, 2023)

Informational Version



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1 Preamble

The Doctoral School of Applied Research in North Rhine-Westphalia – sponsored by the 20 state and state-refinanced Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in North Rhine-Westphalia and the University of Applied Sciences for Police and Public Administration NRW – is an inter-university scientific unit that provides the framework for excellent cooperation in research and doctorate. The further development of science in conjunction with application orientation and the promotion of innovation to meet societal challenges is just as much a focus as the promotion of young scientists through qualified supervised doctorates.

The Doctoral School NRW takes into account the fact that not all people can be assigned to a binary gender classification. In order to be inclusive of all, gender-inclusive language is used and the * notation is employed.

2 Legal Basis and Framework Conditions

The equality concept of the Doctoral School NRW is based on a number of legal foundations and framework conditions. Legal texts and formulations continue to be predominantly based on the binary gender system and do not include the 'third gender' or the category 'diverse'. Regardless of the legal language used, the following explanations of the legal framework conditions refer to all genders.

Article 3 of the Basic Law regulates equality and prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender. In particular, Article 3(2) stipulates that men and women have equal rights and that gender-related disadvantages must be eliminated.

Section 1 of the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) formulates the goal of preventing and eliminating discrimination on the basis of gender. In addition, Section 7 specifies a prohibition of discrimination related to gender.

Section 1 of the Act on Equality between Women and Men for the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (State Equality Act – LGG) addresses the fundamental right to equality between women and men and protection against discrimination on the basis of gender. Section 1 (3) specifically regulates the responsibility of managers for implementing equality within the organization. For the higher education context, Section 5a stipulates the creation of an equality plan within a time frame of three years.

For the Doctoral School NRW, Section 23 of the administrative agreement and Section 13 of the Constitution regulate the role of equality and the person in charge of Equal Opportunities Affairs.

3 Mission

Creating conditions of equal access for all genders to doctoral opportunities, positions, bodies or committees, functions, and management tasks at the Doctoral School NRW is a fundamental prerequisite for a modern, innovative, and excellence-oriented scientific organization. Gender equality is considered a cross-cutting task.

It is reflected in the organizational structure and in the opportunities for participation in and involvement with qualification measures. In its role as an employer and as an institution promoting doctorate, the Doctoral School NRW ensures the compatibility of family and career as well as family and doctorate. In this sense, compatibility is treated as a constitutive part of the equality mandate.

The implementation of equal opportunities for all genders with regard to access to career opportunities and academic qualifications is the responsibility of all those involved. The Doctoral School NRW's

equality work focuses on the areas of administration, self-administration, and the promotion of young academics.

Due to the lack of valid statistical data on the distribution of all genders, it is (still) necessary to refer to a binary gender distribution when defining equality goals, knowing full well that this does not meet the requirement of equal opportunities for all genders. Based on the available data on gender, the equality concept in all areas of the Doctoral School NRW aims to implement a quota system of 50% women and 50% men. As a rule, the 50% quota is also to be implemented in areas where there have been large differences in gender distribution to date. In order to overcome the inequalities in gender participation that exist in specific subject cultures, the equality measures are based on the cascade model of the DFG's research-oriented equality standards until gender parity is achieved.

Gender equality is understood as equal access to positions and resources and serves to establish gender justice in science and administration. To achieve gender justice in science and administration, the Person in charge of Equal Opportunities Affairs works together with those responsible on the Executive Board, in the departments, and at the administrative office. Issues of equality at the participating colleges and universities are not affected by this and fall exclusively within their regulatory domain.

4 Anchoring Equality in the Doctoral School NRW

As an institution dedicated to the promotion of young scientists, the Doctoral School NRW is committed to consistently anchoring gender equality policy goals at all levels. To this end, measures are being implemented to establish gender equality as a cross-cutting issue within the organization and to raise its profile.

4.1 Structural Positioning of Gender Equality

The implementation of equality as equal opportunity is to be understood as a cross-cutting task at all levels in the sense of gender mainstreaming. In this sense, § 23 of the administrative agreement and § 13 of the Constitution govern the rights and duties of the person in charge of Equal Opportunities Affairs and regulate their organizational integration into the Doctoral School NRW.

All stakeholders in the Doctoral School NRW are responsible for the implementation of gender equality policy goals. Managers in administration, Research, and teaching have a special responsibility in this regard. The Doctoral School NRW develops a gender equality concept, which is decided upon by the Executive Board in consultation with the Doctoral School Senate. Gender equality is thus structurally assigned to central bodies.

In addition, equality is also taken into account as a cross-cutting issue in qualification programs and measures. Where possible, equality and equal opportunities should be structurally embedded in the content, and the participation of all genders in qualification measures should be ensured. With this in mind, structures are being created that enable the implementation of equality policy goals and thus contribute to the visibility and feasibility of equal opportunities.

4.2 Mission Statement on Gender Equality and Family-Friendliness

In its role as an employer and as an institution promoting young academics, the Doctoral School NRW promotes the compatibility of family and career as well as family and doctorate and ensures the necessary framework conditions. Compatibility focuses on the entire spectrum of family compatibility, from childcare and education to the care of affiliated members in need of support and nursing.

Equal opportunities and family compatibility are issues that are very much in focus in the organization of administration and teaching and research activities and have become a cross-cutting task. Nevertheless, there are still challenges and requirements here to ensure equal access for all genders to positions and functions as well as qualification opportunities in the sense of equal opportunities.

The Doctoral School NRW is developing a mission statement for a gender- and family-friendly institution. The mission statement stipulates equal access to all areas and guarantees compatibility. Ensuring equal opportunities and issues of compatibility in terms of family compatibility are the focus of the requirements of the members and Affiliated Members of the Doctoral School NRW. Equal opportunities and family compatibility, taking into account gender and diversity dimensions, must therefore be guaranteed for doctoral candidates and professors of the PK NRW as well as for the college staff. The mission statement is an expression of the commitment to gender equality and action in administration, self-administration, and the promotion of young academics.

4.3 Equality Policy Monitoring

The Doctoral School NRW regularly conducts gender-related analyses based on statistical data. Gender analyses are an integral part of quality management and form the basis for monitoring gender equality policy.

Based on data from the Graduate Institute NRW, the predecessor institution of the Doctoral School NRW, the gender equality policy goals to be achieved are defined and subjected to consistent monitoring. The aim is to provide a general assessment of the situation and development of the Doctoral School NRW from a gender equality policy perspective. Furthermore, the activities of the Doctoral School NRW as a scientific institution for the promotion of young academics are assessed against the background of the qualification of young academics in university and non-university institutions.

The monitoring is based on gender statistics on:

- members, Affiliated Members, university cooperation partners, and
- bodies or boards or committees.

A prerequisite for gender-equality-oriented participation in bodies and committees is involvement as a professor, doctoral candidate, or college staff member. Against this background, gender-differentiated data is collected on the following groups:

- professors,
- supervisors,
- reviewers,
- doctoral candidates,
- Staff member,
- Executive Board and
- Academic Advisory Board.

With the exception of the research group staff, the Executive Board, and the Academic Advisory Board, the data is processed on a department-specific basis in order to identify the current situation regarding gender equality in the departments. This enables the departments to implement gender equality in accordance with the cascade model on the basis of a meaningful database.

In a further step, gender-differentiated data is collected to review equality in bodies or committees. The gender-differentiated composition of the Doctoral School Senate, the Department boards, and the doctorate and Recommendations Committees is collected.

Data on college staff members can be used to implement gender parity in terms of positions and functions in administration. Monitoring of the Executive Board and the Academic Advisory Board also serves to ensure gender-balanced representation in the bodies.

4.4 Development of Gender Equality Goals

The description of the reality of gender equality policy in administration, Research, and the promotion of young talent is based on official statistics, which currently only use binary gender classification. This means that it only reflects the diversity of society to a limited extent. The Doctoral School NRW takes into account the requirement to achieve the participation of all genders and equal opportunities for all.

A fundamental goal will be the gender-differentiated collection and processing of data relevant to the Doctoral School NRW. The data will be processed in accordance with gender mainstreaming principles, whereby decisions will be evaluated and designed with regard to their consequences for all genders.

At present, the position on gender equality policy can only be described on the basis of a binary gender relationship. Despite the abbreviated statistical processing, it is clear that science and Research are still areas in which gender equality has not been achieved. The situation at German universities and colleges can be described as a virtual disappearance of women from the academic qualification process. At the beginning of their studies, the proportion of female students is slightly higher than that of male students, which is reflected in a slightly higher proportion of female graduates at the end of their studies. In the phase of training young scientists, this ratio is drastically reversed as the level of qualification increases. With regard to successfully completed doctorates, the gender ratio tends to shift in favor of men (approx. 55%) and tips over completely in the case of postdoctoral qualifications, with more than two-thirds of postdoctoral qualifications being completed by men in 2019 (see www.destatis.de).

In contrast, the proportion of female professors in 2019 was around 25% (ibid.).

Equal participation of both genders in all phases of academic qualification makes subject-specific considerations unavoidable. The Doctoral School NRW aims to take subject-specific factors into account at as a first step toward achieving gender equality goals, taking into account the DFG's cascade model.

In the long term, however, the aim is to eliminate subject-specific gender distributions and increase access opportunities for all genders to all subject cultures. This can be achieved on the basis of the participation of all genders at all levels of qualification.

4.5 Equality Framework Plan and Equality Plans of the Departments and the Administrative Office

The path to equal opportunities for all genders has begun, but there is still a long way to go. Equality plans are an effective means of taking further steps in this direction. They are an instrument for discussing identified gender inequalities and establishing measures to create equal opportunities.

As a cross-university scientific institution for the promotion of young academics, the Doctoral School NRW will define its equality goals for promoting equal opportunities for all genders in administration, research, teaching, and doctorate in an equality framework plan. The goals to be established take into account gender equality challenges at all levels of the organization and focus on all stakeholder groups of the Doctoral School NRW. The gender equality framework plan also regulates the frequency with which the gender equality plans of the departments and the administrative office are to be drawn up.

While the equality framework plan defines the key points of equality, department-specific circumstances require more specific details, which are formulated in the departments' equality plans. Due to traditional gender-related opportunities and barriers, the starting conditions for creating equal opportunities differ between departments. The first stage of establishing equal opportunities does not aim at equal participation of all genders, but rather seeks to avoid gender-related selection processes and counteract glass ceiling effects. In this sense, gender-related selection is eliminated when all genders are represented at the next higher hierarchical or qualification level in proportion to their share at the previous level. Thus, equal opportunities are developed on the basis of a cascading system.

In the long term, however, equality aims to overcome the cascade model and strives for a demographically balanced participation of genders at all levels.

In addition to the office's gender equality policy goals, the office's gender equality plan also regulates gender equality goals for the Executive Board and the Academic Advisory Board. Unlike at the departmental level, the cascade model does not apply here; instead, quotas are agreed upon to ensure equal opportunities for all genders in positions and functions.

5 Areas for Promoting Equality

The targeted promotion of equality extends to the areas of gender-equitable promotion of young scientists, staff in self-administration and administration, and the establishment of equality as a cross-cutting task of the Doctoral School NRW. Equality policy activities focus exclusively on the Doctoral School NRW and do not affect the equality work of the participating colleges and universities. The respective autonomy of the universities with regard to equality policy work remains unaffected by this.

5.1 Implementation of Gender Equality as a Fundamental Task

As a cross-university institution, the Doctoral School NRW strives for gender-equitable participation of all genders at all levels of self-administration and the promotion of young academics. The long-term goal is the equitable participation of both genders at all levels of training for young academics and in bodies or boards or committees, taking into account the subject-specific characteristics with regard to gender distribution.

The basis for equal participation and involvement of both genders in the qualification of young researchers and self-administration is the subject-related, numerically gender-equitable participation of all groups in the Doctoral School NRW. The most urgent task is therefore the successful, active involvement of professors and doctoral candidates in the work of the Doctoral School NRW through membership or affiliated members.

Gender equality as a fundamental task can only be achieved if this is accompanied by concrete measures and instruments in the areas of

- Training of young scientists,
- self-administration and academic quality assurance, as well as
- administration

This allows for the pursuit of gender equality on a group-specific basis and the implementation of equality as a cross-cutting task.

5.2 Gender-Equitable Promotion of Young Researchers

The equal participation of all genders in the qualification process and academic self-administration requires gender-equitable participation in the scientific qualification process. A cascade model oriented toward gender equality can only function if access to the prerequisites is non-discriminatory. These prerequisites are created in the qualification process.

In the training of young academics, gender equality applies on two levels:

- gender-equitable participation of professors and
- gender-equitable participation of Doctoral candidates.

Depending on the subject, this may require contrasting equality strategies and measures.

As a first step, the equal participation of professors in the qualification process is considered a basic prerequisite for achieving equality. Professors can take on the role of role models and show doctoral candidates perspectives for their own academic paths.

In this sense, gender-equitable composition of departments is a *conditio sine qua non* and requires appropriate measures. On the one hand, this enables participation in qualification programs as well as the supervision and evaluation of doctorates, and on the other hand, it allows professors to take on roles in academic self-administration.

Gender-equitable participation of young academics begins with addressing potential doctoral candidates in the context of master's programs. Opening up perspectives for academic qualification is primarily the responsibility of the supporting universities. In addition, the Doctoral School NRW can provide support in the context of corresponding qualification programs. The doctoral programs of the departments should also offer the option of addressing and reaching potential doctoral candidates. In this way, steps toward greater gender equality can be initiated based on the cascade model.

Building on more gender-balanced or balanced cohorts of doctoral candidates, research and working cultures are developing that open up non-discriminatory access to the academic qualification process for all genders. This creates the basis for ensuring equal access to academic qualifications.

At the same time, this creates opportunities to actively participate in academic self-administration and to bring gender-equitable perspectives to the bodies or boards or committees of the doctoral program. In the case of the program election assembly, this even extends to a body of the Doctoral School NRW.

The consistent participation of all genders in the academic qualification process creates conditions for academic socialization that take into account the potential and resources of all and, in the long term, increase the innovative strength of UAS.

The academic qualification of young scientists is the core task of the Doctoral School NRW. In addition to facilitating access to the qualification process, participation in the qualification programs as well as supervision and assessment are also central aspects of gender equality work. The participation of all genders at all levels of qualification ensures the optimal use of existing resources in the sense of further innovation and thus also strengthens North Rhine-Westphalia as a center of science and the universities of applied sciences as actors in the science system.

5.3 Gender Equality in Self-Administration and Academic Quality Assurance

The composition of the Executive Board – chair, deputies, and Managing Director – is independent of the cascade model. The chair, deputies, and Managing Director are appointed from a group of suitably

qualified individuals. In the interests of gender equality, the composition of the Executive Board should be gender-proportional, reflecting the ratio of all genders.

In contrast, the admissions of the cascade model are taken into account when filling the positions of directors and deputy directors. Due to the existing subject-specific gender imbalance in the departments, corresponding gender-proportional approaches can only be realized in the medium term. This can be achieved through the consistent pursuit of gender equality measures. The continuous adjustment of the proportional gender ratios in the group of professorial members will enable gender-equitable filling of management positions in the future.

A similar situation exists with regard to the assumption of additional tasks at the level of academic self-administration. Here, too, the subject-specific gender distribution must be taken into account when filling positions, which may conflict with gender-equitable staffing of bodies or boards or committees. This affects:

- Doctoral School Senate,
- Department board,
- Doctorate and
- Recommendations Committee.

The aim should be to achieve parity in appointments, which should be realized in the long term through consistent gender equality work.

The Academic Advisory Board, as a body for academic quality assurance, can be appointed on the basis of a quota system: subject-specific criteria do not need to be taken into account in the composition of the body or board or committee due to its interdisciplinary and science-relevant significance.

5.4 Gender Equality in Administration

The participation of all genders in administration requires a gender-neutral approach to potential employees and fair access for all to tasks and positions in administration. Particular attention should be paid to filling all hierarchical levels on the basis of a gender-equitable approach.

6 Instruments for Enforcing Greater Equality of Opportunity

The administrative office, including the coordinators, the managing director, and an assistant, is responsible for the operational implementation of equal opportunities in terms of gender equality as a cross-cutting task. The Doctoral School NRW uses various instruments to achieve this. These instruments are continuously reviewed for effectiveness and adjusted as necessary.

6.1 Doctoral School Development Plan

The Doctoral School Development Plan is a strategic document that defines the gender equality policy goals and associated measures for the situation and future development of the Doctoral School NRW. The orientation and wording are based on the guidelines for gender- and family-friendly institutions and take into account the effects and consequences for all genders in all strategic decisions.

Based on the current subject-related unequal participation of all genders in academic self-administration and the promotion of young scientists, the first step is to achieve a cascade model-oriented equalization of gender proportions. Within a reasonable period of adjustment, the cascading approach must be overcome and equal gender participation achieved.

Through the provisions laid down in the doctoral college development plan, the Doctoral School NRW aims to be one of the first scientific institutions to achieve equal opportunities for both genders. In this sense, all efforts are focused on the areas of responsibility of the Doctoral School NRW; the participating colleges and universities remain unaffected in their autonomy.

Taking gender aspects into account when agreeing on targets and allocating financial resources will be of central importance in this context. The implementation of gender equality policy goals will be monitored through gender-sensitive reporting based, among other things, on the results of internal evaluations. Based on ongoing reporting, target quotas for the equal participation of female and male researchers and Doctoral candidates will be set, and financial incentives will be linked to gender-equitable participation.

The same applies to the Executive Board. Failure to take equal opportunities into account when filling management positions at the Executive Board level and on the Academic Advisory Board must be justified to the Doctoral School Senate.

6.2 Equality-Oriented Promotion of Young Researchers

In addition to regulating the structural implementation of equality policy goals and objectives within the organization, specific gender-equitable measures are necessary in the organization of young talent development in order to achieve equality. Gender-relevant aspects must be taken into account, particularly in the interdisciplinary offerings of the qualification programs offered by the Doctoral School NRW.

The basic prerequisites are created by consistently pursuing gender-equitable participation of scientists and doctoral candidates and thereby overcoming subject-related discrepancies in equality. This facilitates contact with role models and enables young scientists to orient themselves towards them.

In addition, appropriate mentoring programs and target group-specific scholarship programs offer the opportunity to address and overcome barriers to access. Non-discriminatory access for all genders must be promoted on the basis of supportive, gender-sensitive measures in order to contribute to overcoming gender inequality.

6.3 Cross-Cutting Measures

In addition to the strategic and substantive positioning of gender equality, a series of operational cross-cutting measures promote the implementation of gender equality.

6.3.1 Gender-Sensitive Organization of Working Hours to Enable the Reconciliation of Family and Caregiving Responsibilities with Work and Doctoral Studies.

Family- and care-friendly working time arrangements primarily comprise working time models. These include flexible working hours as well as the option of working from home, so that family and care responsibilities can be reconciled with professional and qualification tasks. When organizing flexible working hours, the necessary attendance times and meeting structures as well as working group meetings are harmonized. The predictability this ensures creates transparent and reliable conditions for all involved and enables compatibility.

In addition to working time models, work structure models that promote compatibility are also necessary. Both in administration and self-administration, as well as in the qualification programs of the Doctoral School NRW, appropriate work structure models are necessary in order to meet the challenges of family and care as well as work and doctorate. Here, it is important to create organizational

and work structure conditions that make it possible to reconcile the demands of work and doctorate with family and care responsibilities.

The realization of gender equality requires the recognition and consideration of the life-stage-related needs of those involved. In order to ensure that working time and work structure models are tailored to needs and requirements, opportunities for flexible adaptation to personal circumstances must be created.

All regulations on working time and work structure models refer exclusively to the structures of the Doctoral School NRW. Nevertheless, the Doctoral School NRW strives to maintain constant dialogue with the participating colleges and universities in order to enforce equal opportunities for all genders and to draw attention to barriers and discrimination. Specific advice on avoiding discrimination is provided in discussions with the parties involved.

6.3.2 Guidelines for Gender-Neutral and Diversity-Sensitive Language

Language regulations are essential. Through reflective language regulations, it is possible to uncover traditional gender relations and contribute to processes of change through linguistic awareness.

Guidelines for gender-equitable and diversity-sensitive language support all participants in the use of equitable and non-discriminatory formulations. As a scientific institution, the Doctoral School NRW is committed to the consistent implementation of non-discriminatory language use for all genders.

6.3.3 Procedures in Cases of Sexual Violence

Equal opportunities for all genders also include protecting everyone from sexual violence. The Doctoral School NRW is developing a procedure that offers victims of sexual violence a protected environment and ensures that the facts of the case are fully clarified.

7 Outlook

Establishing equal opportunities and freedom from discrimination for all genders at all levels of the Doctoral School NRW is a fundamental task. To fulfill this task, the college is working together with the person in charge of Equal Opportunities Affairs at the participating colleges and universities.

In addition, the doctoral college is seeking membership in the State Conference of Persons in Charge of Equal Opportunities Affairs at Universities and University Hospitals in North Rhine-Westphalia (LaKof) and the Federal Conference of Women's and Equal Opportunities Affairs Officers at Universities (bukof). To further establish equal opportunities for all genders, the Doctoral School NRW is involved in relevant bodies or committees and contributes to raising the profile of North Rhine-Westphalia as a center of science, also from the perspective of gender equality.

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