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Mission Statement on Gender Equality and Family-Friendliness

Reconciling family life with professional work or a doctorate means, for members and affiliates of the Doctoral School of North Rhine-Westphalia (PK NRW), being able to care for family and related responsibilities on the one hand, while at the same time pursuing progress in their profession or academic career. Against the backdrop of unequal career opportunities for women and men in academia, as well as the diverse demands resulting from different family circumstances and life stages, the PK NRW—both in its role as an employer and as an institution supporting early-career researchers—promotes the compatibility of family with profession and with doctoral studies, and ensures the necessary frame-work conditions.

The PK NRW is aware of its special role model function as an institution within the academic system and has therefore set itself the goal of continuously improving gender-equitable reconciliation of family and professional or doctoral commitments for its employees, members, and affiliates. This mission statement reflects the PK NRW's commitment to gender equality in administration, self-governance, and the promotion of early-career researchers, and it sets the course for the systematic development and implementation of appropriate measures.

Compatibility here covers the full spectrum, from childcare to caring for relatives in need of support or nursing, and is not limited to a traditional concept of family. The measures outlined in this mission statement explicitly address all genders.

1 Work-time and work-structure models supporting reconciliation

Employees of the central office are, within the framework of applicable agreements and operational requirements, free to arrange their own working hours and to choose their workplace. This includes part-time work. Employees working part-time have equal access to training and professional development opportunities. Concepts for maintaining contact and reintegration after family- or health-related absences enable a smooth return to the working environment.

2 Family-friendly meeting times for boards and bodies

Meeting times for boards and bodies are designed in such a way that people with family or care responsibilities can participate equally in academic self-governing bodies. Meetings and sessions are held within core working hours and the core hours of childcare or day-care facilities. If exceptions are necessary for operational reasons, they must be communicated as early as possible.

3 Structural anchoring of reconciliation support

For all members and affiliates of the Doctoral School NRW, support options for reconciling family and academic responsibilities are presented transparently, and support is provided on the basis of a transparent selection process. Corresponding funds are included in the budget.

Issues of reconciliation are integrated into existing information and advisory services for professors and doctoral researchers, as well as into the offerings of the cross-disciplinary qualification program. For employees of the central office, the existing services of the Bochum University of Applied Sciences

in the areas of human resources development, family-friendly university, and gender equality are communicated regularly.

Doctoral researchers receive low-threshold advice and support in acute cases of need (e.g. laboratory work during pregnancy).

The PK NRW promotes cooperation between professors and doctoral researchers that is supportive of family-friendliness and reconciliation. In particular, mentors within supervisory teams are reminded of their responsibility in this regard.

When awarding doctoral positions through the PK NRW's funding program or other programs administered by the PK NRW, obligations or limitations resulting from reconciliation issues are given special consideration and constitute a separate selection criterion.

4 Establishing a gender- and family-friendly culture and communication

As a new and, in its form, unique institution for the promotion of early-career researchers, the PK NRW seeks to establish a gender- and family-friendly organizational culture that enables and values the reconciliation of family life with professional work or doctoral studies.

Through targeted communication and the active initiation of discourse on reconciling professional life, doctoral studies, and academic careers with caregiving, parenting, and nursing responsibilities, all members and affiliates of the PK NRW are sensitized to the importance of their respective tasks and roles in this regard. Experiences are to be shared among peers.

5 Needs assessments and further development

Needs relating to gender equality and family-friendliness are assessed on a regular basis, and measures are further developed accordingly.

Within the framework of ongoing gender equality monitoring, the effectiveness of implemented measures is regularly reviewed and adjusted where necessary.

Furthermore, external expertise is consulted when needed, and exchanges are sought, for example with the representatives of the State Conference of Gender Equality Officers of Universities and University Clinics of North Rhine-Westphalia (LaKof NRW), as well as with the gender equality officers of the supporting universities of applied sciences.

Adopted following a resolution by the Doctoral School Senate on May 5, 2025, and a resolution by the Board of Supporters on June 26, 2025.

Bochum, June 26, 2025

The Chairman of the Executive Board

signed *Sternberg*

(Prof. Dr. Martin Sternberg)