

AM 134/
2025



**Official Bulletins
134/2025**

**Guidelines for Career Prospects
Beyond Professorships at the
University of Cologne**

as of 30 October 2025

Universität zu Köln



THIS TRANSLATION OF 'Amtliche Mitteilungen 134/2025 Leitlinien für Karriereperspektiven neben der Professur an der Universität zu Köln vom 30.10.2025' IS NOT LEGALLY BINDING.

Obligation to give notice of defects:

Pursuant to Section 12, Subsection 5 of the Higher Education Act of North Rhine-Westphalia (*Hochschulgesetz HG NRW*), infringements of procedural or formal requirements of the Higher Education Act or the regulatory or other autonomous laws of the university can no longer be asserted after the expiry of one year following the publication of these regulations, unless

1. the regulations have not been duly published,
2. the Rectorate has previously objected to the decision of the body adopting the regulations,
3. the formal or procedural defect has been previously reported to the university, specifying the legal provision that has been infringed and the fact that gave rise to the defect, or
4. the legal consequence of the exclusion of complaints has not been pointed out in the public announcement of the regulations.

LEGAL DETAILS

Issued by:	UNIVERSITY OF COLOGNE THE RECTOR
Address:	ALBERTUS MAGNUS PLATZ 50923 COLOGNE
Publication date:	11 NOVEMBER 2025

Guidelines for Career Prospects/Development Beyond Professorships at the University of Cologne

as of 30 October 2025

These guidelines have been developed on the basis of the considerations presented by the German Science and Humanities Council in July 2025 regarding the personnel structure at academic institutions. The University of Cologne (UoC) herewith aims to open up opportunities for potential employment roles beyond professorships in the areas of Research & Leadership, Teaching & Education, and Research & Higher Education Management. The UoC offers fixed-term and permanent positions for doctoral graduates in these areas based on performance, ability, and qualifications. Furthermore, it ensures an appropriate level of permanent employment in line with the needs of the Faculties and the central institutions.

The positions in the Research & Leadership and Teaching & Education areas can initially be advertised as fixed-term positions and, after an orientation/qualification phase of up to three years, they can be turned into permanent positions if the criteria defined in the advertisement are met. The criteria for creating permanent positions and the associated evaluation process for these are defined by the Faculties. Positions within these areas can also be filled directly on a permanent basis with proof of relevant previous experience. Positions specializing in Research & Higher Education Management are located within both the Faculties and the central administration and are generally permanent. A career in Research & Higher Education Management is also possible without a doctorate immediately after graduation.



The specific profiles and responsibilities of the positions with their respective specialization are defined by the Faculties and departments, taking into account changing research and work priorities and, in particular, their respective requirements. At the Faculty of Medicine, the regulations of University Hospital Cologne may also apply.

¹ Wissenschaftsrat (2025): Personalstrukturen im deutschen Wissenschaftssystem | Positionspapier (Drs. 2639-25), July 2025; Cologne. <https://doi.org/10.57674/j6sf-h296>

1. Specialization areas:

(1) Research and Leadership

Scientists specializing in research and leadership deepen their scientific expertise, lead research projects or groups and mainly take on tasks in research, patient care and/or research infrastructure management. In addition, they participate in research-based teaching and help to develop an early understanding of scientific work among students. In addition to their research duties, these employees also perform administrative tasks and contribute to academic self-administration. Depending on the organizational structure, activities in this specialization area can typically be carried out either in functional roles without personnel responsibilities or in management positions. As development progresses, individuals may take on more independence, greater personnel responsibility, and/or more complex tasks. Permanent positions are usually distributed across professorships at the institute, department, division, or Faculty level.

In particular, group leaders who head a research group acquired through a competitive procedure conduct research and teach independently, and should be granted the right to supervise doctoral studies in accordance with the relevant regulations. They have personnel responsibility, budget responsibility, access to the infrastructure for teaching and research, and are involved in the allocation of funds in the respective department. The university can also designate the positions of these academic group leaders as tenure track roles (Section 13 Appointment Regulations, Tenure Track Regulations plus).

In the Research & Leadership specialization area, the University of Cologne identifies, for instance, the following tasks:

- Taking on (independent) research tasks and further developing these autonomously
- Establishing and managing research groups
- Supervising or managing research infrastructure
- Representing own teaching and research area within and outside the university
- Initiating own research projects
- Responsibility for internal third party-funded projects
- Continuously publishing research results
- Patient care
- Taking on (independent) tasks in teaching
- Designing research-based teaching materials
- Supervising of doctoral candidates and students
- Supervising theses
- Participating in science communication
- Contributing to transfer activities
- Participating in academic self-administration 4

(2) Teaching and Education

Researchers specializing in teaching and education expand their expertise in the field of teaching and take on a large proportion of activities in research-based curricular teaching. They participate in the development and design of courses, degree programmes, and examinations. Employees with this specialization are involved in the design of curricula and have the opportunity to expand their skills in university didactics and the use of digital teaching formats. In addition to their teaching activities, these scholars and scientists also conduct research relating to the subjects in which they teach. They take on the supervision of qualification work, contribute to academic self-administration, and assume responsibility for administrative tasks. As development progresses, individuals may take on more independence, greater personnel responsibility, and/or more complex tasks. Permanent positions are usually distributed across professorships at the institute, department, division, or Faculty level.

In the Teaching & Education specialization area, the University of Cologne identifies, for instance, the following tasks:

- Taking on (independent) teaching tasks
- Representing own teaching and research area within and outside the university
- Establishing a course portfolio
- Designing teaching and learning materials
- Contributing to the development of degree programmes
- Supervising of doctoral candidates and students
- Supervising theses
- (Independent) research in the field of teaching
- Publishing research results
- Participating in science communication
- Contributing to transfer activities
- Participating in academic self-administration

(3) Research & Higher Education Management

Employees in Research & Higher Education Management take on tasks in research or teaching management, in other areas that support science, as well as in the strategic development of the UoC in all performance dimensions and cross-sectional areas. These employees do not take on any directly research-based or curricular teaching tasks. As development progresses, individuals may take on personnel responsibility and/or more complex tasks.

In the Research & Higher Education Management specialization area, the University of Cologne identifies, for instance, the following tasks:

- Taking on strategic and administrative tasks in (third party-funded) projects and at the facilities of the UoC
- IT and administrative support for researchers and faculty members

- Planning and control tasks
- Coordination of graduate schools
- Management of academic organizational units
- Advisory services related to degree programmes
- Degree programme coordination/programme management
- Taking on teaching management tasks
- Management of accreditation and quality processes
- Project and quality management
- Process management
- Contributing to public relations work

2. Recruitment

The decision to establish and fill the permanent positions described here lies with the Faculty management in accordance with the Faculty regulations, and not with the individual professors or institute directors to whom these positions are assigned. Positions are advertised and filled through a quality-driven, objective, transparent, and competitive recruitment and evaluation process designed to attract the most highly qualified applicants while ensuring equal opportunities and gender equality. The requirements laid down in the Guidelines for Personnel Recruitment at the University of Cologne (OTM-R Leitlinie, AM 83/2024) must be observed. In principle, permanent positions are always advertised externally. It is required that at least one professor from another department takes part in the selection decision for permanent academic positions. The filling of positions in the Central Institutions and the central administration is subject to the regulations of the respective UoC institution.

3. Personnel & career development

UoC staff members have the opportunity to continuously strengthen their skills, knowledge, and areas of competence through professional development offers that are tailored to the respective specializations and tasks as well as to their personnel responsibilities. All staff members are invited to engage in regular personnel development dialogues by their direct line manager.

Depending on the job in question, the UoC offers permanent staff members development prospects that involve greater independence, more advanced professional challenges, and/or assuming personnel responsibility. These opportunities for career development are set out by the Faculties and institutions. This process involves designing job profiles and values, and defining positions associated with higher-value tasks and promotion opportunities. Generally, higher-value job profiles should entail greater independence. As part of career development processes, the options for granting the right to conduct independent research (Section 44, subsection 1, sentence 6 HG) and to teach independently (Section 42, subsection 2; Section 44, subsection 2, sentence 2 HG) are also indicated.

4. Quality assurance

These guidelines outline key strategic aspects for the development of career paths outside professorships at the UoC and thus serve as a basis for their implementation in the Faculties and institutions of the UoC. They are to be continuously developed based on the exchange of ideas with the Senate Commission for the Interests of Academic Staff, the Senate Commission for the Interests of Technical and Administrative Staff, Staff Councils and interest groups, and relevant stakeholders in the university administration and employees. Ongoing monitoring will serve to evaluate needs and developments. The implementation of the concept is conceived as a long-term, continuous process in alignment with the university's strategic goals, the specific requirements of the individual Faculties and central institutions, and the needs of staff members. Intersectional aspects such as internationalization, gender equality, diversity, work-life balance and quality assurance must be taken into account.

5. Entry into force, issuance

These guidelines shall enter into force on the day following their publication in the Official Bulletins of the University of Cologne. At the same time, the regulations as of 19 May 2021 (AM 35/2021) shall cease to apply.

Issued on the basis of the decision of the Rectorate of the University of Cologne of 23 September 2025.

Cologne, 30 October 2025

The Rector
of the University of Cologne

signed

Professor Dr Joybrato Mukherjee

Provost
of the University of Cologne

signed

Karsten Gerlof