

THIS TRANSLATION OF 'Leitlinie für die Rekrutierung von Personal an der Universität zu Köln (OTM-R Leitlinie)' IS NOT LEGALLY BINDING.

# **Guidelines for the Personnel Recruitment at the University of Cologne (OTM-R Guidelines)**

**as of 9 October 2024**

## **Preamble**

(1) It is a central concern of the University of Cologne to organize all recruitment processes in an open, transparent, merit-based and quality-assured manner. This ensures that all applicants have equal access to the vacant position at the University of Cologne in terms of equal opportunities and that the most suitable person for the position is selected in a criteria-led process.

(2) These guidelines describe the overarching principles of personnel selection that apply to the entire University of Cologne and supplement the existing regulations for the various personnel groups at the University of Cologne. By publishing these guidelines, the University of Cologne is also fulfilling the objectives of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) for 'open, transparent, merit-based recruitment' (OTM-R), to which the University of Cologne has committed itself as part of the 'HR Excellence in Research' award from the EU Commission and to which it feels particularly dedicated.

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## **Section 1 Scope**

(1) These guidelines apply to all recruitment processes and the methods and instruments used in the selection and recruitment procedures of employees and civil servants at the University of Cologne, with the exception of the recruitment of student assistants. Those involved in the recruitment process are obliged to take the contents of these guidelines into account.

(2) These guidelines apply in addition to the Appointment Regulations and other regulations issued by the University of Cologne, which describe in detail the specific requirements for the recruitment procedures depending on the position to be filled. These shall take precedence. The OTM-R Guidelines forms the general framework for all recruitment processes at the University of Cologne. At the Faculty of Medicine, the regulations of University Hospital Cologne may also apply.

(3) The recruitment process comprises all steps from the planning of a position to the submission of all documents required for hiring. The University of Cologne is committed to organizing these processes in an open, transparent, merit-based and quality-assured manner in order to find the best candidates:

- Open means that applicants are given equal access to the recruitment process in terms of equal opportunities.
- Transparent means that there is transparent communication with all parties involved during the recruitment process, also regarding the selection criteria, and that the whole process is documented.
- Merit-based means that applicants are assessed on the basis of criteria, requirements and performance to select the best applicants for the respective position.
- Quality-assured means that the processes must be regularly reviewed and further developed.

## **Section 2 Job creation**

It must be ensured that the approval process for the respective job is adhered to. Approval requires that the financing, scope, location, value and responsibilities of the position have been clarified, taking into account strategic personnel planning. Approval is given by the staff member authorized to make a decision or the responsible committee.

## **Section 3 Requirements and responsibilities**

(1) Prior to the advertisement, the requirements with regard to the necessary professional achievements, qualifications, experience and skills as well as the responsibilities of the respective position must be defined and documented. These must be mentioned in the job advertisement in order to be considered in the selection process. It is advisable to create a requirements profile for this purpose.

(2) The selection criteria that applicants must fulfil follow from the defined requirements.

## **Section 4 Invitation to tender**

(1) In principle, permanent positions are advertised externally. The templates approved by the Rectorate are to be used and the job-specific requirements and responsibilities must be filled in. The requirements profile specified in the job advertisement may not be changed after publication.

(2) If a (tenure) evaluation is planned for the position, this must be stated in the advertisement text and reference must be made to the relevant regulations.

(3) The advertisement must be formulated in such a way that all potential applicants are addressed equally. As a rule, the job should be advertised in the required working language, preferably in German and English, unless the language skills required in the job profile necessitate a different approach.

(4) The positions are advertised online. As a rule, the job portal/application management system of the University of Cologne or Euraxess should be used for this purpose; the appointment portal of the University of Cologne should be used for the appointment of professors.

## **Section 5 Active recruitment**

(1) Promising candidates can be approached individually with the advertisement and invited to apply (active recruitment).

(2) When filling a professorship, the person responsible for the appointment procedure must initiate active recruitment of suitable female candidates if the proportion of women among faculty in the organizational unit is less than 30%; for the other selection processes within the scope of these guidelines, the same applies if the proportion of women in the organizational unit of the position to be filled is below 50% for the corresponding group. Any actions in the context of active recruitment must be documented.

## **Section 6 Confidentiality**

(1) The digital application management systems the University of Cologne uses guarantee the GDPR-compliant handling of application data. They must therefore be used in the recruitment processes.

(2) The person responsible for the selection process shall expressly draw the attention of all persons involved to the confidentiality of the consultations and the documents in accordance with the GDPR. If persons who do not belong to the University of Cologne are involved in the procedure, this must be documented.

## **Section 7 Selection**

(1) The aim of the selection process is to find the most suitable person for the position to be filled in terms of suitability, ability and professional performance. Individual CVs of applicants must be taken into account to an appropriate extent when assessing performance. Academic age for positions in academia is determined according to the criteria of Section 39a of the Higher Education Act and the other criteria listed in the Guidelines for Appointment Procedures of the UoC. For severely disabled applicants, the special protection provisions of Section 164 subsection 1 of the *Sozialgesetzbuch IX* apply.

(2) The University of Cologne attaches great importance to dealing thoroughly with questions of dependency and bias in all selection procedures. The selection process should be transparent and comparable for all applicants within a procedure. The responsible employee representative body, the representative of persons with special needs and the gender equality officer are involved in the procedures in accordance with legal requirements.

(3) Each step of the procedures for filling permanent positions shall be accompanied by a selection committee, which shall be composed of an equal number of men and women, if possible. The selection committee in the academic or artistic field should include at least one professor from another academic field. It is also recommended that other status groups are involved.

(4) Selection interviews must be standardized in terms of length and format, for example by using a structured interview guide and uniform tasks. The selection process and decision-making must be documented.

(5) The person responsible for the selection process shall communicate about the procedure in a transparent manner with all applicants.

(6) At the end of the selection process, the applicants will be informed as soon as possible by the selection committee about the outcome and any further process steps, subject to the final committee decisions. In the case of a professor appointment procedure, information is only provided after the committee has made a final decision. The successful applicant will then be contacted by the HR department or the future organization area regarding the further appointment or hiring process.

### **Section 8 Appointment / hiring**

(1) In preparation for the appointment or hiring, the general conditions of employment, particularly the responsibilities, scope and remuneration, are defined in writing in close consultation with the direct manager, the Human Resources Management Department and the future employee.

(2) Upon appointment or hiring, reference is also made to the other regulations applicable to the employment relationship.

(3) The direct manager must ensure suitable pre- and onboarding. The University of Cologne's central onboarding programmes should be pointed out and participation made possible.

### **Section 9 Quality assurance**

(1) The University of Cologne guarantees the greatest possible objectivity and transparency in its recruitment processes.

(2) In order to continuously improve the quality of the recruitment processes, the responsible employees are given the opportunity to participate in training programmes.

(3) Current regulations, procedures and tools are regularly evaluated and further developed with regard to their suitability for the recruitment process.

## **Section 10 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.

Issued on the basis of the decision of the Rectorate of the University of Cologne of 8 July 2023.

Cologne, 9 October 2024

The University of Cologne

The Rector  
Professor Dr Joybrato Mukherjee

The Chancellor  
Karsten Gerlof