



**Inclusive Leadership  
Policy of the University of  
Konstanz**

**Equal Opportunity Office**

**Adopted by the Senate on 14.09.2022**

## **Preamble**

The University of Konstanz is aware of its role in society, its responsibility and ability to shape social developments. For this reason, the university pursues goals of excellence in research and teaching, as well as internationalization and social sustainability. As an institution for research, teaching and as a workplace, the university has an organizational responsibility to all its members. This includes ensuring and promoting the health of all members, supporting individual life models and promoting the compatibility of work and family responsibilities in addition to activating the creative potential of university members at all levels through fair, gender-equitable and diversity-friendly conditions, intensive communication and amicable everyday interactions with each other.

To reach these goals, the University of Konstanz fosters a culture of creativity and empowerment in all its research institutions and academic support services. The university's structures for academic self-administration as well as its central and decentral administration ensure transparent and participatory decision-making processes in which responsibilities are clear and university members are open to change and renewal.

In its Code of Practice on Diversity, the University of Konstanz has explicitly committed itself to promoting diversity among its members and to establishing a discrimination-free organizational and academic culture in which all members can reach their goals. This commitment is based on three key convictions: a) recognizing diversity as a social reality and an asset, b) enabling equal participation by providing equal opportunities for students and staff at all levels of qualification and c) preventing direct and indirect discrimination.

These goals were specified and operationalized in the context of the German Excellence Strategy. Based on values it already practices, the university strives to reach these goals by promoting and fostering a positive environment for diversity. In this context, management staff and their style of leadership play a particularly critical role. Until now, the current leadership principles specifically applied to academic support staff<sup>1</sup>. This policy now expands upon these principles and establishes leadership principles for academic staff, too.

It lays out basic principles for leadership behaviour and strives to implement structural measures and organizational goals into the everyday situations of university members.

## **Inclusive leadership**

Active leadership is key for the success of working groups and organizations<sup>2</sup>. Management staff in academic support services are already aware of this fact, which also applies to

academic work. Although many researchers understand their work to primarily involve research and teaching, they also have important leadership tasks, which are not always as obvious. This is why the University of Konstanz would particularly like to encourage this group of university members to see leadership as an inherent part of their work and to include the topic of inclusive leadership in their considerations.

We understand *inclusive* leadership as...

... an often reciprocal influence process for the purpose of reaching shared goals<sup>3</sup> while fostering the *inclusion* of all staff members<sup>4</sup>.

Such leadership constellations can include the classic situation between a formal manager and their staff as well as lateral relationships between colleagues (e.g. between different professors in the context of appointment processes or research projects) and informal management relationships (e.g. between researchers in a qualification phase and student assistants or academic support staff). Inclusive leadership is also associated with different, desirable effects, e.g. increased creativity<sup>5</sup> and innovativeness<sup>6</sup> as well as constructive communication<sup>7</sup>. Such leadership can thus pose corresponding advantages for teams that consider inclusion to be an important leadership goal.

The *inclusion* of staff consists of two important elements: belongingness and uniqueness<sup>8</sup>. Specifically, this means that inclusive leaders do the following:

- Recognize that staff and colleagues feel the **need to belong**, to feel part of the group. To achieve this goal, management staff:
  - Foster each individual in the context of the group
  - Ensure fair treatment and equal opportunity
  - Include all staff members suitably in decision-making processes
- Recognize that staff and colleagues also have a **need for uniqueness**, i.e. want to be seen as unique individuals. To achieve this goal, management staff ensure that:
  - Staff and colleagues are encouraged to contribute their different standpoints, thoughts and ideas
  - All group members can contribute fully to the group
  - Individual circumstances are taken into consideration with regard to work responsibilities (e.g. care duties or health-related limitations)
- Show **appreciation**<sup>9</sup> for their staff members. To achieve this goal, management staff ensure that:
  - They notice, recognize and commend the achievements and contributions of their staff and colleagues in addition to highlighting special achievements.

- Show openness for and **support organizational change**<sup>9</sup> that fosters an inclusive university while promoting such change within the broader organization. To achieve this goal, inclusive management staff demonstrate that:
  - They are open to organizational change and
  - They support and promote the organizational mission on inclusion

Management staff at the University of Konstanz understand and accept that the needs for belongingness and uniqueness do not contradict each other, but must instead receive equal consideration. By doing so, they make it possible for all staff and colleagues – regardless of their diversity characteristics – to fully participate and be an important part of the University of Konstanz as well as to view themselves in this way. Management staff at the University of Konstanz understand and accept that an attitude of respectful appreciation towards all staff as well as openness and support for organizational change must be a part of everyday interactions. Diversity is an opportunity as well as a challenge. The university strives to design its structures to fit the needs of different diversity characteristics. The university supports management staff with developing, fostering and implementing an authentic, diversity-friendly style of leadership.

## **Target groups**

In order to reach the goal of establishing an inclusive leadership culture, all of the university's management staff must be included in the process. This is why the policy is directed at *academic* management staff as well as management staff in the *academic support* services. This includes, for example: professors, tenure track professors, directors of the faculty/departmental administration, junior professors, leaders of research units, directors of university divisions/staff units/units as well as researchers in a qualification phase with management responsibilities and persons elected to management positions in the departments, Clusters of Excellence, research networks and other areas of the university. Getting these groups involved is particularly important for the development of the organizational culture and the associated working environment, since management staff are catalysts for organizational change. They have a strong formative influence on teaching, research, management and administration. They also influence whether all persons, taking into account their diversity characteristics, have access to education and career opportunities as well as whether the University of Konstanz fulfils its obligations and responsibilities as an employer.

## **Training and support services**

The diversity team in the Equal Opportunity Office organizes the necessary support to promote and foster an inclusive leadership style at the University of Konstanz. For this purpose, the Equal Opportunity Office collaborates with other relevant university units, e.g. Academic Staff Development, Human Resources and the International Office, in order to provide sufficient information and training in different formats to develop the required competencies in management staff.

Depending on the target group and what is needed, the following will be developed and made available:

- Impulse presentations during onboarding events
- Presentations during suitable department events (e.g. "Tag der Lehre" (day of teaching))
- Information events focusing on the basics of inclusive leadership
- Workshops and other formats for management staff to practice and establish relevant skills
- Individual mentoring options for management staff to strengthen specific competencies as needed
- Training for funding applicants and members of research networks
- Resources and guides for learning individually, e.g. online exercise materials, websites and brochures
- Training on managing heterogeneous teams
- Training on intercultural communication



## References and bibliography

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- <sup>3</sup> Yukl, G. A. (2013). *Leadership in organizations* (8. ed., global ed). Boston, Munich u.a: Pearson.
- <sup>4</sup> Shore, L. M., Randel, A. E., Chung, B. G., Dean, M. A., Holcombe Ehrhart, K. & Singh, G. (2011). Inclusion and diversity in work groups: A review and model for future research. *Journal of Management*, 37(4), 1262–1289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310385943>
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- <sup>9</sup> Veli Korkmaz, A., van Engen, M. L., Knappert, L. & Schalk, R. (2022). About and beyond leading uniqueness and belongingness: A systematic review of inclusive leadership research. *Human Resource Management Review*, 100894. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2022.100894>