



OVERVIEW OF
GOETHE UNIVERSITY'S
ADVANCEMENT PROGRAMS FOR
EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS



In its concept for the „Advancement of Early Career Researchers“, Goethe University formulated three objectives with which it aims to specifically support early career researchers:

- (i) The promotion of independence and personal responsibility in research
- (ii) The strengthening of the transparency and quality of qualification and support structures
- (iii) A needs-based design for career transitions.

Illustrated below are the established advancement structures and standards that Goethe University uses to support early career researchers depending on their

own goals. Furthermore, this paper provides an outlook for planned programs and structures.

1. ESTABLISHED ADVANCEMENT STRUCTURES FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

Table 1 summarizes the advancement structures that have already been established. It lists the respective structural entities and describes their tasks. Detailed information can be found at the websites of the respective institutions, which can be accessed in the PDF at the homepage of Goethe University.

TABLE 1: ESTABLISHED STRUCTURES OF SUPPORT FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS


STRUCTURAL ENTITY

Supervisors and mentors

Each university department

GRADE 

Research Strategy Department (FuN) 


Department of Staff and Organizational Development (PE/OE) 

Research Service Center (RSC) 

Equal Opportunities Office (GB) 

International Office (IO) 

Goethe Welcome Centre (GWC)

Interdisciplinary College of Didactics in Higher Education (IKH) 

IMPORTANT TASKS

Support during the implementation of research projects; Advice regarding academic career planning; Support for strengthening analyzing competencies

Definition of standards for job concepts, mentoring practices, and PhD as well as habilitation procedures

Structured support for early career researchers and established researchers


Strategic advice for professional researchers

General continuing education programs

Advice and support regarding external fundraising


Coaching and training for female researchers; Access to the Ruth Moufang Fund, as well as to Mentoring Hessen

Advice regarding funding and organization of stays abroad


Point of contact that offers advice to international researchers regarding non-academic matters 


Support during the development of teaching concepts

STRUCTURAL ENTITY

Writing Center for the Humanities 


Studium Digitale (SD) 

Department of PR and Communication (PuK) 

Department of Private University Funding (PHF) 

Goethe University Friends and Patrons Association (VFF) 

Alumni Associations (AF) 

Frauen mit Format (Women with Stature) 

Unibator 

IMPORTANT TASKS

Advice and support during the writing process

Support during the implementation of digitalization projects

Support when presenting research findings to the general public

Support regarding fundraising from private donors

Financial support for conferences and research projects;
Recognition of achievements by awarding prizes

Networks; Advice regarding non-academic careers, and financial support through research funding and awards

Networks for early career female researchers which an interest in non-academic career paths

Support during the implementation of business ideas

2. MEASURES TO SUPPORT EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS


2.1 ESTABLISHED MEASURES



Goethe University already has many successful mechanisms that are used to support and advance early career researchers. Table 2 provides an overview of the established standards and structures.

TABLE 2: ESTABLISHED STANDARDS AND STRUCTURES

ESTABLISHED STANDARDS

Tenure Track Statute 

KHU guideline: The design of the post-doc phase 

PhD regulations; 
KHU guideline: Quality standards for doctoral examination procedures 

CONTENT

Enables researchers to become independent early on in the professorship

Transparent rules for designing the conditions that apply to post-doctoral early career researchers

Transparent rules for doctoral examination procedures

ESTABLISHED STANDARDS

Scholarship guidelines 

Guidelines for supporting PhD candidates at Goethe University 

Guidelines for meetings with supervisors 

Survey for PhD candidates and supervisors

Concept for permanent positions

ESTABLISHED STRUCTURES


Participation structures

GRADE^{Support} 

GRADE^{Centers} 

GRADE^{Initiatives} 

Focus program 

Mentoring programs for female researchers 

Award for best PhD supervisor 

Ombudsperson system 

CONTENT

Transparency directive for handling funding options


Transparent rules for the supervisory relationships and the supervisory agreement during the PhD

Transparent design of processes

Knowledge base for the further development of the conditions for early career researchers

Transparent representation of career opportunities at Goethe University, see 2.1.1

CONTENT

The senate commission dealing with the interests of early career researchers; Membership on GRADE's Board of Directors 

Core structure for the advancement of early career researchers

Professional support for early career researchers

Design of networks and research groups on their own initiative (formerly known as DocAG)

Supporting the practice of early independence through the acquisition of own project funds

Support with career planning for early female career researchers

Acknowledgement of colleagues with a special PhD supervisory commitment

Quality assured conflict management

2.1.1 A CONCEPT FOR PERMANENT POSITIONS

One element for the transparent representation of career opportunities within the university system is the specification of job categories for academic research staff with permanent employment contracts at Goethe University (Table 3). Goethe University has defined four alternative areas of focus for the permanent appointment of staff. The necessary number of positions in the respec-

tive job categories within the individual departments is defined in the strategy agreements between the university's management and the departments in a staffing concept. Appointment to the position should take place following a public call for applications, depending on transparent quality criteria.

TABLE 3: JOB CONCEPT FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH STAFF WITH PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

FOCUS	TEACHING	RESEARCH	FURTHER RESPONSIBILITIES
Research and academic management	8 LV	~30%*	Academic self-management, functional responsibilities
Research and academic management in teaching	8 LV	~30%	Management of study-related matters such as consulting students, course coordination, course development
Teaching	18 LV	none	Academic self-management
Specific functional responsibilities	2 – 8 LV**	none	Management of generally accessible laboratories, assistance with large equipment and other similar things

*Can also deviate from the 30% depending on the definition of functional responsibilities

**Depending on the amount of work required to support the infrastructure

2.2 PLANNED DEVELOPMENT OF NEW STRUCTURES AND PROGRAMS

Moreover, Goethe University is planning further measures in the course of developing its support mechanisms, as are described below. Table 6 provides a relevant overview thereof.

2.2.1 THE PHD COUNCIL

Within the framework of the senate commission for the interests of early career researchers, Goethe University has accompanied and supported the creation of a PhD Council. In their efforts to promote solidarity amongst PhD candidates, improve their working conditions and give their group a voice that carries equal weight as that of other groups at Goethe University, the PhD candidates decided at their general assembly meeting to establish a PhD Council. The aim of the PhD Council is to represent the interests of PhD candidates in areas of higher education and to contribute to personal management in academics. The PhD Council will have two representatives on GRADE's Board of Directors to represent its interests.

2.2.2 PHD AND POST-DOC DOCUMENTATION

A further component for strengthening the transparency and quality of the qualification conditions is the development of data collection, as the development of support structures can be improved when the information regarding the PhD candidates and their conditions is clear.

2.2.3 UNIVERSITY-WIDE SURVEY FOR PHD CANDIDATES & POST-DOCS

Further important mechanisms in addition to documentation that Goethe University uses to systematically improve working conditions for early career researchers are the surveys for PhD candidates, supervisors and post-docs. The first PhD candidate and supervisor surveys were carried out university-wide in 2013 in order to gain an overall picture regarding the PhD conditions, as well the working and research conditions, at Goethe University. Scientists with the relevant expertise for the project were involved during the preparation of surveys. This survey is now to be revised and repeated in 2018.

In order to increase the transparency and quality of qualification conditions for post-docs, Goethe University has, using the appropriate expertise, commissioned a survey on post-docs. The results will be an important reference point for the future development of the advancement concept of Goethe University.

2.2.4 GRADE^{Support}

GRADE has established an extensive program (Table 4), which will continue to be further developed using

an external evaluation of GRADE by the Academic Advisory Board, which will take place every five years. The Chairman of that Board will then report the results of the evaluation to the senate. Based on the results of the evaluation performed by the Academic Advisory Board, the Board of Directors will draw up a conceptual concept for GRADE, which will form the basis of the further development of GRADE over the following five years. This concept is to be approved by the senate together with the President's Office.

TABLE 4: OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMS OFFERED BY GRADE^{SUPPORT} AIMED AT PROMOTING...

INDEPENDENCE AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN RESEARCH

Organizational support of
 – The PhD Council
 – GRADE^{Centers}
 – GRADE^{Initiatives}
 – GRADE^{Academies}
 Open office hours
 Contact to the ombudspersons
 Representation of early career researchers in GRADE's Board of Directors

TRANSPARENCY AND QUALITY OF QUALIFICATION AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Contact point, consultation services, and mediator for early career researchers
 Information regarding general conditions and supervision relationship during a PhD
 Graduate school application support
 Supervisor training program
 Award for best PhD supervision
 Tripple step procedure for dealing with problems by the ombudsperson.

NEEDS-BASED DESIGN FOR CAREER TRANSITIONS

"Get" workshop series to facilitate during career transitions
 eLearning tool for PhD decision-making
 Informational events on career opportunities
 Individual coaching and consultations
 Capability analysis
 Workshops for career planning
 Application training
 Networking events
 Career talks
 Career tracking

The organization of a qualification program that is open to all researchers in the early stages of their careers at Goethe University, offering more than 100 workshops per year in the areas of internationalization, inter/transdisciplinarity, language support, methods expertise, writing workshops, presentation and communication techniques, personal management, time-management and project management, leadership competence, teambuilding, and strategic career development for both academic and non-academic areas.

2.2.5 GRADE^{ResearchUnits}

The GRADE regulations were adapted in order to strengthen the independence of PhD candidates and post-docs in early stages of their careers. In addition to the centers, two important elements were either significantly developed or newly initiated; namely the GRADE^{Initiatives} and the GRADE^{Academies} (Table 5). Both of these were introduced with the aim of promoting independence (see Table 4). GRADE^{Academies} offer various formats for discussion and communication between the academic world, the business world and the general public, and should serve as the impetus for working on academically and socially meaningful challenges.

2.2.6 CERTIFIED QUALIFICATION FOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

Goethe University's certificate "Key Competencies for Academic and Non-Academic Leaders" targets post-docs who would like to (further) develop their leadership skills. As a "seal of approval", it provides post-docs with a relevant interdisciplinary certification – depending on how they develop their career path – to help them fill academic and non-academic leadership positions. Over a period of three semesters, post-docs may take one course each from the modules "Personal Management", "Social Competence", "Leadership Competence" and "Project Management", along with two additional workshops as electives. After successfully completing these six workshops, they will receive the certificate issued by GRADE.

TABLE 5: OVERVIEW OF GRADE^{Research Units}

	GRADE ^{Center}	GRADE ^{Initiative}	GRADE ^{Academy}
FOCUS	Subject-specific continuing education programs for the advancement of ECRs*; an interdisciplinary orientation is preferred.	Strengthening the autonomy of ECRs through independent networking and project financing	Strengthening the independence of ECRs doing a PhD; stimulus for handling academically and socially meaningful challenges using networks
TIMEFRAME	Based on an application for 7 years, continuation after an evaluation is possible	Organized based on an application for 3 years	Organized based on an application for 7 years, continuation after an evaluation is possible
ORIGIN & ACTORS	Application from the faculty or professors; organized by the President's Office	Applications from ECRs; organized by the Board of Directors	Application from central office, faculty or professor; organized by the President's Office
ACTORS	Managed by professor	Managed by PhD candidates / post-docs	Managed by professor
UNDERSTANDING HOW TO SUPPORT	Role model learning & peer learning	Peer learning	Role model learning, peer learning & networked learning

*ECR = Early Career Researchers

2.2.7 INDIVIDUAL COACHING

Support when assessing and making an informed decision for or against a particular career path is provided in the form of extended individual coaching. Personality-based workshops that analyze strengths and weaknesses, individual consultations, etc. are intended to support researchers who are in the early stages of their careers in defining and realizing their own career goals.

2.2.8 BROADENING THE RANGE OF INFORMATIONAL PROGRAMS

By broadening the range of informational programs, opportunities for transitioning between the various career phases are made more transparent in order to support the needs of early career researchers.

2.2.9 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPERVISORS

The professional development training opportunities offered by GRADE or PE/OE ensure that the quality of supervision is maintained and improved.

TABLE 6: PLANNED STRUCTURES AND PROGRAMS

STRUCTURES AND PROGRAMS	CONTENT
PhD Council	The establishment of a participation structure for all PhD candidates at Goethe University, regardless of status group membership
Certified qualification for management positions	Advanced academic training opportunities for the career planning of graduate early career researchers
Individual coaching	Strengthening the decision-making process of early career researchers regarding their next career steps
Professional development training opportunities for supervisors	Increases and standardizes the quality of supervision to early career researchers
GRADE ^{Academy} 	Strengthening graduate early career researchers as they establish independent research groups
Broadening the range of informational programs	Strengthening the transparency of career transition opportunities
University-wide survey	Establishes a baseline a foundation for the development of conditions for PhD early career researchers
PhD and post-doc documentation	Transparency regarding the staffing structure of early career researchers

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