

Springboards into the new role



Whether in terms of administration, personnel management or time management: newly appointed professors face different challenges – how selected modules of the 100-day programme support the work of Professor Stefanie Kaiser.

The 100-day programme for newly appointed professors resembles a kind of modular system. Prof. Dr Stefanie Kaiser, Professor of Pharmaceutical Chemistry at the Institute of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, chose the building blocks that she considered particularly helpful for herself.

The professor started at the Goethe University in November 2020 – the first winter of the COVID-19 pandemic. She felt that she was “somehow incognito” in the beginning. Hardly anyone was on site, meetings usually took place virtually.

Nevertheless, the scientist describes the welcome as cordial. From the start, she was involved in everything and received support from the body of staff whenever she had questions. “Every university has different rules and infrastructures,” says Stefanie Kaiser. What she means by this is issues such as how third-party funding is reported, or staff recruitment.

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On why the scientist chose modules from the 100-day programme after starting her work: “A professorship is different from a junior research group.” Kaiser previously headed a junior research group at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, where she learned a

lot about project management and leadership. But with a professorship, she has completely different responsibilities and faces a larger number of tasks. She mainly deals with the topic of time management. After all, the professor invests a large part of her work in administration, in

addition to research, teaching and her team. To carry off this balancing act, she uses modules from the 100-day programme.

With respect to her time management, the academic was concerned with the question: “How can I manage all my tasks for myself so that my workload remains at a manageable level of hours per week?” From the 100-day programme, she opted for individual coaching with a focus on her leadership role in the field of science, mediated by the Personnel and Organisational Development Department (HR-PEOE). This is well-regulated at Goethe-University: with the start of an initial meeting with the experts from the Personnel and Organisational Development Department to the placement of a suitable coach from an exclusive coaching pool. Based on her individual needs, three people were proposed. Kaiser then had a 20-minute conversation with each of them – and finally decided on one of the coaches. Every six to ten weeks she meets him for about two hours.

Eureka moment in coaching

In the discussions, the professor describes current challenges or problems and tries to translate possible solutions into concrete actions. Recently, she spoke in a coaching session about how difficult it is to find employees. Starting in January 2023, four new interns will join her team. The coach had asked Kaiser: “What does it take for one of them to stay with you? Why did you choose to stay with your boss when you were an intern?”

Stefanie Kaiser is Professor of Pharmaceutical Chemistry at the Institute of Pharmaceutical Chemistry. She was appointed at the Goethe University in November 2020.



Her answer: she was enthusiastic about the inspiration and the creative approach. This was a eureka moment for Kaiser, which helped her see the need to work to inspire others and transmit her vision in a way that is motivating. Since her appointment, she had put too little time into this kind of effort, but she now wants to change this in the future.

“The portfolio of the Personnel and Organisational Development Department at the Goethe-Learning Campus is fantastic, and I point this out to my team again and again,” says Stefanie Kaiser. She appreciates the fact that she has not only been promoted as a leader but also has the opportunity to support her employees.

100-day programme for newly-appointed professors

The 100-day programme is aimed at newly-appointed professors during their first 100 days at the Goethe-University. Participants can choose between modular courses, as elements of leadership development, which strengthen them in their new roles in a needs-oriented and individually-tailored way. The support on offer includes an initial consultation with the Personnel and Organisational Development Department, in which options are weighed up between individual coaching, a workshop on team development and/or seminars on leadership and management competencies.

More information about the content can be found here: www.goethe-lerncampus.de.