

# INSPIRE, EMPOWER, INITIATE

Guidelines for Staff Development



# PREFACE

RWTH Aachen University has set itself the goal to contribute to solving the global challenges of the future by conducting strong integrative and interdisciplinary research. This can only succeed if we succeed in attracting the brightest minds to our University and if we manage to inspire and motivate all employees to work together on this common purpose.

We know that reaching this goal requires a lot of dedication and commitment from each and every employee. Therefore, it is important for us to support all University members in their activities. Thus, the present guidelines have been developed in collaboration with all University bodies and committees.

Together with other guidelines, standards and strategy papers for all staff development activities at RWTH Aachen, the present guidelines represent our core values. Also, RWTH is committed to the DFG Research-Oriented Standards on Gender Equality, whose implementation is particularly important in the area of staff development.

Our framework of values is based on:

- The Rector's Office Guidelines for Cooperative Behavior at RWTH Aachen
- The RWTH Aachen 2020 Institutional Strategy
- The National Code of Conduct Concerning International Students at German Universities
- The Charter of Diversity
- Family-Friendly University Audit
- The University's Action Plans for the Promotion of Women
- The "Golden Rules" of Family-Friendly Leadership



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## MAIN OBJECTIVE

To **inspire** people working at RWTH Aachen University, to **empower** them by supporting their personal and skills development so they are able to contribute to the good of society, and to give them the opportunity to **initiate** ideas and develop their potential to the fullest.

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## INITIAL SITUATION

Staff development means to promote and enhance the professional development of all RWTH members of staff. Taking their individual strengths and competencies into consideration, staff members are to be provided with the skills and qualifications required to achieve optimal work performance. RWTH Aachen University places great emphasis on HR development and is committed to the responsible treatment of its members of staff. As the largest employer and vocational training provider in the region and one of the most well-known universities in Germany it is committed to providing an environment in which people are able to fully develop their potential, regardless of their origin, cultural background, physical abilities, and gender. Staff development is one of the instruments that help to achieve the objectives set out in the “RWTH 2020” institutional strategy.

## 1. TARGET GROUPS

The staff development strategy is addressed to all members of staff at RWTH Aachen University:

- Experienced professors
- Newly appointed professors
- Academic staff in regular employment (i.e. with an unlimited employment contract<sup>1</sup>)
- Junior researchers with a doctoral degree
- Doctoral candidates
- Non-faculty staff<sup>1</sup>

## 2. STRUCTURES AND VISIBILITY

Successful human resources development and the achievement of defined goals require that the necessary structures are in place. The visibility of new and existing measures must be enhanced, so that all target groups are able to benefit from the offers.

## 3. SPHERES OF ACTIVITY

Our staff development measures set out to:

1. Strengthen leadership capability,
2. Enhance teaching competency,
3. Develop innovation and research capabilities,
4. Build a sense of community and “we-feeling”,
5. Foster motivation and commitment among faculty and staff,
6. Support individual development (continuing education, facilitate self-actualization),
7. Enhance equality of opportunities and foster diversity,
8. Promote internationalization.

In concrete terms these spheres of activity mean:



## STRENGTHEN LEADERSHIP SKILLS

The success of our employees depends largely on the leadership qualities of their superiors. In our view, human resource management means to support and motivate our employees in their work, particularly with regard to their own personal needs, particularly health needs. Our aim is that the common goals of the University can be attained and our employees can successfully plan and pursue their own careers and professional development activities.

University executives are supported by training and advisory services.

Through our programs and services we want to ensure that University executives

- show tolerance and respect for the personality of each individual,
- get joyfully and passionately involved in achieving their goals and are enthusiastic about them,
- act in a self-reflective manner, know their own strengths and weaknesses and seek regular feedback,
- set themselves high and achievable performance and quality standards,
- provide clarity about goals and communicate them transparently,
- respond appropriately to below-average and above-average performance and react flexibly and appropriately in different situations,
- actively seek cooperation with others,
- create a trusting work environment,
- are able to adjust to employees and colleagues in terms of language and content so that these can openly address problems and conflicts can be resolved,
- promote teamwork,
- know the characteristics and strengths of international staff members and appreciate and encourage them,
- are aware of the different roles of their employees and are able to respond to them in their daily management routine, such as individual arrangements for mothers and fathers or reducing language barriers for international staff,
- use competency-based selection procedures for selecting employees and train new employees in a targeted, meaningful manner.



## ENHANCE TEACHING COMPETENCY

We understand teaching competency as the ability to support students in the acquisition of professional knowledge and to teach scientific content and methodology using state-of-the-art teaching methods.

This requires that targeted impulses for learning are given and motivation as well as adequate preconditions are created to provide students with the skills to independently acquire content and develop solution strategies. Given the strategic direction of our University towards addressing major societal challenges, it is also becoming increasingly important to point out connections to other course content and to other scientific disciplines. Teaching competence includes the continuous acquisition of new skills, or updating of existing subject-specific and pedagogical skills.

Through our programs and services we want to ensure that all instructors at RWTH Aachen University possess – and teach – the following competencies:

- Professional and application expertise (theoretical knowledge, interdisciplinary knowledge, error-free execution, market knowledge, imagination, practical application)
- Methodological skills (expression and presentation skills, assessment skills, decision making skills, leadership skills, conceptual ability, methodical approaches, planning skills, goal-oriented behavior, problem solving, methodologically solid scientific work)
- Self-competence (resilience, responsibility, discipline, ability to learn, commitment to quality, objectivity, self-confidence, self-criticism, self-management, independence, creativity)
- Social competence (ability to delegate, assertiveness, honesty, emotional intelligence, team skills, integrity, communication skills, networking skills, connectedness)
- Media teaching skills (selection and use of suitable, innovative media and teaching concepts)

By providing optimal conditions for teaching and having excellent, creative instructors, we help

- elicit the full performance potential of students,
- create awareness of complex and interdisciplinary problems,
- promote research and academic work, especially within a team,
- underscore the social and practical relevance of scientific knowledge,
- identify and support talented young researchers early on.



## PROMOTE CAPACITY FOR INNOVATION AND RESEARCH

Capacity for innovation and research is the extent to which employees are able to make significant and visible scientific discoveries and create innovations, both individually and in teams.

With our programs and services we want to achieve that every researcher at RWTH Aachen University:

- adheres to the principles of good scientific practice,
- has sufficient leeway for scientific work,
- combines divergent and synergistic thinking with analytical thinking and solution-oriented approaches,
- advocates his or her own ideas and seeks to implement them even in the face of difficulties or opposition
- is able to identify future topics,
- succeeds in acquiring external funding,
- contributes to creating an open work environment in which ideas can be realized,
- supports qualified junior staff in their research activities and their academic ambitions,
- understands science as an international activity, participates in international networking, operates internationally and is recognized internationally through publications, lectures, and product developments,
- recognizes and exploits, together with his or her team, the opportunities of interdisciplinary research in the development and implementation of innovative research projects.

## BUILD A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND “WE-FEELING”

Our sense of community or “we-feeling” is a unifying element that is greatly enhanced by a positive working environment – it influences both the ability and the willingness to perform.

Through our programs and services we want to ensure that each and every employee of RWTH Aachen University

- feels part of RWTH Aachen and is happy to be working here,
- respectfully and confidently works with all colleagues, achieving a positive interaction through honesty, openness, loyalty and cooperation,
- internally and externally advocates the interests of RWTH Aachen,
- masters challenges, supported by the leadership of University executives,
- familiarizes him- or herself and identifies with the principles and objectives of RWTH Aachen,
- strengthens the team spirit through joint activities.



## PROMOTE COMMITMENT TO PERFORMANCE

Commitment to performance represents the extent to which we as employees are motivated and dedicated to achieving the common objectives of RWTH Aachen University.

Through our programs and services we want to ensure that each and every employee of RWTH Aachen University:

- is aware of the societal significance of research, teaching and training,
- is aware of and identifies with the objectives of RWTH Aachen and supports their achievement through his or her actions,
- reflects on and identifies his or her own goals and takes the necessary steps to realize them,
- is provided with adequate resources and autonomy for his or her actions and takes advantage of this leeway in decision-making,
- is provided with feedback options and learns to give as well as receive appropriate feedback,
- works on tasks that suit his or her interests and abilities,
- learns not to be discouraged by setbacks,
- is valued, behaves respectfully of and appreciates others,
- strengthens his or her team and supports other colleagues.



## PROMOTE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Personal development is a lifelong process which refers to the change in one's own roles, needs, goals, and competencies.

Through our programs and services we want to ensure that each and every employee of RWTH Aachen University:

- wants to and is able to grow on a personal and a professional level,
- has confidence in his or her own development potential,
- develops professional goals and communicates them to his or her superiors,
- further develops the ability to reflect on his or her own motives, needs, strengths, and weaknesses,
- is motivated and able to independently take on challenging tasks,
- expands his or her expertise in the field of project management and self-management and is not discouraged by setbacks,
- expands social skills, especially teamwork and conflict resolution skills,
- develops stress management skills and resilience,
- recognizes and uses individual possibilities of reconciling professional and private roles.



## STRENGTHEN EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Equality and diversity in relation to gender, age, ethnic origin, skin color, social class, mental and physical abilities, family status, sexual orientation, and a host of other personal characteristics enhance the profile of the University and at the same time provide a high potential for academic growth and development. Diversity management, generated at all levels of the University, not only creates a respectful and cooperative environment in everyday university life, but allows that different people use their expertise, innovative ideas and scientific potential for themselves and for the University. In the long term, diversity management, i.e. shaping and managing diversity in a targeted way, leads to greater equal opportunities and promotes a university culture in which the diversity among its members is cherished and promoted. It leads to the conscious creation of a common identity (we-feeling). The necessary increase in diversity and equal opportunities is a central task of the University's academic bodies and executives.

Through our programs and services we want to ensure that

- the members of the University know the general legal guidelines for the creation and maintenance of a non-discriminating environment,
- the participation rights of the staff councils, the representatives for disabled individuals, and equal opportunity officers are known, and that our employees interact with these bodies in a trusting relationship and know about the distinct roles of the actors in these bodies,
- managers and employees know which University bodies they can contact in the case of questions or problems,
- there is a common intention and an agreed process for the continuous development of gender and diversity concepts and strategies,
- the members of the University can develop comprehensive gender and diversity competencies
- employees know how to use the diversity of University members as a resource for scientific progress and that
- members of the University are encouraged to bring in the diversity of their professional and life experiences, as well as their perspectives and values.



## INTERNATIONALIZATION

RWTH Aachen University understands internationalization as a process of increasing cross-border activities which pervades and concerns all areas of the University. Through internationally oriented measures, the quality of teaching and research is to be increased and the reputation and visibility of RWTH Aachen University to be raised nationally and internationally. The objectives defined in the University's Internationalization Plan include ensuring an attractive intercultural environment for study and research, promoting the international mobility of students, junior scientists and scientists, and the successful recruitment of international students and researchers from abroad.

Through our programs and services we want to support intercultural openness in all institutions of RWTH Aachen University and ensure that the employees of RWTH Aachen University

- are open-minded towards new students and new employees from different cultures and ensure that they have a good and quick start at RWTH Aachen,
- are willing to cooperate with and learn from each other, e.g. by incorporating international perspectives into their teaching and other work responsibilities,
- develop and improve, wherever necessary, their German and English language skills,
- develop cultural awareness and competence as well as enhance their ability to integrate themselves and others,
- possess knowledge of have the ability to introduce others to a variety of international teaching and research traditions, including the German traditions,
- know about the internationalization strategy of the University,
- have an increased willingness to be mobile.

## 4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT MEASURES

The staff development strategy builds the foundation for all future HR development measures at RWTH Aachen University. A working group shall be responsible for overseeing the communication and implementation of the above named measures, under consideration of current and future developments at the entire University.

## 5. CURRENT OFFERS

You can find suitable programs and services for all target groups at RWTH Aachen. These are designed according to demand and are updated every six months:

*[www.rwth-aachen.de/staffdevelopment](http://www.rwth-aachen.de/staffdevelopment)*

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