



Joint Diversity Strategy of the UA Ruhr University Partners

Ruhr University Bochum, TU Dortmund University &
University of Duisburg-Essen

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The UA Ruhr partners are committed to a research landscape that reflects diversity and gender equality as a representation of our diverse society and a contribution to the advancement of scientific knowledge and innovation. Our commitment extends from our individual university communities to the many collaborations between the three universities, and to the newly established Research Alliance Ruhr.

Our joint activities address the promotion of a *diverse research landscape*, and the promotion of *gender and diversity innovations* in research activities. More centralized and coordinated diversity support is possible through a more *strategic and creative use of university budgets* complemented by *available resources* for gender and diversity funded by the DFG as part of its research funding schemes.

I. Promotion of a diverse research landscape

The UA Ruhr diversity strategy focusses on improving the diverse composition of research groups, and the recruitment and retention of diverse early career researchers in the UA Ruhr science system.

(a) Our society is diverse in many ways. Our university communities should **reflect this diverse reality** in terms of social, cultural, sexual, ideological, age-related, spiritual, ethnic, political, and physical aspects. Discrimination against persons based on power and inequality structures should be counteracted.

(b) Diversity and gender balanced composition of research groups affects the originality, relevance, and impact of the scientific system.

This concerns the **diverse and gender balanced composition of groups of PIs** in all joint research activities, and must begin **at the top**, in the recruitment of professorships, in selecting the leadership of faculties and research centres, in the applications made to the excellence strategy, and extending to the development of the Research Alliance Ruhr. All three UA Ruhr universities have achieved gender balance in the composition of their rectorates. Gender balance and diversity deserve more attention in university administrative services, and in university scientific and educational leadership, in deanships, and directorships.

The opportunities for advancing gender balance and diversity at the top are greatly affected by the overall composition of the professorships throughout the three universities. At present the universities follow a cascade model to ensure that advancement made at lower levels of qualification are filtered back upwards to higher levels of scientific qualification, and ultimately reflected in the composition of professorships. While a reasonable approach, with the advantage of being broadly accepted, more ambitious approaches should also be pursued. Here we see a high potential in the use of **international recruitment as a pathway for increasing the diversity and gender balance of the science system**.

The international and ad persona recruitment in the new centers and college of the **Research Alliance Ruhr** presents an important chance to **leap-frog the diverse and gender balanced composition** of professorships by targeting the identified leading areas of the UA Ruhr research landscape.

(c) The future of a diverse and gender balanced research landscape requires concentrated attention to promoting diversity and gender balance among early career researchers, and to retaining diverse early career researchers in the UA Ruhr science system.

This is also a question of the composition of laboratories and research groups, but also insuring that diverse early career researchers advance within the science system (**fix the leaky pipeline**). The UA Ruhr universities have long-standing cooperation in mentoring for early career women researchers and in supporting early career researchers in the Ruhr Academy qualification programs. Often such programs unintentionally view the problems in advancement in the attitudes and orientations of diverse persons themselves. In addition, **systematic support structures** are lacking for other groups such as first-generation scientists or scientists with diverse gender or sexual orientation.

More attention should be paid to the structures and culture of research settings, long dominated by white German men, and how these can be made more attractive and supportive of the ambitions and talent development of diverse early career researchers.

We agree that the advancement of research structures and cultures attractive for diverse early career researchers would be strongly supported by efforts to ensure **discrimination- and bias-free research environments**. All three UA Ruhr universities have established anti-discrimination protocols. The challenge however rests in creating a culture of anti-

discrimination and addressing unconscious bias. In this effort, the UA Ruhr universities endeavor to cooperate in the establishment of a further training curricular for all members, but especially for persons in research leadership positions, in anti-discrimination and unconscious bias training.

Efforts to ensure the **autonomy of early career researchers**, long established in international research settings, but only a recent concern of the German science system, will also contribute to the attractiveness of the UA Ruhr for diverse and international early career scholars, and motivate them to remain in the UA Ruhr science system as they advance in their qualifications. All joint research activities should support the autonomy of early career researchers to establish their own third-party research profiles and engage in international peer networks.

Especially for traditional groups of young researchers in more homogeneous pockets of the science system, the contributions of diverse and gender balanced teams to scientific innovations, and the experience of diverse and gender balanced research landscapes may be novel. Also, for young women in dominantly male research environments, and for researchers who are first generation participants in higher education and scientific research, the experience of diversity and gender balance abroad can represent a 'key experience' in their scientific life courses. For descendants of various 'guest worker' migrants in Germany, experiences in more multiculturally integrated research environments may represent the first experience of being in a setting where difference is the norm, and individuality trumps ethnic origins. The promotion of the **international mobility of all early career researchers connects the promotion of diversity with the advancement of international scientific networks** in the UA Ruhr research landscape. This involves commitments to allocate travel funds, and to enable short-term research residencies abroad for all early career researchers.

II Gender and diversity innovations in research

The three UA Ruhr universities not only strive for diversity, but endeavor for cooperating more closely in their leading **research on diversity and gender equality**.

The Essen College for Gender Research at the UDE and the Marie Jahoda Center at the RUB are nationally recognized institutes of leading gender research. Research specifically on gender equality in German higher education is advanced by the Network for Women's Studies and Gender Research and its *Gender Report*. The RUB and TU Do have pioneered programs in graduate training in gender studies. The UDE and RUB have strong traditions in migration research and development studies. The UDE and TU Do are known for their research on social inequalities in education. Several joint projects in these areas of research have been funded over the past years through MERCUR.

The three universities have achieved innovations by including gender and diversity in research designs. Gender is strongly integrated as a perspective in the UDE medical school, while ethnicity and migration background are perspectives established in the RUB medical training and research. The RUB is establishing an institute for diversity medicine in 2023.

Nonetheless, the capacities at all three universities in gender and diversity research are underutilized in their joint research profiles. We propose to cooperate more closely in research on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and to mainstream the relevance of diversity and gender equality in joint UA Ruhr research now and in the future.

III Diversity Resources and Diversity Development

All three UA Ruhr universities have committed resources to diversity support. Innovations in several areas are already present at one or the other of the three UA Ruhr universities. We propose to coordinate measures, and to learn from each other, to identify where one of the partners has more experience, and to establish joint and coordinated measures. We have identified the following areas of immediate action, some of which are already partly established.

1. The Excellence Strategy of the German Federal and State Governments is one of the most important chances to improve the gender and diversity landscape. Our aim is to establish the most innovative and comprehensive measures for improving gender equality and diversity standards in Germany and Europe. The DFG standards address the composition of research groups and the relevance of research for generating knowledge about gender equality and diversity. **Speakers and Lists of PIs** in the proposed clusters must represent the diversity of our universities and society, and be gender balanced. Binding agreements should be made on how to improve the diverse and gender balanced composition of our leading joint research now, and in the future.
2. The DFG standards specifically address the relevance of gender and diversity in research designs. Research involving human subjects and social impacts are always relevant to gender and diversity. Each of the UA Ruhr universities have research groups or entire institutes and programs dedicated to the relevance of diversity and gender in research. Now and in the future, we propose a ***systematic inclusion of gender and diversity in research designs***.
3. We are identifying potential areas for future joint and cooperative **research about diversity**, which can profit from research profiles already established at UA Ruhr universities (for example gender research in medicine).
4. We propose to take up the challenged posed by the “I am Hanna” movement to jointly establish transparent and **long-term career prospects for early career researchers**. Transparent career paths with elements of long-term employment are key to preventing the loss of excellent diverse researchers in the qualification phase, often

to other national and neighboring science systems. The TU Do has established a concept, and there are attempts to develop measures at the RUB and UDE. With the aim of enhancing our competitiveness in attracting the best researchers, we propose to coordinate these efforts and to develop a coherent concept for the UA Ruhr.

5. Science careers are international, and other national science systems have become more diverse and gender balanced than the German science system. We aim to increase the **international mobility of early career researchers** as this significantly advances both their experience of the benefits of diversity in science organizations and their capacities to embark on international scientific career paths. We will explore how this might be linked to a concept of fellowship (*Stipendien*) financing.
6. We propose to jointly develop workshops and **training in unconscious bias**, and to strategically begin with training recruitment officers (*Berufungsbeauftragte*), faculty leaders (*Dekanate*), directors of institutes and research centers responsible for recruitment, career development and evaluation decisions. Establishing discrimination-free research and learning environments will contribute significantly to reducing the gender pay gap and preventing the loss of excellent diverse early career researchers (the leaky pipeline).
7. We propose to coordinate (i) a program of **diversity monitoring** and (ii) a regular **assessment of the diversity climate** across the UA Ruhr universities, covering early career researchers and all scientific personnel. The UDE has established diversity monitoring of students and is currently extending this to researchers. Efforts at the RUB and TU Do will profit from UDE know-how.
8. We plan to establish a **Network Antidiscrimination** at all three universities. Currently, the anti-discrimination and diversity officers at the three universities are developing a common concept.
9. We will exchange the university Inclusion Plans and measures to improve **barrier-free access** and to develop a common strategy for doing so. Efforts at the RUB and UDE will profit from TU Do know-how (DoBuS).
10. We endeavor to coordinate the yearly **Diversity Day** or **Diversity Week** across the three universities by jointly setting the yearly focus of these events.

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