

# **Equal Opportunity Policy for the Promotion of Women**

## **at the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences**

**2021 - 2027**

Policy measures to ensure equality between women and men

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## 1 Foreword

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Over 70 years of experience with the principle of equal rights in the German Constitution ("Men and women have equal rights") have shown that although equal rights exist under the law, in actuality equality has yet to be achieved. There are still structural barriers in the world of work which lead to women being underrepresented in numerous fields of work and education, and which also make it difficult for them to advance professionally and succeed. It is still the case that combining an education or profession with family life means carrying multiple burdens, and this is more so for women than for men; this can lead to gaps in their work lives, often forcing women into part-time work. For women, this often means that although they are equally or more qualified, their opportunities in professional life are significantly worse than those of their male colleagues.

With this equal opportunity policy for the promotion of women, the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences meets its legal obligation in accordance with Para. 4 Section 2 of the Equal Rights Act of the State of Hesse (HGIG) with the aim of correcting the existing underrepresentation of women at the University.

This equal opportunity policy for the promotion of women (hereafter: equal opportunity policy) has been drawn up based on the State of Hesse's Equal Rights Act dated 21 December 1993, which was last amended by law on 20 December 2015, and puts into practice the legal provisions contained in that act. It represents a continuation of the Darmstadt University of Applied Science's equal opportunity policy dated 2015 based on current data and insights. The implementation of the equal opportunity policy is the task of the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences as a service institution funded by the State of Hesse. The equal opportunity officer is charged with ensuring compliance with the equal opportunity policy, supervising the policy aims and measures presented here, and providing support for their implementation. The Human Resources Department and the equal opportunity officer are available to answer any questions regarding the specific application of this equal opportunity policy.

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## 2 Current status and analysis of the employee composition

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This equal opportunity policy is based on a description of the current status and an analysis of the employee composition, as well as an assessment of the personnel vacancies and possible promotions that fall under the jurisdiction of the equal opportunity policy.

The following data were collected and, as Appendices 1 - 6, are an integral part of this equal opportunity policy:

- Permanent employees, both full-time and part-time
- Employees on limited contracts, both full-time and part-time
- Trainees
- Supervisors / Employees in leadership positions
- Assessment of newly vacant positions and promotions
- Underrepresentation of women and policy aims

The analysis of the data shows the following main fields in which improvement is required:

- The group of male and female professors, esp. in STEM fields
- The group of male and female laboratory technicians
- The group of teachers for special tasks
- The group of staff paid according to the pay scale in technical fields and crafts

The underrepresentation of women is most clear-cut in these four groups. This is partly due to the fact that teaching and other activities at the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences are primarily focused on technical fields and the natural sciences. Another factor is that at least the first two groups, especially the group consisting of professors both male and female, are very large in terms of numbers, so that the underrepresentation of women should be given particular weight in these groups.

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### **3 Formulation of aims**

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The aim is to remove structural disadvantages affecting women. This includes counteracting disadvantages affecting women in fields in which they are underrepresented or have hardly any opportunities for professional advancement. In the areas in which women are underrepresented, the aim is to increase the percentage of women over the long term and to improve their educational and working conditions. Underrepresentation is present where fewer women than men are employed in a compensation or salary group on a career path. The Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences is striving to achieve an employee composition which is quality-oriented and in which parity is achieved at all levels of qualification.

In addition, the University aims to achieve parity, as fully as possible, in the appointment or naming of all committee members with voting rights in self-governing bodies. If appointments to a committee are made based on status within a group, these groups should aim for parity of composition as well.

Responsibility for the implementation of equal opportunity policy measures lies with the leading members of the University community (the president, members of the Senate, deans, heads of department and department advisors, chairs of appointment committees, etc). The University's leadership, all supervisory figures and self-governing bodies, dean's offices, the Senate, and appointment committees bear responsibility for implementing the equal opportunity policy.

The analysis of the current situation and the prognostic data form the basis from which binding policy aims for a period of three years have been derived. These aims target the proportion of women in hiring and promotions, so as to increase the percentage of women in areas in which they are underrepresented (Appendix 6).

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### **4 Measures to achieve equal opportunity between men and women**

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The policy measures of the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences as described below complement the right to equal opportunity which is already explicitly stated in foundational law. With this, the University expressly commits itself to the goal of equal opportunity between the genders and requires that its community members support this aim actively and with good will.

The equal opportunity officer is to be actively involved in all organizational and HR development plans at as early a stage as possible. To this end, he/she is to provide advice and guidance to all bodies involved in academic self-governance and is to be punctually informed of all matters involving equal opportunity between men and women.

To facilitate broad-based equal opportunity policies over the long term, the departments can appoint their own decentral equal opportunity officers to stand in for the central equal opportunity officers in their departments and to help implement equal opportunity and affirmative action policies. To do this, they should be relieved to a suitable extent from their other tasks. The costs are to be covered by central funding.<sup>1</sup>

#### **4.1 Organizational culture**

The Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences values trust and cooperation between employees and students, and a positive working atmosphere characterized by mutual respect. The University promotes consideration for gender-specific life situations. Gender-consciousness should be taken for granted as a factor in all actions and decision-making. The University community acts to prevent discriminatory statements and actions based on gender, respects individual personal boundaries, and does not accept discrimination of any kind.

#### **4.2 Hiring new personnel**

All recruiting and hiring processes involving new personnel are to be conducted such that suitable women can be found to occupy positions in the areas in which women are underrepresented. This applies to professorships, substitute professorships, positions for teachers of special tasks, positions for employees, student assistants, and the selection of those receiving teaching contracts.

The equal opportunity officer is to be involved in all stages of hiring and appointment procedures. She is to be fully informed so that she is always aware of the current status of any procedure (e.g. provided with the minutes of each meeting). She is entitled to submit a statement which must be included in the file in question. She also has the right to participate in all meetings of self-governing bodies dealing with matters of hiring, and to speak and submit motions at these meetings. She is to be invited to these meetings and consulted regarding the dates and times thereof so that she can exercise these rights.

##### **4.2.1 Announcing vacant positions**

In accordance with Para. 9 Section 1 of the HGIG, vacant positions in all areas in which women are underrepresented must be publicly announced. Any exceptions must be approved by the equal opportunity officer.

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<sup>1</sup> Rules governing the office of the decentral equal opportunity officer are to be drawn up in accordance with Para. 15 Section 5 of the HGIG.

The type and contents of the announcement must be determined solely by the requirements of the vacant position or office. The minimum requirements stipulated in the announcement of the position are to apply throughout the application procedure, until the position is filled or reannounced.

If women are underrepresented in an area, those participating in the procedure are to make a concerted effort in advance to identify suitable female candidates and ask them to apply.

- Both female and male professors are requested to make a concerted effort to ask female students to apply for positions as student assistants.
- Both female and male professors are requested to make a concerted effort to approach female master's students and encourage them to apply for positions as laboratory technicians or as teachers for special tasks.
- Both female and male professors are to make a concerted effort to speak to female graduates and encourage them to apply for vacant positions.
- Those in supervisory departmental positions are to take steps towards awarding more teaching contracts to women, e.g. by means of direct recruitment.
- Those in supervisory departmental positions are to take steps towards awarding more professorships and substitute professorships to women.

To successfully recruit qualified women during a publicly announced hiring procedure, it is important for the announcement to be suitably worded. If necessary, the equal opportunity officers can provide support when the announcement is being formulated. To purposely recruit women as applicants, in the areas in which women are underrepresented the following statement must be added: "To put into practice the principle of equality between women and men and in accordance with the statutory obligation to correct the underrepresentation of women within the jurisdiction of the equal opportunity policy for the promotion of women, the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences is particularly interested in female applicants." In addition, the announcement must make reference to the fact that full-time positions can as a rule be divided into part-time positions where no compelling work-related reasons exist in individual cases.

In areas in which women are underrepresented,

- positions for student assistants who provide services for a department or degree program (examples of this are laboratory tutors and student peer advisors) are to be announced on bulletin boards and/or via the University's Intranet;
- announcements of teaching contracts are to be published on the homepage of the department and the University;
- publicly announced positions for laboratory technicians, teachers for special tasks, professors, and substitute professors are to be published on the University's homepage and additionally on networking platforms for women on the Internet.

The University's departments are requested to forward any announcements of positions to associated institutes at other universities, as well as to research facilities.

If no female candidate is present after the first round of applications for a vacant professorship, the chair of the appointment committee is to contact the equal opportunity officer and inform her of the steps taken to recruit suitable women as the vacant position was being announced. The chair of the appointment committee and the equal opportunity officer are to jointly reach an agreement as to whether and/or how a second round of applications will be undertaken, or which other steps should additionally be made to recruit suitable women. If no agreement can be reached, the University's president is to decide how to proceed further.

#### **4.2.2 Selection procedure**

To ensure equal opportunity between women and men, there must be transparency in all selection procedures. The entire selection procedure must be documented in writing so that there is a clear record of all decisions.

In all selection procedures in areas in which women are underrepresented, women are to be given preference if they are equally suited, skilled and professionally qualified, up until the point at which the underrepresentation in the compensation and salary groups in question has been corrected, where no other applicable statutory provisions supersede this imperative.

The sole determining criteria for a candidate's suitability are the qualifications and requirements of the vacant positions. Here it must be determined to what extent a candidate's family duties qualify him or her for the position being announced.

Women's right to equality in professional life must be taken into account when selection decisions are made.

The following and similar criteria may not be cited as disadvantages:

- Interruptions in a candidate's work experience, reduced working time, or delays in the completion of individual degrees or educational attainments due to child care or responsibilities for other family members requiring care
- Age and family status
- Serious physical disability
- Time constraints due to child care or responsibilities for other family members requiring care
- The intention to make use of the possibility of reduced working hours.

#### Appointment procedure

If, in an appointment procedure in an area in which women are underrepresented, a list of candidates consisting only of men is submitted despite applications from women, substantial reasons must be presented. In particular, explanations must be given to what extent

- suitable female applicants were sought out
- the female applicants' qualifications for the vacant position were seen as being less suitable
- the statement submitted by the equal opportunity officer was taken into consideration.

During appointment procedures, the agreement of 29 January 2015 regarding equal opportunity qualification criteria in appointment procedures, which is applicable throughout the state of Hesse, is to be complied with (Appendix 7). When lists of candidates are evaluated by a panel of advisors, the participation of female advisors is to be sought out. If no female advisors are included, the reasons for this are to be stated in the appointment report.

#### Positions as student assistants and research/technical assistants

Positions as student assistants and tutors are to be occupied at least proportionately to the percentage of women among the students in the degree program in question. It would be desirable to achieve a proportion which is above this percentage. In this case as well, female students are to be given preference if they are equally qualified. Limited-contract positions for research/technical assistants are to be occupied at least proportionately to the percentage of women among the graduates of the department in question.

### **4.3 Promotions, salary increases, and higher levels of responsibility**

In all promotions, assignments to higher levels of responsibility, and salary increases, women are to be given preference if they are equally suited, skilled and professionally qualified, up until the point at which the underrepresentation has been corrected, where no other applicable statutory provisions supersede this imperative.

Supervisors are to motivate and support women in preparing themselves and applying for positions with higher levels of responsibility. Here, nos. IV and V of the Participation Guidelines must be complied with.

### **4.4 Working hours**

#### **4.4.1 Flexibility in working hours**

Flexible working hours provide the opportunity for both genders to structure their working time such that, in addition to performing in the workplace as required, they are also better able to combine professional and family responsibilities.

There is a workplace agreement regarding the possibility of working from home for a time (including telecommuting).

Informational events are to be held at family-friendly times and scheduled such that as many part-time employees as possible within the target group can participate within their working hours.

Job interviews and meetings of organizational bodies are to take place with family-friendly working hours in mind.

#### **4.4.2 Part-time work**

Requests for a reduction in an employee's working hours are to be granted unless compelling work-related or legal reasons exist to the contrary. The reasons for any such refusal are to be stated in writing, and require the participation of the equal opportunity officer and the approval of the Staff Council where this is stipulated under law. Supervisory and leadership positions can also be carried out on a part-time basis.



Before a decision is made about requests from employees for a reduction in their regular working hours, the employees are entitled to a personal guidance session with the Human Resources Department. In particular, the employees are to be informed that the requested reduction in their regular working hours will or might have an impact on their unemployment insurance, health insurance coverage, expected retirement benefits, pensionable periods, the amount of their pension, and additional benefits, among other factors; regarding these issues, the employees are to be referred to the consultation and advice services available to them at the relevant offices.

#### **4.4.3 Leave of absence**

Requests for work leave are to be granted as a rule, within the framework set by the statutory and pay scale-related regulations and work-related requirements. If compelling work-related requirements make this impossible in individual cases, these are to be described by the University as a service institution funded by the State of Hesse. The refusal of a request requires the participation of the equal opportunity officer, where applicable the representative for the severely disabled, and the approval of the Staff Council, where this is stipulated under law.

The Human Resources Department is to inform the employees in question of any impact on their unemployment insurance, health insurance coverage, expected retirement benefits, pensionable periods, the amount of their pension, and additional benefits, among other factors. Regarding these issues, the employees are to be referred to the consultation and advice services available to them at the relevant offices. In addition, they are to be informed by the Human Resources Department of the following rights to which they are entitled during a leave of absence:

Employees taking a leave of absence have the right to substitute for colleagues on vacation or sabbatical or in case of illness, or to take on other time-limited forms of employment, if they wish to do so.

Where necessary in the profession in question, employees taking a leave of absence have the right to maintain and improve their professional qualifications. During the leave of absence, they may participate in professional development courses and are to be informed of these offerings upon request.

Well before the leave of absence ends, the employee is to have an interview with the Human Resources Department to reach a mutual agreement as to where an equivalent job or position is available to which he or she can suitably return.

These measures are to be documented and the agreements reached must be recorded in writing.

#### **4.5 Professional development opportunities**

Women are to be expressly addressed as a target group in professional development offerings by the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences. Women are to be encouraged by their supervisors to take part in professional development opportunities as part of their goal-oriented preparation for a career.

Requests to participate in professional development courses are to be granted as a rule, where there are no important work-related reasons to the contrary.

With a view to the University's guiding principles, supervisors and those in leadership positions are especially expected to participate in management seminars, both externally and in-house at the University, in order to optimize their leadership skills.

Professional development offerings are to be structured in order to encourage women in particular to participate and such that part-time employees have the same professional development opportunities as full-time employees. If participation in work-related professional development offerings leads to unavoidable expenses being incurred due to the care of children under twelve or family members who require care as proven by a doctor's letter, these will be reimbursed upon provision of documentation. Reimbursement must be applied for in writing within a period of one month. This period begins on the day after the professional development course or event ends. Professional development opportunities should be regional in nature. Where the courses or events are in-house at the University, the various campuses are to be allowed the opportunity to serve as venues.

Specialized professional development courses are to be facilitated with the aim of providing further qualification opportunities for female employees in particular. The goal is to enable them to successfully perform in coveted positions with a professional future. Upon request by female employees, the need for professional development is to be determined in regular dialogues with their supervisors.

The equal opportunity officer can introduce specialized professional development offerings for women into the professional development program, and can herself organize and offer professional development courses/events for women.

An increased effort is to be made to recruit women as course or seminar leaders and teachers.

In all the abovementioned professional development offerings, no. IV.7 of the Participation Guidelines must be complied with.

#### **4.6 Gender mainstreaming**

The goal of gender mainstreaming is to bring a gender-conscious viewpoint to all policy concepts, the making of decisions and their implementation. It is based on the recognition that there is no gender-neutral reality and that men and women can be affected very differently by policy-related and administrative decisions. Taking gender-specific effects into account improves the quality and effectiveness of policy measures, and their results are more readily accepted by the University community.

The Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences is taking strategic steps to communicate the concept of gender mainstreaming. The aim is to increase awareness regarding gender mainstreaming among leading members of the community and both female and male professors. They are requested to take part in continuing education events which provide information about gender-specific disadvantages and identify possible solutions. Everyone who is involved in personnel decisions is requested to participate in specialized gender training courses; to this end, in-house courses will be offered.

The University expects gender competence from its teaching staff; this begins with the statement in our job announcements that "gender and diversity competence is expected." Teaching staff are expected to regularly take part in continuing education courses on gender in university teaching.

Greater awareness is also to be created among students regarding gender mainstreaming. Course offerings have been developed to teach students to question any gender-specific behavioral expectations.

All areas of the University are expected to implement gender-mainstreaming policy measures and to document these activities. The departments' agreements re. future goals must name measures which promote equal opportunity. They can obtain guidance and support in implementation from the Senate's equal opportunity committee or the equal opportunity officer.

To monitor the effectiveness of equal opportunity policy measures at the University and to make them visibly evident, gender monitoring will continue.

To support the implementation of all gender-related policy measures in the long term, a gender and diversity code will be drawn up for the University.

#### **4.7 Research**

In public announcements of research programs, women are to be expressly encouraged to participate.

The University promotes gender (including women's studies and gender research) and diversity in research at both the interdisciplinary and departmental levels. When centralized research funding is awarded, the University strives to ensure that women receive overall funding amounting at least to the proportion of women among the scientific staff at the University.

It is yet to be determined to what extent the promotion of gender (including women's studies and gender research) and diversity can be adopted by the Research and Development Center (ZFE) as part of the funding criteria of the Central Research Funding (ZFF) Program, and to what extent project proposals of this kind, which take aspects of gender and diversity into account, in whose development women were involved to a greater extent, or in which women can be expected to be employed if the proposal is approved, can be given preference where the quality is equivalent.

The University regularly takes stock of the development and the results of gender-oriented research and documents its findings in its research report. It promotes scientific collaboration in this field by providing financial support for the Gender and Women's Studies Research Center run by the universities of the State of Hesse, among other measures.

#### **4.8 Promoting young professionals and university studies**

Even when they are well-qualified and skilled, women continue to face barriers to entering professions and advancing into leadership positions. This is why the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences supports the initiatives by the Mentoring Hessen program for women in the natural sciences at universities in the state of Hesse, among other measures, and itself has launched initiatives to advise and provide women - regardless of their degree program - with expert support and personal contact when they enroll at university, during their studies, and during their transition into professional life. For these purposes, subject-specific and interdisciplinary informational and advisement offerings are to be provided on planning one's university studies and career and coping with problems during the transition into professional life; these are to include guidance on pursuing a scientific career.

Both female and male professors are requested to approach female students before they complete their bachelor's degree to offer advice and encourage them to continue on to obtain their master's degree.

The Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences wishes to awaken and reinforce interest in its scientific and engineering course offerings among women and girls. To this end, in departments in which female students are underrepresented, the aim is to offer special events, information, and guidance for female pupils and high school students who are interested. These include the Hessen-Technikum, visitors' days for women/girls, and special events for female pupils and high school students on Open House Day. Initiatives to plan and organize offerings of this kind are expressly supported in this task by the University and are provided with funding to the extent that is possible. In addition, the University supports and promotes the development of special study units within male-dominated degree programs to consciously emphasize interests and skills which are generally attributed to women.

Students who have child care responsibilities are to be provided with thorough support. For example, they should be given preference when spaces in lectures, courses, and internships with limited enrollment are being allocated. Child care and pregnancy are to be taken into account to a suitable degree in examinations and any deadlines associated with them. No. III of the Participation Guidelines must be complied with.

New or modified student selection procedures in areas with underrepresentation should be structured such that they do not lead to a further reduction when compared to the current proportion of women among the incoming students; rather, such procedures should contribute to reducing the underrepresentation of women which has been caused by structural disadvantages.

In the international exchange programs in which the University and its departments participate, female students in areas with underrepresentation are to be included in numbers at least corresponding to the proportion of women among the students, and explicitly encouraged to participate. In other areas, they are to be included in numbers corresponding to the proportion of women.

Appointments to scholarship committees are to be made in compliance with the parity principle.

#### **4.9 Measures for ensuring safety**

The Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences does not tolerate any form of sexual harassment or violence. Employees and students are to be protected from it, particularly using preventative measures.

Sexual harassment is any undesired behavior of a sexual nature including unwanted sexual actions and requests, physical touching or remarks of a sexual nature, unwanted showing or visible presentation of pornographic content which intends to or has the effect of insulting the dignity of the person in question. This is especially the case where an environment characterized by intimidation, hostile or insulting remarks, humiliation, or disrespect is created or reinforced.

The leading members of the University community are obligated to initiate an investigation when a case of sexual harassment becomes known and, where necessary, to take effective steps as stipulated under labor law.

Persons who feel they have been subjected to harassment can turn to a person they trust with their complaint. This could be a supervisor, the Staff Council, the representative for the severely disabled, or the equal opportunity officer. Employees who are approached are obligated to accept complaints, to ensure confidentiality, and to forward complaints only after obtaining consent. It must be ensured that the victim of harassment will not incur any personal or professional disadvantages due to the steps taken. Persons affected by harassment are to receive every possible form of support from the University as a service institution funded by the State of Hesse and - if desired - they are also to receive counseling, the costs of which are to be borne by the University.

Employees involved in personnel matters are to receive training in the professional and correct way to handle cases of sexual harassment.

Employees in the Construction and Properties Department and safety officers of the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences, when performing their tasks, are to consciously consider and allow for the potential increased danger to women in buildings and facilities belonging to the University; they are also to undertake suitable safety measures where potential danger exists (e.g. lighting in parking lots/garages, lighted bicycle racks, good signage/lighting/directional systems in and around the University's buildings).

#### **4.10 Public relations**

Equal opportunity policy measures and the ability to achieve work-family balance are now a competitive advantage for universities attempting to attract the best students and employees. In its public relations, the University thus takes steps to portray itself as an institution which is committed to achieving actual equality between women and men and therefore has a strong draw among female students, scientists, artists, and employees.

In University documents, a balance is achieved between portrayals of women and men; the contribution women make to life at the University and their achievements in research, teaching, and administration are made visibly evident in the Darmstadt University of Applied Science's media presence.

#### **4.11 Language**

Language creates consciousness. The use of gender-conscious language expresses a considerate attitude and both creative and scientific accuracy. It has the function of modeling correct attitudes in education, in the sciences, in the arts, and in administration. All members of the University community are thus explicitly requested to monitor their own use of language, both oral and written, and that used in their teaching and learning materials, and to use gender-conscious language. This means language that is respectful and non-discriminatory. The equal opportunity officers are available to offer guidance on this issue.

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## **5 Implementation of the equal opportunity policy**

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Every two years, the University's departments and central organizational units are to submit a report on the implementation of and compliance with the measures stipulated in the equal opportunity policy to the Senate's equal opportunity committee and the equal

opportunity officer. The reports will be requested by the equal opportunity officers, who will also provide a template. The reports are to describe the current status of the gender gap.

The equal opportunity officers are to use these materials as a basis for drawing up a report on the status of women at the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences. The Senate is to issue a position statement on the report.

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## **6 Final provisions and period of validity**

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The rights of people with disabilities are not affected by the equal opportunity policy (cf. Para. 24 HGIG). The applicable regulations benefiting people with disabilities, particularly no. IX of the German Code of Social Law (SGB IX), are to be complied with and applied.

The equal opportunity policy is published as a central document of specifications in the University's IMS (integrated management system) and portal for gender-related matters (<https://gleichstellung.h-da.de/>). The link will be sent to all employees for informational purposes. All those in leadership positions are specifically asked to acknowledge and comply with the policy.

This equal opportunity policy is valid for a period of six years. It goes into effect retrospectively effective April 1, 2021 and is valid until March 31, 2027.

This equal opportunity policy is to be reviewed after three years and modified according to current developments. In the course of this modification, additional policy measures are to be adopted if it is evident that the stipulated aims of this equal opportunity policy cannot otherwise be achieved. With the approval of the equal opportunity officer, this equal opportunity policy can, if necessary, also be modified at another point in time.

Darmstadt, 27 July 2021



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President