

Academic Career Paths at Hochschule Geisenheim University

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1 Career Targets and Paths at Hochschule Geisenheim University

One of the main tasks of HR development for academic staff at scientific institutions is to support their junior scientists in their early decision for or against pursuing an academic career and to point out alternatives in areas other than science. The career paths offered at Hochschule Geisenheim University follow the recommendations of the Wissenschaftsrat (WR, German Council of Science and Humanities) and the Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK, German Rectors' Conference). The following chart provides an overview of these recommendations.

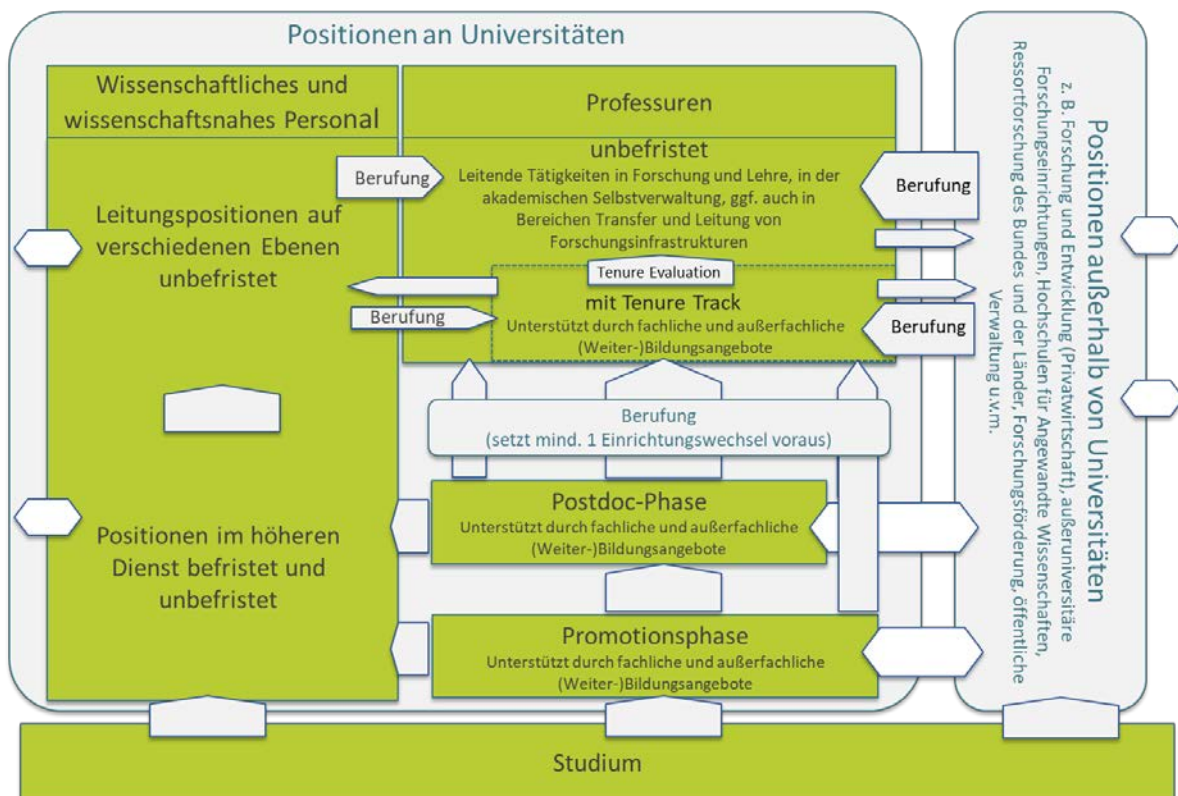


Figure 1: Source: Scientific Council: "Recommendations for Career Targets and Paths at Universities" 2014-adapted

2 Career Paths towards a Professorship in the Science Sector

2.1 Doctoral Degree (R1)

Prerequisites for being accepted as doctoral students at HGU: Graduates with a master's degree earned at an accredited national or international university or with a diploma awarded by a university of the Federal Republic of Germany that show a certain proximity in terms of content to the range of disciplines of Hochschule Geisenheim University can be accepted as doctoral students, if they have achieved a final overall grade of "good" (2.5) in their diploma or their master's degree. In general, a successfully earned doctoral degree lays the foundation for all scientific careers, one of which is the professorship.

With their Ph.D., scientists provide proof of being able to carry out research projects under supervision and to acquire knowledge of research methodologies and disciplines. They have

reached the scientific level of a First Stage Researcher (R1) (European Framework for Research Careers, 2011).

2.2 Post-Doc Programs (Early Qualification Phase, R2)

After the foundation of Hochschule Geisenheim University in its current form one of its main challenges was to set up the academic and scientific staff structure for the former divisions of the university of applied sciences and for the new degree courses. One of the structural measures as part of the targets defined in the University Pact 2020 with the state of Hesse was an internal post-doctoral program which has been established by now. Until 2020, 75% of this program will be subsidized by the state of Hesse and it will then become an acknowledged permanent option for pursuing a scientific career. Currently, five temporary positions are financed under this program. Hochschule Geisenheim University will continuously enhance the structures for junior scientists during this phase, under consideration of the diverse requirements of different areas such as academic teaching, research and knowledge transfer. For Hochschule Geisenheim University its international network (e.g. the virtual Bordeaux-Adelaide-Geisenheim Alliance) provides a possibility for allowing talented junior scientists to change to another institution which, in accordance with legal provisions, is a mandatory prerequisite for being appointed to a tenure-track professorship. However, it considers itself also committed to those junior scientists who will not have the option of becoming a professor at Hochschule Geisenheim University. Its target is to also support post-doctoral students in the best possible way.¹

In their post-doctoral early qualification phase scientists have already demonstrated systematic understanding of a field of study and made very good achievements in research associated with this field. They have reached the scientific level of a Recognised Researcher (R2) of the European Framework for Research Careers.

2.3 Junior Group Manager (R3)

Due to the size of Hochschule Geisenheim University, Junior Group Manager positions cannot be established on a permanent basis. It is, however, possible to set up such positions if they are funded by third parties. Hochschule Geisenheim University will then provide the necessary infrastructure and support the scientists with their research projects. The conditions and period of the funding are subject to provisions of the respective third party. This also allows the university to ensure quality standards during the qualification phase. Active steps are planned in order to pave the way for junior scientists in the future.

Junior Group Managers have already acquired relevant experience in research and teaching and thus reached the highest qualification level, R3. This level is equivalent to an Established Researcher (R3) of the European Framework for Research Careers.

¹In the HR development concept for junior scientists and academic and scientific staff support options are listed and explained in detail.

2.4 Tenure-Track Professorships (R3)

Hochschule Geisenheim University does not hold habilitation rights. As pointed out in the recommendations of the Wissenschaftsrat (WR, German Council of Science and Humanities) and the Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK, German Rectors' Conference), it will be more difficult for junior scientists to be appointed professor if such positions can be achieved by way of qualification, the number of professor positions, however, is not increased at the same time. If a scientist aims for habilitation after having earned a doctoral degree, Hochschule Geisenheim will support him/her in the best possible way to habilitate at another university.

Hochschule Geisenheim University has deliberately made a decision in favor of the tenure-track professorship in order to provide plannable career perspectives for highly qualified junior scientists. This is one of its strategic measures to become more attractive for excellent junior scientists in their early career phase, even though it is only a small university. For this purpose, Hochschule Geisenheim University has elaborated and passed a quality-based appointment procedure as well as a transparent interim and tenure evaluation, as stipulated in its statutes. Thus, a successful evaluation is merely dependent on the individual performance of the tenure. All criteria for measuring the performance will be defined upfront in a clear and transparent way in the appointment negotiations. Structural and financial aspects do not have any influence on the decision. With the exception of assigned organizational leadership functions (e.g. Head of Department) and the conditions of the professorship (adequate, however not necessarily equal to established W2 or W3 professorships) tenure-track professorships will be treated in the same way as W2 and W3 professorships in the future, especially in terms of independent research and teaching. In addition, they will be fully involved in university-wide decision-making processes and will have the same rights and obligations as any other professor at Hochschule Geisenheim University. In the long-run, Hochschule Geisenheim University aims at achieving 20% of its professorships being appointed as tenure track-professors.

Tenure-track professors have already acquired relevant experience in the scientific field and thus reached the qualification level R3. This level is equivalent to an Established Researcher (R3) of the European Framework for Research Careers.

2.5 Academic and Scientific Staff with and without Management Responsibility (Excellent, Eligible Post-Docs, R3)

HGU aims at giving the best of all excellent post-doctoral students the option to further qualify for a tenure-track professorship.

Excellent, eligible post-docs have already acquired relevant experience in research and teaching and thus reached the highest qualification level R3. The level is equivalent to an Established Researcher (R3) of the European Framework for Research Careers.

3 Permeability and Mobility of Career Paths

3.1 Career Paths Leading from the Science Sector into Economy

In order to promote permeability and mobility between career paths in the sector of science and beyond, Hochschule Geisenheim University also supports doctorates earned in cooperation with companies in the relevant sector of industry. It is planned to extend the scope of content of the fields of research in order to make the start into a professional career easier for doctoral students or those who have already earned their PhD after having completed their doctoral phase or their post-doc phase.

Hochschule Geisenheim University has a very good network both on a national and international level as well as fundamental cooperations with companies and organizations outside the scientific sector. The plans pursued by Hochschule Geisenheim University to extend the post-doc program by 2032 also include efforts to considerably increase the number of special projects in industrial enterprises which all are/have been very successful (e.g. by means of joint funding, "industry bridge program"). By this, junior scientists shall get opportunities of advanced development in the industry besides being involved in applied research. They can thus build up networks in the economic sector and qualify for a career outside of the university.

3.2 Paths Leading from the Economic Sector to a Professorship

Since Geisenheim is a type of university comprising the characteristics of both a full university and a university of applied sciences, for some professorships of the W2 salary grade that have a higher percentage of teaching assignments as compared to their research work practical experience is a prerequisite for being hired. For a practice-oriented research professorship candidates need several years of relevant practical experience. Their didactic suitability has to be proven either by demonstrating relevant experience or by a certificate gained for respective education. In general, such positions can also be filled with junior scientists that have qualified by „industry-bridge“ projects as well as with professors who work both in industry and at a university on a permanent basis (tandem system).

4 Professor Careers at Hochschule Geisenheim University

If formal requirements are met, all qualified persons can apply for a tenured professorship at Hochschule Geisenheim University, with decisions being made based on a quality-assured competitive procedure. Hochschule Geisenheim University offers professorships in three salary grades. The necessary qualifications and competencies for each of the three salary grades follow the European Framework for Research Careers and have been defined in an internal catalog of criteria. All W1, W2 and W3 professorships will be filled by way of a quality-assured assignment procedure. In addition, Hochschule Geisenheim University provides the option to advance from a tenure-track W1 professorship to a W2 professorship. This means that a W2 professorship can be achieved either by qualification via the W1 professorship or by going through a quality-assured appointment procedure. W3 professorships can only be achieved through the quality-assured appointment procedure.

Selection and evaluation of achievements are based on transparent procedures and evaluation criteria binding for all faculties. For this purpose, Hochschule Geisenheim University has set up a catalog of criteria and issued "Guidelines on how to apply evaluation criteria to the scientific appointment and career system of Hochschule Geisenheim University".

4.1 W1 Tenure-Track Professorship

Prerequisites for being appointed to a W1 Tenure Track Professorship: All candidates for a tenure-track professorship are required to have changed university after having earned their doctoral degree or to have worked in the scientific field at an institution other than the appointing university for at least two years, however, not more than four years. In their post-doctoral stage the scientists have already demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and very good achievements in research associated with this field. They have reached the scientific level of a Recognised Researcher (R2) of the European Framework for Research Careers.

For a positive final evaluation associated with the appointment to a tenured W2 professorship candidates have to demonstrate respective achievements and personal competencies during the six-year qualification phase of the tenure-track professorship in the following fields:

- Research and knowledge transfer
- Academic teaching
- Academic administrative autonomy and commitment
- Social and leadership skills

Detailed evaluation criteria have been developed and summarized in the "*Guidelines on how to apply evaluation criteria to the scientific appointment and career system of Hochschule Geisenheim University*" and the "*Catalog of Evaluation Criteria*"

4.2 W2 Professorship

Prerequisites for being appointed to a W2 Professorship: Hochschule Geisenheim University offers two possibilities for being appointed to a W2 professorship, either by advancing from the W1 tenure-track professorship or through a quality-assured appointment procedure. For direct appointments candidates have to fulfill the same criteria as are applied for an appointment from a tenure-track professorship to a tenured W2 professorship.

For an appointment to a W2 professorship comprising basic university research, candidates have to prove the scientific level of a Leading Researcher (R4) of the European Framework for Research Careers. The record of publications in the specific field is also taken into consideration. For professorships with a higher percentage of teaching assignments as compared to their research work, practice-oriented requirements are considered in addition to relevant publications. This means that scientific and other adequate achievements also include outstanding projects, awards received or competitions won.

4.3 W3 Professorship

Skill profile for being appointed to a W3 Professorship: For appointments to a W3 professorship, Hochschule Geisenheim University follows the descriptors given in the European Framework for Research Careers as well as the recommendations of the Wissenschaftsrats (WR, German Council of Science and Humanities) of 2012 for founding a university which define W3 professorships as leading professorships. Based thereon, Hochschule Geisenheim University has developed an internal catalog of criteria according to which W3 professorships are required to fulfill at least one of the following criteria:

1. W3 professorships at Hochschule Geisenheim University form an interface between different disciplines, subject areas, and such fields encompassing knowledge, research and teaching;
2. W3 professorships are mainly found in complex fields of basic research;
3. W3 professorships take responsibility for comprehensive platforms or central units;
4. W3 professorships have staff and research infrastructure responsibility. It is their obligation to take care of the members of staff and of the infrastructure while considering other scientists' interests and providing for further development in the future.

It is at the discretion of the university management to decide whether to establish a new W3 professorship.

For being appointed to a W3 professorship it is essential to have reached the scientific level of a Leading Researcher (R4) of the European Framework for Research Careers. In addition, all internal HGU criteria for a W3 professorship as compared to a W2 professorship have been fulfilled.

5 Career Paths at Hochschule Geisenheim University apart from Professorships

Apart from the career target of a professorship, Hochschule Geisenheim University offers the opportunity for scientists to qualify for permanent positions up to the position of an academic director. These positions are an internal incentive for outstanding achievements outside the field of professorships. To fill these positions under the aspects of selection of the best, transparency and equal opportunities, an evaluation framework has been developed which is applied in cooperation with the staff council, the representative body for severely disabled employees and the women's and equal opportunities representative. Currently, the percentage of permanent scientific staff (employees paid under collective agreements and civil servants, incl. professorships) employed by Hochschule Geisenheim University amounts to 43%² thus clearly exceeding the average of all universities in Hesse.

The big challenge Hochschule Geisenheim University is faced with is to set up a clear structure for all scientific and related areas of activities, and to identify the tasks that have to be done on a permanent basis in order to provide the necessary service for all sectors involved. In this connection, it has to be checked whether this can be covered by permanent positions that are assigned to higher-level structures. The target is to provide transparent and plannable employment perspectives for qualified scientific staff who do not seek to become a professor but to acquire a position in the sciences or related areas. Another challenge when creating permanent positions is the aspect of how to finance them as well as the necessity to establish a plan for permanent positions as required for civil servants. Considering their strategic targets, the university management will check very carefully which tasks can be covered by such permanent positions in order to use synergies.

² Last updated: February 25, 2019