

The Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency's research projects at a glance: Non-discriminatory higher education institutions

Overview of the project

This project aimed to support higher education institutions in identifying discrimination and discriminatory mechanisms and to establish anti-discrimination strategies. The findings of the project are based on the pooled know-how and experience of the participating partner institutions.

Participating partner institutions

- University of Duisburg Essen
- *Fachhochschule Erfurt* (University of Applied Sciences Erfurt)
- RWTH Aachen University -
- *Technische Universität München*
- University of Cologne
- *Universität Hamburg*
- *Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Recht Berlin* (Berlin School of Economics and Law)
- Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus
- *Hochschule Mannheim* (University of Applied Sciences Mannheim)

Authors, title and year of publication of the expert opinion

Heidrun Czock, Dominik Donges, Susanne Heinzelmänn: *Diskriminierungsfreie Hochschule – Mit Vielfalt Wissen schaffen!*, 2012.

Results

Risks and factors of discrimination at higher education institutions

Discrimination risks exist

- in the undergraduate phase with the key processes: access to higher education, study financing, study contexts, decision to take a master's degree or not, transition to the world of work;
- during doctoral studies with the key processes: financing doctoral studies, 'postgraduate career', career development, transition to the world of work;
- in occupations (in the academic and technical-administrative fields) with the key processes: staff planning, recruitment notices, applicant selection, interviews, job placing decisions;
- in the career context with the key processes: determination of working hours, work organisation, personnel development, personnel management, remuneration;
- in the context of appointments with the key processes: establishment of professorships, recruitment notice, selection procedure, start of work.

Discrimination factors and risks exist if

- information is not equally accessible to all groups of persons;
- processes invite stereotypes and perpetuate or even intensify existing inequalities due to a lack of regulation, transparency and diversity competency on the part of the actors;
- the special needs of certain groups of persons are not considered in process organisation and opportunities of access and/or participation are distributed unequally as a result.

Indicators for representing “freedom from discrimination“

The set of indicators developed within the project framework addresses the question of how processes must be designed to minimise or eliminate discrimination or unequal treatment. The resulting indicators allow higher education institutions to

- check their processes for any existing factors and risks of discrimination and unequal treatment;
- screen and advance their portfolio of measures to prevent discrimination;
- take stock using participation data.

Authors' recommendations for action

The authors have identified a need to investigate

- the functioning and acceptance of complaints boards in higher education institutions;
- the issue of multiple discrimination in higher education institutions;
- the discrimination categories age, religion, belief and sexual identity.

Moreover, the authors recommend, *inter alia*, that higher education institutions

- engage the intramural quality management department to firmly establish the protection from discrimination through relevant quality standards on the process and structural levels;
- institutionalise coordination and consultation structures to make measures transparent and avoid frictional losses and duplication;
- extend the public higher education institution statistics to include "social background", "ethnicity" and "disability".

The authors recommend that policy-makers

- integrate the developed set of indicators into existing initiatives and standards, such as the Standards on Gender Equality set up by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft - DFG*;
- extend the existing equality instruments to include all groups of persons and/or discrimination characteristics specified in the General Equal Treatment Act;
- systematically incorporate anti-discrimination aspects into the academic and science support programmes of the Laender and Federal governments;
- push ahead with "performance-based funding allocation" for special achievements in discrimination control;
- design courses accordingly and include "diversity modules" modelled on the "gender modules" in compulsory elective subjects.

More information

- The final report „*Diskriminierungsfreie Hochschule – Mit Vielfalt Wissen schaffen*“ can be accessed => [here](#), available only in German language.

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