PAX OPTIMA RERUM

Code of Conduct for Good Employment Conditions at Kiel University

“Pax optima rerum, peace is the highest good. From the beginning, this was our motto, and it continues to be our guiding star. We are committed to democracy, openness to the world, international understanding, scientific curiosity, integrity, and equal opportunities. We value people who want to help shape things and see our university as a place of encounter, close connections, and diverse togetherness.”

Mission Statement of Kiel University (CAU)

Preamble

Kiel University (CAU) exists through those who work, research, teach and learn there. Together, they form the heart of our university: they are the driving forces behind dealing with the social challenges of our time and shaping the future.

With excellent research and teaching and good employment conditions, the CAU wants to attract and retain people in all groups and areas of activity. Good employment conditions are important for further successful development as one of Germany's leading universities; it calls for the university to qualify specialists and managers for national and international employers, both within and outside the university sector, in the best possible way. Good employment conditions apply to all employees in the scientific, technological and administrative fields, regardless of whether they are employed on a temporary or permanent basis. Leading people goes hand in hand with the responsibility of ensuring good working conditions, together with the employees. This Code of Conduct serves as a guide to help with this endeavour – implementing the university’s legal mandate under the German Higher Education Act (HSG) and as a voluntary commitment.

Kiel University and everyone who works there take this Code seriously and are responsible for ensuring that it is adhered to in the context of their duties and responsibilities.
Basic principles

Here at Kiel University, we are committed to ensuring that all members of our organisation treat each other with respect on a daily basis. We collaborate to ensure the success of our university. Regardless of our positions and roles, we treat each other and our environment with appreciation and respect. Discrimination, bullying, abuses of power and violence, especially sexualised violence, have no place at Kiel University. All members of Kiel University and, in particular, the management team are committed to preventing such attacks against members of the university.

We recognise that the experiences and backgrounds of people at the CAU are diverse and value this wealth of perspectives – we know that all specific knowledge has the potential to contribute to our joint success. We see our diversity as a prerequisite for excellence and a benefit for the university as a whole.

We recognise the importance of communication in everyday working life: regular dialogue, the sharing of knowledge and information, respectful feedback and a positive culture of dealing with mistakes are a matter of course for us; structures and processes are designed to be transparent. Awareness of diversity, family friendliness and equal opportunities guide us in our actions; our culture of discussion is shaped by the principles of participation and trust. We welcome participation in committees and opportunities to contribute our own ideas. We maintain a collegial working relationship based on respect, even if different or contradictory positions and opinions are held. We help each other to achieve our joint objectives, celebrate successes and deal with setbacks together.

We take responsibility! We are all responsible for creating a collegial working relationship based on respect - our managers, in particular, are aware that, as role models, they play a key role in shaping our culture and working atmosphere. Constant reflection on this role and further development through continuing professional development are a matter of course for them. Our managers create a working atmosphere in which employees feel comfortable and can make the best possible contribution in the workplace. When organising work, the varied life circumstances of employees, in particular their family and health-related circumstances, are naturally taken into account.
What exactly does that mean for us?

Teamwork

Cooperation is the foundation stone of our joint success. It is characterised by regular and respectful communication, the exchange of information and clarity surrounding work processes and tasks. We see our diversity as a strength and a prerequisite for our success (Mission Statement on Diversity).

We create an environment that facilitates broad participation and take different roles and interests into account. A participatory approach to planning projects and measures ensures transparency and acceptance. We make careful use of the resources of all Kiel University employees. For us, giving constructive feedback and being equally constructive in the way we address this feedback is a hallmark of professional cooperation.

Dealing with conflict

We see conflicts as an expression of different points of view and interests, which can also be part of a scientific culture of debate and academic discourse.

If the conflict is hindering the work of those involved, we expect the matter to be addressed actively, constructively and early on by these individuals themselves, and expect them to be willing to help resolve it. We aim to resolve difficult situations before they have a negative impact on the working environment.

Individuals involved in disputes are encouraged to de-escalate the matter and respect each other, to resolve difficult situations through dialogue and, if necessary, to seek support from experts.

See also: Information and who to contact in matters relating to communication and conflict (in German only)

Work requirements

Work requirements and employee remits are communicated transparently by the managers, both before the employee takes up the position as well as when their area of activity changes, are set out in job descriptions and are regularly discussed at appraisals.

Employees are requested to actively approach their manager if their workload is too heavy to deal with. Managers do not delegate tasks that they are exclusively responsible for completing themselves to their employees.

See also: Dealing with excessive workloads, Notes on annual appraisals (in German only, counselling in English is available)

The compatibility of work and family life

The compatibility of work and family life is a top priority for Kiel University. To this end, Kiel University generally enables its employees to make use of flexible working arrangements. In addition, counselling and support services are available via the Central Office for Gender Equality, Equal Opportunity and Family.

Managers contribute significantly to implementing the goals of a family-friendly university, and to promoting a family-friendly culture. They should provide the best possible support for the family interests of their employees and students and work together to arrive at compromises and solutions.
Flexible working arrangements

Kiel University offers a range of measures to meet employees’ demands for greater flexibility in their work. These generally include variable working hours, the option of working from home and the option of temporarily reducing working hours. Managers check these applications in a careful and sympathetic manner, bearing in mind the personal interests of the applicant as well as the operational planning and the project requirements, and discuss them with the individuals concerned.

Occupational health, safety and well-being

Occupational health and safety and promoting the health of all employees are key objectives of Kiel University.

Kiel University fulfils the requirements set out in legally binding occupational health and safety regulations and also works continuously to improve working conditions with regard to the physical, mental and social health of its employees.

Kiel University takes a systematic and structural approach to the health of its employees. Health-related services are regularly evaluated, improved where necessary and made equally accessible to all as far as this is feasible from a technical and organisational perspective and given the prevailing circumstances.

Responsibility for promoting and maintaining individual health by utilising the services provided by Kiel University lies with each individual. Our managers have special responsibility in that they are responsible for compliance with occupational health and safety regulations and, if necessary, take action as part of their duty of care towards their employees, while also acting as role models and looking after their own health.

Health-promoting living and working conditions are initiated and supported by the Occupational Health and Safety and Occupational Health Management teams.

See also: Information on occupational health and safety (in German only)
Health management information and services (in German only)

Environmental protection and sustainability

Sustainability is a guiding principle for Kiel University. Kiel University is aiming to be climate-neutral by 2030 and to reduce energy-related, mobility-related and operational greenhouse gas emissions to net zero. The focus is on the economical use of resources, such as electricity, thermal energy and consumables, the reduction of waste and measures to promote environmentally friendly forms of transport, such as cycling and the use of public transport.

All employees are asked to do their bit and to use energy and materials sparingly in their day-to-day work. Even though Kiel University is a large-scale consumer, we live by the motto that every little helps when it comes to saving resources. To work together towards this goal, there are many ways to get involved and access offerings and services.

See also: Klima Konzept 2030 – klik (in German only)
**Further and continued education**

All employees are to take advantage of the opportunity for further and continued education. Managers identify individual needs in tandem with their employees and encourage them to take part in training to address these needs. Diversity and gender equality are, of course, taken into consideration in this regard.

See also: [Continuing Professional Development Center](#)

Specific duties and the obligation to provide continued education arise from the Schleswig-Holstein Integration Agreement (Integrationsvereinbarung) and CAU’s Inclusion Agreement (Inklusionsvereinbarung) for supervisors and for employees who attend to personnel matters, towards employees with a recognised severe disability and those with equivalent status.

**Recruiting specialists**

Recruiting and retaining specialists is linked to attractive working and living conditions. Kiel University is one of the largest employers in Schleswig-Holstein, and as a public-sector employer, employment is associated with the associated benefits and security.

Our managers have a decisive role to play as we compete to attract specialists. They are responsible for HR planning in their areas, play a key role in identifying and recruiting suitable specialists, and help shape the welcome culture.

In order to retain specialists, they are given targeted support by their managers so that they can achieve career progression as part of a forward-looking HR and career planning process.

At the CAU, those responsible pay special attention to gender equal and diversity-oriented staff recruitment. Active recruitment is used as a tool, particularly for professorships and other leadership positions, and serves to make Kiel University more international by ensuring that these positions are advertised internationally. Personnel recruitment procedures are structured based on transparency, appreciation and quality assurance.

The CAU is delighted about and looks forward to all new employees, and is proud of the welcoming culture it practices, which supports new arrivals in all areas with different offers. Managers are aware of this special responsibility. New colleagues receive handouts and information, including this Code of Conduct.

Demographic change is altering the age structure at German universities. The institutions at the CAU are actively tackling this challenge through continuous monitoring of how many people with what qualifications will leave the CAU in five and ten years due to age reasons, and by drawing up an HR plan to reflect the resulting requirements.
**Knowledge transfer**

Knowledge transfer also includes safeguarding internal knowledge, i.e. the employees safeguard knowledge that is valuable for carrying out the role, which is made available to current and future employees. This applies in particular to regularly and frequently changing positions, such as those of part-time Deans. If possible, the periods of employment of predecessor and successor should overlap provided the necessary resources are available.

All managers make sure to highlight the experience, skills and abilities of all their employees at the end of their period of employment at the CAU in a respectful and appreciatively formulated final reference, which is issued without delay.

**Framework conditions for specific employment relationships**

**Student employees**

We want to give students the opportunity to gain direct work experience in academia through employment at Kiel University. As a result, managers ensure that achieving study goals and preparing for examinations are not compromised as a result of the work as a student or research assistant. They ensure that work time sheets are kept properly, and that the hours recorded correspond with the workload. If the agreed working hours are not achieved or are exceeded, ways are sought jointly to reduce or compensate for the deficit or additional working hours. Both managers and student employees are responsible for ensuring regular dialogue.

See also: [Legal information and further information on the employment of assistants](in Germany only)

**Employing trainees**

Kiel University is a training organisation. Our trainees are supported in all matters that are essential for achieving the qualification – to this end, training managers are responsible for regular dialogue with their trainees. Of course, the statutory working and learning times are adhered to, and holidays for recreation are granted. The training department takes trainees into account in its forward-looking HR planning.

**Independence of research associates**

Kiel University trains specialists and managers. As such, we recognise the importance of promoting talent in academia. We take our commitment seriously for dealing responsibly with freedom of research and teaching. Managers support research associates in the qualification phase right through to independent scientific work in research and teaching. They support their growing independence in the best possible way within the scope of the organisational conditions at the institutions. Managers are aware of their specific role as supervisors and reviewers. This also means that managers do not delegate tasks that they are exclusively responsible for completing themselves to their employees.

We support the inclusion of research associates in existing networks and in the scientific community. This also includes participation in academic meetings and conferences. This applies in particular to temporary employees.

See also: [Information for early career researchers](in Germany only)
Fixed-term employment

All managers in science, technology and administration are aware of their special responsibility with regard to fairly and transparently handling fixed terms of employment.

Fixed terms without substantive grounds are categorically excluded. They are only used responsibly in exceptional cases, which are specifically listed in the decree issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Cultural Affairs on 4 December 2020, insofar as a fixed term with substantive grounds is not possible on a legally-sound basis.

Managers ensure that contract extensions are carried out in a timely manner, so that the contract transitions occur without gaps and without avoidable effort for the employees.

Managers inform and advise about opportunities for further employment at the university and in scientific operations.

Fixed terms of employment for qualification

The contract duration for qualifications is appropriately and individually forecast by the supervisor or the manager; it is based on the usual duration in the corresponding subject area (doctoral degree, habilitation).

Within the framework of regular performance reviews, the supervisor supports the achievement of the qualification goal. If the forecast duration changes during the qualification phase, contract extensions are initiated at an early stage.

If the fixed term of employment for qualification expires without the qualification goal (doctoral degree, habilitation) being achieved, then an individual follow-up forecast is made for achieving the goal, and a corresponding further fixed term agreed, within the framework of the resources available and taking the structural issues into account.

Doctoral researchers and supervisors jointly design the framework conditions for the doctoral research phase for the benefit of the individual doctoral researchers. The focus is particularly placed on financing the subsistence costs during the doctoral phase and the related employment contracts with the CAU.

Doctoral researchers who have fixed terms of employment in a third-party funded project which ends before their doctoral research is completed seek further employment in another project or in another state position.

Special framework conditions for research staff

Research staff receive targeted support through the provision of internal interdisciplinary continued education and qualification opportunities. The managers approve this as a matter of principle, and enable regular participation during working hours. Specific measures are recommended by the managers.

The forms of fixed term employment for research staff are consciously chosen in such a way that the employees contractually have the greatest possible security, flexibility and perspective for further funding.

In the case of project-based employment, fixed terms with the right to add certain periods of suspended work on at the end are used where possible.
Further information

In addition to this Code of Conduct, the following regulations and agreements apply to CAU employees. This list is not exhaustive:

- Mission Statements of Kiel University
- Schleswig-Holstein’s anti-corruption guidelines (in German only)
- CAU guideline on research data management
- CAU guidelines for safeguarding good scientific practice
- Principles for Doctoral Degree Regulations at Kiel University
- Guidelines on dealing with discrimination, sexual violence and harassment at the Kiel University
- Guiding principles for personnel development