



## Academic careers

The academic career path in Germany is traditionally connected to a habilitation. More recently, additional ways have been established with which you can qualify as "eligible for appointment" for a professorship. There are also a number of permanent university jobs at or just below the level of professor which emphasis lies in teaching, laboratory coordination, management, etc. These positions are rare though in most subject areas.

Most positions for academics at universities and research institutes are not permanent, either as a "Qualifikationsstelle" (for a Habilitation or similar) or for projects (in a fixed-term project funded by third parties). The Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz regulates how often, how long, and with what additional rules fixed-time positions can be given.

If you have questions about whether an academic career is right for you or what you should pay attention to while pursuing it, you can take advantage of individual postdoc consulting at the Graduate Academy. In the qualification programme, you can also regularly find workshops about career planning and development.

## Good scientific practice

In public, "good scientific practice" is often equated with cases of plagiarism when it comes to dissertations. However, the topic covers a substantially wider spectrum of scientific conduct: Dealing with data (including checking, recording, ownership and storage), the publishing process and authorship, responsible supervision, academic cooperation, conflicts of interest and dealing with conflicts. Examples of inappropriate academic behaviour include inventing or faking data, violating intellectual property (theft of ideas or plagiarism), and sabotaging the research of others.

### Guidelines for a good scientific practice at the FSU Jena

The Friedrich Schiller University has adopted guidelines concerning the protection of good scientific practice. These can be found here.

### Seminars on the topic of "good scientific practice"

The Graduate Academy regularly offers seminars on 'Good scientific practice'. In this workshop the myriad conflicts brought up in the day-to-day activities of research are discussed with the help of case studies. We recommend that you attend such a seminar, if possible at the start of your doctorate. The current offers can be found here.

## Omudsman: Persons of trust at the FSU Jena

All academics at FSU must comply with the guidelines that ensure good scientific practice. Should you suspect or be accused of inappropriate academic behaviour, please contact the [University's ombudsmen](#) who deal with these matters.

## Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz (academic employment law)

In Germany, fixed-term employment contracts are legally permitted only under certain conditions. That is supposed to protect the employee: it is supposed to prevent employers from continually employing staff for a limited amount of time instead of giving them a permanent job contract with protection against unlawful termination. In academia, there is special regulation in order to allow for more flexibility, a law about fixed-term work contracts in academia ([Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz](#)).

Fundamentally, academic personnel can be employed at a German institute of higher education for 12 years, including up to six years before the PhD is finished. If the PhD is completed earlier than six years after the start of employment, "unused time" before the PhD can be added to the six years after the PhD (so-called "saved PhD time").

All fixed-term employment contracts with more than a quarter of the working time of a full-time employee at a German institute of higher education will be taken into account. Caution: scholarships and grants are not counted towards the six years prior to earning a PhD, but do count towards saved PhD time!

Ever since German Bundestag passed an amendment to the *Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz* in 2016, a fixed-term employment within the 12-year-period is only possible when the employment aims at the employee's own **academic qualification**. This can be either for dissertation or habilitation, but also for other academic qualifications such as the acquisition of specific scientific methods or teaching methods. Note that the duration of the fixed-term employment has to be adequate for the purpose of qualification, thus the actual qualification goal is to be laid down in the written contract of employment. If you seek further information on academic fixed-term contracts, please see [here](#), or in [this recommendation](#) of the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Exceptions and options for the extension of the 6- or 12-year employment constraint may be: the extension due to the **care of the employee's own children, foster children or stepchildren** (up to two years per child); a **chronic disease** or a **disability** of the employee.

The 12 years are not valid for research projects funded by third parties, because there is a specific reason for the fixed term. That means that after the end of the 12 years, positions with fixed-term employment contracts can continue to be accepted. The duration of that employment is dependent on the duration of the respective project funding. There are still specific conditions to be fulfilled (see Abschnitt III: "[Befristungsmöglichkeiten bei Beschäftigung in Drittmittelprojekten](#)", in German only).

A paper which was written down by the FSU Doctoral council in cooperation with the Jena Abbe School of Photonics doctoral council and the FSU's own head of human resources, can give you a good insight into the most important contents of the *Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz* and its application at Jena University: [Das Wichtigste zum Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz](#) (the Most Important Facts of *Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz*).

The classification does not often appear to be easy. If in doubt, the [human resources department](#) (Personaldezernat) is responsible for the decision. Additional information is available [here](#).

## Habilitation

The habilitation serves as evidence of an individual's capability of researching independently and of teaching in a certain subject area. Traditionally in Germany, a habilitation serves as a formal qualification needed to become a university professor. Along with the habilitation, one is awarded teaching qualification (Lehrbefähigung) and (upon request) a teaching license (Lehrbefugnis).

At present, there are other possibilities for qualification for the job of university professor than the habilitation (see [here](#)). If you aspire to become a university professor, you must know how important the habilitation is within your area of speciality. Only then can you decide whether or not you would like to complete a habilitation.

If you would like to work on a habilitation, you should have a professor that supports your plan. This relationship is typically not as close as it was during the doctoral process.

For the habilitation, you must complete both written (habilitation thesis; cumulative work, if allowed) and oral tasks (an academic talk with colloquium, public talk).

Specific regulations about the habilitation can be found in the faculty-specific regulations of the university's [Conditions for habilitation](#) (Habitationsordnung).

## Qualification for a professorship

The legal prerequisites for professors are regulated by the states' laws of higher education (Hochschulgesetze der Länder). You can find these laws [here](#). The Framework Act for Higher Education ([Hochschulrahmengesetz](#)) can offer you a basic orientation. Concrete requirements are listed in each job posting for a professorship. For a university professor, typically a minimum of a "[habilitation](#) or work experience equivalent to a habilitation" is listed as a qualification for employment.

### University professorships

For Information regarding the W1 professorship (Junior Professorship, Tenure Track Professor W1, Qhalification professorship W1), please see [here](#).

In order to become a university professor, "additional scholarly achievements" (in addition to a PhD) must typically be demonstrated. In Germany, this is traditionally shown via a habilitation. Due to internationalisation, as an alternative to a [habilitation](#), "work experience equivalent to a habilitation" is typically also acceptable. Another possibility to demonstrate "additional scholarly achievements" may be the so called **Junior Professorship**. In job advertisements, both possibilities are usually mentioned.

"Work experience equivalent to a Habilitation" includes additional academic publications written after the PhD has been finished. This means publications that could meet the Habitationsordnung. Criteria regarding the adequacy of a habilitation are somewhat flexible. Each hiring committee is responsible for deciding whether your own work can be viewed as acceptable or equal to a habilitation.

Legally, it is possible to complete position prerequisites through a junior professorship or as the head of a junior research group, even without a habilitation or exam that proves that your performance is equivalent to that of an individual with a habilitation. In job advertisements for professorships though, usually either "habilitation or work experience equivalent to habilitation" is requested. In this case, commissions will check to see if junior professors and heads of junior research groups have a habilitation or work experience equivalent to a habilitation.

When deciding for or against a habilitation, you need to do more than decide whether you fulfil the formal prerequisites for a job, but also how you can lead the pack of applicants. The same is true when you apply for a junior professorship or head of a junior research group.

Depending on the culture in different subject areas, there are different customs. You can find out about these customs by asking researchers/from those in your subject. In addition, due to the states' laws of higher education (Hochschulgesetze der Länder) and at the local level, there are local customs. If you are a member of the [German Association of University Professors and Lecturers](#) (Deutscher Hochschulverband), you can receive additional consultation there.

General information about the path to a professorship is available through [Academics](#) (in German), the [German Academic Exchange Service DAAD](#) and the [German Association of University Professors and Lecturers](#) (in German).

## **Professorship (University of Applied Science)**

In order to receive a professorship at a University of Applied Sciences, you must typically hold a PhD and have five years of work experience (a minimum of three years outside the institute of higher education) in the "use or development of academic knowledge and methods" ("Anwendung oder Entwicklung wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnisse und Methoden") (see [HRG §44.1.4c](#) and the [Hochschulgesetze der Länder](#)).

## **Tenure Track**

### **Professorship on Tenure Track**

A Tenure Track professorship may be the ideal entrance to a career as an academic professor. It is possible to apply to a W1 professorship as early as in the first few years after you complete your doctorate or PhD - without the usual German qualification steps such as Habilitation or equivalent performances. If a junior professorship bears the addition "Tenure Track", this means that after the passing of a six-years tenure, the candidate has the opportunity to gain a full and permanent W2 or W3 professorship, as "Tenure Track" equals the binding agreement that, after a successful intermediate and final evaluation, the professorship is turned from a time-limited to a permanent contract. For the assessment of the junior professor in the intermediate evaluation (after 3 to 4 years) and the tenure evaluation (after 5 years), there will be criteria determined as early as during the appointment procedures. These criteria have to be fulfilled by the candidate before the end of the respective period. An evaluation committee (similar in structure to appointment committees) will then decide whether the criteria have been fulfilled successfully. If the evaluation of the tenure candidate is positive, their position will be turned from time-limited to permanent.

Next to the option of a W1 Professorship on Tenure Track, there is also the possibility to appoint a W2 Professorship on Tenure Track. Here, the usual appointment criteria for the professorship will be demanded. With a time-limited W2 Professorship, Tenure Track means that the university agrees to turn the professorship into a permanent W2 or W3 position after a successful completion of the tenure.

In Germany, there has been the option to apply tenure track to new professoral appointments since 2002. Throughout the first years, the model was rarely applied. Since 2017, the Tenure Track Programme of German Bund and Länder has allowed for a multitude of additional tenure track professorships. It is the aim of the German Tenure Track System to appoint scientists to professorships at an earlier stage in their academic career and give them the opportunity of a permanent and reliable employment position already with their initial appointment.

### **Tenure Track at Friedrich Schiller University**

Friedrich Schiller University Jena is aiming to lower the academic age of a first professoral appointment for young scientists, and enhance an early academic independence and self responsibility as well as improve the projectability and transparency of academic career paths. This is why in May 2017, it passed a set of articles on the appointment of tenure track professorships. These articles determine the announcement and appointment of these professorships, as well as the regulations concerning their intermediate and final evaluation processes. Starting with these articles, the university hopes to appoint the majority of open professoral W2 positions as tenure track professorships.

[Statutes for the recruitment and hiring process for Tenure Track Professorships \(in German\)](#)

### **Support for Tenure Track Professors at FSU**

Every Tenure Track Professor has to mentors from the circle of the university teaching staff to provide them with advice and support. The mentors will be applied on agreement with the professor by the council of the respective Faculty.

[Information on the Mentoring Programme for Tenure Track Professors \(in German\)](#)

Friedrich Schiller University offers a special qualification programme for Tenure Track Professors.

## qualification programme for tenure track professors

### Alternatives to an academic career

Not every postdoc stays at an institute of higher education or research institute. There are many ways to use your knowledge and abilities in other occupational fields. We can help you to map out ways to promote your talents and interests in job applications or to pursue new business concepts.

In the qualification programme of the Graduate Academy, you can find a number of workshops on the topic of "career planning and applications," including for a transition into a career outside of academia. You can discuss these ideas in an individual postdoc consultation. If you would like to found your own company or work on a freelance basis, the founder service (Gründerservice) of the FSU can help you.

### Career Reviews for Postdocs at FSU

The first and second year of their postdoctoral phase are a time of personal orientation for many researchers. Questions that arise may be: What are my chances of working in academia permanently and how will they develop? Will I manage to obtain long-term financing for my academic path towards professorship? Will I use my early postdoctoral years to complete projects, realise ideas and thus expand my research abilities from the doctorate, and then move on to a professional career outside university? Or will I keep up my goal to acquire an academic career and stick to following this goal?

Since 2016, every postdoc who has been employed at Friedrich Schiller University for two years at the most, is required to participate in a **mandatory career review** with their supervisors and another university staff member (vgl. Richtlinie für die Ausgestaltung von befristeten Beschäftigungsverhältnissen 2015). For this career talk, the university's staff department and Graduate Academy have developed a guideline to help you find your way through the relevant topics of a career review.

The career review is meant to support the interests and intention of the postdoc in fixed-term employment. As their academic future is not secured, the experienced academic partner in the review should provide them with the best possible orientation about their career options and the support they can get to realise those options. Another valuable element of the career talk should be to look at previous achievements and to agree on realistic and sensible goals for the nearer future.

At the end of the review, there should be an agreement made on the qualification goals and on the running time of a follow-up contract appropriate to reach those goals, as has been specified in the German Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz. All contents of the review remain confidential, however, the final agreement will be passed on to the university staff department, as it is the basis for the future employment of the postdoctoral researcher.

The guideline for the postdoc career review is intended to help both postdocs and their supervisors to raise the topic of career perspectives in mutual responsibility. It is written in German.

Additionally, it may be helpful to seek a counselling with an outside expert to get a clear perspective on your personal professional options and goals, and to plan further steps of your career. For this, we offer you our Career Reviews for Postdocs.

### Permanent Positions in university mid-level staff

A majority of doctoral candidates are hoping to get the opportunity to do their research and teaching in a permanent position at the academic mid-level of a university. However, there are relatively few permanent positions for scientific staff or *Akademischer Rat / Akademische Rätin* in Germany and the chances to get such a position are no better than those of getting a professorship. Additionally, the academic job market has seen only few open announcements for these jobs so far as, mostly, universities consider long-established staff members for their open permanent positions.

Specifically for teaching at the university basic levels, there are also teaching staff, or lecturers, for special duties, who perform a high level of teaching duties (16 to 18 hrs/week). These positions are considered less attractive by many researchers; on the other hand, the jobmarket offers more job opportunities in this sector, depending on the discipline.

Friedrich Schiller University is aiming to offer their young researchers additional transparent and reliable career options next to the professoral or administrative career paths. Moreover, the university is aware of the necessity to create permanent job positions where needed, in order to provide for a lasting high quality in both teaching and research. Taking into consideration the flexibility and innovative capacity that are necessary at the university, as well

as fixed-term qualification for both doctoral candidates and postdocs, it has yielded a Richtlinie zur Einrichtung und Besetzung von wissenschaftlichen Funktionsdauerstellen (Guideline for the establishment and filling of academic permanent positions; In German).

The Guideline centres around the following statements:

- Every new academic permanent position is to be established on the basis of an integrated concept of the respective faculty.
- Every academic permanent position is to be officially announced.
- A faculty committee will decide about the filling of each of these positions (multiple-eye principle)
- Overall, a total of 20-30% of all household-based academic personnel at Friedrich Schiller University is to work in a permanent position
- Academic permanent positions are established with a focus on the occupational sectors "research, research infrastructure, transfer", "teaching" and "research management".