University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten

OTMR Policy (Open, Transparent, and Merit-Based Recruitment) USTP – University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten

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Preamble

USTP – University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten is a higher education institution with a strong research focus and a well-developed international network. Research, teaching, and knowledge transfer are integral components of its institutional self-image and contribute decisively to the solution of social, economic, and technological challenges.
USTP is committed to the goals of the European Research Area (ERA), to the Bologna Declaration, and to the principles laid down in the European Commission's *European Charter for Researchers*. This commitment is reflected, above all, in the consistent further development of USTP's career model for scientific personnel and in an open, transparent, and merit-based recruiting process.
With this OTMR Policy, USTP creates a binding framework for the acquisition, selection, and development of scientific personnel. The institution thus supports its own strategic goals as outlined on the USTP website and in its central strategy and quality documents, and it contributes to the long-term positioning of USTP in the European Higher Education and Research Area.

1. Basic Principles of Recruiting

- The recruiting processes of USTP are clearly defined, openly and transparently communicated in every contact, and designed to be non-discriminatory.
- Selection and employment decisions are taken exclusively on the basis of clearly defined job requirements (job description), of both essential and optional qualifications as defined prior to the job advertisement, of performance shown, professional potentials, and institutional suitability.
- The recruiting is largely oriented towards the career model for teaching and research personnel in its respectively valid form which rests on three pillars: research, teaching, and practical experience. The described job profiles provide a clear orientation in terms of admission requirements, recruiting process, tasks, qualification

measures, and application potentials. Equivalence with the ‘Research Profile Descriptors R1–R4‘ is laid down in the career model.

- Central elements of USTP’s personnel strategy for all career levels are permanent employment contracts (except when it comes to student personnel), clearly defined career paths, and a tenure-track model as well as extensive qualification agreements. Higher education institutions in Austria are, in their operation, bound by certain legal framework conditions (e.g., FHG) which describe the framework for staffing processes, among other things.
  In addition, USTP – owing to its lack of a collective agreement – follows an internal set of rules jointly developed and agreed upon by the USTP Board / its Chairpersons and the Works Council. Here, transparent processes and standardized procedures are used to ensure high-quality documentation and fairness for candidates.

2. Advertising and Hiring

- The annually evaluated and agreed staffing plan for teaching and research personnel provides the basis for job advertisements. It serves as an instrument for strategic personnel planning and takes the institution’s objectives, organisational needs, and legal and financial framework conditions into account.
- All job advertisements starting from the level of Junior Researchers or Junior Professor for scientific positions are advertised in the commonly used national and European online media and on regional and occupational group-specific platforms.
- Job advertisements contain precise information concerning the position’s objectives, tasks in the described area of responsibility, required competencies, other specifications, type of employment (permanent), and information on benefits for applicants/employees.
- Advertisements for scientific positions are issued in both German and English and are published via suitable national and international platforms (e.g., EURAXESS).

3. Selection Process

- USTP uses a standardised selection procedure with multiple stages that is digitally supported and mapped via defined approval runs.
- Digital recruiting and documentation processes guarantee transparency, efficiency, and legal certainty.
- Selection documents (e.g., interview guidelines, assessment and observation forms) are standardised and aligned with the career model.

- The members of hearing and selection boards are professionally competent, diverse in terms of gender and other specifics, and base their decisions on an evaluation matrix which is tailored to the individual position and contains the categories “Application”, “Hearing: presentation”, and “Hearing: questions”.
- Applicants receive timely and appreciative feedback on the status of the selection process. Every process step is transparent for team coordinators.

4. Assessment Criteria

- The assessment is oriented towards the competence dimensions defined in the career model (scientific, didactic, and practice-oriented competencies).
- Clear, predefined criteria from the staffing plan, the job profile in question (career level), and the job description ensure comparability and transparent selection decisions and can be the subject of qualification agreements.
- Alternative career paths, interdisciplinary profiles, international mobility, and experiences outside the higher education sector are expressly taken into account, promoted, and highly appreciated!
- Qualifications acquired outside of formal academic paths are also considered, provided that they meet the requirements of the advertised position. When it comes to PhD and practical experience, reference is made to coordinated criteria of equivalence.

5. Quality Assurance

- All persons involved in recruiting are qualified for their role and receive training on a regular basis (e.g., in terms of interviewing skills, bias awareness, feedback culture, assessment methods, HR congresses, additional training, tools).
- The quality of recruiting processes is continually evaluated, for example based on feedback from applicants acquired through contact persons in onboarding, indicator analysis, and regular reports and audits.
- Insights gained through quality assurance is systematically integrated into the further development of processes, procedures, and the external corporate identity as perceived by candidates.

6. Equal Treatment, Diversity, and Internationality

- USTP considers diversity to be an asset and thus promotes equal opportunities for all throughout all stages of recruiting and personnel development. Furthermore, an

extensive ‘New Work’ culture is lived at USTP that accommodates individual needs. Since 2024, a focus of the recruiting strategy has been on attracting persons with individual needs/disabilities.

- Gender and diversity aspects are integral components in the selection process and are supported by Human Resources from the beginning: the job requirement. Some areas have a diversity role specifically nominated for this respective organisational unit. And then there is an institutionalised Gender & Diversity Management unit in the Service and Competence Center for Higher Education Development and Quality Management.
- International candidates are supported through digital processes and central service and advice units of USTP – from their application to their long-term integration into everyday work routines. The International Office provides assistance when it comes to mobility, the Service and Competence Center Human Resources and Finance offers support in bureaucratic matters, and the team coordinators and points of contact in the individual organisational units lend a hand in professional topics.

7. Mission Statement and Career Development

- The career model for scientific personnel forms the basis for long-term career perspectives at USTP and outlines the further development. At the same time, USTP offers a comprehensive catalogue of free further trainings on a wide range of topics that is complemented by options tailored specifically to researchers.
- USTP uses tenure-track models, individual qualification agreements, transparent evaluations in exchange with the team coordinator, and clearly defined development criteria to create reliable and plannable career paths.
- Researchers are systematically promoted across all career stages, for example through qualification agreements, mentoring, further training, and structured development and performance reviews.
- USTP fosters international visibility, mobility, and networking, thus improving the employability of its scientific staff members in the European Higher Education and Research Area.

8. Working Conditions

- USTP offers a research-friendly work environment with clear legal, organisational, and infrastructure-related framework conditions.

- Job descriptions are transparent and written in line with the respective position in the career model.
- Attractive working conditions (e.g., flexible working times, compatibility of work and private life, support in third-party-funded projects, services for international employees) are integral elements of USTP's personnel policy.
- Within the framework of workplace health promotion, USTP creates an environment that allows employees to work in a healthy and motivated manner. The institution has been awarded the quality seal for "Workplace Health Promotion" from the Austrian health insurance provider for its efforts in this regard.
- Workplace health promotion, preventive healthcare offered by the company doctor, voluntary company pension plan, and numerous sports courses make for a wide range of health-promoting options.
- Under defined preconditions, diverse models allow for special leave opportunities: educational leave, educational part-time employment, sabbatical.
- Continuous further training – both in-house and external – as well as career models and individual qualification agreements promote the professional development of staff in teaching, research, management, and administration.
- USTP takes systematic steps to improve the compatibility of family and work life – the results achieved in the audit "hochschuleundfamilie" attest to this.

9. Strategic Anchoring

- The OTMR Policy is an integral component of USTP's strategic personnel and organisational development.
- It is closely linked to the career model for teaching and research personnel, the staffing plan, and the institution's digital HR processes.
- The OTMR Policy's implementation and effectiveness are continually reviewed and adapted in line with strategic goals, European standards, and institutional further developments.

This OTMR Policy is continually reviewed and developed further. It is publicly accessible and serves as the central document of reference for transparent, merit-based recruiting at USTP – University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten.