

Diversity Statement

May 2022

KIT – The Research University in the Helmholtz Association



Introduction

Humans are unique and different: They differ not only in visible characteristics such as gender, origin, age, etc., but also in their individual life plans, their social and cultural backgrounds, or their professional or private motives. Dealing with this diversity consciously and constructively and integrating it into everyday work is an important task for KIT.

Since 2009, KIT has been explicitly dealing with the topic of diversity and has meanwhile structurally implemented the idea of diversity at various levels. This topic is expressed both in the KIT 2023 Umbrella Strategy and in KIT's mission statement. KIT's high demand for diversity-oriented action in research and teaching, management and services is not an end in itself, but a timely and appropriate response to social changes and requirements such as demographic change, globalization, and, last but not least, the competition for the best minds.

In order to fulfill its responsible role as a public institution and employer, KIT has set itself the goal of creating a working, teaching, and learning environment that is free of barriers and discrimination and in which it is possible to work together in a way that values others. Diversity management is a cross-sectional task for the entire organization and all its staff. It is thus not focused on a few selected target groups or organizational areas, but refers to all employees at KIT. The focus is on the appreciation of the knowledge, experience, and commitment of the employees and the development of the individual (performance) potential to achieve excellent work results.

The Diversity Statement is deliberately addressed to all KIT employees and emphasizes two strategic focal points: Internationalization and the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women.

People from more than 120 countries research, teach, work, and study at KIT. KIT emphasizes the importance of cultural diversity to life and work in its Internationalization Strategy adopted in 2018. Different cultures and nationalities promote understanding, tolerance, and appreciation for and trust in each other. Cultural and international diversity foster the competence, creativity, and curiosity of all persons at KIT. Internationalization is their common task.

The promotion of equal opportunities for women and men at KIT is of particular importance, among other things because women are still underrepresented in scientific

institutions, especially in those with scientific-technical orientation. The focus of equal opportunities work at KIT is on eliminating and avoiding structural disadvantages in order to achieve actual equality of opportunities between the genders. There is thus an important interface between the Equal Opportunities Officers of KIT and the Diversity Management Department.

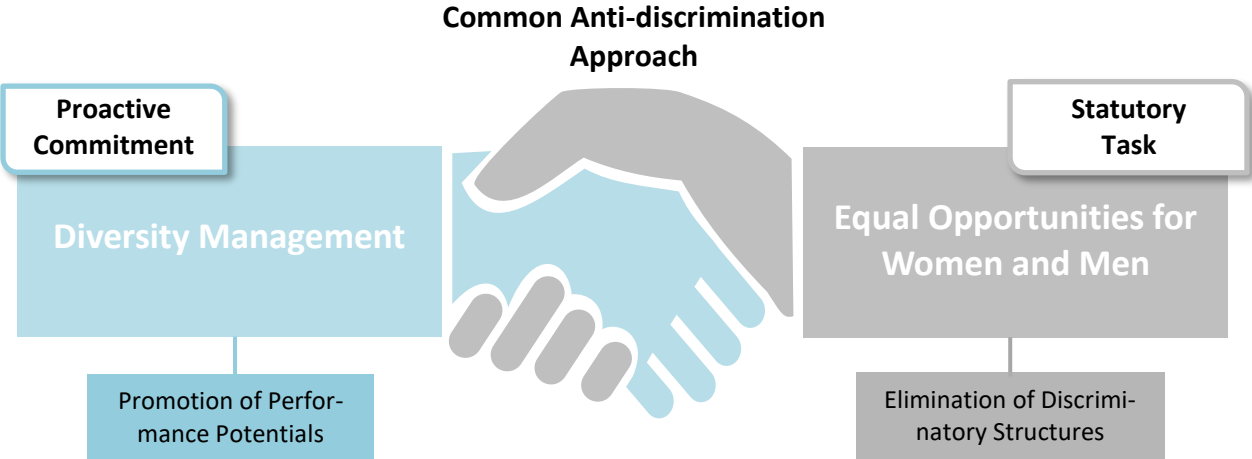


Figure 1: Interface between diversity management and equal opportunities work

Essential content-related foundations for the present statement were created in the context of the Culture and Vision Workshop of the Gender Equity 1 Excellence Project and further developed in the follow-up. In addition, the relevant contents were reflected back with the corresponding interface institutions. Being the Research University in the Helmholtz Association, KIT has geared this statement toward the Helmholtz Guideline on Diversity and Inclusion¹.

¹ Helmholtz Guideline on Diversity and Inclusion 2020
<https://www.chg.kit.edu/downloads/Leitlinien%20HGF%20Diversitaet%20und%20Inklusion%202020.pdf>

Contents

- Current Situation: Diversity Management at KIT4
- Three Key Aspects of Diversity Management at KIT5
- Enabling Individual Life Plans7
- Creating Transparent and Fair Framework Conditions9
- Developing Diversity Competence11
- Conclusion13
- References14

Current Situation: Diversity Management at KIT

In 2010, diversity management was addressed at KIT as being a cross-sectional task located in the area of responsibility of the Human Resources Development and Vocational Training Business Unit (Personalentwicklung und Betriebliche Ausbildung – PEBA). The Diversity Management Department sees itself as an interface to the various institutions at KIT that deal with Germany's General Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz – AGG), or the various aspects of diversity. Diversity Management focuses on the task of promoting and

enabling the development of the performance potentials and talents of all employees at KIT. Discrimination of any kind, conscious or unconscious, is generally not tolerated at KIT and is consistently pursued. Discriminatory structures are uncovered and eliminated. The integration and equal participation of all employees is the responsibility of all executives at KIT. In view of the international orientation of KIT, special attention is paid to the protection against discrimination on racist grounds, on grounds of ethnic origin, religious, and ideological identity, or other grounds.

KIT understands diversity management as a systematic approach with the following objectives



Systematically promoting and using the potential and talents of its employees



Benefiting from the heterogeneous composition of teams with their diverse perspectives and imaginative solutions to problems



Presenting KIT as an attractive employer in an increasingly difficult labor market (competition for the best minds), both nationally and internationally

Dealing with the diversity of employees at KIT is already being taken into account strategically and structurally e.g., in the KIT 2025 Umbrella Strategy, in the Mission Statement, the Code of Conduct, or the Ethical Guidelines. The topic of diversity or the promotion of diversity among employees is not only spurred on by the Diversity Management Department: At KIT, there are various units, committees, and officers who interface with the Diversity Management Department e.g., the KIT Senate Committee on Equal Opportunities and Diversity, the Anti-discrimination Officer, the Health Network, or the International Affairs Business Unit,

as well as many other institutions that represent and move forward their specific topics at KIT.

In order to specifically strengthen the offerings for protection against discrimination e.g., on racist grounds, because of ethnic origin, or religious and ideological identity, various measures of active participation of affected persons are required for awareness raising at the entire KIT.

It is important to KIT to concretize an attitude towards diversity at KIT. Its implementation is based on three conceptual key aspects.

Three Key Aspects of Diversity Management at KIT

A common approach to diversity management is the Four Layers of Diversity model, which addresses various dimensions. However, this approach proves to be complex in its implementation, especially since it usually has a limiting effect through focusing on a few dimensions and because it neglects, for example, the aspect of intersectionality².

A sustainable management of diversity at KIT pursues goals that exceed the sole promotion of individual subgroups of an organization. At KIT, the focus is on a holistic approach in order to understand all aspects of diversity as added value as well as to make everyone's abilities usable as resources for work.

² "4 Layers of Diversity" by L. Gardenswartz and A. Rowe (2003)

Sustainable management of diversity at KIT as a scientific institution thus addresses KIT's high demands on performance and quality while supporting a high level of job satisfaction among employees and enabling them to freely develop their potential in an environment that recognizes and actively reduces discrimination. At the same time, the strategic orientation of KIT leads

to a special emphasis on the aspects of internationality and equal opportunities. In order to adequately address the diversity of all employees and thus also to do justice to the variety of diversity dimensions, three key aspects of diversity have been identified and are taken into account through Diversity Management at KIT:

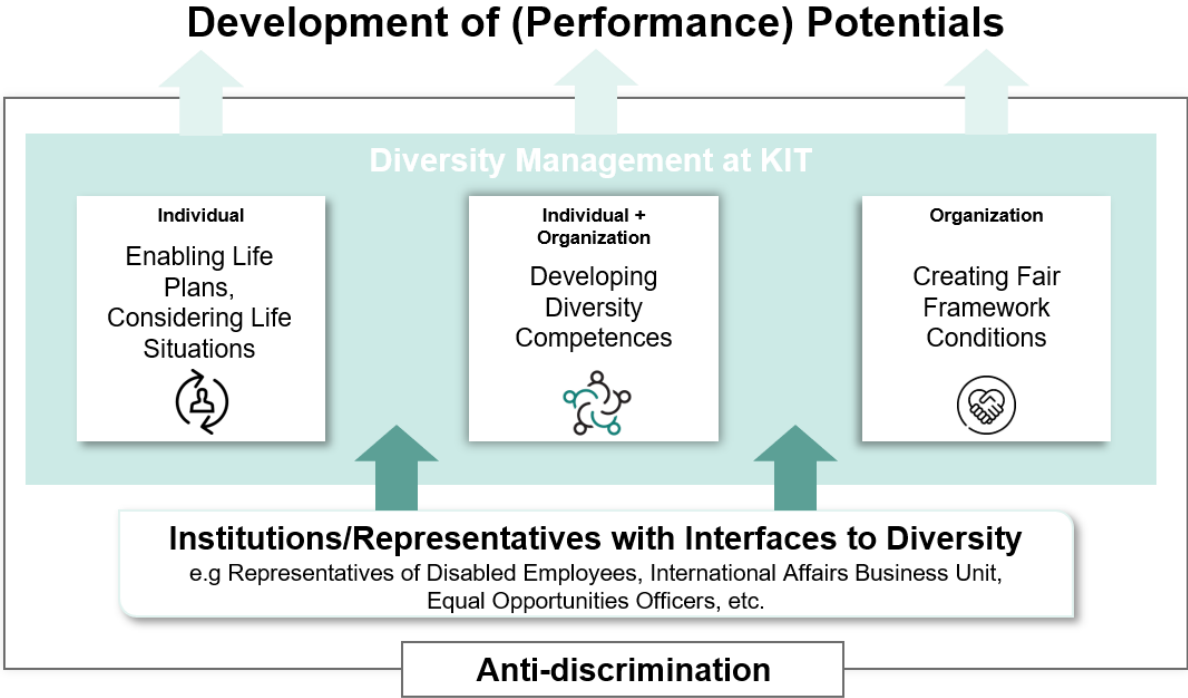


Figure 2: Diversity approach at KIT

This is a challenge for all employees, but especially for the relevant executives. By developing diversity competence, executives are strengthened in their ability to shape the framework provided by the organization

in such a way that individual life plans can be enabled without losing sight of professional goals and demands and the fairness for all team members.

Enabling Individual Life Plans

Diversity management is also a response to the increasing individualization of society: Employers who want to remain attractive and internationally competitive have to adapt to the different lifestyles of their employees. In general, it can be assumed that people operate in different areas of life which they try to reconcile. The reconcilability of work and family life e.g., family obligations like caring for relatives or looking after children, voluntary work, or leisure activities that take up different amounts of time, are just some of the aspects that shape employees' lives alongside their jobs and are significant for them.

Enabling diverse and individual lifestyles within the framework of employment means employing people who are more capable of performing in the long term and who contribute directly to the achievement of KIT's goals. KIT therefore strives to provide its employees with flexible working arrangements and freedom within an appropriate framework and to address specific needs e.g., due to physical impairments. To this end, various measures have been implemented³.



³ The measures presented below are offered by different KIT units.

Examples of measures already implemented at KIT to take account of life situations and individual life:



Flexible working times (Flexitime, part-time, and leave of absence options with re-entry regulations) as well as flexible workplace regulations (teleworking and mobile



Mobility: JobTicket Baden-Württemberg (for the University Sector)



ACCESS@KIT: Center for Digital Accessibility and Assistive Technologies offering support for visually impaired students and conducting research on accessibility to scientific and technical content through to the development of assistive technologies



Comprehensive childcare options: Daycare centers, vacation and emergency care



Counseling services on retirement, career development, care for relatives such as elder care, or specifically on the needs of international employees



(Peer-) coaching and workshops on topics such as work-life balance or self-management



Health promotion: Sports and other offerings such as health management (stress reduction, nutrition, etc.)



Room of silence



Offerings for joint leisure activities e.g., singing in the KIT Choir or playing in the KIT Symphony Orchestra

Creating Transparent and Fair Framework Conditions

The second key aspect of diversity management at KIT deals with the framework conditions for the recognition, appreciation, and promotion of diversity. The management of KIT takes into account the diversity of employees and the promotion of this diversity. To ensure equal opportunities for all employees, the framework conditions of work at the KIT, i.e., guidelines, processes, and structures, must be fair, transparent, and comprehensible

This includes formal decision-making, communication, and information channels as well as the organization's performance standards, and primarily concerns the organizational level, which includes the structural conditions and circumstances under which learning, teaching, research, and work are done at KIT. In particular, the employment relations as well as career paths and access to career paths are to be made transparent and plannable. In addition, protection against discrimination is ensured, participation of all employees is enabled, and raising awareness for the respectful and fair treatment of all members of KIT among each other is promoted.⁴



⁴ The measures presented in the following are offered by different units of KIT.

Examples of measures already implemented at KIT to create fair framework conditions:



Regulations and commitment to fair working conditions in the Code of Conduct, the self-commitment "Good Work at KIT," and the KIT 2025 Umbrella Strategy



Systematic, transparent personnel selection procedures, such as potential analyses



Comprehensive personnel development concept



Various participation opportunities for KIT employees



Extensive welcome and integration offers for international scientists and students



Ethical guidelines



Plannable career paths, e.g. through YIG Prep Pro and Excellent Tenure



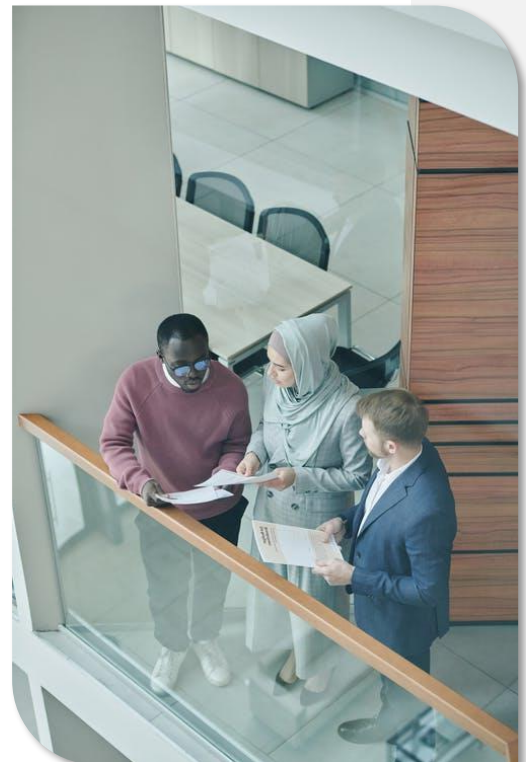
EVA procedure for term reductions

Developing Diversity Competence

Diversity competence can be understood as "the ability to cope organizationally and individually with constantly changing requirements and tasks."⁵ Among these are subcompetences such as tolerance of ambiguity (i.e., coping with ambiguous situations and tasks), the ability to reflect, analytical skills, emotional intelligence, or the ability to change perspectives. Diversity-competent executives are in a position to promote the individual person on the basis of his or her individual performance potential and at the same time to have an integrating influence in team constellations.

In this way, the different expertise, perspectives, and motives of the individual team members can be brought together as profitably as possible and the desired synergies can be created.

Due to the scientific-political and socially relevant issues, diversity-competent people are needed in organizations to actively shape internal and external change.⁶



⁵ Schröder 2012, p.5 in "Greifswalder Beiträge zur Hochschullehre 2015," p.17

⁶ The measures presented in the following are offered by different units of KIT.

Examples of measures already implemented at KIT for development and reflection of diversity competences among employees and at organization level:



Unconscious bias workshops for awareness raising, knowledge acquisition, reflection, and exchange of experience for employees, managers, and other multipliers as well as project groups and teams



Internal organizational reflection through surveys and evaluations in the context of diversity and gender



Gender-appropriate and inclusive:
Language and imagery at KIT



Active participation in the annual German Diversity Day



Online training module for building gender competence



Broad advanced training and education portfolio for subcompetences or for integrated awareness raising and competence building for various target groups

Conclusion

KIT stands for an open research, teaching, and working culture and expresses this also in its diversity statement. Based on the strategic orientation of KIT, certain dimensions are focused - especially gender and internationalization - and at the same time, KIT has aligned its diversity management in a flexible and holistic way. This gives KIT a contemporary orientation that leaves behind a selective group orientation and addresses all employees in their diversity.

Within the framework of diversity management, measures are continuously supplemented and adapted or further developed in accordance with the three key aspects. In particular, the KIT institutions and representatives with an interface to diversity, such as the Representatives of Disabled Employees, the International Affairs Business Unit, the Equal Opportunities Officers, and especially the Senate Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity, are important driving forces in this process (cf. Figure 2). Diversity management in an organization as large as KIT benefits from different perspectives and variegated expertise!

„The foundation of diversity is uniqueness“

~ Ernst Ferstl



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