



# Equal Opportunity Policy for Studies, Teaching, Research, Transfer, and Academic Self-Governance of Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

## Principles and Measures

2026-2031



Science for Society

Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg



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## Foreword

The Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg (JMU) is committed to the strategic and sustainable promotion of equality in the spirit of a university culture that offers equal opportunities. The aim is to give all members, regardless of their gender,<sup>1</sup> the opportunity to **develop** their creative, professional, and personal **potential** to the fullest in all areas of the University. The systematic **promotion of diverse skills** unlocks the University's full potential in research, teaching, and knowledge transfer for the long-term benefit of the institution, its community, and society in general.

With this equal opportunity policy, JMU focuses on the systematic strengthening of equality in **research, teaching, studies, knowledge transfer, and academic self-administration**. There is a separate equal opportunity policy for the academic support staff.<sup>2</sup> Equality affects all phases of an academic career—from the initial phase of study to professorship—and is a **managerial and cross-sectional task**. JMU regards the implementation as a **dynamic process** that is **jointly** shaped and supported by the University Board, academic and academic support staff, and students.

With this policy, JMU is consistently developing its goals and measures for promoting gender equality, thereby specifying the details of its equality mandate in accordance with Article 22 of the Bavarian Higher Education Innovation Act (BayHIG). It is based on **experience** gained from previous equal opportunity policies (2016–2020; 2021–2025), comprehensive **internal reflection**, and intensive **analysis of future areas of action**. The equality policy is also based on the models and recommendations of other institutions: DFG, HRK, bukoF, LaKoF Bayern, the EU Commission, CHARM-EU, and the Coimbra Group.

The strategic goals and measures of the policy are divided into ten sections. The appendix lists some of the existing measures and services offered by the University of Würzburg.

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the term 'gender' does not refer to biological differences ('sex'), but rather to the social and cultural role assignments that shape the behavior, identity, and expectations of individuals.

<sup>2</sup> [Equal Opportunity Policy](#) (in German) for academic support staff.

The **structural embedding of equality and the associated monitoring** (sections 1 and 2) are consolidated through continuous evaluation, increased transparency, and shared responsibility. The **expansion of gender awareness measures** (see section 3) and a targeted **communication strategy** (section 4) aim to sustainably embed gender equality issues in the organizational culture, increase the visibility of female researchers, establish role models, and promote institutional cultural change.

**Professional development and recruitment measures** (sections 5 and 6) aim to reduce structural entry barriers for female scholars at all qualification levels and to support their career paths. Active participation in regional, national, and international **networks** (section 7) also increases visibility, exchange, and networking.

To **protect** against and **prevent sexual harassment, discrimination, and abuse of power** (Section 9), JMU is further developing the confidential and anonymous counseling and advice offered by the relevant helpdesks.

In addition, the concept takes into account the specific needs of **international students, female researchers, and families** (Section 8) and promotes targeted measures to reconcile care responsibilities with studies and careers (Section 10). This policy thus combines **equality, internationality, and compatibility** as central components of university culture.

**Gender equality** is an integral part of the University's diversity strategy. Wherever possible and appropriate, measures to promote equality for women are also open to people who identify outside binary gender models or are in transition. Further dimensions of diversity, specific measures, and goals are addressed in the [Diversity Policy Statement of Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2023-2027](#). The Coordination Office for Diversity works closely with the Office of the University Women's Representative and other university departments to strategically address **intersectional perspectives**.

## 1. Structural Embedding of Gender Equality

*JMU will continue to successfully embed gender equality in its central and decentralized structures and, where appropriate, develop this further.*

**Gender equality** is anchored at all levels of JMU as a **strategic management task**. Within the **University Board**, responsibility for gender equality lies with the President and the Chancellor as the superiors of the academic and academic support staff, and in the area of responsibility of the **Vice President for Equal Opportunity, Career Planning, and Sustainability**. The Vice President is in regular contact with the Representative for the Equality of Women in Science and the Arts (in short: University Women's Representative), who is responsible for gender equality among academic staff and students, as well as with the Equal Opportunities Officer, who is responsible for gender equality among academic support staff. In accordance with BayHIG Art. 22, para. 2, the University Board aims for equal representation: at least 40% of its members should be women and at least 40% should be men.

In the faculties, the **deans**, in cooperation with the faculty boards, are responsible for implementing the statutory equality mandate. This means that all structural and governance measures are systematically designed with equality in mind and that all decisions concerning staff, resources, or quality assurance procedures, for example, are made in accordance with gender equality principles. Faculty leadership and faculty boards should be composed of equal numbers of women and men, with at least 40% of each gender. If the proportion of women is less than 40%, the Faculty Women's Representative (without voting rights) should be invited to the meetings of the faculty leadership or faculty board.

The **University Women's Representative** and the respective Office are supported by several Deputies of the University Women's Representatives. The University Women's Representative is in close contact with the **Faculty Women's Representatives**, who meet regularly in the **Conference of Women's Representatives** in accordance with JMU's basic regulations. Once a year, the President of JMU and the Vice President for Equal Opportunities attend the Conference of Women's Representatives as guests to discuss current gender equality issues in direct dialogue with the faculty women's representatives. In addition, the President of JMU and the Vice President for Equal Opportunities meet with the University Women's Representative at least once every semester.

At the University of Würzburg, the University Women's Representative and the Faculty Women's Representatives participate in the **committee meetings** to which they belong by law or according to the constitution as voting members, in accordance

with the provisions of § 24 (3) of the Constitution of Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg.

In accordance with the provisions of BayHIG Art. 22, para. 5, the University and Faculty Women's Representatives shall be **relieved of other official duties upon request**, taking into account the scope of their tasks for implementing gender equality, e.g., by reducing their teaching load.

Furthermore, there is also a **commission** dedicated explicitly to gender equality, which is based at the central **university level** and headed by the Vice President for Equal Opportunities. Its tasks include, in particular, awarding scholarships funded by the special allocation in the Bavarian state budget for the realization of equal opportunities for women in research and teaching ('Scientia scholarships'<sup>3</sup>), awarding the Romana Schott scholarships,<sup>4</sup> and awarding the University's biannual Equality Award.<sup>5</sup>

The **targets** agreed to by the University Board and the Faculties in 2023 have contributed to further embedding and promoting gender equality measures in the Faculties. Through the targeted search for highly qualified female scholars, appointment procedures carried out in the spirit of gender equality, and, for example, support in finding dual-career solutions, the Faculties have made a significant contribution to increasing the proportion of female professors. These activities must be continued and, where possible, expanded in the coming years. To this end, new target agreements between the Faculties and the University Board will be concluded by the end of 2026 on the basis of this Equal Opportunity Policy.

The **University Women's Representative** is supported in the respective tasks by a team of staff. The **Gender Equality Academy** in the **Office of the University Women's Representative** serves as an umbrella for all activities promoting women carried out by the University Women's Representative: counseling, professional development, support through scholarships, etc.

The various measures of the Equal Opportunity Policy are funded through the university budget, the funds of the University Women's Representative, funds from the

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<sup>3</sup> [SCIENTIA Scholarship Programme](#) – Office of the University Women's Representative, as of 12 Jan 2025

<sup>4</sup> [Romana Schott Scholarships](#) – Office of the University Women's Representative, as of 12 Jan 2026

<sup>5</sup> [Equality Award](#) – [University Archive](#), as of 12 Jan 2026

Bavarian state budget, and Gender Consulting or project funds (in particular the 2030 Female Professors Program). The Female Professors Program funds will run until 2029; the measures funded through these funds (as in 7C, 8B, or 8C below) are therefore initially limited until 2029.

## 2. Gender Equality Monitoring, Cascade Model, and Quality Assurance

*JMU bases its goals for increasing the proportion of women on the cascade model. Specifically, it has set the goal of achieving a proportion of at least 30.9% of women in W2 and W3 professorships by 1 Dec 2031. It will continue to carry out its proven equality monitoring.*

The strategy pursued for years to structurally embed and promote equality in all areas of the University has yielded **visible success and improvements**. The joint efforts undertaken at all levels are reflected, among other things, in the fact that the proportion of women in professorships has increased significantly. Between 2016 and 2024, the **proportion of women in professorships** increased from 41.2% to 54.5% (W1), from 22.0% to 30.1% (W2/C3/C2), and from 16.3% to 25.7% (W3/C4). On 1 Dec 2025, the proportion of women in W2/C3/C2 and W3 professorships combined was 27.2% (after 27.6% in 2024 and 18.9% in 2016). This means that the target of 25.6% women in all W2/C3/C2 and W3 professorships set in the previous equality policy has been exceeded significantly. Across all salary grades (W1-W3/C4), there has been an increase from 19.8% in 2016 to 29.4% in 2024; on 1 Dec 2025, the proportion of women was 29.0%.

Targeted measures such as **gender-sensitive appointment policies** based on the **appointment guidelines**, which take into account factors such as academic age and family care periods, contributed to these successes.

However, as figure 1 shows, there is still room for improvement in terms of the **proportion of women at the W2 and W3 professorship** levels in relation to the **cascade model**:<sup>6</sup> here, effective appointment strategies must be used to make even greater efforts toward achieving gender parity in leadership positions in academia.

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<sup>6</sup> See DFG on research-oriented equality standards: 'According to this, the targets for the proportion of women at each academic career level are determined by the proportion of women at the qualification level directly below.' See also BayHIG Art. 23.

Accordingly, the University of Würzburg continues to pursue a target of at least **37% women among new appointments**. This percentage corresponds to the nationwide proportion of women among habilitations across all subject groups on December 1, 2023. Taking into account the number of professorships that will become vacant at JMU by 1 Dec 2031, and the additional professorships that are expected to be newly filled, this will result in a **proportion of female professors (excluding W1) of 30.9%** on 1 Dec 2031, which JMU has set as an indicator for achieving its goals according to the cascade model.

Due to the discontinuation of corresponding funding, the absolute number of W1 professorships will decline significantly in the coming years. As a result, the difference between the proportions of female professors with and without W1 professorships will even out. Specifically, JMU expects the proportion of **female professors across all salary grades to be 31.0% on 1 Dec 2031**, provided that appointments continue to be made ambitiously in line with the cascade model.

The University also faces challenges in terms of supporting its postdoctoral researchers and habilitation candidates during the critical transition phase between postdoctoral studies/habilitation and professorship. During this phase, many female scholars **drop out**, both nationally and internationally, due to the numerous uncertainties associated with a scholarly career. In order to offer female scholars in particular more planning security and prospects during this uncertain phase, individual and flexible solutions are being developed at the faculty level and anchored in target agreements.

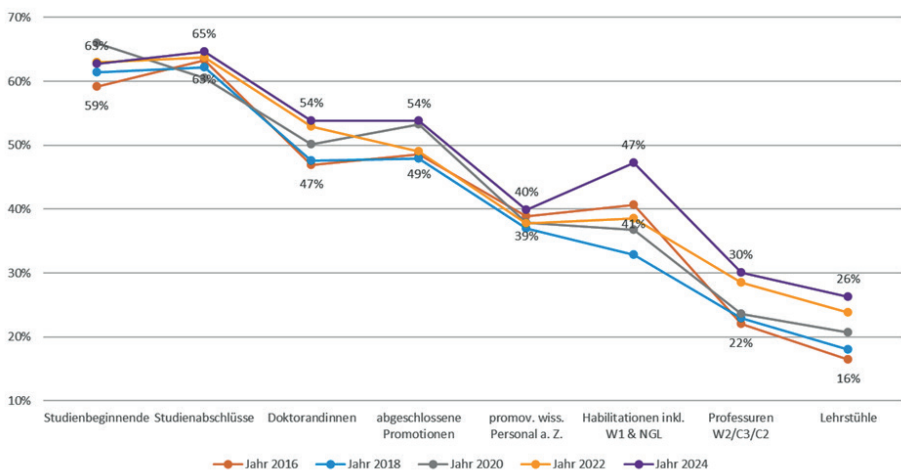


Figure 1: Proportion of Women in Academic Qualification Programs at JMU, 2016-2024.

Despite rising numbers of female students in STEM subjects at JMU, current observations show that there is a high dropout rate among women, especially in degree programs with low female representation.<sup>7</sup> To better understand this development, **guided interviews** with current and former female students will be conducted until 2030 to identify gender-relevant aspects of this development, e.g., possible experiences of exclusion and structural barriers. These results will serve as a sound basis for targeted, gender-sensitive support measures.

For quality assurance purposes, JMU works with the University Women's Representative to compile gender-differentiated data sets on an annual basis to systematically monitor gender equality. These surveys serve to regularly monitor and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of measures taken to date. The Office of the University Women's Representative uses the data to compile and publish an [Annual Report on Gender Equality Monitoring](#) [in German]. The University Women's Representative presents this **status report** on the implementation of the equality mandate once a year to the Extended University Board and the University Council. The report is also discussed at the Conference of Women's Representatives.

Until 2024, women were compared to the entirety of other genders in the Gender Equality Monitoring. In the future, entries such as 'diverse' or 'no information provided' will increasingly be taken into account, at least in comprehensive analyses.

The measures summarized and planned in this Equal Opportunity Policy are an important step in a comprehensive and ongoing work and transformation process. In order to continuously advance the collective pursuit of greater equality, achievements and steps along the way should be documented. New and successfully implemented or executed measures for career advancement, work-life balance, and gender awareness will therefore be communicated on an ongoing basis as **best practice examples** in a section of the University Women's Representative's website.

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<sup>7</sup> See Equality Monitoring 2023, p. 9 (in German)

### 3. Gender Sensitization as an Across-the-Board Task

*JMU pursues the goal of creating a culture of equality in which gender awareness is an integral part of research, teaching, studies, transfer, and everyday work.*

Previously developed formats support students and scholars in strengthening their awareness of gender equality. These formats are being further developed through the following measures and offerings:

- A. JMU already offers training to raise awareness of gender bias among academic leaders, teaching and administrative staff, and members of appointment committees—such as workshops, information pages, and short videos on **unconscious bias** and **gender-equitable teaching**. The aim is to further develop these services with subject-specific content. In a pilot phase, teaching assignments will be specifically awarded to include gender-relevant content in STEM teaching and to increase awareness among lecturers and students.
- B. JMU promotes **gender-equitable initiatives for self-organization or mutual support**, e.g., in working groups or student union groups, by providing temporary rooms through the Office of the Women’s Representative. For example, the Referat Queer:feminismus, the University’s LGBTQIA+ student group, meets regularly in the rooms provided by the Office of the University Women’s Representative to discuss and exchange ideas on university policy issues.
- C. JMU would like to provide greater support for existing **initiatives promoting gender equality in the various faculties** and to bring together so-called change agents, i.e., individuals who are driving internal cultural change. An ideas contest will be held to promote networking among these individuals, enabling synergy effects to be exploited across faculties and innovative ideas to be realized.
- D. Faculty equality funds may be used in a targeted manner to compensate for **structural disadvantages** in terms of equality, including improving the study and working conditions of female students and academics.
- E. The website of the University Women’s Representative continuously provides **clearly structured and up-to-date information** on the above-mentioned

topics and other areas, such as gender gaps, women's health, and family planning in academia. This ensures low-threshold access to relevant support services and background information. This information section will be expanded in the future and also communicated via social media channels in order to reach additional target groups and raise awareness of gender equality issues.

#### 4. Internal and External Communication

*In order to raise the visibility of gender equality issues, JMU relies on target group-specific internal and external communication. In the future, communication channels—including social media—will be used in a more targeted manner to increase the presence of female scholars and students in subjects in which they are underrepresented and to create role models for early career stages.*

Current announcements, information, and offers are compiled on the relevant **websites and channels of the University Women's Representative** and regularly communicated to all internal departments involved. The press office is actively involved in the flow of information and pursues a broad-based and targeted communication strategy.

The following high-profile projects show how this communication strategy is implemented and sustainably strengthened.

- A. As a continuation and expansion of the #WueSeeYou project, which highlights the diverse paths leading to JMU, further **multimedia reports** by female professors and scholars in the early stages of their careers will be produced to increase the visibility of women in academia. Under the motto **'What I love about my job,'** female scholars at JMU will be interviewed about their career choices, their fascination with their profession, and the associated, sometimes unforeseen challenges. After a pilot phase with exclusively JMU-internal female scholars, the format will be gradually expanded to include national and international contributions, with a particular focus on JMU alumnae.

- B. In order to encourage early engagement with gender equality at the University, JMU is also planning a **photo competition for students** on the theme of ‘parity.’ In conjunction with the *What I love about my job* campaign, photos are to be submitted that illustrate parity in the University study and work environment from the student’s perspective.
- C. Faculties and departments are encouraged to **expand existing programs for promoting early-career researchers and to develop new measures**. Existing **outreach formats** such as uni@school, early study programs, and the *Synopsis Kolleg*—a one-year study orientation program leading to a certificate—will be supplemented with compatible offerings and made permanent. Plans include keep in touch programs, regular invitations to workshops, and trial internships for interested female pupils to deepen their initial contact with the University and promote long-term interest, particularly in STEM courses.
- D. In the area of balancing academia and family life, the **#WueHearYou podcast** series will be continued. The podcast aims to address female scholars who are starting families and to raise awareness for gender equality issues among (new) academic leaders. Findings from the podcasts will be documented and incorporated into topics for professional development initiatives.
- E. To complement the media campaign and an excellent tool for science communication, JMU plans to continue its successful premiere of the women-focused version of the **Science Slam SHE\* TALKS**. Here, female scholars at all career stages present their research to internal and external audiences.

## 5. Professional Development

*JMU pursues professional development programs that systematically break down structural barriers and promote women in their academic and professional development.*

In line with the overarching goals of the **Professional Development Strategy 2025-2030**, programs to promote women have been offered under the umbrella of the **Gender Equality Academy** since 2013. These include **SCIENTIA** for female scholars in the early stages of their careers, the **Women's Leadership Program (WLP)** for (junior) female professors, and career counseling for female students and scholars at all qualification levels. The initiatives are closely coordinated with the other institutions in JMU's Professional Development Network, which coordinates JMU's portfolio and establishes leadership standards.

These measures were rated as effective and career-promoting in internal evaluations and feedback from participants. Thanks to targeted support, many female scholars were able to advance more effectively on their individual career paths, build networks, and strengthen their scientific careers in the long term. Building on the successes achieved so far, the existing gender-equitable personnel development programs will be further developed and expanded.

- A. A key tool for strengthening the initial phase of study, particularly in STEM subjects, is the establishment of an **internal faculty mentoring system** that focuses specifically on **professional and social networking**. The focus is on exchange between peers: STEM students are given the opportunity at an early stage to network with experienced fellow students and instructors in order to utilize and actively shape informal structures for the transfer of knowledge and experience. The mentoring program is designed to be low-threshold and structured in order to facilitate orientation in the subject, strengthen the sense of belonging, and promote self-determined study planning in a networked community. In order to provide targeted support for female students as they progress through their studies, **a new mentoring format** will also be developed by 2029 that ties in with existing structures such as the HCI Mentoring Circle and early study programs. This will create a continuous chain of support from study orientation to graduation, with a special focus on the transition to further qualification levels.
- B. Female scholars in the early stages of their careers should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own research at an early stage and thereby es-

establish themselves in the (inter)national research community. In cooperation with the faculties, initiatives for the early development of an **individual academic portfolio** are supported. To this end, the Office of the University Women's Representative will set up a **fund for travel grants** and **publication support** specifically for female students and doctoral candidates available until 2029. The grants will be awarded on the basis of a selection process.

- C. With the **SCIENTIA program**, the University offers a one-year career development program for female scholars in the early stages of their careers, which focuses on personal development, individual career planning, and the establishment of mentoring relationships. In the future, there will be a special focus on **transregional and international networking** among participants. Through cooperation with external partner institutions and targeted contact initiation with JMU's European alliance partners, the professional exchange among program participants will be strengthened, new perspectives will be opened up for female scholars, and career steps in an international context will be made possible (see section 7).
- D. The **Women's Leadership Program (WLP)** offers a platform specifically for female scholars in leadership positions. Regular workshops, individual coaching sessions, and additional formats such as meetings with guests from science, politics, and society enable participants and alumnae of the program to engage in continuous collegial exchange and profitable networking. The quality assurance evaluation of the program revealed the need for an additional element that would also promote organizational parity in the long term: The module '**Leadership in Academic Self-Administration**', designed in collaboration with the German Association of University Professors and Lecturers (DHV), addresses this need and will provide female professors with targeted training for central and decentralized committee work within JMU.
- E. The Service Centre Research and Technology Transfer (SFT) offers qualification workshops as part of the 'Frauen.MI\*N\*T.Gründungsgeist' initiative to encourage more female scientists from STEM subjects to analyze the **innovation potential** of their scientific work and strengthen their **entrepreneurial personality**. Promising knowledge transfer ideas are rewarded with prizes.
- F. Special attention should also be paid to increasing the participation of female researchers in the early stages of their careers—especially doctoral

students, postdoctoral researchers, and postdoctoral lecturers, but also undergraduate students—in **academic self-administration**. This target group should be actively involved in the structures and decision-making processes of the University. With the help of appropriate workshops, the long-term goal is to ensure that more women are involved in the University's internal decision-making processes.

- G. **Professional coaching** will continue on request in order to provide individualized and targeted support to female researchers of all status groups in important career decisions.
- H. The University would like to specifically promote women in the **acquisition of third-party funding**. Female researchers are therefore specifically made aware of the services offered by the JMU Research Advancement Center — from assistance with project applications and joint projects to support in resubmitting rejected but promising applications.
- I. **Role models** play a central role in promoting gender equality — from early education to top scientific careers. The University is strengthening the visibility of female role models through targeted public relations work (see section 4) and mentoring programs such as SCIENTIA and MENTORING med at the Faculty of Medicine. In addition, the range of information available on doctoral opportunities for female students and researchers in the early stages of their careers is being expanded. Among other things, role model lectures with opportunities for exchange and networking are planned in order to specifically attract more women to academic careers. The aim is to create opportunities for identification and to promote interest in a scholarly career.

## 6. Staff Selection and Long-Term Retention

*In order to achieve its goal of increasing the proportion of women according to the cascade model, JMU is designing its recruitment, staff expansion, and long-term retention strategies in a forward-looking and equitable manner.*

This will be implemented through the establishment and continuous development of the following measures:

- A. A key component is the early promotion of academic career paths for female students. **Additional student research assistant contracts for high-achieving female students** allow them to be introduced to research activities in a targeted manner and prepared for a possible doctorate at an early stage. Particularly in subjects with low female representation, attention should be paid to ensure a balanced ratio when awarding assistant positions. Supervisors have a special responsibility to promote diversity in their teams.
- B. **Fixed-term employment contracts** for academic staff should be made **as long as possible** within the limits of the law. The extension of the maximum fixed-term period by two years per child and the associated possibility of extending employment contracts is applied generously in consultation with the supervisor. The University welcomes the catching-up of family-related absences within the scope of legal possibilities, even for third-party-funded staff. Contracts should be designed to be family-friendly in accordance with the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act (WissZeitVG). Possible reasons for fixed-term contracts, as well as predoctoral or postdoctoral training-based ('qualifizierungsbefristet') contracts (including for third-party funded projects) and their consequences, should be discussed openly with all parties involved. An information sheet will be available for download by 2027, developed by the Office of the University Women's Representative in cooperation with the Human Resources Department.
- C. **Permanent positions for lecturers and research associates (*wissenschaftliche Mitarbeitende*), especially in the employment category of *akademische Rätinnen und Räten*, must continue to be advertised publicly.** A transparent selection process involving the faculty women's representative will be carried out. In justified individual cases, the advertisement may be waived after consultation with the Dean and the Faculty Women's Representative.
- D. In order to create opportunities for further training for all lecturers and research associates (*wissenschaftliche Mitarbeitende*), possibilities for tem-

- porarily reducing their teaching load will be examined. Female researchers in permanent positions should also be given greater encouragement to pursue **habilitations** and **substitute professorships**. In cases of equal qualifications, female researchers at the University of Würzburg should be given preference.
- E. In the coming years, the University will continue its efforts to attract and retain excellent female professors by offering **competitive appointment and retention offers**. To this end, family leave may be taken into account in fixed-term or performance-based agreements. Family leave should also be taken into account in interim evaluations of junior professors and in evaluations in the context of tenure-track procedures.
  - F. Through a variety of measures already described above, JMU will further strengthen its attractiveness as an employer. In addition, an anonymous analysis has been initiated to examine the awarding of **performance-related pay** with regard to possible gender pay gaps. This analysis is to be continued, presented to the Conference of Women's Representatives and the Equal Opportunities Commission, and repeated every three years. With the participation of the aforementioned committees, countermeasures will be discussed if deemed necessary.
  - G. In order to retain excellent female scholars at the University of Würzburg and increase the proportion of women in the professorial staff, the University Board also intends to make use of **internal appointments**. Still, it continues to uphold the policy that internal appointments should be the exception at the University of Würzburg.
  - H. Faculties are encouraged to give favorable consideration to **new leadership models**, such as shared or rotating leadership, and to offer them as alternative options in (re)appointment applications and in advertisements for professorships. The selection process should also specifically examine the extent to which such models can help attract qualified female applicants for leadership positions.
  - I. The special commitment of female scholars in **committee work** should be compensated for by appropriate measures. This can be achieved by reducing their teaching load, relieving them of other university tasks, or providing financial support from JMU, e.g., for teaching assignments in exchange for a (subsequent) research sabbatical. A **student research assistant program** specifically for female professors involved in committee work will also be set up.

- J. Efforts will be made to identify qualified female candidates for professorships at an early stage, in particular through **active recruitment**. In order to facilitate the active search for suitable female candidates in subjects with a low proportion of female scholars, a **fund for expanded and innovative recruitment measures and activities** will be provided by the Office of the University Women’s Representative until 2029. Based on the successful Grete Hermann Network of the ct.qmat Cluster of Excellence,<sup>8</sup> these subjects can finance various formats such as symposia and workshops from a central fund in preparation for a professorship to be advertised. During these events, potential applicants have the opportunity to exchange ideas with future colleagues and gain a first impression of JMU as an employer.

## 7. Local, National, and International Networks

*JMU sees itself as a driving force for transformative development in the scientific system — with future-oriented, gender-sensitive career development that combines equal opportunities, networking, and global visibility. The following measures integrate female scholars into a dynamic network of local, regional, and international relationships:*

- A. The already ongoing **SCIENTIA Career Development Program** will take on an international focus from 2026 onwards in order to facilitate access to global networks for female scholars in the early stages of their careers. Through cooperation within the Coimbra Group and the CHARM-EU Alliance, JMU plans to develop low-threshold, career-promoting formats that complement traditional mobility phases. The Office of the University Women’s Representative is actively represented in the diversity, equity, and inclusion groups of the Coimbra Group and the CHARM-EU Alliance, which JMU joined in 2023. With the international opening of SCIENTIA, JMU is strengthening individual career development, promoting equal opportunities in the academic system, and positioning itself as an attractive research location in Europe.

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<sup>8</sup> The Cluster of Excellence ‘ct.qmat’ will be renamed ‘ctd.qmat’ at the beginning of the second funding period (2026).

- B. Expansion of regional networks: The University strongly encourages female scholars to become involved in **transregional or international professional associations** and **scientific networks for the advancement of women**. It also supports the work of **local scholarly networks**, such as the **Grete Hermann Network** for female physicists, which was initiated by the Cluster of Excellence in Physics, ct.qmat.
- C. JMU intends to strengthen **decentralized networks** with a focus on female scholars and link them to international networks. In recent years, networks have been established on the initiative of female scholars for female scholars in the fields of Economics (Women@WiWi<sup>9</sup>), Law (Justitia ist weiblich<sup>10</sup>), Human-Computer Interaction (HCI Mentoring Circle<sup>11</sup>), Humanities (AK Gender<sup>12</sup>), and Physics (Grete Hermann Network<sup>13</sup>). In order to relieve the administrative burden on the organizers and enable them to engage in public relations work on a larger scale, these and other networks are provided with a budget for student research assistants and material expenses.
- D. Membership and participation in **Bavarian and nationwide networks on gender equality work** (LaKoF, bukof, Netzwerk Gender Consulting, etc.) ensures that university stakeholders are kept up to date with current developments.
- E. JMU plans to introduce an **annual International Career Day for Women** to bring together decentralized and centralized career development and networking opportunities. This event is aimed at female scholars from JMU and abroad and offers a platform for exchange on the topic of ‘Women in Research’ — on site or in a hybrid format.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.wiwi.uni-wuerzburg.de/forschung/womenwiwi/startseite/> [in German], as of 19 Jan 2026

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.jura.uni-wuerzburg.de/fakultaet/frauenbeauftragte/news/> [in German], as of 19 Jan 2026

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.mcm.uni-wuerzburg.de/piis/hci-mentoring-circle/>, as of 19 Jan 2026

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.politikwissenschaft.uni-wuerzburg.de/en/research-groups/research-group-on-gender/>, as of 19 Jan 2026

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ctqmat.de/en/careers-support/grete-hermann-network>, as of 19 Jan 2026

## 8. International Female Students, Researchers, and Researchers' Families

*JMU sees equality as a central component of its Internationalization Strategy and is committed to ensuring that international collaborations, networks, and mobility opportunities are designed to provide equal opportunities. In particular, international female scholars and their families receive targeted support in settling in, getting acquainted with their new surroundings, and starting their careers—with a focus on the integration of international academic families.*

In addition to hands-on assistance such as providing English-language forms, support in finding accommodation, dual career options, and childcare services at the Children and Family Center, which are coordinated in close cooperation with the Family Service, the Welcome Center, and the City of Würzburg, JMU will implement the following measures:

- A. The Office of the University Women's Representative is actively committed to working closely with the Welcome Center to sustainably improve and further expand the welcoming culture for international academic families. A central element of this initiative is the development of a multilingual **online information platform** that provides advance information in the country of origin and also serves to assess the need for networking opportunities on site. The aim is to make it easier for international academic families to get started at JMU and to overcome any language barriers.
- B. **Welcome Assistants** will provide targeted support to international female students and researchers, regardless of whether they come with or without their families, in overcoming administrative hurdles. The aim is to facilitate their transition into their new living and working environment and enable the researchers and their families to settle in quickly and easily.
- C. A permanent support service will be set up for international families, which will be particularly effective in the first six months after their arrival in Würzburg. Among other things, it will include help in **finding childcare options** and opportunities for children (up to school age) and their families to **get to know German culture**. In addition, an **international mentoring program for families** and **get-together events** for the whole family will be designed and introduced. The aim is to make it easier for them to settle in and get started in Würzburg.

- D. The **integration of international children into the German education system** is a fundamental component of successful compatibility. The JMU continues to support the introduction of an English-language branch at a new elementary school near the Hubland Nord campus in order to increase the international appeal of the University. To ensure successful school attendance, an **overall concept** is currently being developed for the **integration of the children of international researchers** into the German education system, which also provides for **homework assistance**.

## 9. Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Abuse of Power

*Sexual harassment, discrimination, and abuse of power are not tolerated at JMU. JMU promotes a culture of appreciation and respect in interactions with each other and with third parties, offers counseling services, and professionalizes its handling of reported cases—regardless of status or gender.*

At JMU, there have long been points of contact for victims of sexual violence, both physical and psychological. These include the occupational health service ('Betriebsärztlicher Dienst'), Conflict Counseling Center, the Service Center Human Resources, and the counseling center for employees of the University Hospital Würzburg. Since 2024, the **Sexual Harassment Helpdesk** has also offered (anonymous) counseling for sexual harassment, regardless of gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Similarly, the **Anti-Discrimination Helpdesk** offers (anonymous) initial counseling and support in cases of discrimination and anti-Semitic incidents. The principles of their work are strict confidentiality for all parties involved and a duty of care towards all those directly affected by the reported cases, as well as any potentially unknown victims.

The following measures will enable JMU to further professionalize its handling of cases of sexual harassment, discrimination, and abuse of power:

- A. To **prevent** and raise awareness of sexual harassment, discrimination, and abuse of power, informational materials, events, and other awareness-raising formats are planned for all university status groups. There is a particular focus on workshops for academics in leadership roles and thesis supervisors, whose role in preventing inappropriate behavior is to be strengthened.

- B. **Procedural guidelines** for reported cases of sexual harassment or discrimination are currently being intensively prepared and are expected to be adopted in early 2026.
- C. The University Board has appointed university **contact persons** for questions relating to sexual harassment and sexual violence, as well as contact persons for anti-discrimination. According to the relevant statutes, these persons should have previous psychological, educational, and/or legal experience, as well as practical experience in counseling. In addition, they, like the members of the contact points, are given regular opportunities for **further training**.
- D. In necessary individual cases, university-internal contact persons may also consult **external expertise** in anonymized form.
- E. In addition, JMU plans to set up a corresponding (anonymous) initial consultation and support service for cases of **abuse of power**. This service will work closely with the other contact points in order to address overlapping issues with issues of gender equality. This will also allow for synergy effects to be achieved through the exchange of experience in counseling methods and compensate for staff shortages during vacation and sick leave periods. The establishment of the Abuse of Power Contact Point accompanies a certificate program entitled 'Machtmissbrauch erkennen und verhindern' (Recognizing and Preventing Abuse of Power) launched at JMU in 2025, see appendix.
- F. In legally relevant cases or at the request of the persons concerned, the **Legal Department** or the **General Equal Treatment Act Complaints Office ('AGG Beschwerdestelle')** of the University of Würzburg will be involved, which will provide appropriate further training on the topics mentioned. The details are regulated by procedural guidelines. The regular exchange of experience between the Legal Department, the General Equal Treatment Act Complaints Office, and the contact points will be continued.

## 10. Compatibility of Scholarship/ Studies and Family

*Beyond gender equality, this policy also focuses on the compatibility of scholarship and family as well as studies and family as a central task for society as a whole that affects all genders. The issue of family-friendliness, which is also important for successful careers and retention at JMU, is to be embedded even more firmly in information and communication strategies, at management level, in administration, and in Human Resources development, including academic qualification programs.*

Family friendliness has been **firmly established** at JMU since 2008: as a **certified Family-Friendly University**, it is regularly audited by external bodies; its family friendliness was last confirmed in 2024 as part of the triennial re-audit.

JMU offers all university members comprehensive advice, support, and mediation on issues relating to family obligations through its **Family Service**. JMU emphasizes that balancing work, study, and family life is a shared responsibility for all genders and encourages everyone to take advantage of the services on offer and to actively help shape a family-friendly academic culture. In addition, the University Women's Representative and the team provide advice on **planning study and career paths during pregnancy** and mediate between employees or students and the administration or teaching staff.

The exemplary **Keep in Touch & Re-entry Program (WÜkit)** in the ct.qmat Cluster of Excellence has firmly established elements that provide targeted support to academic staff during the family phase: counseling, childcare concepts, and regular information events on specific topics, including events for senior researchers.

Building on this, further measures are being implemented across the University to continuously strengthen the compatibility of research, study, and family life:

- A. The Child and Family Center on the Hubland Nord campus provides a **comprehensive childcare infrastructure**, which was expanded in 2024 as planned in the previous equality concept. Together with the Family Service, the Office of the University Women's Representative is working on setting up **flexible childcare for off-peak hours and emergencies**. This may also include initial and temporary childcare for children of visiting scholars and international postdoctoral researchers.

- B. The range of **breastfeeding and diaper changing facilities** available to university members can be viewed on the Family Service website as an [interactive map](#). These are primarily located in all-gender restrooms so that all parents can use these facilities without any problems. Following the example of the multifunctional room at Wittelsbacher Platz and the Family Room at Hubland Nord, which have a breastfeeding corner and offer workspaces, the aim is to make suitable free spaces available to parents and their children on a flexible basis. The redesign and planning of the campus grounds will focus on creating a **family-friendly infrastructure**. **All-gender restrooms** are to be further expanded on all campuses.
- C. **Working hours:** Regular and extraordinary meetings as well as committee meetings are to be scheduled Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. If meetings nonetheless take place outside these hours, the possibility of using digital formats should be explored. If this is not possible, any additional childcare costs incurred may be reimbursed by the relevant department or the chairperson upon request.
- D. **Mobile workplace design:** The pandemic-related switch to working remotely and digital teaching in the home environment in many areas of the University in 2020 has often proven beneficial in terms of balancing family and work/study commitments. It will therefore be made possible depending on the requirements of the service operation. Additional digital teaching and working formats can help to improve the compatibility of studies and family life and should be used at the discretion of the University.
- E. Students and researchers with care responsibilities often have little time for time-consuming everyday tasks. The Office of the University Women's Representative is working with the Family Service on the **'Helping Hands'** concept, which, similar to the Family Service's babysitter referral service, provides support with tasks such as making appointments and running errands (excluding cleaning services).
- F. The University actively promotes the compatibility of academic careers and motherhood through various measures for pregnant scholars and mothers. In addition to **regular information and counseling services**, these include a fund for maternity leave replacements, travel allowances for employees with small children, and financial support for student research assistants or TA hours for pregnant doctoral students and junior research group leaders.

In addition, a program will be developed by 2027 that highlights ways to make laboratories safe for pregnant students and female scholars.

- G. The proposed **WueFamilyCare program** aims to provide postdoctoral researchers and junior professors with family responsibilities relief from university duties by financing substitute teaching and student research assistants. In addition, a **re-entry grant** will be introduced to support female researchers with care responsibilities after taking family leave. The scholarship funds can be used individually, for example, to relieve administrative tasks or to set up a parent-child area (family room) at the chair.
- H. In addition, there are plans to raise awareness among academic support staff and train them in new further education formats, particularly with regard to the needs of researchers with family responsibilities. For example, a **workshop** on work-life balance-friendly contract design and dealing with changing family models and parental leave options is being developed **for employees in administrative departments**, such as Human Resources. Further training courses on specific life or career phases (e.g., maternity leave regulations) are to be offered. For academics in leadership positions, an information event has been developed as part of the WÜkit program, which is offered regularly online and whose content is also made available for permanent access online.
- I. For many young researchers, the issue of balancing science and family life is a decisive factor in their career choices. To ensure that the University of Würzburg remains at the forefront in terms of family services in Germany, it is important to stay up to date with the latest research and developments in the (inter)national higher education landscape, which is why cross-university networking plays such an important role. In addition to founding a local group of the **'Mutterschaft und Wissenschaft'** network in the summer of 2025, the aim is to join **'Familie in der Hochschule'** in 2026.

## Appendix

The appendix contains a selection of existing offers, tried-and-tested measures, and relevant JMU guidelines in the areas of equality and work-life balance. This overview serves to illustrate current structures and initiatives that contribute to promoting equal opportunities and improving the compatibility of work, study, and family commitments.

### Equal Opportunity

- A. Based on its social responsibility and educational mandate, JMU informs its students about **pension options**. The University Women's Representative provides relevant information material (current studies and surveys) that can be shown in courses or linked to on the University Women's Representative's website. The same applies to topics such as **'Family Planning in Academia,' 'Gender-Equitable Teaching,'** and **'Unconscious Bias in Appointment Procedures'**.
- B. A [Guide to Gender-Sensitive Language](#) [in German] was published in 2024.
- C. **Gender-sensitive career counseling** is an important area of gender awareness and educates students and female academics about stereotypical career decisions, typical pitfalls, and critical phases in female career paths to address current inequalities in terms of earnings, distribution of care work, full-time and part-time work, and retirement provisions.
- D. In terms of quality, too, significant progress has been made in recent years in promoting equality. Additional innovative measures for academic staff development, which have also attracted widespread external attention, have been implemented and carried out. The career and mentoring programs brought together under the umbrella of the Gender Equality Academy were awarded the **rating 'Equality: excellent!'** by the German Aerospace Center (DLR) as part of the *Professorinnenprogramm III* (Female Professors Program III) and were also positively highlighted by the German Research Foundation DFG in its review process. These measures will be expanded as part of the present policy.
- E. Another important method in all university equality efforts is to actively involve all genders in the collective efforts. A sustainable change in culture and values can only be achieved together in the spirit of comprehensive governance. Not only women in particular but people of all genders are invi-

ted to follow positive examples at the University, to get involved in equality initiatives, and to actively model equal opportunities as **'agents of change'**.

- F. The **certificate program 'Machtmissbrauch erkennen und verhindern' (Recognizing and Preventing Abuse of Power)** at JMU is aimed at students and other individuals, such as teaching staff or other professionals, who are confronted with power relations and the prevention of abuse of power in their professional practice. It imparts practical knowledge about recognizing, dealing with, and preventing abuse of power in various contexts, particularly in the church, medical, and social sectors. Through various modules, participants are enabled to understand the structural, psychological, and legal aspects of the topic and to develop the skills to prevent abuse and implement appropriate interventions professionally.

### **Childcare and Compatibility**

- A. The **Campus Kinderhaus**, run by the *Kita Zweckverband* (Daycare Association) of the Protestant Lutheran Deanery of Würzburg, now has 159 childcare spots in four nursery groups (age 10 months to 3 years), three preschool (Kindergarten) groups (age 3 to 6 years), and two mixed-age groups (age 10 months to 6 years). The childcare services are primarily aimed at children of university employees.
- B. **Campus StudiKids** provides short-term childcare on an hourly basis for infants and toddlers (aged 2-18 months) of student parents and early-career researchers. The service is offered free of charge by the University's Family Service department and aims to prevent long interruptions to studies or academic qualifications. An extension of opening hours is planned from spring 2026.
- C. The University's Family Service organizes a full-day holiday program for schoolchildren (aged 6 and above) of students and employees during all school holidays except Christmas called **Campus Camp**.
- D. **Babysitting and tutoring service:** Upon request, the University's Family Service arranges tutors and babysitters and assists with organizing childcare during university events.

- E. Once a month, the Family Service and the Office of the University Women's Representative hold a group **counseling session for pregnant students** and/or those who already **have children** and their partners. Individual counseling sessions are also available, including for students with children.
  
- F. With on-site and online events, creative, cultural, and sporting activities for families or children accompanied by caregivers, and opportunities for exchange, JMU, together with the other two universities in Würzburg—the University of Music and the Technical University of Applied Sciences Würzburg-Schweinfurt—offers a networking program for all interested university families as part of **FamilieWÜ<sup>3</sup>**.

## **Imprint**

### Editor

Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg  
President Prof. Dr. Paul Pauli  
Sanderring 2, 97070 Würzburg

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### Photos

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Jonas Blank (p. 2)

[info@uni-wuerzburg.de](mailto:info@uni-wuerzburg.de)  
[www.uni-wuerzburg.de](http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de)

### Editorial Staff

Press and Public Relations Office  
Sanderring 2, 97070 Würzburg  
[presse@uni-wuerzburg.de](mailto:presse@uni-wuerzburg.de)