

Career paths for researchers in mid-level academia at Goethe University

Preamble

When it comes to mastering a multitude of scientific tasks at the highest level, it is our central concern as Goethe University to attract, train and retain excellent and motivated colleagues. We offer optimal working conditions and create attractive career prospects, including for long-term employment at our university. We first formulated principles for filling permanent positions in 2014, which are further developed in this paper. The explanations offered here refer exclusively to the design of scientific, science-related or directly science-supporting career paths (E13 – E15 Goethe University Labor Agreement, TV-G-U) within the faculties and scientific institutions. The aim of the principles' further development is, among other things, to represent permanent tasks through permanent positions and to bundle competencies. Against this backdrop, we at Goethe University are pursuing three main goals with the transparent structuring of career paths for researchers in mid-level academia:

(1) *Establishment of career paths in academia in addition to professorships:* We consider the permanent positions and associated functions as vital to being able to carry out research, teaching, transfer, digitization, internationalization, security management and infrastructure support tasks at the highest level. They are also necessary for a professionalization of Goethe University's structures and a legally compliant execution of permanent tasks by trained staff. The diversity of disciplines is acknowledged through the definition of permanent tasks and permanent positions as part of the Strategy and Development Agreements for each individual faculty, or, at the level of scientific institutions, in the target agreements with the Executive Board.

(2) *Creating transparency about the various career paths for researchers:* With a view to transparently presenting the requirements and opportunities in the science system and enabling researchers to independently design qualification strategies at an early stage, the job profiles at Goethe University are clearly defined and the criteria for filling positions unambiguously formulated. Beyond that, the regulations of the permanent position principles also help professionalize the procedures and processes for filling permanent positions.

(3) *Linking permanent position prospects with opportunities for further qualification:* Goethe University colleagues are enabled to continuously work on diverse tasks at the highest level and to open up additional career perspectives.

Regulations on assistant professorships, professorships with tenure track, and professorships in general are made and reviewed in the corresponding Goethe University statutes. Beyond the scope of these principles, the faculties have the option of earmarking positions for teaching staff for special tasks ("Lehrkraft für besondere Ausgaben", LfbA; 18 Lehrveranstaltungsstunde, LVS, teaching hours). The implementation of the Goethe University principles is subject to and situated within the framework of legal requirements.

1. Career paths at Goethe University

Researchers have the option of preparing for various career paths not only within the framework of their studies, but also through targeted further qualification opportunities during their doctorate and in the career phase following their doctorate. Here, Goethe University distinguishes between scientific or science-related, technical-administrative and non-university post-doctorate career paths. While the support for the latter career path includes information, counseling and further education, Goethe University also aims to provide transparent qualification opportunities for internal university career paths. Below is an outline of the three different internal university career paths:

1.1 Advanced Academic Track (academic career paths)

1.2 Advanced Teaching Track (academic career paths focused on university teaching)

1.3 Academic Support Track (research-supporting career paths)

The *Advanced Academic Track* at Goethe University covers both the career paths to a professorship and the professional career in mid-level academia with a focus on teaching and science-related tasks. Goethe University's *Advanced Teaching Track* focuses on the professional career in mid-level academia with an emphasis on teaching, but also allows the qualification for a professorship. The *Academic Support Track* offers researchers at Goethe University a targeted career path, e.g. in science or lab management. At Goethe University, we refrain from further subdividing the latter track to ensure the transparency of opportunities and procedures on the one hand and the variety of possibilities on the other.

The basic principles that apply to all career paths are a transparent descriptions of procedures, (inter)national job advertisements, transparent target agreements for the qualification phases, including clear formulations of expectations, as well as a target-oriented range of opportunities for further qualification and personal development. In addition, Goethe University strives to implement a comparability of access opportunities, e.g. through the introduction of qualification phases and a permeability between career paths.

1.1 Advanced Academic Track

1.1.1 Research Assistants

After completing their doctorate, researchers have the opportunity of qualifying further for an academic career as research assistants (Fig. 1). This further qualification falls under their personal responsibility and takes place via the structures and offers of Goethe University, in particular the structures of the (Post-)Graduate Academy GRADE. Also part of this further qualification is the attendance of courses in the field of university didactics. Employment as a research assistant is governed by the German Act on Fixed-Term Employment Contracts in Academia (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz, WissZeitVG) and should be no less than three years for the first regular employment contract or, if shorter, the maximum funding period of the project financing the position. In accordance with legal requirements, researchers financed from the

basic university budget are to be employed for at least three years with a teaching load of 4 LVS teaching hours. If an applicant already has creditable periods of experience according to the WissZeitVG, these must be taken into account in the contract's duration. According to the current version of the WissZeitVG German Act on Fixed-Term Employment Contracts in Academia, scientific employees can be employed for up to six years after their doctorate (Fig. 1).

Research assistants may also qualify for *Researcher* or *Lecturer* positions on a voluntary basis. For a permanent position, however, they must apply for an (inter)nationally advertised *Associated Researcher* or *Lecturer* position.

1.1.2 Associated Researcher

After completing their doctorate or after a phase of up to three years as a research assistant, researchers can apply for a position as an *associated researcher* (Fig. 1). The position is initially announced on a fixed-term basis with the option for permanent employment as a *Researcher* upon successful qualification and positive external evaluation (tenure track; 2.3, 2.4). Successful qualification for permanent duties and academic teaching as well as a positive evaluation of competencies by an external review (2.5) are the prerequisites for permanent employment as a *researcher*. The pay-scale classification is based on the regulations of the fee structure (usually E13 TV-G-U). The teaching load of the associated researcher comes to 4 LVS teaching hours, and a share of self-determined research also should be accounted for. With this and by means of continuous further qualification, the possibility of qualification for professorial positions is upheld.

Qualification for the option of becoming a permanent researcher takes place by taking into account the spectrum of tasks associated with the permanent position in question, including management of research infrastructure, projects, academic courses or security (see Appendix, Table 1). Within faculties, the functional categories and the scope of positions for each functional category as well as the positions to be advertised as associated researcher are defined in the respective Strategy and Development Agreements, whereas scientific institutions do so in their target agreements. The validity of this definition is checked in the monitoring meetings. All further qualification is carried out independently in accordance with the requirements laid down in an individual target agreement, among other things via Goethe University's structures and offers, prime among them the structures of the (Post-)Graduate Academy GRADE and the university's additional offers for personal development and didactic advanced training. For highly specialized tasks, external offers have to be considered. The employment as *Associated Researcher* is limited to a period of three years for qualification.

If an applicant already possesses all the required qualifications as well as the corresponding professional experience after completion of the doctorate or employment as a *Research Assistant*, and if this is confirmed by an external review (2.5), it is possible to immediately enter into permanent employment as a *Researcher*.

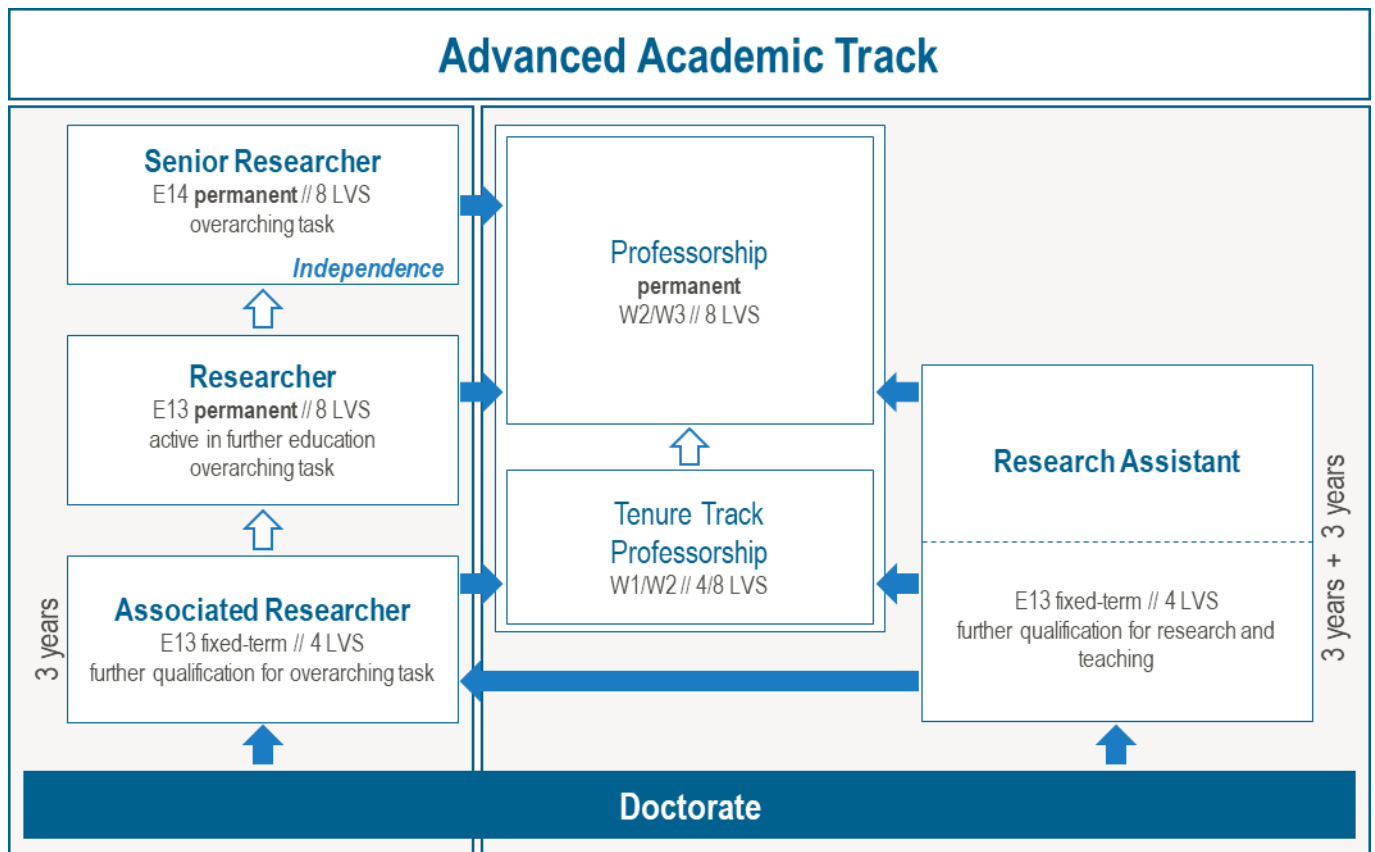


Figure 1: Alternative options in the Advanced Academic Track at Goethe University for researchers who have completed their doctorate

↑ application ↓ evaluation

1.1.3 Researcher

Having successfully proven their qualification and obtained the necessary certificates as well as having received a positive external evaluation as an associated researcher or as lateral entry, candidates can be employed as researchers for an unlimited period (Fig. 1; 2.5), and perform the defined permanent tasks (1.1.2) in addition to research and teaching. The pay-scale classification is based on the regulations of the fee structure (usually E13 TV-G-U). Researchers have a teaching load of 8 LVS teaching hours for curricular teaching (Bachelor, Master, State Examination courses) and additionally provide 2 LVS teaching hours in Goethe University's further qualification programs (graduate training, internal further training, Goethe University further training programs and courses of study). Researchers are obligated to continue further qualifying themselves in their field of permanent assignment and in university didactics. They also have to conduct a share of independent research. By engaging in this relevant, self-directed research, the opportunity to apply for professorial positions is maintained. The assignment by the employer of time-consuming tasks in the academic self-administration is not to come at the expense of independent research and is to be considered accordingly in the execution of the permanent tasks. This provision does not apply to elective and voluntary positions.

1.1.4 Senior Researcher

The position of Senior Researcher can be awarded for outstanding achievements in teaching and research or for outstanding permanent tasks (1.1.2) (Fig. 1; 2.6). Advancement from Researcher to Senior Researcher is not automatic, but depends on the performance, the activities to be executed, and the qualifications of the applicant (see 2.6). Legal and financial framework conditions permitting, the promotion is to be combined with an increase in the pay-scale classification from E14 TV-G-U upwards. Senior Researchers have a teaching load of 8 LVS teaching hours for curricular teaching (Bachelor, Master, state examination study program). With the promotion of researcher to senior researcher, in compliance with the prevalent specific financial, spatial and disciplinary regulations, the faculty implements the senior researcher's independence in research and teaching, as a rule by assigning him/her to the dean as direct superior (in terms of subject and discipline)¹. It is strongly recommended to combine this promotion with the transfer of independent tasks in research and teaching according to § 72 of the Hessian Higher Education Act (Hessisches Hochschulgesetz, HessHG) and the award of the title "adjunct professor". Through the possibility to conduct independent research, the opportunity to apply for professorial positions is maintained. In the case of assignment of time-consuming tasks in the academic self-administration, the procedure described in 1.1.3 should be followed.

1.2 Advanced Teaching Track

1.2.1 Associated Lecturer

After completing their doctorate or after a phase of up to three years as a Research Assistant, researchers have the opportunity to apply directly for a position as Associated Lecturer (Fig. 2) in the Advanced Teaching Track, which was previously defined within the faculties' Strategy and Development Agreements. The Associated Lecturer position is initially advertised for a fixed term of three years with the option of entering into a permanent position as a Lecturer upon successful qualification and positive external evaluation (Tenure Track; 2.3, 2.4). Successful qualification and its positive evaluation by an external review (2.5) is a prerequisite for permanent employment. The pay scale classification is based on the regulations of the fee structure (usually E13 TV-G-U). Associated Lecturers have a teaching load of 8 LVS teaching hours². A share of self-determined research is also required for qualification purposes.

The qualification for the option for permanent employment applies to both analog as well as digital research-oriented teaching. This further qualification takes place on one's own responsibility according to the requirements set out in a target agreement, among other things, via the structures and offers of Goethe University, in particular GRADE as well as the centers for university didactics and studiumdigitale.

¹ §52 Hessisches Hochschulgesetz (HessHG) – Hesse Higher Education Act: Pursuant to § 37 para. 3 nos. 3 and 4, the dean shall exercise the supervisory function over the members not assigned to an institution of the department.

² According to the Hessian Ordinance on the Scope of Teaching Obligations of Academic and Artistic Staff at the State's Universities (Teaching Obligations Ordinance, Verordnung über den Umfang der Lehrverpflichtung des wissenschaftlichen und künstlerischen Personals an den Hochschulen des Landes), this corresponds to a "temporary academic staff member with a focus on teaching."

If an applicant already possesses all the necessary qualifications as well as appropriate professional experience after completion of the doctorate or employment as a Research Assistant, and if this is confirmed in the course of an external review (2.5), immediate permanent employment as a Lecturer is possible.

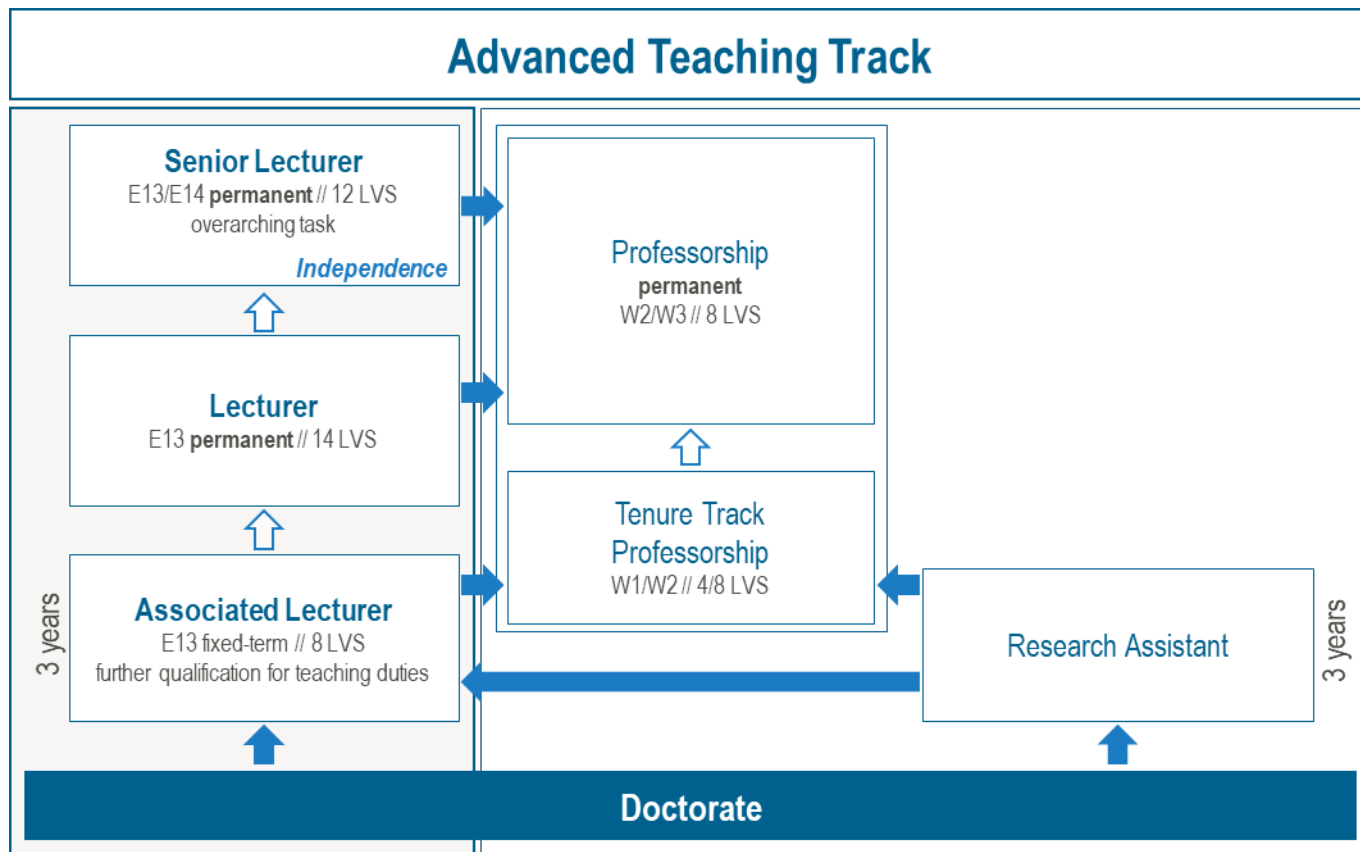


Figure 2: Alternative options in the Advanced Teaching Track at Goethe University for researchers who have completed their doctorate

↑ application ↑ evaluation

1.2.2 Lecturer

After proven successful qualification and positive external evaluation as an Associated Lecturer (2.5) or as lateral entry, the candidate is offered permanent employment as a Lecturer with a teaching load of 14 LVS teaching hours and independent scientific research (Fig. 2; 2.3). Through the possibility to conduct independent research, the opportunity to apply for professorial positions is maintained. The assignment by the employer of time-consuming tasks in the academic self-administration is not to come at the expense of independent research and is to be considered accordingly with a reduction of teaching duties of at most 2 LVS teaching hours. Elective and voluntary positions are excluded from this regulation.

The pay-scale classification is based on the regulations of the fee structure (E13 TV-G-U). Lecturers are required to continuously improve their qualifications in the field of university didactics.

1.2.3 Senior Lecturer

The position of Senior Lecturer can be awarded for outstanding achievements in teaching and research as well as for taking on a prominent task (Fig. 2; 2.6). The promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer does not occur automatically, but depends on the applicant's performance, the activities to be performed and his or her qualification, as outlined in 2.6. The promotion is to be linked to an advancement into the E14 TV-G-U grouping, provided that this is permitted by the legal and financial framework. Senior Lecturers have a teaching load of 12 LVS teaching hours for curricular teaching (Bachelor, Master, state examination study programs). With the promotion of Lecturer to Senior Lecturer, the faculty implements the independence of the Senior Lecturer in research and teaching, as a rule by assigning him/her to the dean as the direct superior (in terms of subject matter and discipline), while observing the specific financial, spatial and disciplinary regulations in force. It is strongly recommended that this promotion be combined with the assignment of independent tasks in research and teaching according to § 72 of the Hessian Higher Education Act (HessHG) and the award of the title "Adjunct Professor". Through the possibility of independent research and continuous further qualification, the opportunity to apply for professorial positions is maintained. In the case of assignment of time-consuming tasks in the academic self-administration, the procedure described in 1.2.2 should be followed.

1.3 Academic Support Track

Researchers at Goethe University can pursue a dedicated career in Academic Support. The necessary qualification must be demonstrated and can also be acquired in additional relevant courses of study in science management as well as in the context of employment as a Research Assistant, Associated Researcher or Associated Lecturer. Colleagues with suitable qualifications must apply for an (inter)nationally advertised Academic Support position (2.3, 2.4).

The positions comprise tasks in science management or lab management (see appendix, table 1), but no independent scientific research. The aim is to provide teaching shares of 2 LVS teaching hours in Goethe University's further qualification programs (graduate training, internal further training, further training programs and courses of study). The pay-scale classification is based on the regulations of the fee structure (usually E13 TV-G-U). The position will be offered for an indefinite period of time upon proof of qualification. Employees in the Academic Support Track are required to continuously improve their qualifications in the respective field of science management.

2. Procedures at Goethe University

2.1 Job definition

In coordination with the Executive Board, the faculties determine individually and independently the requirements for researcher, lecturer and academic support positions in accordance with the content and structural needs laid out in the Strategy and Development Agreements. Scientific institutions define the requirements for researcher and academic support positions in their target agreements in coordination with the Executive Board.

For researcher positions, corresponding tasks are defined in areas such as management of research infrastructure, projects, programs, or security (see Appendix, Table 1) and the qualifications required to implement the tasks are specified.

The tasks and required qualifications for Lecturer and Academic Support Track positions are laid down in the Strategy and Development Agreements.

2.2 Job scope

Permanent employment contracts (permanent positions) can be established for full-time permanent tasks in research (1.1), teaching (1.2) and science management (1.3). The permanent tasks must comprise more than 50% of the job. Employment is generally full-time and usually part of an employment contract. Part-time employment of at least 50% is only possible in justified cases, in particular at the request of the employee.

2.3 Job posting

The positions as Associated Researcher, Research Assistant, Associated Lecturer and in Academic Support are to be advertised both internally and externally and as a rule also internationally.

The positions for Associated Researcher and Associated Lecturer are initially advertised on a fixed-term basis with the option of switching to a permanent position upon successful qualification and positive evaluation (tenure track). The criteria for successful qualification are to be recorded in the job posting in writing as a basis for the evaluation. The job posting should already contain the job description for the position as Researcher or Lecturer, which ensues after successful evaluation in the tenure track procedure.

In accordance with legal regulations, the positions in the Academic Support Track will be advertised and filled directly for an unlimited period of time.

As a rule, the positions of Researcher, Senior Researcher, Lecturer or Senior Lecturer are not advertised. After successful qualification and positive evaluation as Associated Researcher or Associated Lecturer, the permanent employment as Researcher or Lecturer is granted without requiring another job posting.

2.4 Selection procedure and hiring requirements

In addition to the direct supervisor, the selection committees for Associated Researcher, Associated Lecturer and staff members in the Academic Support Track include another professor from the faculty or the academic institution as well as one staff member from the faculty or the academic institution. The selection committees for Associated Lecturers should include a representative of the relevant departmental student council. In line with legal regulations, the participation of the Staff Council, the Equal Opportunity Officer and, if applicable, the Representative for Severely Disabled Persons in the procedures is to be ensured.

The selection decision is made by the committee. In case of dissenting votes, the direct supervisor must document the arguments. In the event of a tie vote within selection committees to fill the Associated Lecturer position, the committee chairperson's vote is decisive. In accordance with the Strategy and Development Agreements, the recruitment requires the approval of the dean responsible for the implementation of quality standards (2.8) as well as the approval of the Executive Board. In the case of scientific institutions, Executive Board approval is required, in alignment with the target agreements.

With regard to recruitment in the Academic Support Track, another assessment is required, issued by an assessment structure soon to be established at Goethe University³.

In addition to the general requirements under service and employment law, employment prerequisites include a university degree and, as a rule, a doctorate. Exceptions are permitted for the career path in Academic Support provided achievements and qualifications appropriate to the doctorate or position exist. For employment as Associated Researcher and Associated Lecturer, a fixed-term contract in accordance with § 2 (1) of the German Act on Fixed-Term Employment Contracts in Academia (WissZeitVG) must be possible for qualification purposes. In the case of employment as an Associated Researcher or Associated Lecturer, a target agreement is concluded with the researcher, outlining the intended qualification goal, the teaching to be provided as well as the necessary qualification measures.

2.5 Evaluation: Associated Researcher and Associated Lecturer

The successful qualification as Associated Researcher or Associated Lecturer and its positive evaluation by an external reviewer and the faculty dean or the head of an academic institution is a prerequisite for permanent employment as researcher or lecturer. The evaluation must be carried out by the faculty in good time, at the latest six months before the end of the fixed-term employment contract.

At the candidate's own initiative, the process is then initiated by the faculty.

The candidates provide the following documents to the respective dean's office:

- (i) Curriculum vitae including publications as well as a list of taught courses and further qualification

³ This stipulation only applies once the structure has been established.

measures,

- (ii) Presentation of the contents of the completed qualification measures, with reference to the established criteria (including submission of evidence),
- (iii) Outline of the achievement of the goals defined in the target agreement, including teaching evaluations,
- (iv) Brief description of the individual understanding of research, teaching and the area of responsibility to be assumed.

The supervisor sends the Dean's Office confirmation of the discussions on goal attainment (data, not content), which are held annually, alongside an assessment of the degree of achievement, in accordance with the defined development goals.

The dean or head of the scientific institution appoints an external reviewer, who must be generally recognized and considered outstanding in his/her field of research and must not have any current or past personal connections with either candidate or direct supervisor.⁴

The faculty will provide the external reviewer with the text of the job advertisement, the job description, and the criteria for successful qualification as well as the target agreement specified at the time the position was advertised.

On the basis of the submitted documents and the expert opinion, the dean or head of the academic institution checks in how far the defined objectives were fulfilled and submits both the documents and the assessment, together with an application for permanent continued employment, to Goethe University's Executive Board via the Human Resources Department. In accordance with the applicable bylaws, the Executive Board then decides on the proposals for permanent employment.

In case the targets were not achieved or the reviewer's vote was negative, the procedure is discontinued once the assessment has been submitted to the Human Resources Department and the Executive Board, and the position as Associated Researcher or Associated Lecturer will once again be advertised according to 2.2.

2.6 Promotion to Senior Researcher or Senior Lecturer

The prerequisites for launching a promotion process from Researcher to Senior Researcher or from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer include a demonstration of

- (i) the duties to be performed as a precondition for pay-scale classification,
- (ii) the ability of the faculty or academic institution to finance the position,
- (iii) the necessary qualifications of the applicants.

As a rule, only researchers or lecturers with several years of professional experience as researcher or

⁴ The German Research Foundation's (DFG) [Guidelines for Avoiding Conflicts of Interest](#) apply, which are also used in appointment procedures.

lecturer (> 5 years) can be considered for the assignment of corresponding tasks. The promotion is based on an evaluation in the style of an appointment procedure with documentation of independent third-party funding, proof of independent research and submission of the evaluation of independently conceived and conducted teaching. The criteria should correspond to those for filling a W2 position.

Once the requirements (i, ii) have been checked, the procedure is initiated by the faculty or the scientific institution. The candidates provide the following documents to the respective dean's office or the management of the scientific institution:

- (iv) Curriculum vitae including publications, third-party funding, list of courses taught and further qualification measures including teaching evaluations,
- (v) Presentation of the contents of the completed qualification measures, with reference to the established criteria (including submission of evidence),
- (vi) Brief description of the individual understanding of research, teaching and the area of responsibility to be assumed.

If the procedure is initiated at a faculty, the dean appoints two external reviewers in consultation with the Executive Board. The external reviewers must have an international reputation in their field of research and must not have any personal current or past connection with the candidate and the direct supervisor.⁵ The faculty provides the external evaluators with the candidate's documents, its average teaching evaluation ratings, the average publication performance as well as third-party funding acquisitions of the faculty's researchers and senior researchers. The results of the evaluation are reviewed by the dean and submitted to the faculty council, which makes a recommendation. This recommendation, together with the relevant documents and the application for promotion, is sent to the Executive Board via the Human Resources Department.

In cases where this procedure is initiated at a scientific institution, the respective management board appoints two external reviewers in agreement with the Executive Board, as described in the above-mentioned rules. The external reviewers are provided with the candidate's documents, the job description and, if applicable, the candidate's target agreement. The management board then formulates a recommendation based on all documents and expert opinions. This recommendation, together with the documents and an application for promotion, is sent to the Executive Board via the Human Resources department.

In accordance with the applicable bylaws, the Executive Board then decides on the proposals for promotion.

⁵ The German Research Foundation's (DFG) [Guidelines for Avoiding Conflicts of Interest](#) apply, which are also used in appointment procedures.

2.7 Financing

Permanent positions are financed from the budget of the faculties or the scientific institutions. They are defined in the context of the discussions on the formulation of the Strategy and Development Agreements between the faculties and the Executive Board, or on the target agreements between scientific institutions and the Executive Board, and replace the previous permanent position concepts.

2.8 Quality assurance

Faculties and scientific institutions need to regularly review the tasks of the permanent positions, adjust them with regard to changed requirements, and bundle them with the faculty's existing permanent positions. The requirements and positions are to be laid out in the Strategy and Development Agreements or the target agreement, whereas adjustments are to be recorded in the monitoring discussions or new conclusions of the Strategy and Development/target agreements. This is particularly necessary if individual permanent tasks change over time or are completely eliminated.

For each permanent position, a qualified job description must be submitted at the time of its application. The same applies to each new appointment. The job description must indicate the share of permanent activities and the main duties and defined obligations as outlined in the Strategy and Development Agreements.

The quality standards adopted by faculties and scientific institutions for the job advertisements, selection procedures, and the filling of positions in the three tracks outlined in these principles are based on the quality standards for appointments

2.9 Coming into force and transitional provisions

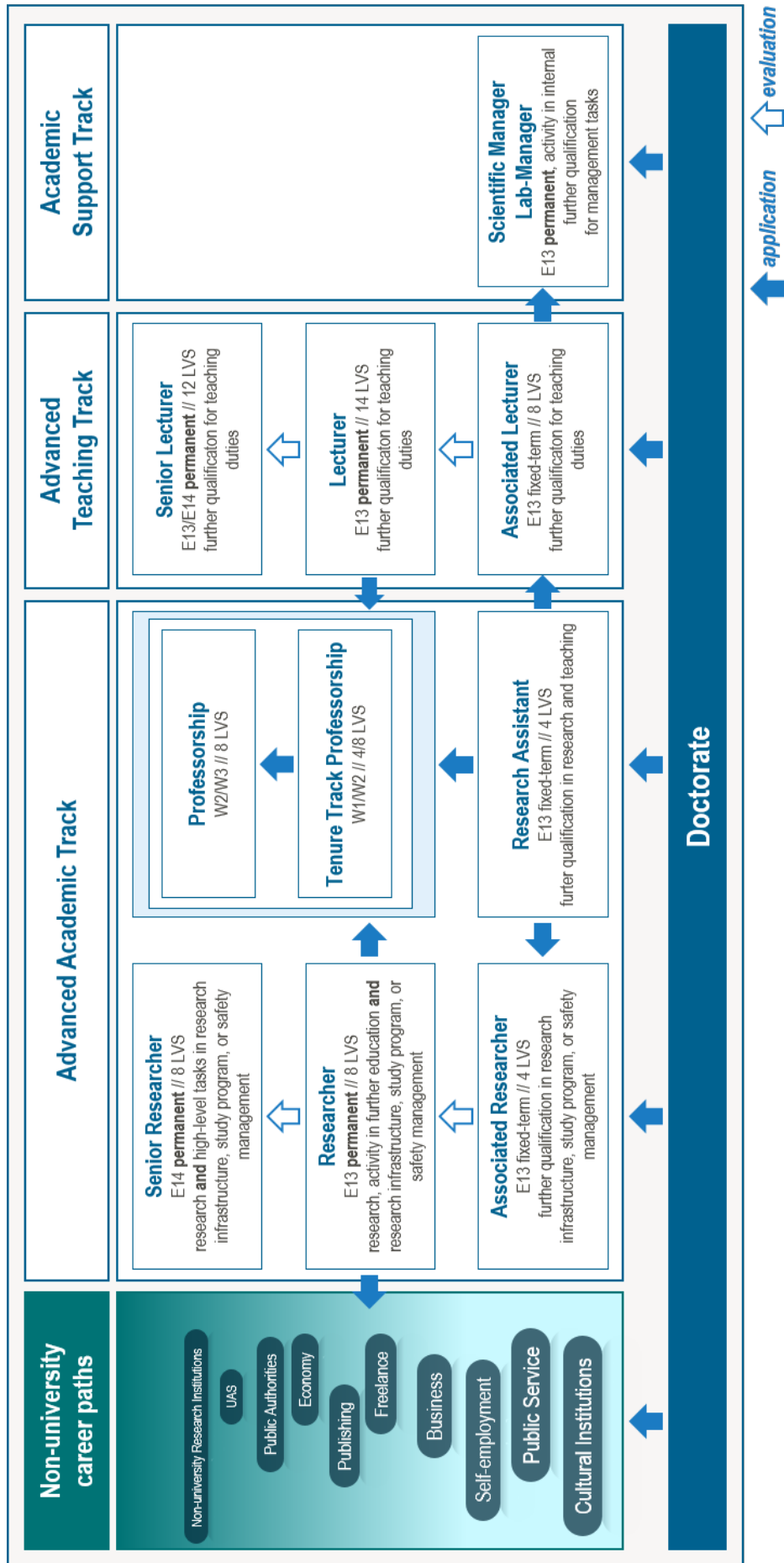
These principles shall come into force on April 1, 2023 following the resolution of the Executive Board.

The prerequisite for application of these principles is that the faculties and scientific institutions develop prior concepts for implementation (see 2.1) and specify these in their Strategy and Development Agreements/target agreements with the Executive Board. Faculties or scientific institutions whose Strategy and Development Agreements or target agreements will not have been concluded by April 1, 2023 may revert back to the "Principles for the Establishment and Filling of Permanent Positions" of March 7, 2017, which are still valid until this date, but which will expire on March 31, 2024. The decision on whether the 2017 Principles will apply rests with the Executive Board.

In anticipation of the entry into force on April 1, 2023, faculties or scientific institutions that have already agreed on the implementation of these principles in their Strategy and Development Agreements/target agreements with the Executive Board can already apply the principles outlined here to fill permanent positions in pilot procedures.

Procedures for filling permanent positions that are already underway by the time this guideline comes into force can be completed by March 31, 2024 in accordance with the "Principles for Establishing and Filling Permanent Positions" dated March 7, 2017, which will remain valid until that time. Individual exceptions can be considered.

Appendix: Overview



Appendix: Table 1

Area of the permanent task for a superordinate sector* (Institute(s) / Hospital / Faculty; non-professorship)	Researcher (~33%)	Scientific/ Lab-Manager
Occupational safety	X	
IT security	X	
Equal Opportunity/Diversity measures	X	
Anti-discrimination measures	X	
Coordination of internationalization	X	
Genetic engineering safety	X	
Animal Protection	X	
Maintenance of biobanks	X	
Study course guidance and students mentoring	X	
Data protection	X	X
Maintenance of Archives and Collections	X	X
Coordination of public relations activities	X	X
Study course coordination	X	X
Coordination tasks in scientific centers	X	X
Maintenance of large-scale equipment in centers	X	X
Quality management of research and teaching	X	X
Supervision of scientific projects		X
Management tasks in faculty-relevant teaching support units		X
Teaching coordination across examinations and faculties		X

* These areas can be expanded or adjusted according to needs of and agreements reached with faculties and scientific institutions.