

# Quality in Academia and Life

**A joint  
strategy  
to improve  
Work-Life  
Balance**  
by GEW,  
UCU and  
SULF



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## Preface

This strategy paper is the result of the multilateral partnership, 'Work-Life-Balance and gender specific career patterns in higher education and science', funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme Leonardo da Vinci, during the period 1 August 2008 till 31 July 2010.

Partners of the project are the German Education Union (GEW), the British University and College Union (UCU), and the Swedish Association of University Teachers (SULF). Short descriptions of the three unions can be found in Annex 1.

Our joint strategy summarises the common aims and strategies concerning the improvement of general conditions for arrangements of work-life balances and their transparency to promote the European dimension in the area of professional careers. It is the result of the cooperation of the three unions by systematic exchange of knowledge, information, and experiences. The aim has been to support transparency, information, and orientation concerning Europe-wide mobility, to support gender equality and to increase the share of women among academic staff, ie university teachers and researchers.

The project partners prepared this strategy in several steps: The exchange about the regulatory and institutional framework for the arrangements of work-life balance and related problems was done with a criteria grid and a glossary. The written compilation 'Criteria for Work Life Balance Measures in Higher Education and Research' was discussed at the kick off meeting on 22-23 September 2009 in Stockholm. The partners then also agreed on the aims of the project and the common approach. A homepage of the partnership was built up. The unions worked on their national strategy papers to prepare the next workshop in London on 1-2 February 2010. The results of the discussions in London were brought into a proposal for a Joint Strategy, which was discussed and agreed upon at the last workshop in Berlin on 17-18 June 2010.

During the three workshops we also made some study visits and invited researchers. Short descriptions of examples of good practises can be found in Annex 2.

Apart from the lessons learned by the participating unions and the impact on the work-life balance issues in academia in Germany, United Kingdom and Sweden we would like to point at the possibility of disseminating and progressing the project outcomes in appropriate ways through the European Education Social Dialogue and the Bologna Process.

We also believe that there are lessons for good practice in inter-union collaboration on projects like this, and in particular we would urge ETUCE and EI to be more proactive in facilitating and encouraging inter-union collaboration on projects.

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## Executive summary

We are convinced that academic work—often regarded as a ‘mission’—would gain in quality by encouraging a workplace culture which allows the university teachers and researchers, including doctoral candidates, to lead a full life inside and outside paid work. One obvious reason for this is that women today are heavily underrepresented on the top positions as professors, less than 20% in all our countries. When qualified and well educated women are less likely to exploit their full potential in academia it is a loss, not only for the individual but also for higher education institutions – and in the end for society. Apart from the quality aspect the justice aspect through equal opportunities also has to be considered.

Our findings in section 1, where we look at the academic workplaces in the United Kingdom, Sweden and Germany, are that the combination of teaching and research work with caring responsibilities for children, handicapped, elderly or sick relatives is perceived as problematic by women, but frequently also by academia. The academic culture, dominated by passionate men, affects women as a group and as individuals but also individual men who have any kind of caring responsibilities and *all* those individuals who have other interests and obligations apart from work. We are convinced that such outside experiences and perspectives would improve the quality of academic work. If higher education institutions want to be attractive workplaces for highly not only for qualified women but also for highly qualified men, work-life balance arrangements must be made an integral part of the academic workplace culture.

In section 2 concerning improvement proposals we initially agree upon five common goals to achieve work-life balance for university teachers and researchers:

- 1 for the sake of justice and for the sake of quality of higher education and research, to make the academic career equally attractive and feasible to women and men
- 2 to fight the hidden prejudices/attitudes in higher education institutions
- 3 to have greater flexibility in working arrangements
- 4 to extend work-life balance options to those without children; work-life balance options should be open to *all* university teachers and researchers, with or without children
- 5 to improve work-life balance as a part of the unions’ fight for fair salaries and reasonable working conditions.

In this section we also list various examples of actions which can be taken to reach these goals. Some of the actions have already been successfully implemented, whereas some have been found in union policy documents and some are new and not yet fully developed.

Finally, we make suggestions on actions to be implemented at European level (section 3.1), by the European Commission and within the Bologna process. In section 3.2 we present actions to be taken at national and institutional levels in the United Kingdom, Sweden and Germany respectively. In the very last section we offer some advice to other European unions and to EI/ETUCE (section 3.3).

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# Background

## Our understanding of Work-life balance and equality

A definition of **Work-life balance** has been made by the Work Foundation<sup>1</sup>:

*Work-life balance is having a measure of control over when, where and how you work, leading to being able to enjoy an optimal quality of life. Work-life balance is achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society.*

Our understanding of work-life balance is based on this broad definition. However, we have found it necessary to add some specific aspects to the subject in our context.

Our main focus is on the equality dimension, since this is generally considered to be a problem in higher education institutions. In spite of good representation of and good academic results by female students for a long period of time few women can be found in the highest academic positions in Germany (17%), United Kingdom (19%) and Sweden (19%) and elsewhere.

Therefore, this goal for equality between men and women<sup>2</sup> should be added:

*Women and men should have the same power to shape society as well as their own lives.*

Moreover, we recognise that differing individual circumstances mean that the ideal work-life balance will be specific to the individual. Our main concern is that a life outside university is not only accepted, but also encouraged and appreciated for every employee, independent of position in higher education institutions.

Lastly, work-life balance is often a question of 'family', but not defined only as heterosexual couples with children. Our broader definition includes single parents, partners in same-sex relationships as parents, as well as other forms of house-holds in which people take responsibility for each other, for example caring for elderly, disabled or sick people. In addition, it must be remembered that single academics also have a right to strike a balance between their work and their outside life. Therefore, we need regulation which leaves room for specific arrangements due to individual living conditions and which are not predominated by a unidirectional (male) definition of the workplace culture.

## Is Work-life balance a special issue for higher education

It can well be argued that work-life balance is important to all working individuals, but our joint experiences are that higher education institutions house a special tradition where teaching and in particular research is regarded as a 'mission' that allows for no or little outside life, be it family, political engagement or hobbies. The concept of academic work as a mission is

<sup>1</sup> **The Work Foundation** is a British not-for-profit foundation that provides Consultancy and Research to the UK business, governmental and not-for-profit community.

<sup>2</sup> The goal is a translation of the Swedish governmental goal for equity.

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double-edged: on the one hand it raises the status of the academic profession as it marks those in it as gifted and special, chosen by their career rather than the reverse. On the other, it is a hindrance for achieving work-life balance as it requires the individual to put work before every other demand on their time and on their mind. This concept is so internalised that few dare voice scepticism or indeed even perceive their own lives in this light. Our three organisations are, however, convinced that university teachers will do a better job as teachers and researchers if they lead a *full* life. We support any effort to demystify the academic workplace and generate a view of the profession that presents it as a normal field of work—a career to be chosen, or rejected, in the same way other careers are.

We also agree that the poor representation of women in the highest positions is a problem that needs addressing, not only for the sake of justice through equal opportunities but also from a quality angle. If qualified and well educated women are less likely to exploit their full potential it is a loss. These losses are not only for the individual but also for higher education institutions—and in the end for society.

The present situation for women in higher education is often described as ‘the leaky pipe’. We have, however, decided not to use this term since it gives the impression that we are dealing with a passive, inevitable system that cannot be changed by individuals, or by pursuing strategies like this one. Furthermore, a recent Swedish dissertation has shown that women do not leave higher education more often than men, but rather the opposite. However, the men who stay are promoted faster.

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# 1 Snapshots from the United Kingdom, Sweden and Germany

## 1.1 Short characteristics of the academic careers in our three countries

This strategy will start by short descriptions of the academic workplaces in our three countries and an attempt to characterize the various types of problems especially women are facing when trying to pursue an academic career. We are fully aware that we cannot give the full picture of these problems, but we intend to highlight those that from a union perspective relate to the aim of our project, ie the balance between career/working life and personal responsibilities and interests/free time. We will thus try to point to various structural problems that are important from a work-life-balance perspective.

### 1.1.1 THE UK ACADEMIC CAREER

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In the UK, there are considerable differences in all respects, including staff structure, between the 'pre-92' and 'post- 92' universities. 1992 was the year when the polytechnics were re-designated as universities. Roughly speaking, the pre-92 universities are more elite and traditional. One of the biggest divides in all universities is between those on permanent full-time contracts, and those on part-time and/or fixed-term contracts.

There are three types of employment function for UK academics: teaching-only, research-only, and teaching-and-research. The vast majority of teaching-only contracts are part-time. The majority of researchers are on fixed-term contracts. The contract regarded as the norm for full-time academics is teaching and research.

The hierarchy within the teaching and research career path can be defined as: junior lecturer; senior lecturer; principal lecturer; and professor/head of department.

Within the research career path the hierarchy is: research assistant; research fellow; senior research fellow; reader; and professor. There is some movement between these career paths.

At the top of the tree comes the chief executive, usually called the vice-chancellor.

Needless to say there are gender issues in all these areas. The current data quoted below all come from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), unless otherwise stated.

### **One third of academic staff is part-time and 36% have fixed term contracts**

The number of academic staff employed in British Universities has gone up steadily year by year, from 127,000 in 1995 to 175,000 academic staff (excluding atypical) in 2007-2008.

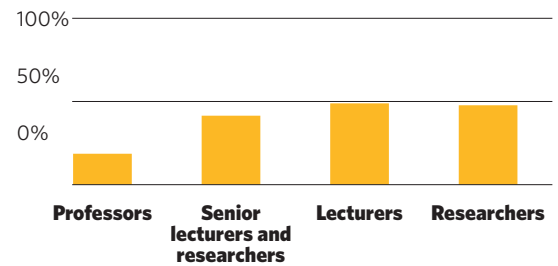
One third of the staff was part-time. 64% of *all* academics were on permanent or open-ended contracts; 25% of research-only academics were on permanent contracts (increased recently), whereas almost half (49%) the teaching-only staff was on permanent contract; and 90% of teaching-and-research academics were on permanent contract.

### **Women more often work part-time and more often as research-only or teaching-only**

In 2007-2008, 46% of research-only academics were women. In 2007-2008, 72% of total female academics were UK nationals, but only 62% of research-only academics were UK nationals. In 2007-2008, 37% of full-time academic staff were female; 56% of part-time academics were female. In 2007-2008, half of full-time teaching-only academics were female;

42% of full-time research-only were female; 33% of full-time academics were female. In 2007-2008, 19% of professorial staff (both full- and part-time) were female; 37% of senior lecturers and researchers were female; 48% of lecturers were female; 46% of researchers were female.

**2007-08 Female % of UK academic staff**



Only 16% of vice-chancellors in Britain are women.

### **The gender pay gap has not changed for the better**

The gender pay gap in British universities remains distressingly high, and has barely shifted in recent years. According to the HESA statistics, based on the average full-time salary, the gap was practically unchanged from 1995 to 2005. HESA statistics for 2005 gave average annual pay of full-time women lecturers as £35,250 and for men it was £41,053. Female average pay was thus 86% of their male colleagues. The Office for National Statistics, which publishes annual figures for earnings of all employment groups, uses a slightly different formulation, and leaves out researchers. On their statistics, published in November 2008, the gender pay gap for academics has actually slightly worsened over the decade, and now stands at 18%.

In 2004, the trade unions in the HE sector all signed up to a 'Framework Agreement', on pay. All staff who work in universities, from professors to cleaners, have been assigned to a grade within the common framework. One of the agreement's aims was to help to achieve equal pay, with a commitment to conduct equal pay reviews. This latter is only just starting to happen however, although the Framework was supposed to be implemented by 2006.

Very depressingly, so far the Framework seems to have had little effect on gender equality. The pay gap has not decreased, and evidence from the small number of universities which have already assimilated staff onto the new pay and grading structures show that the pattern of the proportion of female academics decreasing with seniority is continuing under the Framework deals, despite the use of job evaluation. The pattern shows about 50% of women at the top of the 'researcher/junior lecturer' scale, 40% at the top of the lecturer scale and 20% at the top of the senior lecturer scale. A further cause for concern is that the pay grades under the framework agreement have additional performance-related contribution points on top, and data on performance-related pay before the introduction of the Framework Agreement showed that male academics were 1.5 times more likely than female academics to get performance-related pay.

## **1.1.2 THE SWEDISH ACADEMIC CAREER**

### **Men dominate the higher positions and women the lower positions**

The table at the top of the opposite page shows the present five positions as university teachers and researchers in Sweden and the number of full-time equivalents per category and gender in 2008.



	Professor	Senior lecturer	Post doctoral fellow	Researcher	Junior lecturer
Women	794 (19%)	2,592 (40%)	494(44%)	2,008 (45%)	3,265(56%)
Men	3,407 (81%)	3,847 (60%)	630 (56%)	2,489 (55%)	2,571 (44%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,201</b>	<b>6,439</b>	<b>1,124</b>	<b>4,497</b>	<b>5,836</b>

The teacher position as junior lecturer is the only one which does not require a doctorate and also the only one where women dominate. Any junior or senior lecturer has the right to be evaluated for promotion to senior lecturer and professor respectively.

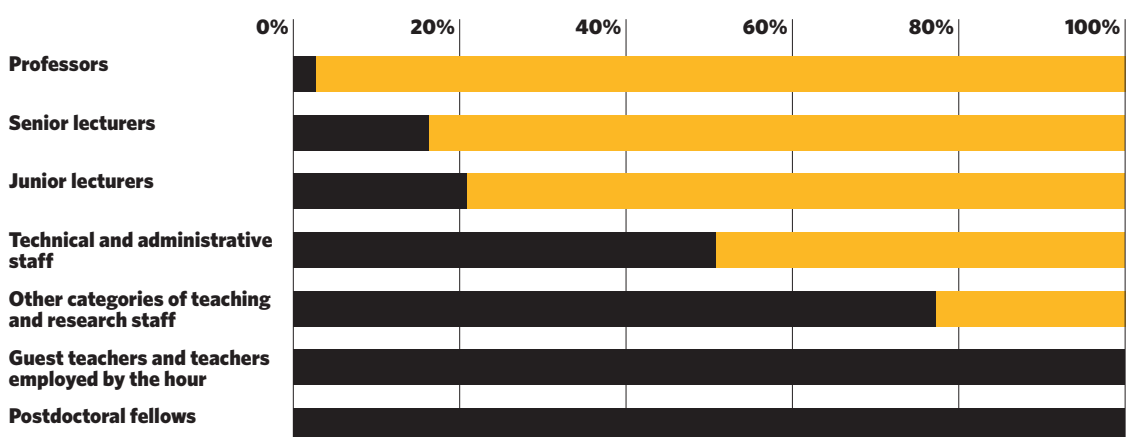
In leading posts, such as vice-chancellor, board chairman and board member, the gender distribution is acceptable. These posts are practically all, at least formally, appointed by the government. The deans are elected by the members of faculty and their gender distribution mirrors that of the professors, ie only 20% are women.

### Men dominate all subject fields but one

There are considerable differences between subject fields, but the majority of teachers and researchers are men in practically all fields. The male predominance is greatest in technological sciences, where 81% of researchers are men. The only field where women dominate is health sciences, where 85% are women. But men are also pre dominate in higher positions, even in subject areas with an even gender distribution or where women are in majority. The only exception is health sciences where 71% of the professors are women, but it should be noted that there are relatively few professors in this field<sup>3</sup>.

### One third of the academic staff is on fixed term contracts, women more often than men

In 2008 two thirds of the research and teaching staff held *permanent positions*<sup>4</sup> and one third held *fixed term contracts*. The diagram below shows the distribution of permanent positions (black) and fixed-term contracts (yellow) in each teacher category<sup>5</sup>.



In 2008, 30% of the men and 38% of the women had a fixed term contract.

<sup>3</sup> *Women and Men in Higher Education*, Högskoleverket rapport 2008:48R (this report is downloadable from [www.hsv.se](http://www.hsv.se)).

<sup>4</sup> Until further notice, ie the person can be given notice if the HEI does not get sufficient funding.

<sup>5</sup> *Kvinnor och män i högskolan*, Högskoleverket rapport 2008:20R.

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### **It is not only a matter of time before women make it to the top positions**

The first step on the academic career, the doctoral studies, shows an almost even gender distribution among the beginners and this has been the case for almost 15 years (47% in 2008). In 2008 also 47% of the doctorates were awarded to women. There are, however, great variations between different subjects. Women are a majority in all fields except engineering and natural sciences.

So, one might argue that it is just a matter of time before the same proportions will be found at the highest positions. A study made by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (Högskoleverket 2006) on previous cohorts of doctoral candidates indicates, however, that that will not be the case. According to this study proportionally twice as many male doctoral candidates of all age cohorts studied have reached the position as professor as their female doctoral colleagues.

### **The gender pay gap mainly mirrors the female representation on the various positions**

Within each career step there are fairly small differences between men and women. This is shown in the table below showing the quota between the median salaries for female and male Swedish university teachers in November 2009.

	<b>Humanities, theology and arts</b>	<b>Social sciences</b>	<b>Technology and natural sciences</b>	<b>Medicine and dentistry</b>	<b>All faculties</b>
<b>Doctoral candidates</b>	99.1%	101.3%	98.3%	98.3%	99.2%
<b>Post doctor</b>	*	*	*	*	102.8%
<b>Senior fellow</b>	100%	96.5%	98.2%	96.3%	99.6%
<b>Junior lecturer</b>	97.7%	98.4%	95.5%	98.9%	97.2%
<b>Senior lecturer</b>	98.3%	98.9%	97.7%	92.7%	97.3%
<b>Professor</b>	99.4%	99.1%	101.2%	100.1%	99.4%

\* No data available

The biggest gaps exist within junior and senior lecturers, where the gaps are 1.1-4.5%, whereas the gaps for the other teacher positions are much smaller, especially among professors, where the gaps are practically non-existing. The problem is, however, that those positions rarely are reached by women.

## **1.1.3 THE GERMAN ACADEMIC CAREER**

### **The German female students and doctoral candidates are fewer than in most countries**

Unlike other European countries, the proportion of female students in Germany has yet to reach 50% (48% in 2007). The country ranks among those four with the smallest number of female students among OECD countries, together with Liechtenstein (32%), Japan (41%) and Turkey (43%). Since 2003, the percentage of women who passed their graduation exam is slightly higher than the number of female students. The 50% was reached for the first time in

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2006. But while 54% of the bachelor graduates were women in 2007, only 41% of the master graduates were female.

The proportion of female doctorate graduates has continuously increased during the last years; in 2007 it was 42%. The total increase of doctorates awarded during the last ten years is mainly a result of the increased number of female Ph Ds.

### **The traditional '*habilitation*' is still the main post doctoral career path within universities**

The post-doc qualification period earlier had the clear focus towards a career as a professor. Developments in recent years have made a change in this respect. The traditional qualification, the post-doctoral thesis ('*habilitation*'), which is the prerequisite for becoming a professor, was complemented by the introduction of the junior professorship in 2004, which was complemented with tenure-track options that did not exist before. But since the number of such positions remains very small, and tenure-track is more an exception than the rule, the post-doctoral qualification period is also used by post doctors with an extra-mural perspective. The post-doctoral stage has been criticised for being the key to several problems regarding young researchers: lack of independent research opportunities, high initiation age due to long qualification periods, long and insecure career perspectives. Two thirds of those finishing their '*habilitation*' (around 2,000 per year; 23% were women in 2008) are employed inside a university. The alternative junior professorship (around 800 persons) is thus far less important. A further alternative way to a professorship is the *Leadership of an Independent Junior Research Group* within the *Emmy-Noether-programme*. This programme has covered only around 500 researchers since its beginning in 1999 and is also far less important than the '*habilitation*'. Furthermore, researchers have a feeling of uncertainty towards these alternatives, since the '*habilitation*' is still implicitly expected in the German academic system.

The number of junior professors has increased since its introduction. In 2008 36% were women. Since the average qualification period of a junior professor is meant to be six years (with a first evaluation round after three to four years), final results and information about the success of this new structure are yet to be revealed. However, there is some quantitative information about the junior professors as well as qualitative evaluation of current position holders. One observation being that the subject makes a difference, eg only 25% of all junior professors in engineering sciences were women in 2008, whereas they were 47% in linguistics and literature studies.

### **Female professors are still very few**

In 2008, 38,564 professors were working in German higher education institutions, according to official statistics. This comprises junior professors, who statistically belong to the group of professors, even though they are still qualifying for this position, as well as full professors in different staff categories. Of those, 6,725 (17.4%) were women (DESTATIS 2008). The proportion of female full professors was 17% in 2008.

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### **The academic career has been described as unattractive for a long time**

The German academic career, originally distinguishing mainly between professors and junior staff ('*Wissenschaftlichem Nachwuchs*'), has been identified as unattractive due to the long period of insecure short-term employment and the lack of independence in research. Already in the 1990s junior staff in teaching and research was estimated to carry more than two thirds of the total workload in research and higher education. This proportion has been estimated to be even higher today. Today only one fifth of all research positions are permanent positions. Legally, positions can be announced as a tenure-track position, but many organisations and institutions look upon them as a door opener for nepotism. However, there are many aspects to this debate. The negative situation for young researchers has led to a broader discussion on the structure of scientific jobs and advocates for an increased number of tenure-track positions.

Also the structure of the higher education scene in the states ('Länder') differs for many reasons. As a result of this, both the legal situation in academic careers as well as the recruitment of researchers differs between the states. Since the constitutional change in 2006 the federal legislative competence framework regarding higher education is no longer valid. Therefore the staff regulations within the former higher education framework law are no longer mandatory for the federal states. The states can establish their own legislation for academic staff in the future. The sole national legislation remains in the area of employment law, including temporary arrangement regulations for academic staff.

### **The gender pay gap**

The main reasons for the German gender pay gap are

- a higher proportion of avocationally working female researchers,
- a greater importance of part-time activities for female academic staff, and
- the underrepresentation of women in highly remunerated status groups, i.e. professors.

More than one third of female researchers in academia (2008: 33.8%), but only one fifth of the men (21%) is working in avocational jobs. The majority of them are working as part-time and temporary assistant lecturers ('*Lehrbeauftragte*'), whose task originally was to integrate practical knowledge into teaching. In reality though, and especially at universities, they often take on regular teaching tasks for long periods. According to a Berlin study on average 10% of regular teaching at universities is provided by such assistant lecturers. Women tend to perform this kind of badly paid and hardly valued work for longer periods of their academic career than their male colleagues—often for more than 20 years. Such a lectureship does not include employment status at a university. The 'fake self-employment' is often paid less than what the qualification calls for. In comparison with fully-employed teaching personnel they receive less payment, have unsecure employment, unsatisfying professional and institutional integration, a lack of access to scientific networks, and incomplete social insurance. The majority of

assistant lecturers categorized their own situations as precarious—according to a survey on the situation in the federal state Berlin.

Part-time employment is wide-spread among the regular staff, too. Almost half of the women work part-time (49.2%). Among male researchers this is only true for every fourth (25.5%). The research qualifications are no longer the reason for working part-time, but the limited financing by third-party funds. This type of funding has grown and brings about insecure 'project-dependent careers' with short contract periods and (involuntary) part-time work.

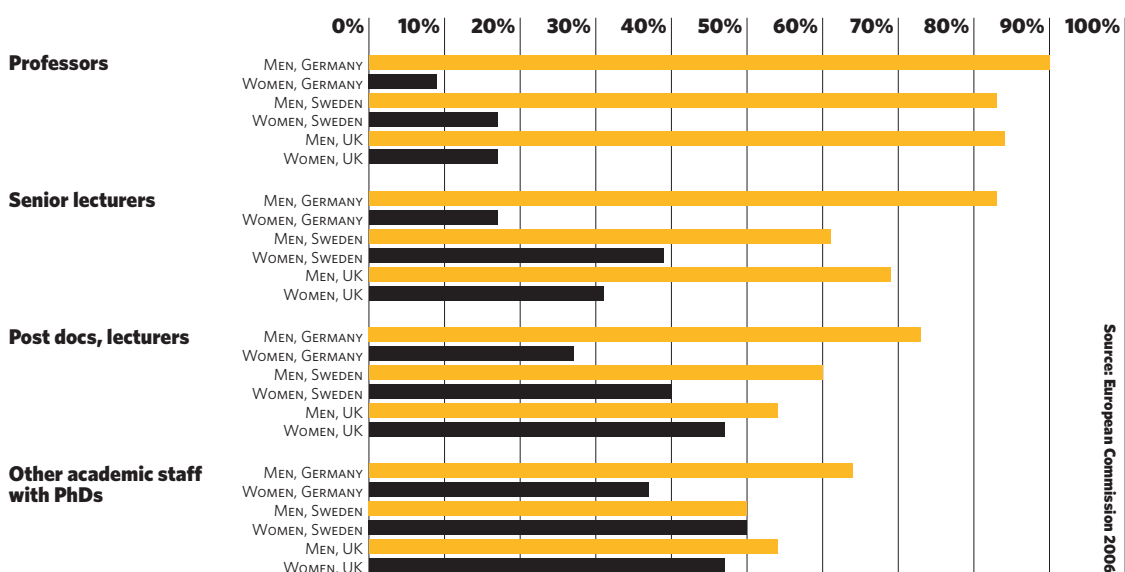
Currently only 17% (2008) of the professorships are held by women. And within the professorships there are fewer women with a C4 salary (final stage of basic salary without additional payments of €6,091 pre-tax). This stage is reached by 25% of the male professors, but only by 13% of the female professors. However, on a pro-rata basis more women can be found on less endowed C2 professorships (€4,750)<sup>7</sup>.

Only 10.4% of vice-chancellors in Germany were women in 2009 (GWK).

### All three countries have a low proportion of female professors

Even though the academic careers differ from country to country, there are some common characteristics of the careers in our three countries. All countries show a low proportion of women in higher positions, ie among professors. But as can be seen in the diagram below, showing the percentage of female and male staff in higher education institutions in Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom, the proportion is low even in post doctoral positions, especially when compared to the proportion of doctorates awarded to female doctoral candidates. Even if women qualify for an academic career they seem less likely than men to stay. Why is that?

#### 1.1.4 COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF ACADEMIC CAREERS IN THE THREE COUNTRIES



<sup>7</sup> There are no statistics for the pay gap for other teacher categories.

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### **The academic career is uncertain and unforeseeable, especially for post doctors**

One obvious conclusion when looking at the previous descriptions of the academic careers in our respective countries is that the career paths are uncertain and unforeseeable and often include long periods of fixed term contracts. The initial post doctoral periods, generally abroad, are in most cases funded with scholarships without the social security that alternative careers outside academia offer. All these factors might repel *any* young person, but statistics show that female PhDs seem to choose alternative careers to a greater extent than male PhDs. Men seem to accept post doctoral scholarships and long periods of short term contracts more easily. One reason is that the postdoctoral period often coincides with parenthood, and women are generally expected to bear the brunt of responsibility for small children, a situation which calls for economic and geographical stability.

### **The academic world is tough and hidden discrimination makes it even tougher for women**

Having passed the postdoctoral period the positions still does not necessarily offer employment security. Even when a permanent position is reached, the working situation is still demanding and stressful because of the constant need to apply for research funding, fight for publications and citations to defend and enhance your position. Also, research has shown that women are assessed unjustly harsh at every step of the career. Combined with the male homosociality, where men in power often recruit younger men at an early stage, the unjust assessment of women will lead to male concentration in the higher positions in higher education institutions. The importance of the male networks is not often recognised, especially not by men and is therefore hard to fight. This hidden discrimination can be used to explain the subordination of women in top positions within higher education, which very probably is universal and not particular for our three countries.

### **The working hours are long and the working situation is stressful**

Even if the job of a university teacher regularly is described as independent and inspiring the ideal is that one should work long hours, the higher the position the longer the hours. Hours that should be spent on research. At the same time more and more time has to be spent on administration and the fight for funds, so the pressure on university teachers has grown considerably during the last twenty years. The emerging stress on 'excellence' and strategic areas has sharpened the competition and the short time perspectives. All this has had an effect on the experienced stress among all academics, but those with caring responsibilities, more often women, are affected negatively to a greater extent by a lifestyle which requires total dedication to the exclusion of all else.

### **Part-time work is not the solution**

Several surveys have shown that full-time work in higher education institutions means more than 40 hours a week, often as much as 50 hours a week. This means that working part-time will solve work-life balance problems only partly: it will probably mean a full weekly workload

of 40 hours, but with less pay. Furthermore, those employed part-time are still expected to attend meetings and fulfil administrative duties to the same extent as those who work full-time. So, working part-time is usually not a solution to the problem. Also, a large share of academic staff works part-time not because they want to, but because they have not been offered full-time jobs. And in reality, it does not reduce the actual working hours since the actual workload often is as high as if they had had fulltime contracts. Therefore, part-time employment reduces the earnings more than the working hours.

Working time regulations are also in conflict with the predominating understanding of research as a 'mission' that asks for hard and passionate work, regardless of working hours. Motherhood and other caring responsibilities are regarded as incompatible with a career in higher education institutions. Parental leave and working part-time is usually not readily accepted. However, SULF has noticed a gradual shift of the workplace culture, which has been influenced by political amendments. Today, young doctoral candidates of both sexes are asking for decent working conditions. But even if Swedish employers are bound by law to accept parental leaves, they are not always appreciated.

## **1.2 Comparison of preconditions for Work-Life Balance in the three countries**

As defined initially work-life balance means a 'fulfilled life inside and outside paid work'. Some regulations to reconcile the demands of the workplace with a fulfilled life already exist in all three countries. Arrangements such as working time regulations, parental and sick leaves as well as child care are necessary to enable people to care for their children. Such arrangements are certainly indispensable for a work-life balance. But it should not be forgotten that people without children might have other caring responsibilities and that everyone also has the right to a social life besides work.

Another important aspect is that a balance of work and life is also advantageous for the quality of teaching and research. 'Life' is the time we spend beyond the specialized, narrow field of work in the company of people who, in turn, are linked to other combinations of life and work. Civil societal, ie social engagement in daily activities at home, but also contacts in non-governmental organisations or while practising hobbies provide insights into the world that cannot be gained by only sitting at a desk or being in a laboratory. Such experiences are of great importance to any academic in order to develop socially relevant questions, to be able to assess technological impacts, to judge the social acceptance of procedures, and so on.

Studies have shown abundant examples of where male researchers made grave misjudgements due to a restricted perspective that disregarded the complex living environment. As the traditional division of work between men and women has been gradually reduced, both parts - work and life - must be recognised as being as important to teachers and researchers, be they men or women.

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## **1.2.2** **WORKING TIME** **REGULATIONS**

Part-time regulations and flexible working hours as regulations of working time can be found in all three countries. There are many similarities between Sweden and Germany, whereas the United Kingdom leaves the responsibilities for these matters to the employers. So, the conditions vary a lot among higher education institutions.

### **Part-time regulations**

The possibility for parents to work part-time is guaranteed by law in Sweden and in Germany. In Sweden this right applies until the child is eight years old, 12 years for civil servants. In Germany it applies until the child is three years old. There is also a *general* right on part-time employment in Germany. But there is no right to return afterwards into full-time employment.

But to work part-time might not be the best way to balance work and life. It will slow down the academic career and it also means reductions of unemployment compensation, sick leave, and pensions. Moreover, women are more likely to work part-time than men. Hence, female academics are facing those problems more often.

### **Organisation of work**

Flexible working arrangements are frequent in all three countries. There is even a *general* statutory right to request flexible working in the UK. But generally, long working hours are common and also working evenings and at weekends is normal in academia. Flexible working hours will often lead to more hours of work, hours that are unpaid and hours that cannot be spent on life outside academia. So, although the flexibility is appreciated the drawback is that work tends to be unrestricted, as the work load is increasing and the pressure is high.

## **1.2.3** **LEAVE FOR** **FAMILY** **REASONS**

### **Parental leave**

In Germany there are 14 weeks of maternity leave when earnings are fully compensated. Additionally, in Germany and Sweden, there exists a right to full and benefited leave for 14 months in Germany and 16 months in Sweden, but there the parental leave has to be shared by both parents during at least two months. In Germany benefits amount to 67% of earnings (but not more than €1,800) and in Sweden generally to 80% (but not more than €2,890). However, Swedish civil servants get 90% of full pay, ie the vast majority of university teachers. In the United Kingdom leave is shorter and benefits are lower. There is one year of maternity leave. The first six weeks are benefited at 90% of earnings. The following 33 weeks are benefited at £ 123 per week, or at 90% of regular earnings, if lower. An additional 13 weeks without any benefit can be taken. But the paternity leave comprises only one to two weeks that can be taken by the father after birth of the child. Parental leave without compensation can be taken for 13 weeks. It has to be taken in blocks of four weeks until the child is five years old. Some universities have better local agreements.

In all three countries there is a general right to return to the same job or to an equivalent one. Problems arise for employees on fixed-term contracts, which is often the case for research



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projects. After taking parental leave the project might already be finished and no funding is left, so there will be no job to return to.

### **Leave for taking care of a sick child**

In Sweden and Germany there is a statutory right to leave work when a child is ill. This right applies until the child is 12 years old. Benefits amount to 80% of regular earnings in Sweden and to 70-90% in Germany. In the United Kingdom the statutory right only goes as far as 'reasonable unpaid leave to deal with unexpected incidents involving dependents'. But there are local agreements at a considerable number of universities. They enable one unpaid day up to ten days paid leave.

#### **1.2.4 LEAVE FOR OTHER REASONS**

In Sweden and in Germany there is a right to get paid leave if you have a relative who is seriously ill. In the UK the above mentioned 'reasonable unpaid leave to deal with unexpected incidents involving dependents' also covers these cases, as well as various local agreements.

There is also a right to paid leave for elected union officers in Sweden. In Germany some members of the elected personnel board have the right to leave. In the UK there is no specific provision in this regard although there are codes of practice associated with pieces of legislation which state that trade union members should be allowed reasonable time off to carry out their duties, for example as a TU Health and Safety Representative.

#### **1.2.5 CHILDCARE**

Looking at childcare, we find comparatively good conditions in Sweden and in former Eastern Germany. But we find insufficient childcare services in former Western Germany and in the United Kingdom.

### **Childcare provision**

In Sweden a place in community daycare is guaranteed by law. There is also a right to childcare in Germany, but it only applies to children older than three years. As a result of former policies in the German Democratic Republic child daycare is better developed in former Eastern Germany. In former Western Germany the increasing number of available places is still too low to match the rapidly growing demands. In the United Kingdom childcare provision is not universal and also very expensive. In the United Kingdom as well as in Germany there are too few places to compensate the lack of places in public daycare.

### **Opening hours**

In Sweden opening hours of childcare facilities are normal working hours during weekdays. Some municipalities have special night-care, but those are used by other categories than university teachers. German schools as well as kindergartens traditionally used to end at noon. Today school lunch, afternoon lessons and afternoon childcare are slowly expanding. Still, most childcare facilities in former Western Germany are open less than seven hours per day. Childcare facilities in former Eastern Germany have longer opening hours. While in Germany

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**1.2.6**  
**THE ACADEMIC**  
**WORK PLACE**  
**CULTURE IS**  
**CRUCIAL IF**  
**WORK-LIFE**  
**BALANCE IS TO**  
**BE ACHIEVED**

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some institutions try to develop programmes also for overnight stays, in Sweden this is regarded as contra-productive considering the work-life balance of the parents.

The conception of a higher education institution as a work place is defined by those who set the norms. If academic work is predominantly regarded as a 'mission', such arrangements as regular working hours, part-time working models, conditions for parental leave, etcetera cannot be applied—even if they do exist. If research quality is only measured in terms of *quantitative* output (publications, conferences etc) without any consideration to the *quality* and above all to the quality of life the definition of quality of academic work is too narrow.

The working culture defined by the 'passionate male professor' is hostile to having a family or even friendships outside work. As women still normally carry more responsibilities regarding family they will not stay in a workplace culture where family care is considered as wasting precious time that should be used for research. While women are taking maternity leave their male colleagues are starting their careers. Where only quantity counts, this 'loss' of time cannot be recovered. This might be one reason why women do not reach the higher academic positions. Without work-life balance arrangements higher education institutions hinder highly qualified women from contributing to innovative research at high levels.

We strongly believe that Work-life balance arrangements do not only improve the quality of life, but also the quality of academic work. If higher education institutions want to be attractive workplaces for highly qualified women but also for highly qualified men, work-life balance arrangements must become an integral part of the workplace culture. In order not to lose highly qualified people it must be realized that quality in teaching and research can only be achieved by offering the best working conditions.

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## 2 Improvement proposals

### 2.1 Common goals

Our three organisations have agreed upon the following common goals to achieve work-life balance for university teachers and researchers:

- ① For the sake of justice and for the sake of quality of higher education and research, to make the academic career equally attractive and feasible to women and men
- ② to fight the hidden prejudices/attitudes in higher education institutions
- ③ to have greater flexibility in working arrangements
- ④ to extend work-life balance options to those without children; work-life balance options should be open to all university teachers and researchers, with or without children
- ⑤ to improve work-life balance as a part of the unions' fight for fair salaries and reasonable working conditions.

### 2.2 Actions which can be taken

We have listed—without internal priority—various examples of actions which can be taken to reach these goals. Some of the actions have already been successfully implemented in one or two of our countries, whereas some have been found in policy documents from the respective union. Some are completely new and not yet fully developed.

- Higher education institutions should adopt the recommendations by the European Commission published in the *European Charter for Researchers* and the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers* when designing the terms and conditions of employment and opening up career opportunities.
- Higher education institutions must engage in anticipatory personnel planning to ensure maximum stability and continuity for any employment, also for employment financed by external funders, such as research councils.
- Employment, including social security, should be offered to all doctoral candidates and post doctoral positions; if junior researchers are given a grant or stipend, the funding must include social security arrangements.
- The periods of qualification after the doctoral degree have to be limited to foreseeable periods and include reasonable chances for promotion to permanent employment.
- All positions as doctoral candidates and university teachers should be announced officially; the personnel selection process has to be transparent and just.
- Career breaks for child caring and other work-life balance leaves have to be discounted when research and pedagogical qualifications of university teachers are evaluated.
- Employment contracts must be examined to remove bias and promote flexible working

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- Pension, flexible working, work-life balance and other policies should be publicised, so that there is a constant awareness of them and what effect they might have. Any changes in law in these areas as well as changes to local policies should also be publicised.
  - Unions should be involved to champion employment rights, and through their structures ensure there is awareness of career path related policies and all aspects, including gender specific, or benefits such as pensions.
  - Staff attitude survey to identify how staff feels working for the higher education institution should be considered.
  - Ways to lighten academic workload should be looked into, eg by improving the student/teacher ratio and appointing non-academic staff to undertake administrative tasks.
  - Policy for research 'catch-up' periods following return from maternity/parental leave and other work-life balance leave should be adopted.
  - Each higher education institution should have an Equality officer or office to promote and implement various policies to improve work-life balance.
  - Union representatives should be trained to become aware of the effect of structures that work against equality in higher education institutions, for example those that are gender related or heteronormative.
  - Improved maternity, paternity and parental leave should be campaigned/lobbied for.
  - Improved childcare arrangements should be campaigned/lobbied for and closures of campus nursery, where those are threatened, should also be campaigned against.

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## 3 How to implement actions at European, national and institutional levels

### 3.1 What can be done at European level?

#### 3.1.1 THE EUROPEAN UNION

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The European Commission must take its Recommendation from 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers seriously. Our understanding is that university teachers should be included by the Recommendation since they (should) do research even if their main task might be teaching.

According to the Charter employers and funders should 'aim to provide working conditions which allow both women and men researchers to combine family and work, children and career'. Furthermore they should 'ensure that the performance of researchers is not undermined by instability of employment contracts' and should improve the stability of working conditions. According to the Code 'career breaks or variations in the chronological order of CVs should not be penalized, but regarded as an evolution of a career'. These quotations indicate that at least some of our understanding of work-life balance is shared by the European Commission and already part of its official policy. Thus, the Commission should:

- develop its Recommendation according to our statement
- encourage employers and funders to sign and implement the Charter and Code (unfortunately several higher education institutions all over the European Union still refuse to sign the documents or only have accepted them with reservation)
- fund institutions within the European Research Framework Programme and other research programmes providing that these sign and accept the Charter and Code without any reservation and improve good practice in gender equality and work-life balance of their staff
- encourage national funders to accept the same policy, and
- employers and funders should of course also consider the Gender-Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation.

#### 3.1.2 THE BOLOGNA DECLARATION SIGNATORY STATES

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The ministers who have signed the Bologna declaration should:

- include career paths in higher education as a new action line within the Bologna process, thus expanding the action line concerning doctoral studies and stress that doctoral candidates are early stage researchers rather than students
- oblige the governments and HE institutions within the European Higher Education Area to improve the career paths according to the aims and measures proposed by us
- acknowledge gender equality and work-life balance as criteria in quality assurance procedures (concerning study and research programmes as well as institutions), and
- consider that work-life balance must not be compromised under the conditions of national and international mobility of higher education teachers and researchers.

## 3.2 What should be done and by whom at national and institutional level?

The problematic situation regarding work-life balance in the three higher education systems has been described above. In the following, we will, having taken the present deficits and problems in each country consideration, list our demands thereby addressing the institutions as well as the funding organisations, German 'Länder', the federal state, and also the social partners in higher education collective bargaining: employers as well as trade unions.

To fulfil these demands does not only mean to change current personnel, family and gender policies but also the existing male predominated workplace culture where research is not regarded a profession but a 'mission'. For achieving a work-life balance this is indispensable.

We are convinced that fulfilling these demands will help to improve the living as well as the working conditions in higher education institutions, which will be fruitful for both realms.

- set up a dedicated 'work life balance for all' website with links to full texts of policies and other useful information; this could be done at either *national* level in partnership or at institutional level
- at *national* level negotiate collective agreements and/or improve upon those already in existence
- conduct action research projects at *institutional level*, looking at leadership characteristics that enable the successful establishment of a work-life balance culture
- *unions* to review best practice and campaign to ensure that branches improve maternity/paternity/parental policies above the statutory minimum and to promote uptake of flexible working
- all work on work-life balance should include consideration of staff on fractional contracts, eg research contracts, part-time, hourly paid, fixed term contracts
- identify and pursue ways of holding employers to account, including work-life balance in the implementation of equality
- the external funding of research projects must always be calculated in such a way that they allow for financing of work-life balance leave as well as sick leave
- campaign against campus nursery closures and for better childcare provision
- lobby for the rights of equality officers to be strengthened including statutory time off<sup>8</sup>
- train union representatives to become aware of structures that work against equality in higher education institutions, eg those that are gender related or heteronormative
- policies for research catch-up periods following return from maternity/parental leave and other work-life balance leave should be negotiated by *local* or *national* agreement.

<sup>8</sup> At present equality union representatives do not have an automatic right to time off for union duties, unlike other 'general' union representatives, or, for example, healthy and safety representatives.

**1. To reach the basic goal to make the Swedish academic career equally attractive to women and men the career has to be made more foreseeable and transparent. In order to enhance national and international mobility the career steps and the recruitment procedures should be defined nationally, ie by government or negotiated by unions and the joint higher education institutions.**

**Here are some examples of the necessary features of such a career:**

- Employment including social security should be offered to all doctoral candidates and post doctors, ie the two first steps on the career.
- The periods of qualification after the doctoral degree have to be limited to foreseeable periods and include reasonable chances for promotion to permanent employment.
- All positions as doctoral candidates and university teachers should be announced officially to enhance quality and equality.
- Research and pedagogical qualifications should be assessed by external experts to avoid biases and ensure a just and correct recruitment process.

Lastly, but all the more important:

- Higher education institutions must engage in personnel planning to ensure maximum stability and continuity for any employment, also for employment financed by external funders, such as the Swedish research councils.

**2. The most important goal for the Swedish strategy is, however, to fight the hidden prejudices/ attitudes towards women in higher education institutions. To achieve this goal we have to acknowledge the fact that many of our elected representatives are as 'blind' as others in academia. A first step therefore has to be to train union representatives to become aware of the effects of gender structures. Thus these actions should be taken:**

- Train our union representatives to become aware of the effect of structures that work against equality in higher education institutions, for example those that are gender related or heteronormative.
- Make sure that the same type of training is included in leadership training programmes offered by higher education institutions—the workplace culture must allow for work-life balance for everyone.

**3. Some more precise actions have to be taken to improve work-life balance for university teachers and researchers:**

- The external funding of research projects must always be calculated in such a way that they allow for financing of work-life balance leaves as well as sick leaves.
- Policies for research 'catch-up' periods following return from maternity/parental leave and other work-life balance leave should be negotiated by *local* or *national* collective agreements.

- Career breaks for child care and other work-life balance leaves have to be considered when research and pedagogical qualifications of university teachers are evaluated.
- Men should be encouraged to take parental and other family leaves more than is done today.

**1. We need a personnel structure for higher education institutions where academic work is done under regular employment contracts in accordance with collective bargaining agreements which allow for career perspectives and future planning in the academic system—besides professorship!**

This implies:

- **The personnel structure must be oriented towards the profession, not the professor!**

Therefore:

- Institutions must provide tenure track options to offer reliable career prospects rather than precarious conditions of employment
- Researchers must be given the opportunity of pursuing an academic career— independently of receiving a professorship or not.
- The 'habilitation', ie the professorial thesis and examination, which is needed to teach and do research at professorial level, has to be abolished.
- Regular and permanent tasks in higher education and research as teaching, research, and administration must be carried out by staff in permanent positions with decent working conditions.
- Doctoral candidates must be offered a full-time trainee contract. The doctorate is not another period of study, but rather the first phase of a professional academic career.
- This calls for up-to-date procedures of transparent staff recruitment and leadership.
- Working in the academic system must be covered by social insurance. Thus, doctoral candidates as well as post docs must be given regular employment rather than stipends. If there are stipends social insurance must be included.
- Work performed by colleagues in administrative, technical, service and advisory capacities must be upgraded!

- Higher education institutions must engage in anticipatory personnel planning to ensure maximum stability and continuity for any employment, also for employment financed by external funders, such as the central German research funding organisation (DFG).
- The fundamental principle of collective bargaining agreements must be implemented everywhere in higher education institutions. Collective bargaining agreements should cover all groups of employees including teaching staff, research assistants and students having jobs at these institutions.



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## ***2. We need an equal representation of male and female academics at each career step and position in higher education and research!***

This implies:

- The commitment to gender equity and actively practiced equality policies must be enforced at every level.
- The quality of higher education institutions must be assessed according to how far and with how much success they practise an active equality policy.
- Legislation and funding organisations must enact binding quotas to raise the proportion of women in fields where they are currently underrepresented. These quotas must be enforced by sanctions.
- The rights of women's and equality officers, respectively must be strengthened.
- In addition to women's advancement, gender equity and equality, and gender mainstreaming diversity strategies must be developed to combat multiple discrimination and open up higher education institutions to all social groups.
- The awareness must be raised in the academic system for the hidden discrimination of women.

## ***3. We need the harmonization of family and work and work-life balance!***

This implies:

- Pregnancy and parental leave must no longer trigger the premature termination of externally funded research project. Resources must be made available by funding organisations and higher education and research institutions to extend limited contracts during and after pregnancy and parental leave.
- Parental leave must be accepted not only for mothers but also for fathers. Employers must encourage fathers to take parental leave and they must appreciate experiences gained during parental leave. There must be incentives for parents to share the parental leave.
- Appropriate educational and care facilities for children must be provided.
- Consideration for colleagues with family members in need of care.
- Overtime must not longer be a natural part of the workplace culture.
- Academic work must be judged by its quality and not by its quantity.
- Societal commitment must be valued in application procedures.
- A corresponding design of working hours and conditions of study.
- Higher education institutions should provide their employees with free advisory service to help them find a balance between the demands of the working place and their private life.

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4. Many of these demands have already been recognized by the European Commission. **The GEW calls for the compliance with the recommendations by the European Commission published in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers when designing the terms and conditions of employment and opening up career opportunities in the course of personnel planning.** Both, the Charter and the Code of Conduct, call for greater continuity and better career prospects for researchers.

### **3.3 Concluding advice to other trade unions in Europe**

Unions in higher education all over Europe should be made aware that their members in higher education systems have a right to work-life balance—women as well as men, early stage teachers and researchers as well as senior academics, parents as well as persons without children. Hence the unions have to be active to improve the work-life balance for higher education staff in order to represent their colleagues in an optimal way.

We recommend our colleagues in other European countries to discuss our strategy paper in order to check the situation in their institutions and to check if our strategy is suitable for their country. If not change, adapt, remove, or add!

We recommend the Pan-European Network of Education International (EI) and the European Trade Union Committee on Education (ETUCE) to discuss our strategy paper and decide whether it could be the first step towards a joint strategy and policy of these umbrella organisations. A common website to share information on work-life balance initiatives should be useful in facilitating such a work.

We recommend that the EI and the ETUCE and their affiliate organisations, including our unions GEW, SULF, and UCU, develop training courses for their members and officers. Our members need support in their efforts to deal with the bad work-life balance conditions in their institutions. They should be encouraged to find ways to improve their work-life balance, but also to enforce their rights. The union officers should be enabled to consider gender equality and work-life balance aims in collective bargaining, in university bodies, and to lobby for their members face to face with members of parliaments and governments.

Last, but not least, the unions of higher education should enable their own officers (full-time as well as volunteers) and employees to have an optimal work-life balance. To be quite honest: a lot remains to be done!

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## **Annex 1** Short descriptions of the three organisations

### **Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft (GEW)**

GEW is the education sector union affiliated to the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB). Members of GEW are women and men, teachers, educators and researchers, working in different types of schools, universities, academic and research institutions, in adult education, social and cultural work, vocational and language training or other forms of teaching. The GEW is a trade union for a professional community. The vast majority of our members are academics.

It is by far the biggest organisation in the education sector in Germany with 250,000 members. Trade union membership in the education sector ranges from 15% to 50%, depending on the region and the teaching profession. GEW not only attends to the salaries and social interests of its members. As an education union we also play a vital role in campaigning and implementing education reforms.

Almost 70% of the GEW's members are women. The GEW has been working for years, through its policies on women and gender, to ensure that women are properly represented on its committees and in its activities.

### **University and College Union (UCU)**

UCU is the largest post-school union in the world: a force working for educators and education that employers and the government cannot ignore. It was formed on 1 June 2006 by the amalgamation of two strong partners—the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and NATFHE—the University & College Lecturers' Union—who shared a long history of defending and advancing educators' employment and professional interests.

UCU represents more than 120,000 academics, lecturers, trainers, instructors, researchers, managers, administrators, computer staff, librarians and postgraduates in universities, colleges, prisons, adult education and training organisations across the UK. The recorded number of women was 56,616 in September 2009.

### **Swedish Association of University Teachers (SULF)**

Sveriges universitetslärarförbund (SULF) is a politically independent union and a professional association for university teachers, researchers, doctoral candidates and comparable personnel. SULF is a member of the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Saco), whose members all are professionals with tertiary education.

SULF's members are professors, lecturers, researchers, postgraduate students and doctoral candidates within Swedish universities and university colleges. SULF also has members from the Swedish national research councils.

SULF has a total of 20,000 members; almost 50% are women. SULF has local bodies at all the universities and major university colleges. Some of the SULF members are also affiliated to another Saco-union on favourable financial terms.

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## Annex 2 Good practice examples found

**UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE LONDON  
(UCL), DIVISION  
OF PSYCHOLOGY  
AND LANGUAGE  
SCIENCES**

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### **In the United Kingdom...**

#### **Culture change and gender balance in decision-making**

The division has begun a research output analysis to compare female and male grant getting, and publications, in order to determine whether differential career progression post-lecturer might be due to differential productivity. Preliminary research and analysis found no differences between females and males in either grant applications or grant success at any grade. Thus female staff seems to be as research-productive as males.

The division runs a buddy system pairing first year students with a second or third year student who acts as an advisor.

#### **Work-life balance practices**

Maternity leave is partly or fully covered, either by employing another member of staff, buying in cover for specific activities, or temporarily suspending activities. On return, staff have sometimes renegotiated their working hours or agreed greater flexibility. This has been supported by the introduction of a one-term teaching sabbatical for maternity returners. The division sent out a questionnaire to all the staff who had taken maternity leave in the previous three years, asking about their experiences. Responses suggested that there was a sense of isolation among new mothers and a feeling that individuals were having to figure things out for themselves, so the division is creating a parenting support network with a webpage and online mailing list.

**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY,  
BELFAST**

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#### **Culture change and gender balance in decision-making**

Queen's has commissioned work as a visual reminder of the important roles of women in the University, for example, a Council Chamber painting, 'Women Emerging from the Shadows'. Three portraits have been commissioned, two of women in SET.

A Women's Forum Committees subgroup has been set up to make proposals that will increase the voice of women in the university. All women were asked if they would like to place their name on the register of those willing to sit on committees/give talks to internal/external audiences.

#### **Work-life balance practices**

Queen's monitors the uptake of flexible working, career breaks, part-time working and reviews exit questionnaires to identify any possible issues. A successful flexible working hours pilot scheme has been followed by mainstreaming, and an annual survey of flexible working for clerical, technical and academic-related staff is undertaken.

Queen's Childcare Package includes after school and summer holiday provision, a voucher scheme, a salary sacrifice scheme, and a register of child minders. A major review of childcare in 2006 led to more places and other improvements. A maternity leave cover scheme gives schools funding to find replacement cover. There is also a careers package and associated website.

### **Culture change and gender balance in decision-making**

There is female membership on all the department's key decision-making committees, encompassing staff at all academic grades, not just at professorial level, and the membership changes regularly. The Finance Group is chaired by a female member of staff. Membership of key committees is known to all staff and is for a fixed term.

The achievements of women in the department are regularly promoted in the departmental newsletter and in the university magazine and annual report. A conscious effort is made to invite female chemists as external speakers for departmental seminars and guidelines have been issued to seminar organisers about the importance of ensuring a greater number of female external lecturers and visiting professors.

### **Work life balance practices**

Flexible working practices are open to all staff and operate at all levels. There have been examples of internal promotion of women working part-time, including one to senior lecturer grade. Several members work on part-time contracts including research fellows, administrative staff and two academic staff. Family friendly policies are evident in all appointment material.

The Athena SWAN Charter is a scheme which recognises excellence in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) employment in higher education. The Charter was launched in June 2005. Any university or research institution which is committed to the advancement and promotion of the careers of women in SET in higher education and research can apply for membership. All of the above universities have won Athena SWAN awards.

More good practice examples identified via Athena SWAN can be found at:  
[www.athenaswan.org.uk/html/athena-swan/good-practice/case-studies](http://www.athenaswan.org.uk/html/athena-swan/good-practice/case-studies)

### **In Germany...**

The Freie Universität Berlin (Free University) is one of nine German universities successful in all three funding lines in the federal and state Excellence Initiative, thereby receiving additional funding for its institutional future development strategy. 32,000 students are enrolled there, about 3,000 members of staff work there, among them 350 professors, 30 junior professors, and 900 academics without a professorship.

### **Promotion of women and gender mainstreaming**

Mechthild Koreuber, gender equality officer at Freie Universität, gave a report on the gender equality policy of the university to the project. One part of its policy is to understand gender as a component of academic structural development. Gender competences should be taught in all study programs offered by the Freie Universität – according to the central guidelines. Another important part of its policy is target agreements and the performance-based allocation of funds.

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Both tools serve as mutually complementary internal steering mechanisms for the active promotion of women. Target agreements are qualitative steering mechanisms based on negotiation; they are flexible, open to change. Performance-based allocation of funds is an operational qualitative steering mechanism which focuses on the status quo and rewards past performance. When the two mechanisms are combined, the result is an 'intra-university dialog about possibilities for successful gender mainstreaming policies', according to the university. Units successful in selecting female candidates for qualification posts (weighted at 50%), appointing female professors (weighted at 30%), and in women PhD degrees (weighted at 20%) get additional funds within the performance-based allocation.

### **The family-friendly university**

Sünne Andresen, head of the family office of the Freie Universität, presented the tasks and work of her office. The mission statement of her office is the family-friendly university. The understanding of family is almost as wide as within our project: 'Family is wherever people take on long-term social responsibility. That includes, above all, child minders and those who provide care for partners or relatives'. The family office of the Freie Universität provides advice, information and support in all matters concerning the balance of professional and family life at the university and is actively involved in developing a family-friendly university.



