

CHARTA

FAMILY LIFE AND ACADEMIA

We, the undersigned institutions, hereby declare our commitment to upholding the standards set out in this Charta regarding the compatibility of family responsibilities and the demands of studies, teaching, research and other academic activities. Furthermore, we apply these standards equally to the diverse forms of family existing in our society.

The Charta is tailored specifically to the higher education system as well as the academic system and the world of academia. It is designed to address the needs of students, employees and scholarship holders with the aim of promoting independent and responsible action.

We consider ourselves pioneers in the process of a social development leading to a greater focus on family and an appreciation of diversity. The compatibility of work and family life (“work-family balance”) forms an integral part of our profile development; we believe this compatibility is an important managerial and mainstreaming task that must be fulfilled in order to attain the following high standards:

MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

We are committed to fostering a respectful, family-oriented management culture in academia that establishes framework conditions and develops instruments to enable a healthy work-family balance.

Employees in leadership roles having personnel or supervisory responsibilities are informed of the institution’s framework conditions and instruments. These employees recognise the value of a healthy work-family balance and understand their personal responsibility and impact as a role model. They proactively manage matters within their sphere of influence in a family-oriented manner. In recruitment and performance appraisal procedures, the demands of parental leave and family responsibilities are treated with consideration and respect.

RESEARCH

We are convinced that successful research and an academic career are compatible with active involvement in family responsibilities. High quality research results and findings are not dependent on the constant availability of researchers. Moreover, researchers should use their organisational freedom to further the work-family balance.

STUDY CONDITIONS

We take advantage of our freedom in organising study and exam procedures to support students with child care commitments. The flexibility of our educational programs enables students to find solutions that suit their individual needs. We furthermore support a quick completion of studies and work to lower drop-out rates.

WORKING CONDITIONS

We create family-friendly employment conditions that foster professional and academic career development as well as smooth re-entry to the workforce after parental leave. Themes of family-oriented leadership and work-family balance are integrated into our continuing education programs.

As determined by need, supervisors and staff work together to identify the possibilities and limits of flexible work arrangements (regarding location, working hours and organisation). They develop and implement common solutions.

PROMOTION OF HEALTH

We understand that the combined demands of family responsibilities and professional or study obligations can result in higher physical and emotional stress, also in view of demographic changes. In order to effectively reduce this stress, we put measures in place that promote family life and good health.

INFRASTRUCTURE

We ensure the availability of the necessary human resources, equipment and facilities to provide for a family-oriented infrastructure. We offer – with the assistance of our cooperation partners where required – information, support and advisory services that are tailored to specific target groups. We promote the further development and continuation of such services, according to demand.

NETWORKING

We share our experiences in family-oriented practices with the undersigned and with other interested institutions; we also maintain dialogue with interest groups. At the local and regional level, we avail ourselves of the existing infrastructure and cooperate with stakeholders and authorities which support families. We participate actively in public debate on socio-political issues and academic policy.

The standards of this Charta are given due consideration in our steering instruments as well as in our policies of staff and organisational development. We underpin these standards with resources and implement them transparently in strategic objectives and creative measures, which we then evaluate in terms of their success. We do not hold these standards to be complete. They serve as the basis for future development.