


Diversity Strategy of Johannes Gutenberg- University Mainz



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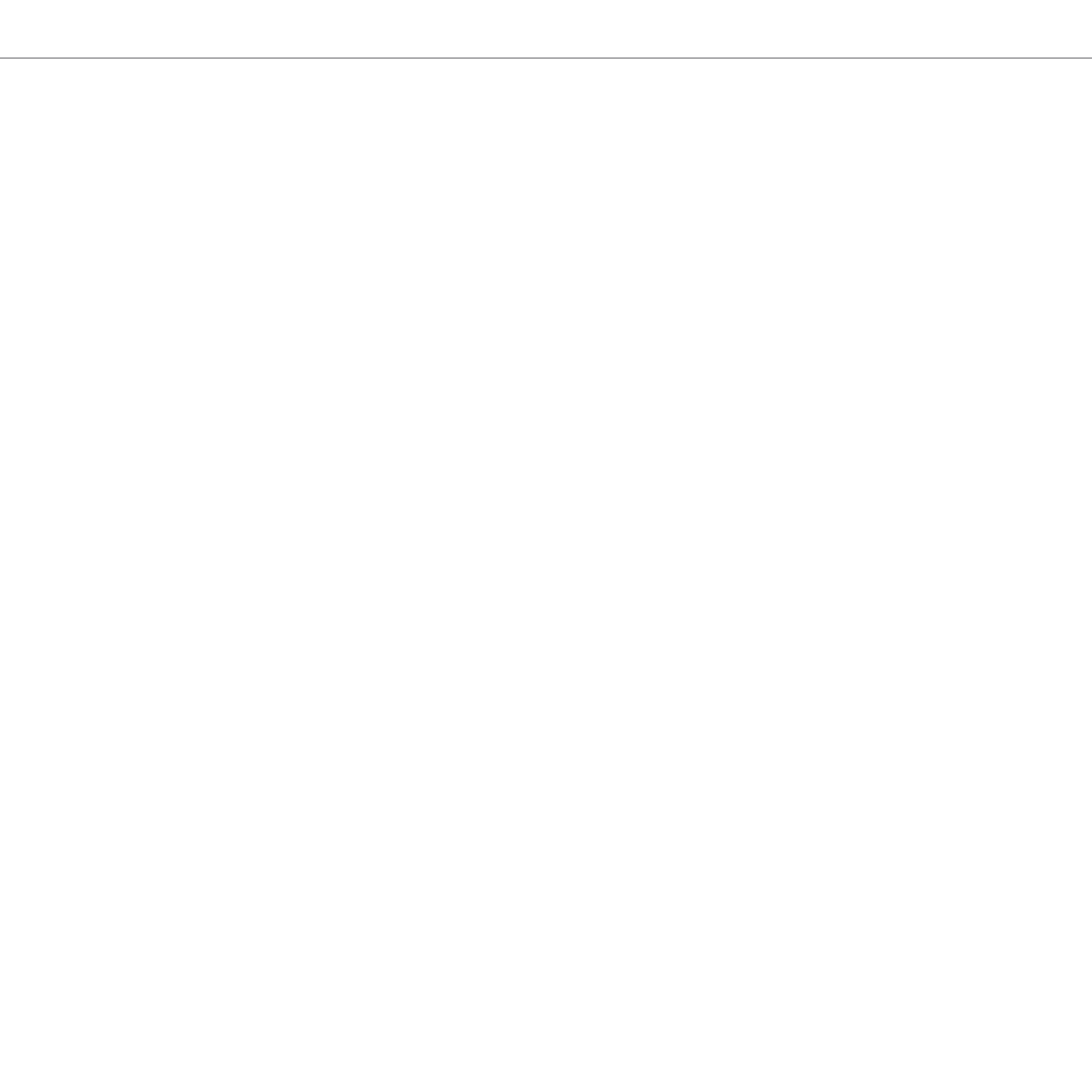
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DIVERSITY STRATEGY OF JOHANNES GUTENBERG-UNIVERSITY

Preamble

Universities are sustained by their members' diversity. JGU intends to support and strengthen this diversity. Therefore, the diversity strategy has the overarching goal of allowing all JGU members the best possible participation in university processes and the best possible development of their individual potential.

Universities provide important impulses for society. They are obligated to a liberal and democratic order as a fundamental political value. Ensuring equal opportunity is an important prerequisite. On this basis, it is important for JGU and its diversity strategy to take a stand for respectful, appreciative, and reflected interactions regarding the university's diversity. The equal participation of its members in all their diversity increases the univer-

sity's potential in fulfilling its original tasks in research, teaching, and further education.

The strategy paper is a frame of reference for JGU members. Taking into account the individual aspects of each subject, department culture, and working area, it encourages viewing the improvement of equal opportunities and the foresighted and constructive approach to diversity as a cross-sectional task. Incorporating expert academic knowledge, JGU is constantly reflecting on how and to which extent the diversity of its members can be considered when constructing university processes and structures.

Guiding Principle

Within the framework of its diversity strategy, JGU aims for the actual realization of equal opportunities. In order to accomplish this, JGU's goals are the minimization of discrimination and marginalization within its area of influence on the one hand, and, on the other, developing its teaching, learning, research, and working environments to the extent that all of its members feel accepted and respected. Furthermore, JGU aims to be aware of its members' diverse needs and, as far as possible, adapt its processes and structures to match them. JGU's actions in respect to diversity are grounded in the knowledge that a deliberate and foresighted treatment of diversity holds a myriad of chances in store for JGU, an institution always interested in developing itself further.

I View of Diversity

JGU's view of diversity aims to reflect the diverse needs and experiences of its members. Diversity expresses itself in very different ways and affects us all. Thus, it is important to promote a way of dealing with diversity that respects and acknowledges both differences and commonalities.

It is essential that

- more attention is paid to circumstances of actual and potential discrimination regarding the legally emphasized gender equality and therefore the wide spectrum of concerns resulting from the diversity of the university's members;
- more attention is paid to the interplay of different factors resulting in a risk of discrimination;
- a solution-oriented and foresighted way of handling the challenges diversity can be accompanied by is (further) developed;
- the awareness of the fact that already existing structures might have to be changed is further developed;

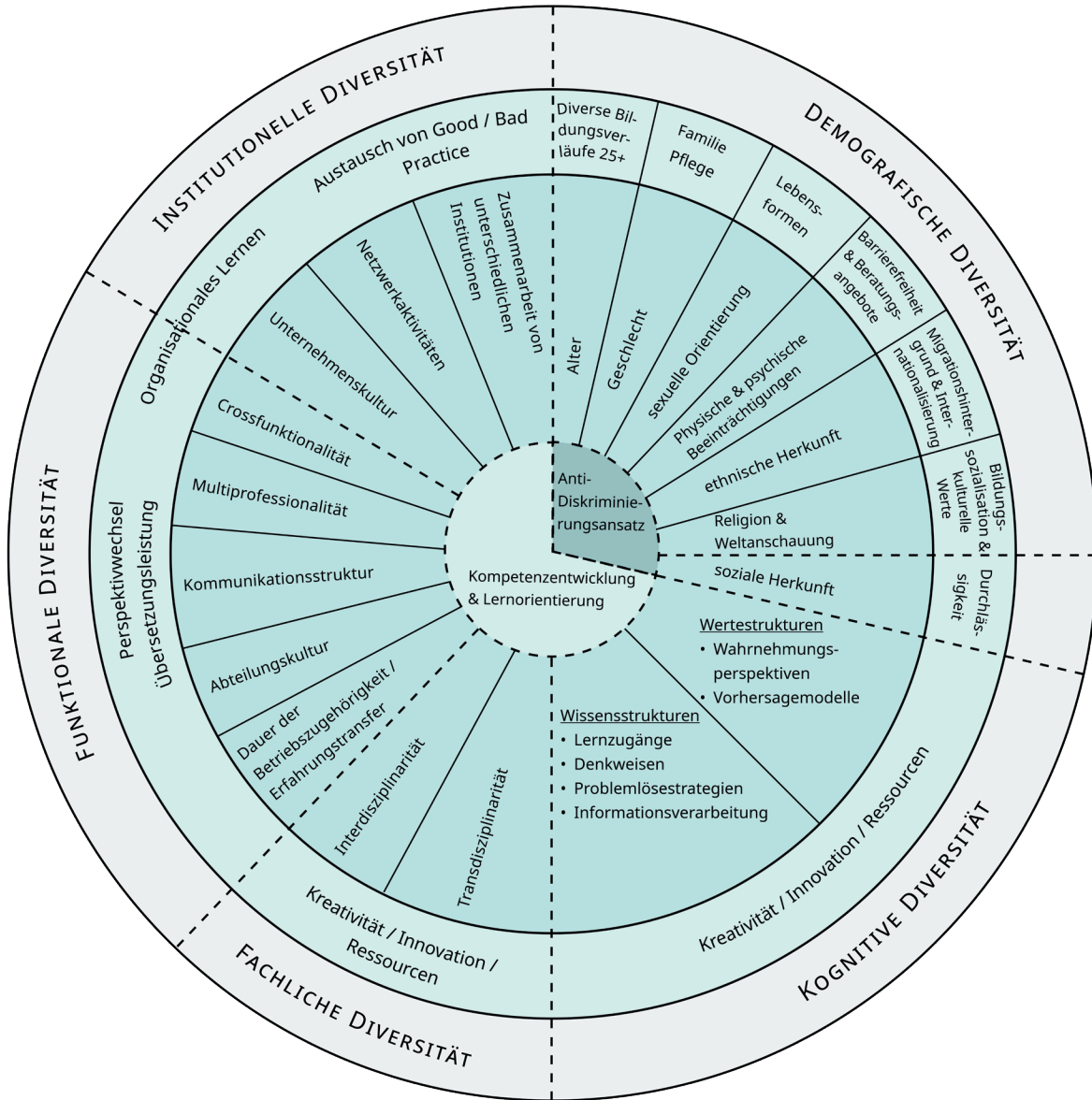
- interactions with each other are respectful as a matter of course;
- perspectives recognizing that the guarantee of an environment free of discrimination is beneficial for the further development of our institution are encouraged.

The fundamental aim is to create awareness of social power structures and the privileges and discrimination connected to them, which also affect the university environment. Furthermore, greater awareness is to be raised for the fact that people always face positive and negative assumptions based on social differentiations and that such expectations and ideals also exist in the university environment and are to be questioned and, if necessary, taken action against.

The approach is to be a comprehensive one. The implementation of equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination based on individual factors¹ such as age, gender, religion, physical and psychological impairments, origin, marital status, social background, financial situation, sexual orientation, and identity must be gua-

¹ Diversity factors refer to memberships in constructed social categories which can but must not be self-chosen and which could have implications in the university context.

ranteed. In addition, depending on the context, reflecting upon further levels (see fig. 1) in the sense of a critical analysis of existing and future university processes and structures against the backdrop of their different impacts on a diverse group of people is to be recommended. Correspondingly, measures will be implemented at both the individual and the institutional level.



It is important for JGU to emphasize that those who interpret the diversity strategy as justification for group-specific misanthropy, marginalizing or repressive identity politics, religious fundamentalism, etc. misunderstand the diversity strategy. The opposite is the case: The diversity strategy is in full accordance with the *Resolution for Tolerance on the University Campus* and augments its implementation.²

II Background

The focus of the diversity strategy was first on requirements, which would entail a more deliberate handling of student diversity related to university processes and structures.³ Successively, all of JGU's members are taken into account. Correspondingly, the diversity strategy is expanded with a differentiated catalogue of measures, which is constantly being further developed.

² in german: https://www.uni-mainz.de/presse/downloads/uni_mainz_senat_resolution_fuer_toleranz.pdf

³ Within the framework of the auditing process successfully concluded in 2017, a special focus was given to the sensitization for diversity, the possible implications for the learning and teaching context, as well as the expansion of diversity competence and the awareness of diversity for the JGU members. The previous activities promoting diversity were not only distinguished through the awarding of the certificate „Vielfalt gestalten“ (Shaping Diversity) of the Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft in Germany in the spring of 2017, but also with the add-on distinction for Diversity based on the Total E-Quality distinction for equal opportunities. In addition, JGU's diversity activities have received nation-wide attention through numerous press releases and news articles. JGU's diversity expertise has also been acknowledged within the academic landscape.

III Guiding Principles and Developmental Perspectives

JGU is actively pursuing the goal of sustainably creating/further developing an environment in which

- the best possible participation in university processes, structures, and resources is guaranteed for all members of JGU regardless of their age, gender, social background, origin, religion, sexual identity and orientation, their physical capacities and their current situation in life;
- equal opportunity access to a university education and the different training and career phases are made possible;
- open discussions and respectful interactions based on mutual respect are a matter of course,

and further,

- diversity is understood to be an asset and is nurtured/promoted accordingly;
- different socializations in academic cultures are acknowledged, respected, valued, and changes in perspective are made possible;
- centralized and decentralized JGU institutions are supported to the fullest extent when

tackling the challenges which go along with diversity.

Creating such an environment requires a proactive approach and is to be viewed as a cross-sectional task, to be considered in all areas of the university.

IV Developmental Goals

The guiding principles mentioned above result in the developmental goals for JGU's handling of diversity, explained in the following.

Structural Level

Within the framework of the work done by the Equality and Diversity Office, the interconnectedness and cooperation of all of JGU's offices and support offers relevant to diversity will be advanced, and the interconnectedness and exchange with the decentralized units will be promoted.

The *Equality and Diversity Office* supports JGU's centralized and decentralized areas through situational analyses in the development of a university-wide awareness of diversity and an appreciative, constructive approach to diversity. It accompanies the implementation of diversity management as a cross-sectional task. Aware of the reciprocal influence of and interplay between categories of discrimination and mechanisms of exclusion, it advocates stronger interconnectedness of the activities and measures for different dimensions of diversity where necessary.

The university-internal governance instruments, guiding principles, and strategy papers will be expanded to include diversity-specific aspects.

Up to this point, the governance instruments, guiding principles, and strategy papers have mainly been focused on the issue of gender and equal opportunities for men and women/promotion of women. In the future, the aim is to also take into account a broader understanding of diversity.

When shaping study conditions, JGU will take into account the students' diverse conditions, experiences, and personal circumstances.

Structural and organizational conditions which make the achievement of a performance target unnecessarily difficult or have discriminatory effects for certain parts of the student body are to be made visible against the backdrop of student diversity and, if possible, reduced. Furthermore, the awareness of the effects of subconscious prejudices on assessments of students' performances is to be further developed.

In the context of the advising, supervision, qualification, and training of individuals during their academic qualification phase, JGU takes into account their diverse conditions, experiences, and personal circumstances.

Working in academia requires room for diversity and creativity to a special extent. In order not to lose young researchers due to prejudices, traditional ideals, or qualification requirements that are not compatible with family life, a disability, or a chronic illness (for example), JGU will pay particular attention to the transition phases from studies to doctorate, and from doctorate to post-doc. Subconscious prejudices and resulting errors in selection and assessment processes will be made visible and dismantled.

When shaping its working conditions, JGU will take into account the diverse conditions, experiences, and personal circumstances of its employees.

JGU can only win *the best of the best* for the university if it dismantles existing barriers and creates the prerequisites for the best possible use of existing potential. Within the framework of this development goal, JGU would first like to focus

on the (further) development of diversity-sensitive personnel.

Personnel Level

JGU members' awareness of and competence in diversity will be further developed through relevant offers.

A sensitive approach to diversity also requires taking into account diverse needs, conditions, and requirements in university teaching, in examination and advising situations, in supervision, in administration processes, among staff and in interactions in every-day university life on the centralized and decentralized levels. On the basis of a detailed situational analysis including interactions teaching staff, administrative staff and those active in advising have had with diversity and related challenges, measures and tools will be (further) developed. These are to be suitable for the sensitization for diverse needs and to expand employee competence in their interactions with diversity in the above-mentioned sense.

JGU members will be familiar with the diversity strategy. JGU's expertise in the area will be nationally recognized.

Its members' knowledge of all aspects and possible implications of personnel diversity in the university context is a central tenet of JGU's diversity activities. The primary goal is to raise awareness of the topic's importance, imparting knowledge, promoting understanding, and encouraging changes of perspective. Second, open and widespread discourse on the diversity strategy and the resulting developments is to be kindled. Lastly, JGU is to be presented to the outside world as a place in which diversity is handled with awareness and sensitivity.

JGU's support offer will be expanded by including further measures for students and young researchers.

On the basis of critical reflection of the diversity-specific challenges and needs, as well as the gaps identified in a first survey, additional measures will be developed in cooperation with the affected institutions. These will supplement JGU's previously existing advising and support offer.

JGU's members are better informed of existing support offers and feel addressed by them.

The goal is to increase the visibility of all the target group-specific and diversity-specific initiatives and to guarantee easy access to support offers everyone feels addressed by. Self-selection effects and stereotypes are to be dismantled over the course of such an approach. This requires those advising to be sensitized and informed correspondingly.

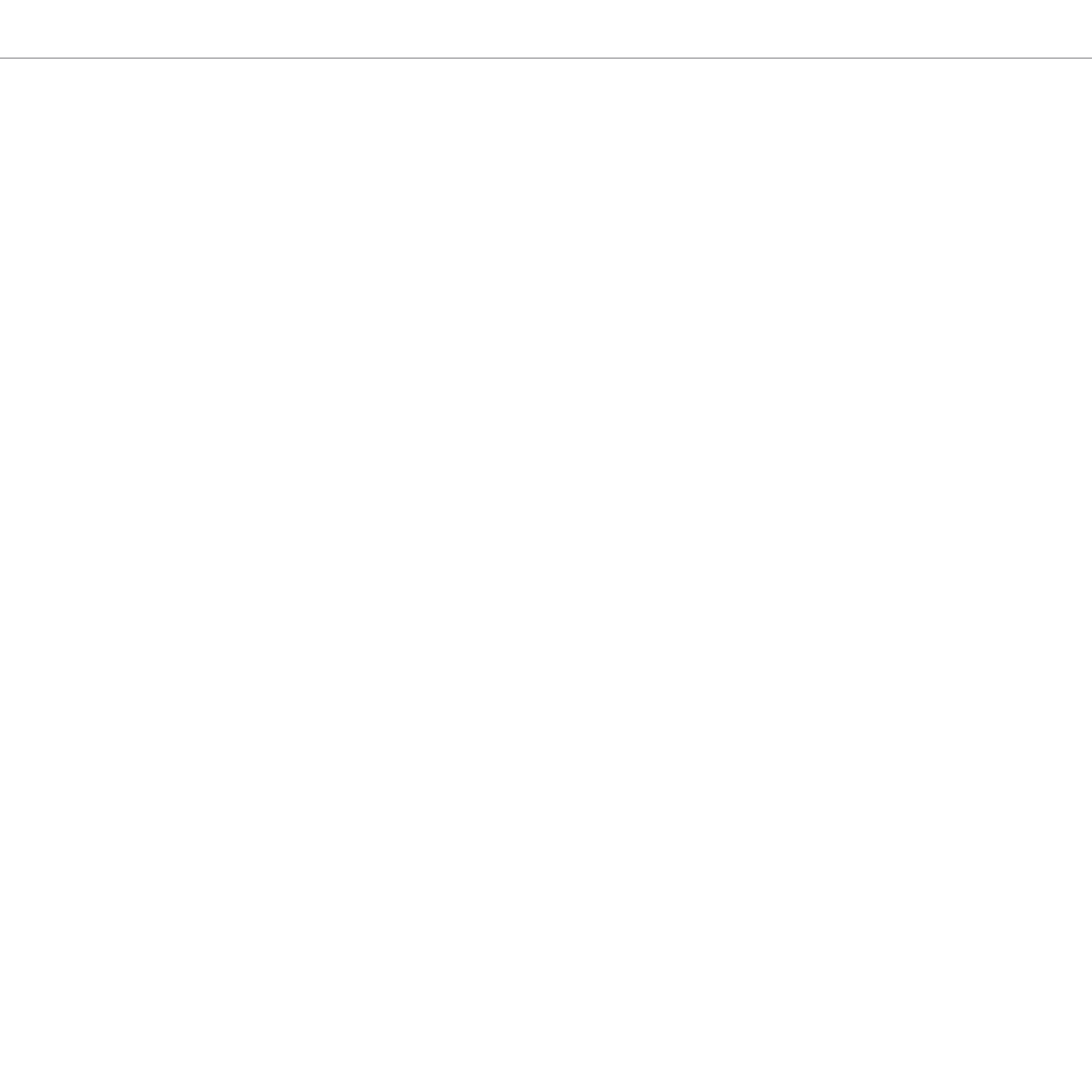
V Structural Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Actively taking into account diversity when shaping all university processes and structures is a task for all members of the university, as well as cross-sectional. The University Executive Board is responsible for JGU's strategic orientation regarding its handling of diversity. It is supported by the Equality and Diversity Office, which functions as a junction between other centralized and decentralized JGU institutions and identifies points of contact and cooperative possibilities in order to make sure that diversity-related concerns, being cross-sectional, influence all of JGU's processes and an appropriate handling of diversity thus becomes visible. Furthermore, the *Equality and Diversity Office* promotes exchanges with those whose academic work is located in that field.

VI Cooperation and Networks

For the successful implementation of JGU's diversity strategy, networks both within and without the university and cooperating institutions are of particular importance. On the university level, the intention is to guarantee the university members' awareness of JGU's activities on this topic through close contact with the representative bodies of the university's different status groups.

On the extra-university level, JGU is interested in the exchange and cooperation with (international) universities. Within the framework of the strategic alliance of the Rhine-Main universities, cooperative initiatives are a possibility. Furthermore, JGU is represented in the *KoMDiM network*, in the nationwide *Netzwerk Diversity an Hochschulen* and, currently, represented in *the Benchmark-Club* of the universities audited by the *Stifterverband*. In addition, cooperations with regional companies engaging in the topic of diversity management are to be established. JGU is also interested in expanding existing contacts to relevant initiatives of the City of Mainz, as well as other regional contacts.



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