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EDUCATION IS NOT
A COMMODITY!

We can do better!

An academic world with greater democracy, open higher education, quality teaching and research, and better conditions to work and study

The GEW programme for higher education and research policies

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We can do better!

// The programme of academic policies of the education union GEW //

For many years, the guiding principle behind the current restructuring of higher education has centred on words like “deregulated”, “unchained” and “entrepreneurial”. The objective is to model higher education institutions on production companies and manage them like commercial operations. Students are to become paying customers; working conditions and terms of employment for staff engaged in teaching and research, as well as those in technical and administrative functions, are being increasingly deregulated and flexibilised. Elite universities, autocratic management structures, stony career paths, faster degrees, the marketing of teaching and research – these are the hallmarks of this approach.

But education is not a commodity, and higher education institutions are not service providers! The “entrepreneurial university” cannot serve as a model for confronting the challenges that academic policy must tackle in our 21st-century knowledge-based society. Germany’s trade union for education and research, the Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft (GEW), which represents people working in higher education and research establishments, and also students, within the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB), has responded by drawing up an alternative model for a sweeping reform of higher education and research, as part and parcel of a broader reform of the education system as a whole. The motto for our programme of academic policies, adopted at our 26th Ordinary Congress in Nuremberg in 2009, is “democratise knowledge, open up higher education institutions, enhance the quality of research and teaching, improve employment and study conditions”.

With this academic manifesto, the GEW is demonstrating that we can do better! We can open up the sector, boost funding for higher education and research, make it fairer, strengthen both the autonomy of the institutes themselves and state and public responsibility for their wellbeing, place self-administration on a more democratic footing, strike a better balance between work (research, teaching or studying) and family life, implement gender equality, reform the personnel structure in higher education and research in a manner that reflects tasks more equitably and ensures fair employment conditions, renew course content and enhance the quality, and establish a solid basis for research as a public mission. We can do better: with this programme for higher education and research, Germany’s education union has shown that there is a different way forward.

Together with many others, the GEW has reset the agenda for higher education and research policy. For decades, as the federal states in Germany set about amending their Higher Education Acts, the “entrepreneurial university” model was adopted without question, but recently that trend has changed direction. Many state governments now subscribe to the idea that staff and students should have greater rights to information and consultation, that there should be a more balanced relationship between institutional autonomy and public responsibility, that society’s responsibility

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for research and teaching should be reinforced by greater transparency and a commitment to civil goals, that career paths need reforming and employment conditions need to be stabilised, and that our higher education institutions should open up to a broader social spectrum. The GEW has contributed to this reorientation with the campaign launched by our trade union in 2010 to make academic life a “dream job” (Templin Manifesto, also available in English under www.templiner-manifest.de), and also by helping the German Trade Union Confederation to draw up its own manifesto for higher education.

The next few years will determine whether this trend reversal brings about a substantive change of policy in higher education and research. The crucial decisions will be taken by governments in the federal states, but also at federal level and in the higher education institutions and research institutes. It is up to the National Executive Board of the GEW, our branches in the federal states, and above all our members wherever they work, to make sure we embark on a new course. The GEW's academic programme will remain an important tool in providing orientation for our trade union work.

But the proposals in this manifesto are not carved in stone. They provide the basis for an open debate which the GEW hopes to conduct – with the other trade unions in the Confederation, with higher education institutions and research institutes, with agencies that implement higher education and research policies, with political parties, with our social allies and, last but not least, with students and with the people who work in teaching, research, administration and technical functions. All of you are cordially invited to take part in this debate.

Frankfurt am Main, September 2019

Dr Andreas Keller
Vice-President of the GEW and
Executive Board member in charge of Higher Education and Research

Preamble

In the current transition from an industrial to a knowledge-based society, growing importance is attached to education and research. In this context, public debate about the way forward for the higher education system and the research landscape is increasingly significant and the political implications have become more sharply defined.

We can assume that key skills in professional and social practice will be founded increasingly on knowledge and research. Consequently, acquiring an education, research skills and critical faculties will be decisive to the future potential of our society. Education and research must play their part in reducing inequalities and pursuing social, cultural and democratic integration.

We can assume that there will be an international trend towards higher education as the norm for a growing majority of young people. That calls for integrated education systems which are designed to bring out the best in every individual student. Germany lags a long way behind in this field, and this is damaging its social potential for innovation. We need a fresh wave of momentum that will open up the higher education institutions to a broader section of society. Education is not a commodity, but a human right. Participating in education must not depend on private purchasing power: it needs to be a lifelong legal entitlement, free of formal limitations and social exclusion.

And we can assume, last of all, that society will set the bar higher for the quality of higher education institutions and research institutes as these institutions display growing social responsibility. More quality in higher education and research cannot be had simply by applying new management techniques. It is primarily driven by employees and students engaged in the academic process. So the participation of all members of the higher education institution, and equitable conditions for employment and study, are essential foundations for high-quality teaching and research.

The education union GEW is therefore calling for a comprehensive reform of higher education and research as an integral component in a reform of the education system as a whole. This reform is long overdue, and its hallmarks are social diversity, open doors, quality enhancement, democratic participation and decent conditions in which to work and study. We will measure the academic policies of federal and state governments, higher education institutions, funding bodies and supranational institutions against their progress towards these goals.

Current education policy, however, is based on cementing social selection mechanisms, placing administrative restrictions on the time it takes to study, imposing further financial hurdles and promoting elites, rather than improving the skills of a broad base. Mainstream academic policy is geared towards restructuring higher education institutions and research institutes along the lines of production compa-

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nies by applying the principles of commercial management and reducing the participation of employees and students in decision-making. Access to higher education is limited by selection procedures and tuition fees. Working conditions and terms of employment at higher education institutions and research centres have become more flexible and precarious to the detriment of employees.

The education union GEW rejects the dominant model of academic deregulation and the “entrepreneurial university”. In its programme for academic policies, the GEW describes the pillars of an alternative approach to higher education and research, a reform which will make academic life more democratic, open up higher education institutions to social diversity, enhance the quality of education and research, encourage participation and ensure decent conditions for working and studying.

We invite everyone who works in higher education and research, students and the general public to join us in debating the cornerstones for a democratic, social reform of higher education and research, developing policies and putting them into practice.

1 Open the doors: expand access to higher education

// The GEW demands implementation of the right of access to free higher education. Doing away with the current ministerial orders on student capacity will not solve the existing problems. The numerus clausus must be replaced by an expansion in the number of places in higher education in response to need and demand. The GEW calls for our higher education institutions to open up to people with a vocational qualification. It should be recognised as having equal value to an advanced school leaving qualification and should likewise entitle the holder to study for a degree. //

The “entrepreneurial university” claims the right to select students from among the applicants to suit its own profile. This is often linked to the commercial objective of restricting student numbers in order to strengthen a competitive advantage in research. When these institutions choose their students, they often apply arbitrary criteria, which can be subjective or vary from one course to another. Parallel to this, an industry has grown up around the publication of tests and superficial tips.

The GEW has demanded that the numerus clausus system be replaced by an expansion in the number of places to meet need and demand, accompanied by an improvement in staff ratios. Simply abolishing the current capacity orders will not solve the problems we have today. As long as higher education is underfunded, the case law of the Constitutional Court accepts the right to enter higher education as defined by the capacity laws as an expression of the basic right to choose a vocation.

The GEW supports measures which permit suitable choices of subject, discourage inappropriate decisions and reduce the risk that students will drop out before completing their course. The key to this is to have an inclusive system of public education that facilitates moves from one sector of education to another in transparent ways. This includes the option of taking a trial course before acquiring the entitlement to study and better cooperation between higher education institutions and schools.

In a knowledge-based society, it is not enough to acquire a legal entitlement to study in higher education purely by taking the traditional route of the educated middle classes and completing grammar school. Vocational training must be recognised as equal in value to a school education, and should likewise result in an entitlement to study at higher education institutions. The GEW welcomes the growing practice of awarding credit points for vocational or other verifiable (informal) qualifications. The higher education institutions must open up to a far greater number of applicants emerging from vocational training, adult education and life-long professional development.

2 Better, fairer funding for higher education and research

// The GEW demands public funding for higher education and research, geared to growing needs. Instead of pursuing the differentiation between institutions for the elite and institutions for the mass, the federal level should ensure regionally balanced finance for higher education throughout the country. Supplementary instruments such as third-party funding and excellence-oriented awards are predicated on solid, calculable basic financing. //

Funding for higher education and research is characterised by a trend towards privatisation, a state retreating from its responsibilities, a shift towards funding projects rather than institutions, and the use of commercially defined key performance indicators to manage higher education institutions and research centres.

The GEW demands public funding for higher education institutions and research institutes geared to the growing social demand for education and research in our knowledge-based society. This calls for a substantial, sustained increase in state spending on education and research.

The GEW is opposed to the hierarchical differentiation between elite and mass higher education institutions. It is a vital federal task to facilitate regionally balanced funding for (building) higher education institutions all over the country, ensuring basic funding in response to real public need and also creating the conditions for excellence. This is the only way to overcome regional disadvantages in access to education and research and to secure the resources for economic, social and environmental development in structurally weaker areas.

The GEW sees third-party funding as a desirable form of cooperation between higher education institutions or research institutes and bodies whose task it is to promote research or public objectives. However, third-party funding is obviously predicated on solid, calculable basic financing. Third-party funding can be used to pursue additional and short-term objectives. Higher education institutions should not depend on it to carry out their fundamental mission in research and teaching. Moreover, there are no compelling objective reasons for linking third-party funding for employment to the use of fixed-term contracts: higher education institutions and research institutes must engage in predictive, professional human resource planning to achieve maximum stability and continuity for employment financed from third-party funds.

Performance-oriented funding instruments can play a supplementary role in quality development as long as the resources provided for this purpose are not deducted from basic finance. All past experience demonstrates, however, that performance-

oriented funding allocations only reinforce existing inequalities in conditions – and this is actually an obstacle to genuine competition. Performance parameters must be negotiated in participatory processes, be geared to improved process flows, and hence also, for example, reward efficient course reforms, facilitate introductory studies or promote equality. The GEW rejects the exclusive alignment of management to quantitative performance indicators defined for commercial scenarios.

3 Abolish tuition fees: more grants and structural renewal

// The GEW insists on its demand that university studies should be unconditionally free of tuition fees, and calls for a structural renewal of the maintenance loan and grant system, which should in the long-term develop towards income enabling students to live independently of their parents. This maintenance grant should begin during upper secondary education and be complemented by an effective social infrastructure at the higher education institutions. //

Today, less than 20 per cent of students in Germany receive loan and grant payments under the Training Assistance Act (BAföG). In addition, tuition fees deter those who are entitled to enter higher education from enrolling in a course, and they are detrimental to equal opportunities for students.

The GEW therefore demands a structural renewal of the system for financing students, providing an unrestricted guarantee that students will not be charged tuition fees and establishing a grant system that is fit for purpose.

The GEW unconditionally rejects tuition fees – including in the form of loans for subsequent repayment, charges for taking longer to study, administration fees or voucher schemes. Tuition fees run counter to the objective of opening higher education to a broader section of the population, because they act as a deterrent to groups who are at an educational disadvantage. They also exacerbate social inequalities in education by making studying effectively more expensive for students from lower-income backgrounds. Student loans extend the opportunity gap into the years following graduation. The GEW stands by the principle enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN Social Covenant) that higher education should be free and calls for a nationwide statutory ban on tuition fees. The GEW is equally opposed to any fees or costs which have to be paid in order to be admitted to the course.

The GEW demands the preservation and expansion of BAföG as a state-guaranteed system of grants for training and study founded on individual entitlement. If over 50 per cent of every age cohort is to enter higher education in Germany in future, reflecting the average for all industrial countries, the resources to finance these grants will have to be substantially increased and the scheme will require structural improvement. The GEW campaigns for a dynamic, regular adjustment of BAföG grants by indexing the amounts to the cost of living and average income. To improve social mobility, enabling all students to enter secondary schools that can qualify them for higher education, grants must be re-introduced for all school students at upper secondary level.

The GEW calls for the loan component of the grant to be replaced gradually by a non-repayable amount so that young people are not obliged to begin their working lives burdened by debt.

In the long term, the BAföG grant should evolve into a form of income that enables all students to live independently of their parents. In return, all the transfers (child benefit, tax allowances, etc.) currently granted to the parents of students by way of compensation for their financial support should be integrated into the grant itself and paid out directly to students.

To study effectively, students also need a well-developed social infrastructure: domestic and foreign students alike need guidance provided by properly trained advisors; students who are also parents need free care and education to meet the needs of their children; students with impairments, disabilities and chronic diseases need the barriers to their studies to be removed.

4 Strengthen institutional autonomy; take public and social responsibility

// The GEW rejects both state micro-management of higher education institutions and the withdrawal of parliaments and governments from their responsibility for the development of those institutions. Instead, the GEW wishes to see a transparent division of labour between higher education institution, government bodies and society. Parliament and governments must define the structural framework for a democratic development of higher education that serves social objectives. Advisory boards with a diverse composition can promote exchange between members of higher education institutions and social practice. //

The inspiration behind autonomy for higher education institutions is not derived from commercial management theory, but from the independence of the academic community, as a subset of society, from state and industrial hegemony and the associated ideologies. The “entrepreneurial university” also attaches great importance to autonomy – but in the sense of formally absolving the state of its responsibilities. The result is by no means stronger autonomy for higher education institutions as such, but stronger autonomy for higher education managers vis-à-vis their institution. At the same time, the organs of state, which derive their legitimacy from the democratic process, are able to shirk their responsibility for education and research policies. Control over the development of higher education is thus removed from parliamentary scrutiny and exposed instead to processes which artificially simulate markets and competition. Through the supervisory boards, individuals with no democratic legitimation who represent corporate interests exert an excessive influence on the future of higher education. This process can lead to privatisation of higher education as a whole or of its facilities, and the path is smoothed by amending the corporate status of institutions (endowing them as foundations) and by setting up public-private partnerships.

Education, however, is not a commodity, but a human right. The GEW therefore demands that tertiary education must be left within the domain of state responsibility and not dominated by market interests. The GEW calls upon the democratically legitimated organs of state to exercise their structural responsibility for the fundamental issues in higher education development: funding that will meet needs and demand, guaranteed access to a free higher education, rules for examinations and their organisation, a social framework enabling people to study, a statutory framework for higher education institutions so that they will fulfil their tasks, maintain their personnel structure and provide information and consultation for employees. As long as these conditions are met, the GEW supports the streamlining of state regulation in higher education.

For the GEW, intuitional autonomy and social responsibility in higher education are two sides to the same coin. Just as public responsibility for higher education needs to be reinforced, so too institutions need to recognise their responsibility to society by pledging greater accountability and reporting and by enhancing the transparency of their internal processes.

The GEW expects higher education institutions and their members to live up to their social responsibilities, to consider the conditions and consequences of academic endeavour, and to reflect upon society's requirements in terms of research, teaching and studying. A major role can be played here by advisory boards which, unlike the current supervisory boards, would strive for a diverse composition, with members explicitly representing different social interests (trade unions, employers, social movements, religious communities etc.). These boards should advise their institutions, pursuing exchange and debate between higher education and its members on the one hand and professional and social practitioners on the other.

In this spirit, the GEW campaigns for a transparent political division of labour between the state, the institutions and society and opposes further privatisation in higher education. There is room for self-administered partnerships between higher education institutions and non-state or private organisations, but these can only exercise a complementary function alongside the public education mandate. Partnerships with private organisations become a problem when private interests acquire a controlling influence over the core function of public education establishments and over the use of their resources.

5 Reform and democracy for self-governing institutions

// The GEW demands the reform and democratisation of higher education self-governance, and this means that all stakeholders in the process must be involved on an equal footing. All matters not directly concerned with the core domain of research and teaching, which is ring-fenced under constitutional law, should be opened to codetermination, with all groups equally represented. The GEW wishes to see greater rights for works councils representing staff, the professionalization of management functions at institutional and department level, and a nationwide guarantee for student bodies, which must have their own autonomous funding and by-laws and an unconditional right to express political opinions freely. //

When responsibilities previously exercised by the state are transferred to the higher education institutions, the self-governance bodies acquire the competence to conduct negotiations and make decisions in more fields. Instead of strengthening the functionality and transparency of these structures, the “entrepreneurial university” erodes the self-governance rights of elected bodies, reducing them to a merely advisory capacity. The few options left to employees and students to take part in information and consultation processes are then diminished.

The GEW’s response to this is to demand the reform and democratisation of self-governance in higher education, with equal participation for every group involved in the academic process. The conditions must be created, in some cases within a statutory framework, to enable this participation to take place. The principle applied here by the GEW is that all groups of higher institution members should have equal rights of representation on governing bodies. No group should be able to outvote all the others. The majority for professors required by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1973 refers exclusively to matters of direct relevance to research and teaching. Most decisions on structural and financial policy are not covered by this rule. The GEW would like to see all matters which are not academic in the narrow sense opened to broader information and consultation procedures based on parity. In addition, the GEW advocates granting students equal representation on committees responsible for teaching matters and study conditions. Experimentation clauses should be introduced, enabling higher education institutions to test more far-reaching, innovative models of codetermination.

Higher education institution members with a structural disadvantage, such as people with disabilities, foreign citizens or women, continue to need special committees to represent them and whose members they should elect themselves. These committees should at least have the right to submit and veto resolutions on institution bodies.

An independent student body able to manage its affairs autonomously and exercise a political mandate in relations with politicians, the general public and the institution's governing bodies is an indispensable component, in the GEW's view, of the self-governance structures that exercise social responsibility in higher education. The GEW therefore calls for nationwide laws to create a statutory basis for student bodies, with their own autonomous funding and by-laws and an unconditional right to express political opinions freely.

The GEW demands greater rights for works council representing staff – not least as a consequence of the greater autonomy institutions now have in commercial and personnel matters. The scope of the legislation governing staff representation must be extended to all employees, including student assistants working for the institution.

When implementing strategies and decisions, there is a mutual interplay between greater codetermination and operational professionalism. In this context, any viable management team fundamentally draws its legitimation "bottom up" from all members of the higher education institutions. The appointment of managers by an external supervisory body must, therefore, be resolutely rejected. At the very least, the management team must be endorsed by a directly elected collegial body composed equally of professors, students, academic employees and administrative and technical staff. The GEW also advocates testing models whereby every member of the institution elects the principal directly.

6 Family-friendly research, teaching and studying

// The GEW believes that academic life should make room for family life, so that every member of the higher education institution or every employee of the research institute can benefit from equal opportunities to pursue their course of studies or their work. This includes meeting the demand for education and care facilities for children, respecting the needs of employees who care for other members of their family, and organising work hours and study conditions appropriately. //

Whenever reconciling family and academic life starts to pose a problem, still the women among the academics, students and administrative and technical staff bear a lop-sided burden, and this in turn stimulates the exclusion of women from academic life. The dominant approach to families in higher education and research is anachronistic, and has increasingly been shown to impede innovation.

The GEW campaigns for equal opportunities for all members of higher education institution and employees of research institutes, regardless of their family situation. The GEW calls for a family policy that consistently respects equality and addresses both women and men. It can only work if it is based on a definition of family that includes single parents, same-sex partners as parents, and other forms of cohabitation in which people accept responsibility for one another.

The GEW demands education and care facilities for all children, open to all members of the higher education institutions or employees of the research institute. Respect for the specific concerns of employees with children or relatives in need of care must be enshrined within the structures and culture of academic institutions.

To guarantee equal opportunities, flexible models for organising working hours must be implemented in academic life, and equal treatment must be granted to part-time students and employees and to people on fixed-term contracts. The GEW argues that measures designed to help individuals to study or to advance their careers should not depend on partners, while age limits should be abolished in higher education and research, especially for academic career pathways.

7 Gender equality in higher education and research

// The GEW demands an active equality policy at higher education institutions and research institutes, with a structural approach to tackling career pathways and staff recruitment. A binding quota with penalties attached must be applied to establish a balanced gender ratio at all career levels, including professorships and other leadership roles. The GEW calls for gender justice to be anchored in human resources and quality management at higher education institutions and research institutes, and for the rights of women's and equality officers to be strengthened. //

Women in particular still confront multiple structural and cultural barriers in academia. This is already evident from the fact that women remain heavily under-represented in positions of leadership at higher education institutions and research institutes and in professorships.

The lack of stable, long-term career prospects in academic life presents an additional disadvantage for women. At every stage in the qualification process, women drop out of academia rather than being promoted through it. The vertical approach to career development that underlies existing personnel structures does not reflect changing social lifestyles. This is exacerbated by a cultural dimension to research: the myth that academic life is not a profession like any other, but a way of life that calls for total personal dedication.

The GEW calls instead for academic career paths which permit horizontal and intersectoral mobility and allow for interruptions in gainful employment. Research funding and support for junior academics must respond to these requirements and offer suitable options. The equality remit of higher education institutions and research institutes, along with their duty to pursue gender mainstreaming in institutional management, content planning and the development of organisational and human resources, must be anchored in law. This likewise applies to the functions exercised by women's and equality officers, who still require effective powers to act and rights of participation.

The GEW calls upon higher education institutions, research institutes and academic funding bodies to take effective measures to increase the proportion of women at every stage of the academic career pathway, including professorships and other leadership roles, with the aim of improving the gender balance. Wherever women are already under-represented as students, notably in science and engineering, the percentage of female students also needs to increase. Moreover, it must be ensured that women can make a smooth transition from a Bachelor to a Master's programme. The GEW demands a binding commitment from higher education institutions and

research institutes, in the form of target agreements, that they will verifiably increase the proportion of women in areas where women are under-represented. These quotas must be backed by tough penalties. Public funding for research must be made conditional on meeting these requirements.

Whenever higher education and research bodies talk about academic quality, the GEW demands that the definition of quality and the criteria for assessing it are made fully transparent, especially with regard to evaluations of individuals, processes and institutions. One yardstick for the quality of higher education institutions and research institutes should be how broadly and successfully they operate active equality policies, implement gender-aware conditions for studying and working, promote women's and gender studies and draw on the findings in course design and in teaching and studying.

8 Higher education and research as a profession: match the staff to the task

// The GEW wants higher education institutions and research institutes to structure human resources around their objectives. Staffing structures should take their cue from professions, not professorships, and all academic employees – professors or not – should have the opportunity to pursue an academic career pathway. Junior academics must be offered reliable prospects rather than precarious contracts. Higher education institutions must establish functional posts providing permanent employment in order to meet their tasks in research, teaching and higher education and research management. The GEW demands an upgrade for employees in administration, technical services and counselling. //

The anachronistic staffing structures at higher education institutions do not do justice to their objectives. Junior academics are kept in a state of artificial dependence, with employment conditions ranging from atypical to precarious – even when their qualification cycle has been completed by the award of a doctorate. Consequently, fixed-term contracts are now the norm for an overwhelming majority of academics who are not professors but who shoulder the brunt of academic work. Under the current conditions, remaining and succeeding in academic life forces people into self-exploitation mode, with socially destructive forms of employment and working hours.

There is no recognised position, apart from a professorship, which sets an academic on a solid career pathway. Not so long ago, universities maintained a sizeable and secure intermediate corpus of non-professorial staff, but this is now seen as out-of-date, while the universities of applied science never established this system in the first place. Junior academics who are not appointed to a professorship regularly find themselves stuck in a dead-end: they are considered over-qualified for the open labour market, but higher education institutions and research institutes do not offer them opportunities for permanent employment.

Many find themselves clutching at straws in the form of a poorly paid part-time teaching assignment. These posts were originally designed to bring practitioners in as guest teachers in higher education, but with so many institutions now facing huge financial pressures, they resort to this sham self-employment to cover the bulk of compulsory teaching.

The GEW has responded to this aberration by demanding that higher education institutions and research institutes adopt the staff structures they need in order to

meet their objectives, and to do so in a manner that is flexible and less hierarchical. The GEW calls for a transparent division of labour between professors, academic employees and technical and administrative staff, so that the tasks that need to be fulfilled in research, teaching, professional development, knowledge transfer and higher education and research management can be tackled on the basis of team work.

The GEW argues that individuals should be able to negotiate the use of their own personal time budget for research, teaching and other tasks in the academic setting without becoming trapped in a professional dead-end due to one-dimensional specialisation. This also means that the system in place today, with its rigid, one-size-fits-all approach to teaching obligations must provide greater flexibility for individual teachers founded on a collective agreement between employers and trade unions. The GEW advocates substantially reducing the number of compulsory teaching hours, especially for teaching staff at universities of applied science. Permanent tasks in higher education and research must, as a general principle, be performed on the basis of permanent employment contracts, permitting stable life and career planning and enabling people to practice higher education and research as a profession.

Junior academics should as a rule be able to complete their qualification cycle within a post designed for this phase, which can be based on fix-term contracts. Researching for a doctorate is not like studying for a degree, but is the first stage in the exercise of an academic profession. Doctoral candidates should be able to spend at least three quarters of their working hours on independent research towards obtaining this qualification. The GEW rejects age limits on admission to doctoral research. In the GEW's opinion, the academic qualification cycle ends with the doctorate. The next stage is, by its very nature, a form of continuing professional development parallel to the pursuit of academic employment, and it should be founded on a secure employment perspective. The recruitment of junior academics should be based on a tenure track which opens up a range of career prospects to young academics while allowing them to remain long-term at the university – whether or not they are appointed to a professorship. The GEW calls for the Habilitation to be abolished as a rite of initiation which – not least by international comparison – is out of place in today's world.

Wherever part-time lecturers without full status (Lehrbeauftragte) undertake permanent teaching duties, they should be granted permanent contracts with full social insurance contributions.

Anyone who wishes to teach at higher education institution in a secondary capacity – perhaps because they exercise a primary profession in a different sector – should be able to do so as a contractual associate, with minimum standards respected with regard to pay, contract duration and renewal options. Lehrbeauftragte should also be recognised as members of the university, with all proper rights and duties.

The GEW remains committed to the principle of national collective bargaining agreements applying to all public employees, including those at higher education institutions and research institutes, and wishes to extend their scope to employees of all types, including professors, teaching and research assistants and student employees. Within this framework, the GEW wishes to see the provisions applied in a manner that reflects academic life, respecting the demands of employment in higher education and research. The GEW also wants to abolish the divide between standard employment law and the special laws applied to employees with civil servant status.

The GEW demands an upgrade and greater recognition for the employees in administration, technical functions and counselling, who make such a vital contribution to fulfilling higher education and research objectives by providing support and related services. Higher education institutions and research institutes should meet their responsibilities by creating functional posts and permanent contracts for these people. Enhanced recognition for their work must be reflected in broader rights for works councils to represent these groups and in improved, non-discriminatory pay grades.

9 More participation: enhance the quality of teaching and studying

// The GEW champions improvements to the quality of teaching and studying. Quality cannot be defined and imposed top down. It is the outcome of a participatory process which should involve teachers and researchers, students and representatives of professional practice, including the trade unions. //

The former practice of state regulation and approval for study programmes and curricula has been replaced by a new system of quality assurance by accreditation. It is not yet fully developed, and the solutions devised to date are by no means satisfactory. There is a risk that, under a veil of quality development, an undemocratic grey zone is taking hold around an isolated bureaucracy of experts and lobbyists.

The GEW argues that quality is not and cannot be measured in academic terms or decreed by an executive act. Just as teachers and students have different perspectives when defining the quality of a study programme, so too do other stakeholders in society. Quality is a political concept, underlaid by processes of discussion and negotiation. Consequently, any system for quality development must remain impartial, dynamic and open to correction, and must facilitate the participation, not only of groups involved in teaching and studying the course concerned, but also of professional and social stakeholders who operate in the field targeted by the qualification. Quality development is no substitute for the responsibility of democratically legitimated political decision-makers and elected university bodies, but must above all support them in their work.

The GEW supports the wider use of internal teaching and course evaluations, founded on an equal partnership between teachers and students. In this way, study targets and programmes are subjected to continuous reflection and improvement. Active participation in course reform should be recognised as an integral part of studying and as a demonstration of skills.

An external accreditation system can play a supportive role with a view to decentralised course reform and can help to ensure that all higher education institutions observe minimum standards in terms of course content and organisation, which facilitates comparison and permeability. Representatives of professional and social interest groups should be able to take part in the accreditation procedure, as should representatives of the academic disciplines.

10 Students at the centre: reform the European Higher Education Area

// The GEW supports study reform within the Bologna Process, as long as the aim is to provide graduates with the knowledge they need for lasting professional practice, to place students at the centre of teaching and study, to smooth transitions within the education system and to strengthen the social dimension of mobility in the European Higher Education Area. //

The overall balance of study reform in the wake of the Bologna Process has been negative. Ten years after the Bologna Declaration was signed, the education union GEW conclude that we are still a long way removed from a European Higher Education Area founded on promoting the internationalisation of research, teaching and studying, easier cross-border mobility for students and higher education employees, and improvements in the quality of teaching and studying. If anything, we now have less mobility between higher education institutions and a greater lack of transparency in higher education. Teachers and students complain that academic creativity is increasingly hampered by the spread of regimented learning and a decline in scholarship. Both students and higher education staff face growing workload, but the ideas that studying should be free and that the new courses should be accessible have fallen by the wayside. The guiding principle behind the structural reform of the “entrepreneurial university” is merely to make it easier to adjust to shifts in the economic cycle within the labour market, as expressed in the concept of employability promoted by the European business lobby. The Bologna Process has become a playground for restrictive economic objectives that have nothing to do with the original inspiration for the reform of higher education: cost savings, capacity limits and administrative rules to shorten the period spent studying.

The GEW supports the development of a European Higher Education Area if it truly pursues the internationalisation of research, teaching and studying, facilitates cross-border mobility for students and higher education employees and enhances the quality of teaching and courses. The aim of study reform in the European Higher Education Area must be the enduring ability to exercise a profession, in the sense of a critical reflection on professional and social practice. The yardstick for course quality is the acquisition of the skills needed to form an independent, knowledge-based opinion and to act on it.

The GEW calls for the elimination of all rigid time constraints which have no objective basis in study reform. A course of higher education should promote creative learning and must not be reduced to formal, exam-oriented, tick-box learning.

The key to successful study reform is to have enough staff to implement the courses – not only teachers, but also properly trained employees in administration and management, counselling, services and infrastructure. The GEW calls for student-centred teaching, focused on fostering academic faculties, a critical exploration of the subject matter and the acquisition of additional skills which students will need in their future professional and social practice. This is compatible neither with a teaching-to-the-test approach that promotes the mere reproduction of knowledge, nor with constant exam pressure. Instead, the GEW advocates approaches to teaching and learning that foster an active appropriation of knowledge, self-determination and critical skills, such as project-based study, learning through research, and the recognition of autonomous seminars.

Course components must be freely combinable and must encourage mobility between different parts of the education system.

Graduates who have obtained their Bachelor at a university of applied science and now wish to take a Master degree at a university, or Masters seeking to enter doctoral research should not be barred from doing so because they obtained their qualification at the wrong institution (be it a university or a university of applied science). Skill acquisition should be the sole criterion. The GEW insists that the reforms carried out under the Bologna Process should reflect the needs of male and female students equally. Gender mainstreaming must be applied when accrediting and evaluating the new Bachelor and Master courses.

The GEW calls for unconditional permeability in the new structures: access to the Master cycle must not be limited by quotas or grading. The willingness of students and professional practitioners to accept the new Bachelor courses will have to grow from the grass roots upwards – it cannot be imposed from above.

Anyone wishing to continue studying straight after a Bachelor qualification should have a legal entitlement to be admitted to a Master course in a compatible discipline so as to build on this qualification.

The GEW wants higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area to open their doors to the broad public – in other words, to offer equal opportunities to all, regardless of social origin, gender, nationality, ethnic group, worldview, disability or sexual orientation.

There are still too many barriers to the cross-border mobility of students and higher education employees. The GEW therefore calls for a right to mobility in the European Higher Education Area and for a stronger social dimension to the Bologna Process. Nobody should be penalised for wanting to study, research or teach abroad. Higher education employees must be able to port their entitlements from national social insurance systems when they go to another country. This is also the key to balanced mobility flows within the European Higher Education Area and between Europe and other parts of the world – a brain gain to the detriment of economically weaker regions with a more active education policy should not be encouraged.

11 High-quality teacher education: strengthen the educational sciences

// The GEW insists that all teachers should enjoy a training of equally high quality and of equal length, whatever type of school they work in and whatever age group they teach. Teacher education programmes should be geared to the skills which teachers will need to work in schools today and tomorrow. //

When it comes to training teachers, the federal states still predominantly take their cue from an anachronistic and imbalanced paradigm that allocates different status to different teachers, the idea apparently being that it takes a small qualification to teach small children and a big qualification to teach big children. This means that a major goal of education policy, which is that state schooling should strengthen social and cultural integration, is already undermined by the design of teacher training. As Bachelor and Master degrees were gradually introduced for trainee teachers, the structures constantly changed from one federal state to the next and even from one university to the next, resulting in a countrywide patchwork of very different models which further restricts the mobility of students and graduates alike.

Given the threatened shortage of teachers, not to mention the growing educational needs of our knowledge-based society, courses in education science which train for the education professions must be publicly promoted and made more attractive. The Bologna Process could be an opportunity to make studying more innovative. To achieve this, we need common standards throughout Germany, permeability and comparability – not least by standardising course length.

The GEW insists that all teachers should enjoy a training of equally high quality and of equal duration, whatever type of school they work in and whatever age group they teach. If we want better education for our children, the quality of teacher training in general must be improved, and the course must be geared to the skills teachers need to work in schools today and tomorrow. Budding teachers must be able to recognise differences between classes of pupils and must learn to respond to these productively. They must be equipped to offer every pupil favourable conditions to learn and to develop. Life-long learning must be integrated into the way they see themselves as professionals.

These demands apply equally to training for all teachers. Any differences in training must relate to the subjects taught, not to quality and not to the duration of study. This also means that studying to become a teacher must always mean completing the Master cycle. Throughout the period of study, equal weight must be given to expertise in the subject, expertise in education science, and expertise in subject-related didactics, and components drawn from school practice must also be integrated.

The GEW urges universities to assume their responsibility for training teachers as part of broader education policy and to fulfil this task with greater professionalism – for example, by setting up teacher education schools to cater for all subjects, by expanding research into the professional field and into education, and by forging better partnerships with other providers of initial and further training for teachers and with schools.

In the long term, the GEW wishes to see all education practitioners train together in higher education. Early-childhood teachers should also receive a higher education in future. This requires higher education institutions to enhance their resources in early-childhood development.

12 Transparent research with a social mission

// The GEW welcomes equal partnership between higher education institutions and research institutes, but calls at the same time for the institutional unity between research and teaching at higher education institutions to be preserved, instead of encouraging its break-up. The GEW demands stronger rights of information and consultation for employees, not only at higher education institutions, but also at extra-mural research institutes – regardless of their form of incorporation. Research policy must not be geared even more towards the market and profit, but must become an instrument for shaping our future in the medium and long term, resulting in a fairer distribution of opportunities in employment and in life. //

Mainstream research policy is targeted towards dissolving the unity between research and teaching. The Excellence Initiative rewards universities which distinguish themselves through outstanding research and are then able to continue building on that position thanks to additional funding for graduate schools, clusters of excellence and future strategies. Universities which fail to assert themselves in this competition, like universities of applied science, stand to lose out on research in the long term and to be relegated to “teaching universities” with a lower standing. There is also a trend towards dividing professorships into teaching and research categories. The current promotion of partnerships between universities and research institutes only counters this on the surface: these partnerships entail the identification of so-called cores of excellence at universities, with the prospect of possibly leveraging them out of the university structure. Research institutes are to be “freed” of state management and staff participation and restructured into research companies.

For the GEW, this much is clear: research is and remains a fundamental task of higher education institutions; research and teaching must constitute an institutional unity. Training students in scholarship and fostering the qualifications of junior academics can only be done on the basis of research. That is why the GEW opposes efforts to concentrate research resources within selected universities and university types, specialist departments or purpose-made centres of excellence. The result would be a more regimented approach to learning and a fall in academic standards in the disadvantaged areas. The GEW also opposes relocating research outside the higher education institutions. There are no objections to stronger, equal partnerships between university-based research and independently organised research, as long as this does not lead to a “creaming off” effect in higher education institutions and the structural hiving off of university facilities with a strong research capability, and as long as this remains a partnership between peers.

mands an expansion to staff codetermination in all research facilities – regardless of their form of incorporation. Employees should be represented in the supervisory bodies of research facilities, with half the seats and votes on the basis of parity. Programme advisory boards should reserve seats for representatives of social interests, including trade unions. The use of legislation for protecting specific interests (Tendenzschutz), which is permitted under the Works Council Constitution Act, needs to be questioned.

As corporate and industrial research is already market- and profit-oriented, higher education institutions and research institutes have a particular responsibility to gear their research to social needs and to carry out basic research. Basic public funding for research must be sufficient to ensure that the themes and questions for the research agenda are not primarily swayed by short-term benefits for extramural users. A thematically broad research landscape is essential to innovative diversity during study. To counter the narrowness that arises when research funding is lopsidedly governed by competition policy and the pursuit of growth, structures must be developed which, boosted by an interdisciplinary work environment, can help to tackle the social, environmental and economic challenges of the 21st century. Research policy must be an instrument for shaping the future in the medium and long term, resulting in a fairer distribution of opportunities in employment and in life – and respecting a balance between human and natural life, women and men, north and south, east and west, capital and labour. The GEW expects, research institutes, research funding bodies and individual researchers to reflect at all times on the social desirability of the structures they work in and on the ethical, social, environmental and cultural consequences of their research. Employees who have ethical reservations about working on research projects which give them cause for concern should not suffer disadvantages as a result and must have the right to inform the public. Higher education institutions and research institutes must systematically assess the impact of research programmes and technologies and make the records of public consultation accessible. Society has a right to transparency in research and to the publication of findings. The same applies to research carried out at higher education institutions and research institutes with the aid of third-party funding or on commission. Like the higher education institutions, research institutes funded by public resources must meet their responsibilities towards society by remaining accountable, reporting back and ensuring transparent procedures.

13 The GEW – a strong union for higher education and research

// The GEW is the education trade union within the German Trade Union Confederation. It organises employees in all spheres of education from early-childhood education to further training – including higher education and research. //

Our members include doctoral candidates, postdocs, lecturers, teachers and lecturers, academic employees, research managers and service employees. Students can join the GEW too.

The GEW works in the political arena and through collective negotiations to defend the interests of people working in higher education and research and to achieve reforms.

The GEW helps members to understand and assert their rights – with personal advisers and legal protection provided by the trade union.

We firmly believe that we will not improve the academic environment with a dog-eat-dog mentality, but only through solidarity. So join us now in the education union GEW!

As a GEW member

- you will receive the monthly magazine “*Erziehung & Wissenschaft*” and a newspaper from the GEW branch in your own federal state,
- you will have free access to trade union legal protection,
- you will have free professional liability insurance,
- you will be directly covered by collective agreements negotiated with the trade unions,
- you can take part in a range of seminars and use materials on many issues relating to education and research,
- you can join your colleagues in campaigning for trade union and education policies.

More details online at: www.gew.de

For higher education and research, see: www.wissenschaft.gew.de

You can subscribe online to the free GEW newsletter *Hochschule und Forschung*.



GEW-Guide “Fixed-Term Contracts in Higher Education and Research”

Currently, nine out of every ten employees in higher education are on a fixed-term contract, and most of these are concluded for periods of less than a year. The new law will not suffice to trigger fundamental change. Crucial decisions remain that will determine the future of every academic – decisions about how to finance tomorrow’s universities and research infrastructure, about the way forward for the Higher Education Pact and the Excellence Initiative, and about the exact nature of the joint federal and state strategy for promoting young researchers which has now been announced.

The brochure can be ordered from the GEW at the unit price of 1 Euro plus shipping costs at: broschueren@gew.de



Membership Application

Please complete in block letters

Gewerkschaft
Erziehung und Wissenschaft



Personal Details

Surname (title), first name(s)

Address

Postal Code, City

Telephone / e-mail

Date of birth

Citizenship

Desired entry date

Previous union membership: where, from through (month/year)

female

male

other

Professional Details (explanatory notes overleaf)

Job title (students: aspired job title), professional group

Entry into service / beginning of career (month/year)

Pay scale area / salary area (public service)

Gross monthly income € (only if not in public service)

Pay scale group / salary class level since (month/year)

Institution / agency / school

Provider of the institution / agency / school

Address of the institution / agency / school

Postal code, place of the institution / agency / school

Employment relationship

Salaried employee

Civil Servant

Part-time employed: ____ hours/week

Part-time employed: ____ %

Freelance

On unpaid leave until _____

Retired / pensioned

Student

Partial retirement

In parental leave until _____

In fixed-term position until _____

Trainee teacher / Vocational internship

Unemployed

Other _____

Each member of the GEW is required to pay the statutory fee. By signing this application I acknowledge the GEW's statutes

Place, date

Signature

SEPA Direct Debit Mandate

Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft, Reifenberger Str. 21, 60489 Frankfurt a. M.

Creditor identifier: DE31ZZZ00000013864

By signing this mandate I authorize the GEW to send instructions to my bank to debit my account and I authorize my bank to debit my account in accordance with the instructions from GEW.

Note: I am entitled to claim a refund of the debited amount within eight weeks, starting from the debit date. The terms agreed with my bank shall apply in each case.

Surname, first name (owner of account)

Bank (name and BIC)

IBAN

City, date

Signature

The personal data provided will be recorded on media exclusively in the performance of our statutory tasks and will be protected according to the regulations of the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Please send the completed form to the respective GEW branch resp. to the office of the National Executive. Please find the addresses overleaf.

Thank you!

Professional title

Please indicate your professional title or occupation, also whether you are unemployed or retired.

Professional group

According to § 11 of the GEW-statutes there are the following professional groups:

- Further education
- Comprehensive schools
- Vocational schools (*industrial*)
- Primary schools
- Secondary schools (*Gymnasien*)
- Secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*)
- Higher education and research
- Vocational schools (*commercial*)
- Secondary schools (*Realschulen*)
- School supervising and administration
- Special needs education
- Socio-pedagogical education

Please tick as appropriate.

Pay scale group/Salary class

The indication of your pay scale group or salary class allows the correct calculation of the statutory membership fee. In case your remuneration is not subject to TVöD/TV-L (Public Service Wage Agreement) or TV-H (Agreement for Hesse) we kindly ask you to state your gross income.

Institution/Agency

This refers to the member's actual workplace. In higher education please state the name of the university/research institute and the name of the faculty/department.

Membership fee

- In 2018/2019 civil servants pay 0.81% and in 2020/2021 0.83% of the salary class and level according to which they receive remuneration.
- In 2018/2019 employees holding a wage agreement pay 0.75% and in 2020/2021 0.76% of the respective pay scale group and level; employees without wage agreement pay 0.7% of their gross income.
- The minimum fee is always 0.6% of the lowest level of pay scale group 1 TVöD.
- Unemployed persons pay one third of the minimum fee.
- Persons working free-lance pay 0.55% of their remuneration.
- Students pay a fixed amount of 2.50 €.
- Members in teacher training or completing an internship pay a fixed amount of 4 €.
- Recipients of a civil service pension pay 0.68% of the gross retirement pension, other retired members pay 0.66% of their gross pension.

For further information please refer to our membership fee regulations.

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