

Dual Career Service Quality Criteria

– Best Practice Guidelines –

The Dual Career Service provided at many universities in Germany is a key success factor in the (inter)national competition for the “top brains”.

The Dual Career Network Germany (DCND) has established the Dual Career Service Best Practice Guidelines to enhance the profile of the Dual Career Service (DCS) and to guarantee a high standard of service provision at the individual university locations and throughout Germany.

These guidelines set out the Dual Career Service quality criteria. They also refer to special features at specific universities. Each university is responsible for determining the extent and the details of the support, advice and guidance provided. The common goal of all universities is to provide the best possible, transparent support for dual career couples.

1. Dual career definitions

Dual career couples (DCCs) are “couples, in which both [life] partners generally have a high level of education and professional orientation and are pursuing their own careers” (Solga/Wimbauer 2005, p. 9).

These couples are attributing increasing importance to being able to structure professional careers as dual careers – defined as the successful pursuit of a professional career by both (life) partners.

2. Objectives

The Dual Career Service provides support for the recruitment and retention of excellent academics and in so doing helps to make the academic location more attractive. The priority focus varies from one university to another.

Location-specific

Different priorities, individually or in combination:

- Increasing the attractiveness of the academic location
- Recruiting and retaining first-class academics
- Gender equality instrument (in particular, to attract highly qualified female academics)
- Family-friendly human resources policy
- Promoting a work/life balance



3. Target group

The Dual Career Service provides support for partners and families of newly appointed professors and those to be appointed. Moreover, this group of people varies in accordance with the rules, facilities and resources of the universities concerned.

Location-specific

- Professors in retention negotiations
- International academics
- Junior scholars (doctoral candidates, post-docs, junior group leaders, etc)
- Subject specialists and management staff (e.g. senior lecturers, group leaders)
- Selected representatives of research management and administration

4. Range of services

The Dual Career Service provides support, advisory services, mentoring and guidance

- on finding a job (job placement cannot be guaranteed)
- on establishing contact with employers in the region
- in career matters
- on further training and qualification opportunities, scholarships and language courses

Location-specific

- Developing a job-seeking strategy
- Application documents, self-presentation in job interviews and profile creation
- Settling down in the region
- Information on childcare facilities and schools, often in cooperation with family offices or the family service
- Help to find housing
- Advice on matters relating to residence permits
- Information on matters concerning social security law
- Support in dealing with authorities
- Information about leisure time occupations, social matters, and so on

5. Guidelines

The advice provided by the Dual Career Service is based on the following minimum standards, which are also enforced when working with network partners, such as non-university research institutions, business enterprises, government ministries, etc:

- Defined procedure (see 8c)
- Support for a regulated application procedure (transparent and performance-oriented procedures, principle of selecting the best)
- Compliance with legislation (Personnel Representation Act, Equal Treatment Act)
- Confidentiality
- Reliability

6. Data protection

The Dual Career Service complies fully with data protection law.

Each university takes account of the relevant data protection rules.

7. Transparent information about the DCS

Transparent information is intended to ensure that a Dual Career Service is contacted at an early date.

Location-specific

Information is provided

- in the appointments committee
- in appointment negotiations
- in tenure negotiations
- in notifications of appointment
- on the website
- in a flyer
- in job adverts

In addition, all those responsible for recruitment at the university should be fully informed about the services provided and how the DCS operates so as to draw the personal attention of potential candidates to the services in advance of their appointment and thus help to inform the candidates' decisions.



8. Description of the procedure

a) Planning and establishing contact

- Arranging an initial interview (in person or by telephone)
- Request for the dual career partner to provide a CV in preparation for the interview

Location-specific

Contact is established

- by means of a questionnaire/contact form
- by appointment officers
- proactively by the Dual Career Service
- by a designated contact person during the appointment procedure

b) Preparation by the DCS and the client

- Presentation of a current curriculum vitae (CV) (possibly together with a letter of motivation, references, publications, testimonials and other references, etc)
- Gathering information on:
 1. The date scheduled for the start of employment
 2. Professional future (professional wishes, framework conditions and expectations)
 3. Possible employers
 4. Self-employment
 5. Full or part-time employment
 6. Distance from home
 7. Salary expectations
 8. Legal framework conditions (e.g. for civil servants, particularly in the teaching profession)
 9. Recognition of foreign educational and professional qualifications

c) Procedure and expectations management

- The Dual Career Service provides procedural support
- The support is determined together with dual career couples by
 1. Clarifying the brief
 2. Defining the scope of the advice (possibilities and limitations)
 3. Agreeing on a timeline



- Dual career couples are informed of realistic estimates of results of the advisory service; no promises or job guarantees (regarding expected salaries, permanent employment contracts, the availability of childcare, etc)
- Independent initiative by dual career couples is encouraged
- Discussion documentation: (written) agreement regarding the next steps/further procedure

Location-specific

- Determination of the maximum advisory period
- Personal final discussion
- Feedback/evaluation form
- Reporting/documentation

9. Duties of dual career advisers

- Researching job vacancies (providing an overview of current job vacancies in the network and with potential employers in the region and finding out about jobs that are likely to become available in the future, e.g. with network partners)
- Making enquiries of employers, if appropriate providing a letter of support (in person, by post, by email)
- Forwarding the application documents after obtaining the client's consent
- Advising candidates on self-presentation in the job market (including application documents, interviews, the application procedure in general)
- Maintaining regular contact (by email, by telephone, or, as an option, further personal discussions)
- Networking/network building (including event design/management)
- Lobbying and PR work within and outside the university (including website, involvement in the DCND)
- Cooperation with other service units at the university and in the surrounding region

Location-specific

- Concerns other than job-seeking (questions about the region, childcare, housing, dealing with authorities, language courses, social matters, etc)
- High quality administration (database management, evaluation)
- Further concept development



10. Quality management instruments at the DCS

The Dual Career Service is evaluated on the basis, for example, of

- Dual Career policy/procedures, involving the main parties concerned at the university (human resources department, etc)
- Statistics, feedback forms, documentation, reports, needs analysis, monitoring
- Ensuring a regulated procedure at the university

Ongoing professionalisation of DCS staff

- Specific qualification programmes in the DCND and individually
- Taking advantage of the different skills of Dual Career Service staff members in the DCND
- The DCND ensures an up-to-date exchange of information
- Establishment of a peer-to-peer advisory system