

**23 April 2024****Strong impetus for the promotion of diversity at German universities:  
HRK and BMBF conference discusses successful diversity projects**

Innovative science thrives by embracing diverse perspectives and worlds of experience. Since Monday afternoon, participants in an online conference organised by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) together with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) have been discussing the steps that can be taken to establish and shape a university culture that promotes diversity, to increase equal opportunities and to further reduce structural discrimination in the higher education system.

The conference marks the conclusion of the initiative "Diversity at German Universities", with which the HRK and BMBF supported selected projects for the further development and long-term embedding of holistic diversity concepts at a total of 33 universities in the winter semester 2023 / 2024. Together with experts from Germany and abroad, lessons will be derived from the funded projects until the event wraps up at noon on Thursday. The conference is focusing on successful strategies, concepts and individual measures, the conditions for success and possible further approaches for a long-term embedding of institutional diversity efforts in the higher education system.

At the opening of the event, Prof Dr Angela Ittel, HRK Vice-President for International Affairs, Equal Opportunities and Diversity, said: "The added value of measures to promote diversity has already entered into higher education discourse. German universities are now facing the task of translating the associated goals into customised, productive processes for the comprehensive participation of all university members – and prospective members – in order to continuously develop as places of diverse thinking, learning, teaching and research. The measures that have been developed and trialled as part of the initiative "Diversity at German Universities", which is now coming to an end, provide a lot of helpful impetus for this."

In the opening panel discussion, it became clear that targeted equal opportunity steps along individual or interacting dimensions and categories of diversity are required for a corresponding cultural shift within universities. At the same time, with a growing awareness of differences, similarities must not be lost sight of. Making both visible and fruitful, and recognising and promoting diversity in the community as a source of creative potential for pursuing the institutional goals of a university, is the key to joint success.

The Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Dr Jens Brandenburg, explains: "Excellent results can only be achieved if there is room for a variety of perspectives in the academic dialogue. For us as the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the inclusion of all talents and potentials in the research system is therefore not only a question of justice and participation, but also a prerequisite for academic quality. This requires sustainable structures and concepts at universities that support the embedding of diversity in academia. It was for this reason that we funded the initiative "Diversity at German Universities" with around €1.7 million. By this means, we aim to embed diversity in all research-related institutions."

### **About the initiative "Diversity at German Universities"**

On 1 September 2022, the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) launched the initiative "Diversity at German Universities" funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). Following an independent review process, a total of 33 universities were selected in spring 2023 to implement institutional diversity projects in the following winter semester. Among these projects were innovative event formats, new approaches to monitoring and creative information campaigns. The funding of the selected university projects and the cross-project dialogue aimed to further promote diversity at universities in a holistic sense. Together with the BMBF, the HRK is now holding the virtual final event of the initiative from 22 to 25 April 2024.

Further information on the closing event and the opportunity to register can be found on the [event website](#). Participation in the current event is still possible.

The [interactive map](#) on the initiative's [website](#) provides an overview of all funded projects. The projects and their respective focal points have also been presented in detail in [blog posts](#) over the past few months.