

Guidelines concerning the leadership development of assistant professors at ETH Zurich

1. Principles and objectives

1.1. Principles

All assistant professors with and without tenure track at ETH Zurich are equally supported in the development of their leadership personality. For this purpose, they have access to a specialist from the Unit Consulting for Professors, among others. This guideline defines the essential framework conditions for a successful relationship between the assistant professor and the specialist from the Unit Consulting for Professors.

All contents discussed within the framework of leadership support as well as reports prepared are treated confidentially.

1.2. Goals of the leadership guidance

The guidance serves to provide additional support to assistant professors in their leadership development. Within the framework of the guidance, the following should happen:

- Identify development potential with regard to competences relevant to leadership (leadership potential interview)
- Develop and implement measures and recommendations for the assistant professor phase (personal development plan)
- Organise development talks at regular intervals to reflect on the current situation and define personal development steps
- Offer concrete support for current leadership topics and, if necessary, refer the assistant professor to the relevant ETH-internal units.

The guidance is not aimed at scientific or field-related issues and does not replace mentoring. It is a development offer and complements leadership and/or personality training, organisational and team development or coaching.

The counselling is to be understood as a low-threshold offer to reflect on individual leadership issues with an expert and to explore solution options.

2. Tasks and role description

2.1. Tasks of the assistant professors

The assistant professor reflects on his or her own leadership role and is responsible for his or her own leadership development.

The specific tasks and responsibilities of the assistant professor include:

- Introducing topics and questions into the development talks
- Development and implementation of solutions to the discussed topics and issues
- Reflection on own leadership role
- Seeking structured feedback from the research group and, voluntarily, from other people (e.g. colleagues, HR partners) and self-reflection on leadership in preparation for Development Talk III (see below).

2.2. Tasks of the specialist from the Unit Consulting for Professors

The task of the specialist from the Unit Consulting for Professors is to strengthen the assistant professor's self-awareness and reflection and to support the assistant professor in an advisory capacity. For questions that go beyond a sparring partnership or counselling, the respective specialists from the domain of the Vice Presidency for Personnel Development & Leadership (e.g. Unit Development and Leadership, Unit HR Consulting, Unit Diversity and Collaboration) are referred to.

The specific tasks and responsibilities of the specialist of the Unit Consulting for Professors include:

- Early contact with the assistant professor
- Conducting the Leadership Potential Interview together with a second specialist from the Unit Consulting for Professors or from the staff of the Vice President for Personnel Development & Leadership (VPPL staff)
- Initiating and conducting the development talks (Development Talks I bis III)
- Reflection, counselling and assumption of the role of a sparring partner for leadership issues
- If necessary, referral to specialists from other units who can provide in-depth support in the respective individual issue.

3. Process of the guidance

The following overview describes the intended meetings between the assistant professor and the specialist from the Unit Consulting for Professors. The times at which these meetings are to take place can be flexibly adapted to the needs of the assistant professor. Of course, additional meetings can take place at any time.

3.1. Leadership Potential Interview

As a first meeting, usually a few months after the starting date as professor, a Leadership Potential Interview takes place.

The Leadership Potential Interview is conducted by the responsible specialist from the Unit Consulting for Professors together with a second specialist from that Unit or the VPPL staff. It serves to discuss strengths and possible areas of development with the assistant professor in order to lay the foundation for further leadership development.

As a result, a report is prepared by the specialist of the Unit Consulting for Professors and discussed with the assistant professor. The assistant professor is encouraged to draw up a development plan on the basis of the Leadership Potential Interview and the following discussion, which can be concretised and implemented in the further course of the leadership guidance.

3.2. Development Talk I

The first of three scheduled development talks between the assistant professor and the specialists of the Unit Consulting for Professors takes place a few months after the Leadership Potential Interview.

In this discussion, the findings from the Leadership Potential Interview are reflected upon and joint considerations are made as to how the individual development plan (if available) can be concretised and implemented. The focus is on the following questions: Which leadership development goals are being pursued? What does the assistant professor need in order to successfully fulfil his or her leadership role? In addition, current leadership challenges are discussed and, if necessary, possible recommendations for action are developed. If necessary, central offers for leadership development are pointed out or referrals are made to further units in order to directly address immediate challenges.

3.3. Development Talk II

The second development talk takes place approximately two years after starting as a professor.

This talk focuses on the assistant professor's research group and the cooperation within the group: What does the group structure look like? What other employments are planned, and how do they fit into the group structure? How does the collaboration work? How can the assistant professor be further strengthened in his or her leadership role? Individual questions are addressed, progress and possible hurdles in leadership development are reflected upon and possible measures are discussed.

3.4. Development Talk III

The third development talk takes place approximately four years after starting as a professor. In preparation for this, the assistant professor will obtain structured feedback from his/her group members and conduct a self-assessment regarding leadership. Optionally, if required, specific online assessments can be carried out to further deepen the self-reflection.

In this talk, the focus is on preparing for the growing leadership tasks after the assistant professorship phase. What insights can be gained in retrospect on the topic of leadership? How will the transition to the next position be shaped? What support is needed to be optimally prepared?

4. Complementary offers

All newly appointed assistant professors are expected to participate in the Leadership4newFaculty programme, which is organised by the Unit Development and Leadership, and attend other courses on special leadership topics. In addition, the Unit offers training, networking events and workshops for assistant professors at regular intervals.

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