

# Position of the TUM Graduate Council on the topic "Diversity and Internationalization"

Science and research are increasingly interconnected, interdisciplinary and international. The most pressing questions of our time are being addressed by a wide variety of people with different backgrounds. The Graduate Council of the Technical University Munich (TUM) welcomes diversity and internationality and is dedicated to ensuring all doctoral candidates at TUM are in a safe, supportive, and open-minded working environment.

In this position paper, the TUM Graduate Council uses the working definition of diversity as individuals with a range of intersectional histories and lived experiences, including but not limited to race, socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and a broad spectrum of identities from members of the LGBTQIA+ community, individuals living with chronic diseases and/or disabilities, to older adults and beyond. Our definition of diversity is one that is continuously open to new iterations as we recognize and learn more about intersectionality and the lived experiences of our peers and fellow doctoral candidates. On this basis, the TUM Graduate Council decides on the following positions for the promotion of diversity through frameworks of equality, inclusion, and accountability, and internationalization in order to fully utilize the potential of such a working environment and to give all individuals the opportunity to develop fully at the TUM.

## **1. Equality of women, men, and nonbinary individuals**

The Graduate Council supports the efforts of the TUM to increase gender balance between academic levels. We are of the opinion that the ratio of gender distribution should be based on that of the lower academic level, according to the cascade model. The Graduate Council is committed to ensuring that more attention is paid to statistical surveys of gender distribution (discussion or closer examination in the Diversity Boards to be implemented, see section 3) and information provided by the TUM on this subject. Additionally, the Graduate Council recognizes the limitations and problematics of the female-male binary in most demographics and strongly encourages a change in data collection options to promote an inclusive and representative atmosphere.

## **2. Internationalization**

Today, science and research are more international than ever. This includes doctoral candidates from the TUM who go abroad ("outgoing") as well as international students who do their doctorate at the TUM ("incoming"). Both groups have individual needs in order to realize their projects as successfully as possible.

To support doctoral candidates at the TUM, the Graduate Council is committed to expanding the range of information available. In addition to the extensive financial support already provided by the Graduate School for stays abroad, the information offered is to be expanded. To this end, doctoral candidates are to be involved in the organization of International Days.

## **3. Implementation of diversity boards**

In order to support diversity at the TUM and to address related issues in an orderly and systematic manner, the Graduate Council advocates the implementation of diversity boards at School level as well as at university level. The already existing Diversity Board of the former

Faculty of Chemistry can serve as a role model. Such a committee should enable communication on diversity-related topics between the various stakeholders (professors, scientific and non-academic staff, doctoral candidates, and students) of a School and promote workshops that improve understandings of equity and inclusion in their departments.

The Diversity Boards should meet at least once per semester. Problems and challenges that have arisen can be discussed at department or School level. More general issues requiring a solution at university level should be discussed by representatives of the Diversity Boards with *TUM Equal Opportunity*.

#### **4. Supporting parents and creating a family-friendly environment**

To improve the situation of parents at the university, premises are needed that meet the special requirements of parents (especially those who have recently had a child or are responsible for childcare duties in their household). We demand that parent-child offices are set up at the individual departments, especially for the care of infants and young children. These premises will enable the child to be cared for at the same time as parents are required to conduct office work. The Graduate Council supports the efforts of the TUM to facilitate access to the childcare facilities at the TUM, regardless of student status, in order to facilitate a seamless transition to the care of children of kindergarten age.

#### **5. Prevention of discrimination**

The Graduate Council is firmly opposed to any form of discrimination. In order to create a constructive and peaceful working atmosphere, it is important to promote competencies in the field of intercultural education and anti-racism. These competencies should be accompanied with education on allyship and avenues for actions of inclusion. To this end, the Graduate Council proposes the creation and expansion of workshops, which are offered within the framework of kick-off events for new doctoral candidates and at regular intervals for all doctoral candidates.

Next to intercultural education and anti-racism, targeted workshops on the topic of intersectionality and diversity training are to be offered, taking all intersectional dimensions of diversity (such as age, chronic disease, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, social and educational background) into account.

These workshops could also prepare "outgoing" doctoral candidates for their target country. At the same time, they would be helpful for "incomings" to find their way around more easily in Munich and the surrounding area as well as to build a network of fellow international students. In addition, the Graduate Council would like to see separate support for incoming students in the form of assistance with bureaucratic matters, as it is already offered for Bachelor and Master students at some Schools. The integration of doctoral candidates into these information programs is desirable.

In addition, the prevention of discrimination extends to the transition from Master to doctoral candidate as well as from doctoral candidate to PostDoc and is a crucial part of "good supervision".

#### **6. Regular information events with the Graduate Centers**

Both the Graduate Council and the Graduate Centers offer information and training programs for doctoral candidates. We would see it as beneficial to strengthen the cooperation between the Graduate Council and the Graduate Centers and offer regular information events. These could be used to spread information about the positions of the Graduate Council and its work for the doctoral candidates, but also for trainings and get-togethers.

## **7. English language version of all TUM publications and documents**

The Graduate Council is proud of TUM's international positioning, be it in the extensive exchange and internationalization programs, the TUM branch offices worldwide or the campus in Singapore (TUM Asia). This global network invites international researchers and doctoral candidates to study and work at the TUM. In order to communicate without any limitations, the Graduate Council advocates for an English version of all TUM publications and documents. This is already the case for a large part of publications and documents, however, in order to fully integrate international doctoral candidates and non-German speakers, we call for translations of all official publications and documents at all levels of administration.

## **8. Pronouns**

The Graduate Council is supporting diversity and inclusion at all levels. We want to acknowledge and celebrate all voices and experiences across the TUM. Getting names and pronouns right helps to create a sense of belonging and respect in the workplace. An easy way to normalize the use of pronouns is to include them in the e-mail signature as well as incorporate them on the staff website to improve visibility of all employees. If everyone includes pronouns, it makes it easier to correctly address people with non-standard names or names from diverse language backgrounds. Moreover, having pronouns in the e-mail signature and on the website protects trans and gender diverse people and it also signals that the TUM is an active LGBTQIA+ ally. Overall, it is a quick and easy way to create a positive impact and welcome diversity into the TUM Family.

*The points above were decided by the members of the TUM Graduate Council as an official position at the Graduate Council meeting of 16 December 2020 and were amended at the meeting on 25 January 2022.*