



TECHNISCHE  
UNIVERSITÄT  
DARMSTADT

Personal- &  
Organisationsentwicklung

# *Strengthening employees, promoting the development of TU Darmstadt*

*The Department of Human Resources and Organisational  
Development – Who we are and what we do*



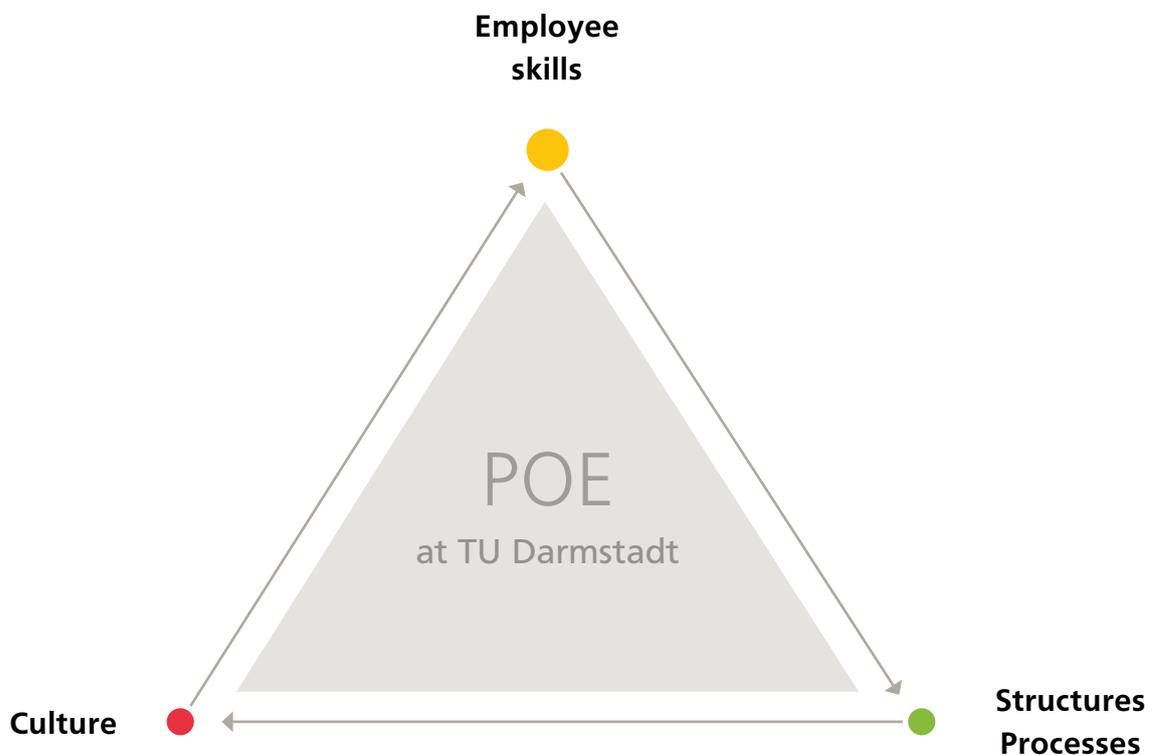
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# 1. The basis for our work at TU Darmstadt

Internationalisation, interdisciplinarity, excellence, diversity and digital transformation: The strategic goals of TU Darmstadt are the basis for the work carried out by the Department of Human Resources and Organisational Development (in German: "Personal- und Organisationsentwicklung" or "POE"). How can we develop the skills and potential of all employees while at the same time improving our organisational structures and processes so that both are combined in synergy with one another? This document describing how we at the POE view ourselves and our role is based on this question.



## *The role of the Department of Human Resources and Organisational Development ("POE") at TU Darmstadt*

Our goal is to create a culture of agile and dialogue-oriented cooperation. The key factor in this process is the ability of our employees to independently tackle the challenges they face in their increasingly complex working lives and transform them into opportunities. We also use this ability to deal with difficulties and tension to improve the structures of TU Darmstadt together. Ultimately everybody benefits – the individual employees and the entire university.

As an autonomous university, TU Darmstadt supports its employees and managers in their professional and personal development (Human Resources Development - "HRD" or "PE" in German). TU Darmstadt also has a responsibility to develop the structures and framework conditions that are required for them to complete their work in the best possible manner (Organisational Development - "OD" or "OE" in German). We – the Department of Human Resources and Organisational Development at TU Darmstadt – productively combine these two key aspects in our work and thus speak of "HROD" or "POE" in German. We are your experts for learning processes and change management.

Our role is thus to strengthen the employees and managers at TU Darmstadt to such an extent that they can independently tackle the growing challenges, tasks or differences and transform the resulting difficulties and tension into positive development opportunities. This ability to handle difficulties and tension should also enable us at TU Darmstadt to improve the structures at the university and should be anchored in a culture of dialogue-based and agile cooperation. This assumes that the processes, interfaces and cooperation are designed in

such a way that they offer greater scope for new possibilities and produce synergies more easily – for our individual employees at the university and for TU Darmstadt as a whole.

We do both with our range of advisory service and events. This means that we supplement personal skills with sound theories and models from various different disciplines, with sophisticated tools and adopting an approach that focuses on finding solutions<sup>1</sup>. To this end, we not only work together closely with the various units at our university who are themselves promoting human resources and organisational development in certain areas. We can also call on an external network of professional consultants, coaches and trainers – who coordinate their work in terms of its content and methodology. In addition, we actively exchange information and ideas with cooperating universities (Rhine-Main Universities, Interuniversity Further Education, UniNetzPE, TU9). In this way, we work for individual teams and managers from various departments on behalf of the Executive Board.

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<sup>1</sup> Key theoretical areas include e.g. sociology, psychology, biology and logic. Our guiding concepts are derived above all from the field of systematic constructivism with, amongst others, Virginia Satir and Heinz von Foerster, from solution focussed methodology with Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg and from the research and development work carried out by Insa Sparrer, Matthias Varga von Kibéd and Elisabeth Ferrari.

## 2. Our strategic areas of activity

The POE views itself as a trailblazer for organisational development within TU Darmstadt and thus also for the positioning and profiling of TU Darmstadt in the university landscape. In this respect, we operate across the four strategic areas of activity described below.

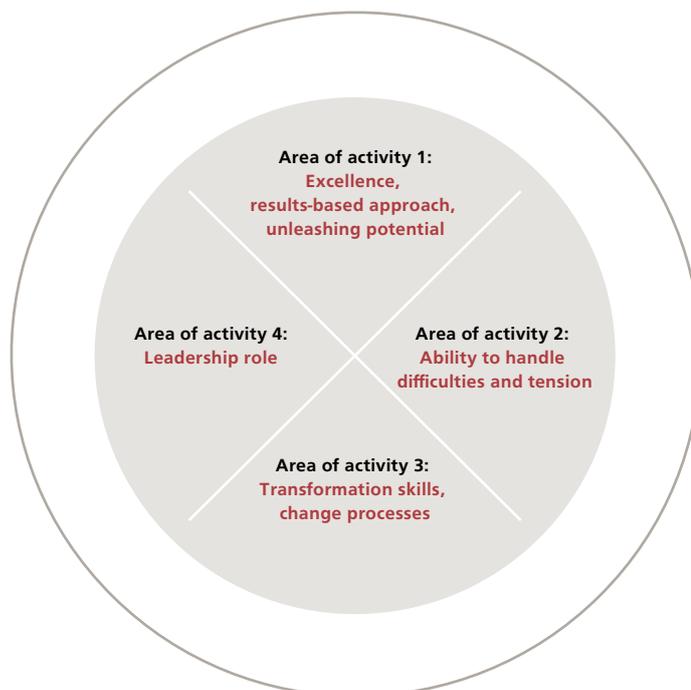
### Area of activity 1:

#### Driving forward excellence, a results-based approach and unleashing potential

In the first area of activity, the POE helps managers and their employees to exchange information and ideas in a manner that unleashes their potential. This means that managers and employees enable each other to perform the tasks assigned to them in the best possible manner and ensure the provision of the required specialist knowledge. Managers and employees are also invited to unleash their potential and repeatedly discover new opportunities and paths – not only themselves but also together with others.

This first area of activity is based on the conviction that people can find a solution for any challenge (even extremely difficult ones) – and they can achieve this together. In very difficult or tense situations, employees should develop the ability to produce win-win solutions.

Managers and employees can develop this ability during regular discussions. The POE provides an appropriate framework and helpful tools for this purpose. We naturally focus our services on these aspects and also support other advisory bodies at TU Darmstadt to do the same (see “4. Themes and Tools for Human Resources and Organizational Development at TU Darmstadt”).



### *Areas of activity at POE*

The work carried out by the POE can currently be broken down into four areas of activity. We handle them separately from one another for strategic purposes but there are nevertheless significant synergy effects.

## Area of activity 2:

### Promoting the ability to handle difficulties and tension to achieve the strategic goals of TU Darmstadt

The strategic goals of TU Darmstadt focus on, amongst other things, internationalisation, interdisciplinarity, excellence, gender equality and diversity, as well as the major challenges posed by the digital transformation. In the process, it is increasingly important to recognise and understand differences and integrate them into your own actions. This applies to cultural differences or disparities between disciplines and also to totally new or surprising development in everyday working life. The focus of the second strategic area of activity is thus placed on promoting the ability to handle difficulties and tension at TU Darmstadt: We do this by integrating knowledge and tools, as well as relevant values and behaviour, into our various different services.

In a highly difficult and tense situation, this means placing the main focus, for example, on the solution rather than the problem – and considering where similarities and differences can be identified. In turn, this requires so-called dialogue skills which involves, amongst other things, asking questions, listening to one another and wanting to understand the other person's perspective, without immediately asserting your own position. Ultimately, a BOTH approach needs to be utilised when searching for a solution so that similarities and differences can be combined with one another in such a way that a win-win solution can be achieved. One such form is the supra-summative combination of different interests ( $1+1=3$ ).

## Area of activity 3:

### Improving transformation skills and designing change processes

The third strategic area of activity focuses on ensuring that managers, teams, university departments and individuals are qualified enough – with respect to certain issues – to independently improve the transformation skills at the university and provide corresponding advice.

However, many change processes require proven expertise in this area, which a subject-based or scientifically-oriented manager does not usually require or would take too long to acquire this expertise. If this is the case, an advisor from the POE who possesses such expertise and has experience in a university context is available to provide close support.

## Area of activity 4:

### Making the leadership role at TU Darmstadt transparent and bringing it to life

Realising the goals of TU Darmstadt relies on the fact that managers at the university are also pushing in the described direction. The key requirement here is a common understanding of leadership and the tasks associated with it. Another strategic area of activity for the POE is, therefore, to describe the leadership role in detail in a theoretical and practical way and make this description available to all managers for guidance purposes.

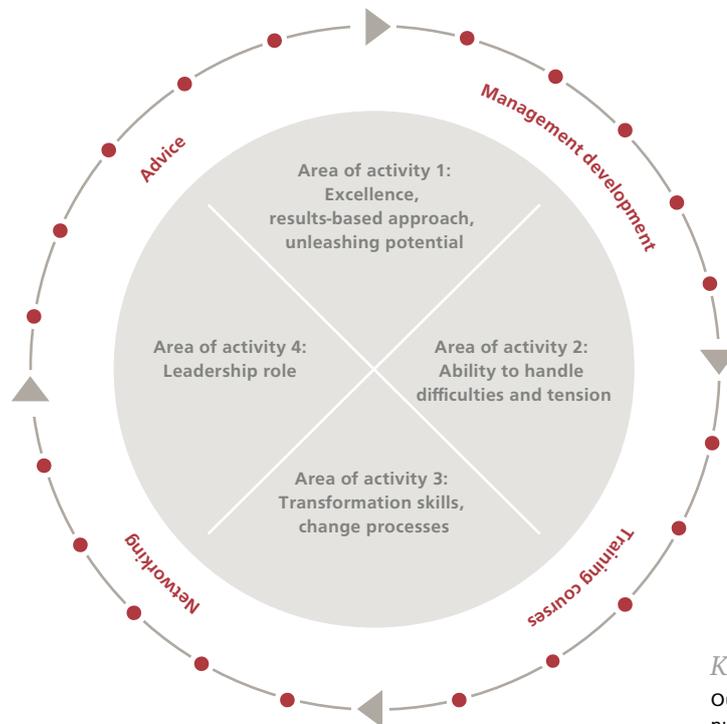
The management philosophy at TU Darmstadt is based on the definition given by Elisabeth Ferrari: Leadership means making decisions (that no one else can make) and ensuring that these decisions are implemented (in the desired direction)<sup>2</sup>. On this basis, we develop tools that can be independently used by managers and which simplify their managerial work.

Leadership behaviour and culture is governed by the management guidelines<sup>3</sup> produced by the Executive Board. They are addressed and integrated in all measures carried out by the POE – and are also gradually finding their way into the services offered by other departments. In this way, we support managers and their teams to embody these guidelines and bring them to life in their everyday working lives and across the whole of TU Darmstadt.

<sup>2</sup> See the manual for developing management skills of Elisabeth Ferrari. (Elisabeth Ferrari (2016): Handbuch Führungskraft entwickeln. 3. Auflage, ISBN 978-3-942131-08-7)

<sup>3</sup> [www.tu-darmstadt.de/managementguidelines](http://www.tu-darmstadt.de/managementguidelines)

### 3. The key areas of our work



#### *Key areas of our work at the POE*

Our areas of activity are implemented in numerous events and advisory services that we split between four key areas.

The strategic areas of activity are implemented in practice in our four key areas and the corresponding services. They are coordinated with one another with respect to their content and specialist focus and are based on a uniform, theoretical approach which is used to develop appropriate tools (see “4. Themes and Tools for Human Resources and Organizational Development at TU Darmstadt”).

If you would like to browse through our range of services, you can find the relevant information online at [www.tu-darmstadt.de/poe](http://www.tu-darmstadt.de/poe).

We use evaluation tools for all key areas that help us to constantly enhance our services. These include systematic course evaluations, standardised employee questionnaires, review sessions with defined success factors and reflection workshops. The POE utilises an iterative approach here which can include various different evaluation tools.

#### The key areas of our work

##### Advice

We advise and accompany you through change processes and in your change management. For this purpose, we offer advice on specific issues to individual, teams, groups and organisational units. You define the goals and content and we are responsible for precisely formulating the assigned task and designing the process together with you. In addition, we also provide subject-related services, such as:

- Designing change processes
- Implementing management guidelines
- Discussions between managers and employees/annual appraisals and holding discussions in difficult situations
- Designing personnel selection procedures
- Dual career service (for new appointees)
- Coaching

## Management development

Professional leadership is an issue at TU Darmstadt across all areas of our university. Therefore, we provide management development programmes for:

- Managers of directorates and central facilities
- Managers of departments/groups, heads of junior researcher groups, managing directors of specialist departments
- Managers of technical university departments
- New appointees and established professors
- Deputies for managers and employees who are interested in taking on a management position

In addition to these development programmes, workshops and other offerings on specific themes or for specific target groups at a management level are currently available, such as:

- Bringing management guidelines to life for individuals and teams
- Leadership day on current themes in a leadership context for all managers
- Network management
- Change management programmes
- Project and process leadership (including project and process management)

## Training courses (professional skills, dialogue and communication skills)

As part of the further education opportunities offered internally at TU Darmstadt, there are a broad range of training courses, workshops and seminars available to employees at the university that help them to properly fulfil the requirements for a particular position and its associated tasks. In addition, there are numerous overarching seminars that focus on subjects such as communication, self-management, IT, administration and law, business English and health. These training courses are sometimes designed for specific target groups, such as the pAssat (professional assistance at TU Darmstadt) development programme for employees in the secretaries' offices. In the near future, specialist courses for technical occupations will also be added.

## Other services both internally at TU Darmstadt and externally

Alongside the training courses offered by the POE, the following services are also available both internally at TU Darmstadt and externally:

- Programme of events from Ingenium – Young Researchers at TU Darmstadt
- Events offered by the Equal Opportunities Office
- Unit IA – Data Warehouse
- Unit IIC – Campus Management
- Unit IVA – Occupational Safety
- Unit VIIC – International Affairs and Mobility
- Centre for Educational Development (HDA)
- University IT-Service and Computing Centre (HRZ)
- Language Resource Centre (SPZ)
- University and State Library (ULB)
- University Sports Centre (USZ)
- Interuniversity Further Education (IUW)
- Berufundfamilie Academy (Work and Family Academy)
- Helmholtz Academy
- State Office for Technological Education in Hesse (hlft)
- Hessian Association of Administrative Schools (hsvs)
- Central Further Education Office Hesse (ZFH)
- Centre for Science & Research Management (ZWM)

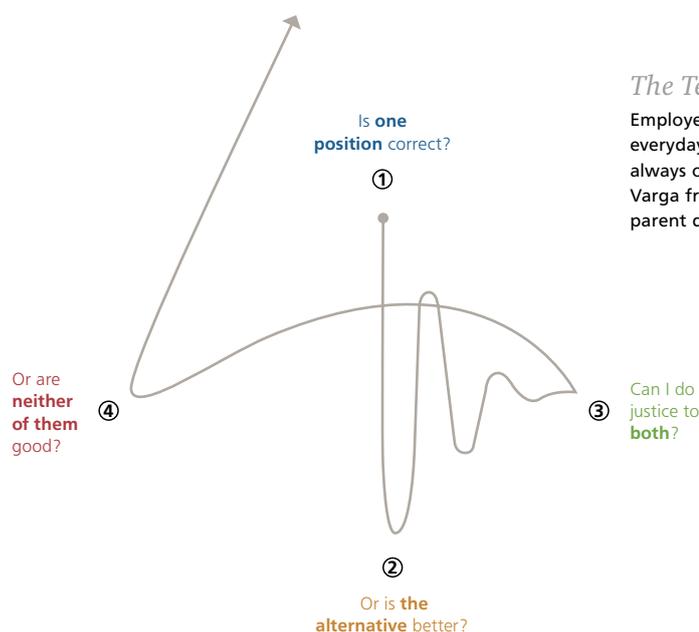
## Networking

The TU Darmstadt promotes interdisciplinary and cross-departmental working practices. A good internal network also makes it easier for you to work independently. All of our networking services have a specific focus. These currently include the following:

- Welcome event for all new employees
- "Wissensbisse" – new appointees get to know the departments and organisational units supporting the scientific work at TU Darmstadt
- Internal work shadowing for mutual learning
- Groups of colleagues that want to improve their networking (also virtually)
- Out and about together – cultural tours and events in the Darmstadt region

## 4. Themes and tools for human resources and organizational development at TU Darmstadt

We have developed standards and tools for the employees at TU Darmstadt. Corresponding materials can be requested by managers and employees at any time for their own use. Some of these tools are described below as examples.



### *The Tetralemma*

Employees and managers often have to make decisions in their everyday working lives. However, the correct path to take is not always obvious. The Tetralemma from Insa Sparrer and Matthias Varga from Kibéd is a tool that can point the way out of an apparent dilemma.

### Leadership role

Guidelines for the leadership role, as performed at the university and other possible approaches, such as managerial guidelines are reflected upon and discussed in a variety of different contexts (e.g. with your own group, in a committee, in a working group).

### Team building

Tools that teams can utilise in countless new situations where they are required to deal with change (e.g. founding a new group, a member of the team is leaving, a new member is joining the team).

### Ability to handle difficulties and tension

A set of useful, interlinked questions that can help a team experiencing difficulties or tension to find, for example, new development opportunities when faced with new issues.

### Discussions between managers and employees

A tool for clarifying issues between managers and employees in various different situations in partnership (which can be initiated by both sides) – such as annual appraisals, (career) development reviews, discussions in difficult situations, discussions to unleash potential or discussions about returning to work.

## 5. Quality and learning development at the POE

We discuss and reflect on the work carried out at the POE with internal and external experts for specific subject areas. The findings are passed on to the Executive Board and form the basis for further discussions within the university bodies where necessary.

Close networking with other universities and industry partners, as well as the ongoing further education in the field of human resources and organisational development, ensures that we work with state-of-the-art procedures and tools at TU Darmstadt.

All employees can read about the latest developments at the POE on the central information portal. You are welcome to provide us with helpful impetus for our work at any time.

### Contact

**Can we help you with a particular issue? Do you have any questions, wishes, suggestions or criticism about our services? Please don't hesitate to contact us at any time.**

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## Legal notice

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Design: 3st kommunikation GmbH, Mainz, Germany  
Printed: Gutenberg Beuys Feindruckerei GmbH, Langenhagen, Germany

Release date: October 2018



[www.tu-darmstadt.de/  
managementguidelines](http://www.tu-darmstadt.de/managementguidelines)

