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Subproject 4

Onboarding at Universities of Music

Strategy Paper for the Onboarding of Newly Appointed Professors at Universities of Music

For use by university management and administrations

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Preamble

Onboarding, i.e., using specific, systematic measures to admit and introduce new university members plays a crucial role, especially for the successful integration of newly appointed professors at music universities. Effective onboarding ideally promotes job satisfaction, engagement, and organizational commitment of the newly appointed members regarding the strategic goals and culture of the university. Such commitment, in turn, increases the professors' long-term intention to stay. Not every music university has defined onboarding processes, nor does a systematic, structured onboarding for new appointees always take place.

To carry out onboarding successfully in the interest of both the university and the newly appointed members, it should be understood as a strategic instrument of the university management, and the process, as well as measures and expectations, should be integrated into communication early in the appointment process.

In this strategy paper, in addition to a definition (1), the aim of onboarding (2), success factors for the onboarding process (3), onboarding-institutionalized and individualized tactics (4), as well as a process flow with exemplary contact points (5) are presented along with good practice examples (6).

The paper is intended to serve as a guide for the individual design of an onboarding process at the 18 participating universities. At the same time, it is understood as a 'work in progress', inviting member universities to discuss, add, and develop its contents constructively.

1. Definition of Onboarding

Onboarding refers to structured measures by a university that begin with the admission of newly appointed members[1] and end after a longer but manageable period, with the goal of integrating new appointees academically, practically[2] and socially into the university and familiarizing them with the university culture.[3]

Onboarding programs have been used for many years in various organizations and are to be understood as part of the organizational

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[1] This paper focuses on the onboarding of newly appointed professors. In principle, a structured onboarding program makes sense for all university members, i.e. also for mid-level staff (lecturers) as well as for administrative staff and students.

[2] E.g. introduction to using the learning management system and other digital tools.

[3] This definition was formulated as part of the cooperative collaboration between the conservatoires in Network 4.0 based on a definition by Becker (2020, p. 19 f.).

socialization process or to promote it (see Wanberg 2012). Particularly for artistic teaching staff appointed to professorships, systematic onboarding is very important because they often have not undergone long-term academic socialization at the time of their appointment, as is (more) standard in the scientific field, for example. The career paths of (international) artists are increasingly less linear, and a recent survey shows that "professional mosaics are more the norm than the exception for the majority of professional musicians in Germany" (Deutscher Musikrat & Deutsches Musikinformationszentrum 2023, p. 5)[4]. Therefore, the systematic and individually appropriate support of newly appointed staff in 'arriving' at the institution of a University of Music is more important.

2. Aim of Onboarding

Below is a list of onboarding aims and their value to the university organization and newly appointed members.

Onboarding Goals

- Developing a commitment to the university's strategic objectives (according to e.g., the university development plan, mission statement) while considering individual professional goals.

- Developing a comprehensive understanding of the professorial role and individual positioning[5] within the overall context of the university organization.

- Supporting the development of (inter-)disciplinary (teaching) competencies and continuous reflection of the individual university teacher profile.

Added Value for the Universities

- Onboarding as a tool of university strategy to reflect, transmit, and further develop value attitudes (e.g., as articulated in a mission statement on 'Teaching').

- Onboarding as a tool for sustainable personnel development (also in the sense of lifelong learning).

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[4] See https://miz.org/de/statistiken/professionelles-musizieren-in-deutschland (20.02.2024).
[5] In addition to teaching, examining and artistic development work, official duties also include assuming functions in academic self-administration, such as module representative, subject group spokesperson, senate member, etc. [see (artistic) university laws of the federal states].

- Onboarding as a control instrument for university development (for example, networking can strengthen collaborations for the development of new teaching and learning formats and content).

- Reduction of information deficits (e.g. through structural and process knowledge already acquired through work at other universities).

▌Value for Newly Appointed Members

- New appointees are informed about important processes, structures, and contacts, as well as about the university's formal and implicit attitudes towards value.

- New appointees are systematically networked from the beginning and get to know (new) colleagues from other subject groups and areas, which can ideally promote interdisciplinary projects.

- Ideally, new appointees have a committed contact person (sponsor) within the organization from the beginning.

▌3. Success Factors for the Onboarding Process

Only a few empirical studies focusing on specific onboarding practices and their effectiveness have been carried out (Klein et al. 2015, p. 263). However, the existing evaluation results suggest that successful onboarding of university teachers is facilitated by various factors that can be actively steered and/or accompanied by the university (see Gerber & Wunderlich 2022).

An important component in the process is the early provision of information about the university, its structures, resources, and activities in the core areas of teaching, research, artistic development, and in transfer/of the Third Mission.[6]

The following will now show and explain the central factors of a successful onboarding process, based on literature, good practice experiences[7], and findings of a study from 2022 on onboarding at Universities of Music[8].

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[6] The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) defines the Third Mission as follows: "The sum of the activities described in the areas of continuing education, knowledge or knowledge and technology transfer and social commitment is often referred to as the 'Third Mission' of universities. This 'Mission' is not independent, but develops consistently on the basis of and synergistically with the core competencies of research and teaching. It is therefore part of the universities' range of tasks, the overall fulfillment of which requires reliable basic funding" (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz 2017, p. 3).

[7] See good practice examples of some Universities of Music from Network 4.0 in Chapter 6.

[8] See Peters (2022).

Time Frame

The duration of onboarding should be approximately six months, according to the literature.[9] In any case, the duration of the onboarding should be communicated to the newly appointed members in advance as a binding commitment; at the same time, the university should retain the possibility of extending the onboarding period depending on the individual case. After the completion of the (previously agreed upon) period, the onboarding or the individual process should be evaluated by the newly appointed members in the sense of a closed feedback loop.

Involvement of Actors

The following actors should be involved at an early stage in the onboarding process.

a) University Leadership
   Contact points with the university leadership should be chosen so that feedback discussions with the newly appointed members take place at the beginning, in the middle, and after the completion of the onboarding process. Whoever will conduct the initial, second, and subsequent discussions with the newly appointed members should be defined in advance.

b) Responsible Personnel from the Human Resources Department
   One of the first contact points for the newly appointed is with the staff of the Human Resources Department. Ideally, from the beginning, the newly appointed members should have a nominated contact person within the Human Resources Department to whom they can turn with all organizational and labor law questions even before starting their job (preboarding[10]).

c) Committees, Specialist Groups, and University Public
   The newly appointed members should be officially introduced to the university public at an appropriate occasion (e.g., semester opening, senate and/or department meeting) or be able to artistically present themselves in an appropriate setting (inaugural lecture or concert).

d) Staff from the Teaching Support Units
   Staff from the areas of science management, university didactics, as well as teaching and study program development should support the

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[9] See Brenner (2020, p. 592).
[10] Preboarding refers to the first phase in the onboarding process. It starts after the employment contract is signed and ends with the first working day of the newly appointed members.

newly appointed in conveying (university didactic) further education, coaching, and possibly mentors[11], depending on their competence or task profile, both in an advisory and organizational manner. It is recommended to involve these positions at an early stage as a fixed contact point in the onboarding process.

Recognizing Individual Needs

Due to diversity (also) among the professorship, misunderstandings and obstacles in the integration process can arise due to linguistic, cultural, or other reasons. Therefore, special attention should be paid to the socio-cultural backgrounds and individual needs of the respective newly appointed members and should be discussed right from the beginning (possibly even during the appointment process), with particularly regard to which support measures the university can provide.

Identification of Expectations

Identifying mutual expectations for professional collaboration between newly appointed members and the institution of the music academy is a key success factor for successful integration. Uncovering implicit expectations and their constructive negotiation can be a particular challenge. The more clearly expectations are articulated through job advertisements, throughout the entire appointment process, and during onboarding, the higher the likelihood of a successful fit between individual and institutional objectives. Ideally, this results in long-term motivation for committed participation, e.g., in academic self-administration.

Internal Networking

The newly appointed members bear responsibility for their own socialization process at the university. This expectation should be explicitly communicated to the newly appointed and exemplified, e.g., the expectation that new appointees proactively contact colleagues and contacts, especially from the teaching support units, and regularly use (informal) opportunities for exchange.

Universities of Music and administrations can contribute to the successful onboarding of newly appointed members by considering the following attitudes and measures:

- Clear communication of expectations and goals regarding onboarding from both sides, usually initiated by the university or the supervisors.

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[11] See "Concept Paper on Sponsor System" (26.03.2024).

- Creation of a positive work environment that promotes collaborative work and mutual support.

- Opportunities for professional (subject-specific and interdisciplinary) development or education through participation in conferences, workshops, and promotion of active participation in networks (Network 4.0 of Universities of Music, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen, among others).

- Recognition and appreciation of the achievements (artistic, scientific, as well as in third-party funding and study program development, etc.) of the newly appointed professors.

4. Onboarding – Institutionalized and Individualized Tactics

A model that has been widely cited to this day for describing introduction processes in organizations is the 'Socialization Tactics Model' developed by Van Maanen and Schein in 1979. The model is based on six diametrically opposed points that mark the respective degree of institutionalization (for detailed information, see Van Maanen & Schein 1979; Jones 1986).
Socialization tactics allow for mutual adjustment between the organization and the individual. They promote both the integration of the newly appointed members into existing structures and the recognition of their individual motivations, attitudes, and competencies. A proactive attitude on the part of the newly appointed members plays a crucial role in successfully navigating the socialization process at a university (of music).
The following table exemplifies how universities of music can utilize different tactics with specific measures.

Tactic	Description	Operationalization (Examples at universities of music)
Collective	Summary of new members for collective experience gathering	Introduction to digital systems
Serially	Guidance by and through a role model/example	(informal) Mentoring
Constructive	Recognition of motivation, attitude, and competencies	Participation in examination committees, interdisciplinary concert opportunities
Variable	No fixed schedule	Interdisciplinary concert opportunities
Informal	Implicit presence of measures → limited controllability	Mentoring

Table 1. *Summary of the empirically proven socialization tactics at the respondents' universities of the Network 4.0*

A commonly applied tactic is the serial socialization tactic, where newly appointed members orient themselves to their predecessors and maintain a close professional relationship. This tactic often relies on a mentoring-like practice, where experienced university members support the new professors and assist them in their professional and social integration. Furthermore, there is the incremental tactic, where recognizing the identity and individual motivations and attitudes of the newly appointed person plays an important role. Newly appointed members should be actively invited to set their own focuses in teaching and art, thus contributing to the profile development of the university. Some newly appointed members bring additional teaching offerings that go beyond their main instrumental subject. This tactic promotes independence and the development of individual competencies.

Additionally, collective tactics can be identified, where new members come together to gather common experiences. An example of this are ensemble-based and interdisciplinary concert opportunities within the university. These not only provide an opportunity to be artistically active but also familiarize the newly appointed members with the values, culture, and implicit rules of the university.

A variable socialization tactic is not based on a fixed schedule, so there is no information regarding the precise duration of individual steps in the onboarding process. Furthermore, informal socialization tactics can be empirically observed. These tactics are less easily controlled institutionally but are still significant for the socialization process.

The tactics (see Table 1) have also been empirically demonstrated for onboarding at universities of music: The study by Peters (2022) shows that the organizational socialization process of newly appointed members to artistic professorships

largely takes place in a self-directed and informal way. These insights into socialization tactics can nevertheless be used to implement, adapt, and further develop onboarding processes at universities of music.In summary, it can be said that structuring and coordinating onboarding activities in a meaningful way offers universities the chance to engage newly appointed members at an early stage and integrate them into the university's long-term developmental and strategic goals. A balanced mix of centrally organized information events or workshops and informal exchange and cooperation opportunities can be beneficial to the successful organizational socialization of the newly appointed members.

5. Process Flow with Exemplary Contact Points

The following figure exemplifies how the contact points between newly appointed members and the university can be designed in the four different phases of onboarding: Preboarding, Arrival Phase, Socialization Phase, and Transition.
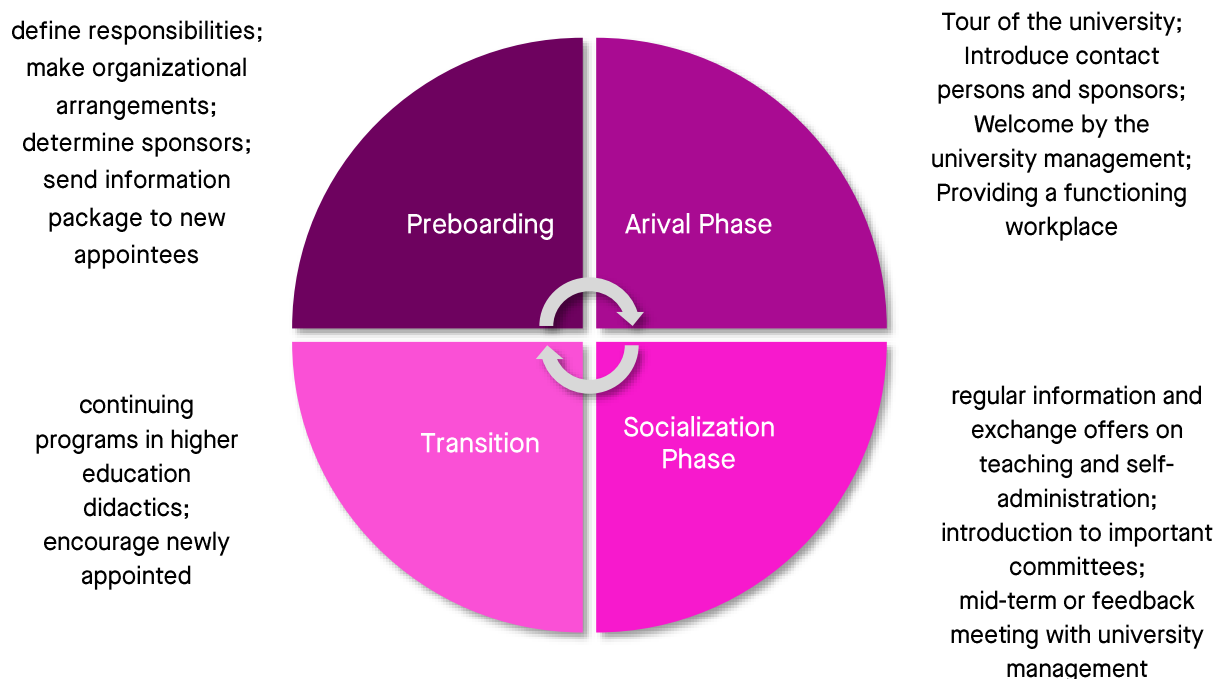
define responsibilities; make organizational arrangements; determine sponsors; send information package to new appointees

Tour of the university; Introduce contact persons and sponsors; Welcome by the university management; Providing a functioning workplace

| Preboarding | Arival Phase |
| Transition | Socialization Phase |

continuing programs in higher education didactics; encourage newly appointed

regular information and exchange offers on teaching and self-administration; introduction to important committees; mid-term or feedback meeting with university management

Figure 1. Example of an onboarding process for new appointees at universities of music

6. Good Practice Examples

Below is a collection of good practice examples from the universities of music of the Network 4.0, following the phases of an onboarding process described in Chapter 5.

Preboarding

University of Music Würzburg: Information and Checklist for New Teachers
At the University of Music in Würzburg, all new teachers receive a welcome email from the Human Resources Department before starting their work. In this email, new teachers receive, among other things, the link to the 'Guide for Teachers'[12] and a 'Checklist: What do New Teachers Need to do at The Beginning?'. This creates transparency and clarity for the new teachers regarding what is expected of them.

Arrival Phase

Academy of Music in Trossingen: Event for New Teachers
At the Academy of Music in Trossingen, an 'Introduction to Studies and Teaching' is offered by the Vice-Rector for Studies, Teaching, and Research at the start of each semester. During this approximately 90-minute event, a journey through the Student Life Cycle (SLC) is undertaken from the students' perspective and along one or two concrete examples: from the application process, through the aptitude test and enrollment, to the final examination, certificate creation, and finally de-registration. This event explains the processes and steps underlying these topics, as well as their interconnections, and responsibilities. Additionally, the beginning of studies, the first teaching event, documentation in the study book and its regular submission, study counseling, exam preparation, exam registration, conducting an exam, choices in the course catalog, recognition of external academic achievements, module completions, and some special cases such as a leave of absence or individual standard study period are also inherent parts of the SLC and thus part of the thematic spectrum explained in this information event. The 'Introduction to Studies and Teaching' is announced on the homepage of the Academy of Music in Trossingen and is open to all teachers.

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[12] See University of Music Würzburg (20.02.2024).

Socialization Phase

Freiburg University of Music: Information for New Teachers in Department Meetings
At the Freiburg University of Music, the Quality Management and Teaching Development office offers discussions each semester with the departments. This takes place during a department meeting. In this brief conversation, the office informs the teachers about news from the university administration, planned measures such as evaluations or similar, and upcoming projects, and provides short inputs on the topic of academic self-administration. Additionally, it is available for any questions or concerns the department may have. This offer for discussion has been in place since the winter semester of 2021/22.

Cologne University of Music and Dance: Design of the Socialization Phase
At the Cologne University of Music and Dance, the socialization phase essentially consists of three elements:

1. University Didactic Workshops and Exchange Formats: regular full-day workshops on 'Giving Feedback' and 'Assessing' (focus on artistic subjects), short formats with input and exchange (including on learning objectives, teaching roles).

2. Collegial Teaching Observations: following an introduction to the concept of collegial observation, newly appointed members conduct mutual, interdisciplinary classroom visits (including pre- and post-discussion).

3. Mid-Term Discussion with the Rector
   After the first year of service, the rector conducts a mid-term discussion with the newly appointed members, which includes topics such as their participation in the onboarding program to date, as well as broader experiences during the 'settling in' phase at the university.

Transition

Cologne University of Music and Dance: Dialogue at Eye Level from the Beginning and Beyond Onboarding
At the Cologne University of Music and Dance, newly appointed members and teachers with special responsibilities go through a structured onboarding program in their first year of employment; participation is mandatory, and the required minimum number of hours is legally specified

in the employment contract. The aim of the program is to support teachers as well as possible in familiarizing themselves with the university culture and settling into their new function and role. The program includes, among other things, information events, university didactic workshops, and collegial class observation. Onboarding at the Cologne University of Music and Dance is understood from the outset and beyond as a joint development process between teachers and the institution, in which participation, equality, and constructive feedback are systematically anchored and practiced (see Gerber & Wunderlich 2022). These basic principles also apply to the design of the transition after completing the formal onboarding: The program concludes with an event in which teachers provide comprehensive feedback on their experiences during onboarding and can suggest improvements to the program. In addition, teachers can identify needs for their individual professional development and propose topics for university-wide discussion processes (e.g., program development, ethical principles). The leadership of the onboarding program follows up on the specific suggestions for further processing and connects teachers with other contacts if necessary to clarify individual concerns. Even after the official conclusion of the program, teachers can attend further onboarding events and conduct class observations with colleagues; all teachers are regularly informed about current further education offers.

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The literature refers to the information in this strategy paper. They are also intended for further or more in-depth reading.

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