

## STAFF COUNCIL INFO

Nº 1/2025

Dear colleagues,

It gives us great pleasure and encouragement to see that you value our work. With almost 300 participants in person and online, our staff meeting in February was the best attended in recent years. We were particularly pleased that non-German-speaking colleagues and a significantly higher proportion of academic staff attended the staff meeting.

The great interest in the staff meeting certainly also shows how much the topic of "mental health in the workplace" seems to concern you all. We are firmly convinced that a healthy working environment can guarantee performance and qualitative development. Healthy employees have the freedom to come up with innovative ideas. Healthy employees enjoy going to work more. Numerous scientific studies have shown that happy employees are significantly more productive and achieve better work results. A healthy working environment also strengthens loyalty to the employer. Especially in times of labor shortages, loyalty to and satisfaction with an employer is a major asset.

We continuously receive feedback on where stress or other factors are having a negative impact on your well-being at work. We raise structural issues with the department on your behalf at every opportunity. Through service agreements, co-determination in committees and our own innovative proposals for change, we continuously look for opportunities to bring about change. We provide direct support for specific challenges in your immediate working environment through advice, support and our contacts with the various stakeholders at the university. Therefore, please do not hesitate to contact us. We can only help if we know where the shoe pinches.

With best regards and best wishes

For the Staff Council of Leuphana University of Lüneburg

Daniel Simons

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## After-work event at KLIPPO

Where can I meet (new) colleagues?



Since the beginning of 2023, we have launched a regular **after-work event**. We meet approximately once a month at different times in the "KLIPPO". We make new contacts there after work in a relaxed atmosphere. You can find the dates for our meetings on our homepage: <https://www.leuphana.de/personalrat>

### Practical tip



#### function

When you arrange a consultation appointment with the Staff Council, we create an appointment in the Outlook calendar that is set to "Private". This means that the content and participants of the appointment remain confidential for everyone else, even if it is a shared calendar. This function can also be very useful for your own appointments, especially if they are during working hours or if you want to give your colleagues a better overview of your availability.

## Tasks of the Staff Council

The staff council is an important body for co-determination and participation in public administrations, companies and institutions. Its tasks extend to various areas of personnel and labor law policy, whereby it represents the interests of employees vis-à-vis the employer. The Staff Council has co-determination, participation and consultation rights. In the case of measures subject to co-determination, the department may only implement these once the Staff Council has given its consent.

- **Co-determination:** The Staff Council has the right to have a say in certain matters. This applies to issues such as personnel planning, hiring, transferring, regrouping or dismissing employees. In many cases, the employer must obtain the consent of the Staff Council.
- **Protection of employee rights:** A central task of the Staff Council is to protect the rights of employees. This includes protection against discrimination, advocating fair working conditions and ensuring health and safety measures.
- **Advice and support:** The Staff Council advises employees on labor law issues and supports them in the event of problems at the workplace. This includes both individual and collective issues, such as conflicts.
- **Communication with the employer:** The Staff Council holds regular discussions with the employer to discuss employee concerns and develop solutions. Constructive cooperation is also sought in order to avoid conflicts and improve the working atmosphere.

In summary, the Staff Council is an important point of contact for employees, ensuring that working conditions are fair and equitable and that employees' rights are protected through co-determination, consultation and monitoring. Further information and the legal basis can be found on our homepage: <https://www.leuphana.de/services/personalrat/aufgaben-des-personalrats.html>

## Report of the Staff Council for the year 2024

As part of the annual staff meeting on 20.02.2025, the Staff Council presented its annual report for the year 2024. In addition to a few figures, we focused on the substantive developments of the year and what we as the Staff Council were able to implement and support for you, dear colleagues.

### What have we achieved in 2024

#### Staff Council election

In February 2024, a new Staff Council was elected for a term of four years. Some experienced members were no longer standing

for election and many new faces joined the committee. This marked the beginning of an exciting and challenging phase: we quickly realized that we all had high expectations in terms of team quality and expertise, which had to be met.

The initial period was dominated by organizational issues, getting to know the new structures and tasks and coordinating with one another. To support this process, a closed meeting was organized at an early stage. This gave all members the opportunity to take a close look at their role, define common goals and establish working methods. In the foreseeable future, more experienced members will be leaving the committee due to their age, which is why we place particular emphasis on the exchange of knowledge between the experienced and new members in our teamwork.

Targeted and continuous training for all members is a key component of our ability to perform our duties successfully and competently – for 2024, we focused in particular on building the basic skills of new members. Training courses and workshops were held to strengthen both legal foundations and communication skills.

Over time, the many different personalities grew into a strong team. Constructive discussions, honest exchanges and a consistently objective approach increasingly characterized the work. The Staff Council knew how to use the diversity on the committee as a resource and always "think ahead".

#### Classification in the institute secretariats

After years of arduous negotiations, a breakthrough was finally achieved in 2024 regarding the classification of the institute secretariats. In the 2025 job plan, it is planned that the approximately 60 positions in the institute secretariats, which were previously grouped in EG6, will be grouped in EG8 in the job plan across the board. This change should enable the institutes to assign job profiles to their institute managers from 2025, which will result in a higher grouping from EG6 to EG8.

In the view of the Staff Council, this development is both pleasing and overdue. The job profiles of institute managers (former university secretaries) have changed significantly in recent years. They are no longer just administrative support for the chairs, but central players in ensuring the professional operation of the university. Due to digitalization and the growing complexity of university management, they play a key role in the interaction between teaching, research and administration. Thanks to their organizational knowledge and networked work, they are the stable pillar of the volatile and innovation-driven academic world. These multi-talented individuals are becoming increasingly difficult to recruit and retain, as can be seen from the number of applicants in recent years. This makes comprehensive upskilling all the more crucial from a strategic perspective in a tight labor market.

In recent years, the heads of institutes have repeatedly been rejected with changed job descriptions, as these would have resulted in a higher grouping according to EG8. This was done with reference to the categorical classification of the positions in the job plan. In the past, however, this did not mean that the work was left undone or that higher-paid colleagues were assigned the tasks. As a rule, the office managers still carried out the necessary tasks without being paid for them. This shows that in many places, this adjustment to the staffing plan merely

reflects a reality that has been practiced at the university for years. The Staff Council alone has addressed the problematic situation in the institute secretariats in each of its written statements on the staffing plan since 2018. A newly founded collegial initiative has also been drawing attention to the issue since 2023, after an exhibition in the lecture hall corridor in 2016 and consequently a university secretaries' initiative pointed the finger at the changing working conditions in the university secretariats. It is thanks to the tireless commitment of our female colleagues that Leuphana will finally be able to upgrade to EG8 in 2025 - 13 years after the development from EG5 to EG6 was achieved in 2011.

### Negotiations on service agreements

Behind the scenes, in quiet confidentiality, the Staff Council is currently negotiating several service agreements with the department. Although we cannot yet announce a final agreement, the talks are constructive and are making good progress.

Last year, we already reported that we had entered into negotiations on a "work overload notification" service agreement. A service agreement on overload notification is intended to provide employees with a structured way to report an unreasonable workload. It ensures that overloads are recognized at an early stage and suitable measures can be taken to relieve them. It can also serve as an instrument of legal protection and should make a long-term contribution to a healthy working environment.

We are also in talks about updating the service agreement on annual appraisals and the service agreement on dealing with conflicts in the workplace. In the case of the former, the shared interest of the department and the Staff Council is to make the instrument of annual appraisals even better known and to prepare line managers and employees more competently for the appraisals.

For the service agreement on dealing with conflicts in the workplace, it is important to us to further develop the procedure so that it can be used by more colleagues and to reduce inhibitions and formal hurdles. We also want to ensure that affected colleagues receive prompt and binding support.

Here are a few more figures from 2024:

Staff Council in figures	
Members (7 women/4 men)	11
Substitute members	19
Sessions of 1.5 hours on average.	51
Job advertisement procedure	255
Personnel measures	approx. 1200
Occupational safety inspections	19

		Temporary	Unlimited
<b>Total settings</b>	<b>199</b>		
WiMi	93	92	1
MTV	80	47	33
Continued employment	156		
WiMi	108		
MTV	33		

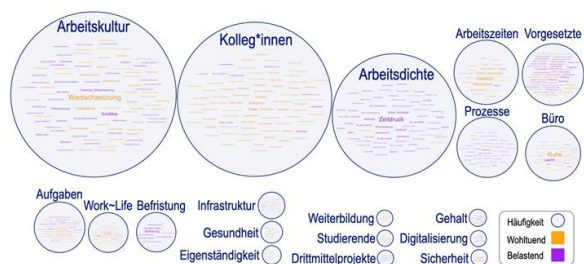
<b>Full-time staff (total)</b>	<b>983</b>	
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WiMi	407	
MTV	576	
Temporary		
WiMi	350	86%
MTV	21	17%

<b>Female employees (total)</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>60%</b>
WiMi	227	56%
MTV	401	70%
<b>Part-time employees</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>53%</b>
thereof women	393	75%

<b>Auxiliary staff (total)</b>	<b>770</b>	
WHK	20	
SHK	750	
<b>Apprentices</b>	<b>9</b>	
Severely disabled	51 (4%)	

## Your votes on our survey "Mental health at work" during the staff meeting 20.02.2025



The detailed view of the graphic can be found here (in German):

<https://www.leuphana.de/services/personalrat/umfrageergebnisse-personalversammlung-2025.html>

### What is a service agreement?

A service agreement is a binding regulation between the department and the staff council that regulates certain working conditions or organizational processes for employees. It supplements statutory and collectively agreed provisions and serves to ensure fair and transparent working conditions.

First of all, a reminder and classification: During our staff meeting on February 20, we conducted a survey among the participants to find out which things they find particularly stressful at work and which they find particularly beneficial. Feedback was provided both online and on site (confidentially using moderation cards). The following is a brief summary of

the results, which are not representative but reflect the mood of the employees present (approx. 300). We have drawn up a rough diagram, which you can find on the next page.

Generally speaking, there are four areas that characterize our working environment. On the one hand, these are the spatial and technical design of workspaces and workplaces, as well as the work content and organization. In addition – or with a view to the survey results, one could also more aptly formulate: beyond that – it is above all aspects of social interaction that have a decisive influence on well-being in the workplace. Interestingly, the most frequent mentions fall into categories that are perceived as both stressful and pleasant: Supervisors, colleagues and work culture, with the collegial environment being considered particularly important in both respondent groups. In the colleagues category, for example, predominantly beneficial aspects were mentioned; the work culture category showed an evenly distributed picture for stressful and beneficial aspects with a slight bias towards the latter. In the supervisor category, there were twice as many stressful aspects as beneficial aspects.

Aspects of work density were mentioned in third place, and here the negative assessments with time pressure and a flood of e-mails outweighed the few mentions of sufficient time or a pleasant division of work.

Working hours and tasks can also have both positive and negative effects, with flexitime and flexibility in terms of working hours, as well as appropriate, meaningful and varied tasks being rated as positive.

Of the 19 topics, most were mentioned by both status groups. The exceptions were the topics of autonomy, salary, security and further training. These were only mentioned by employees from technology and administration. In contrast, third-party funded projects were only mentioned by scientific employees.

Even if these findings can only be a snapshot of a part of the workforce, the results provide important pointers to neuralgic points that the Staff Council will focus on in its future work in the interests of all employees. Of course, this also applies, albeit in reverse, to the aspects of the Leuphana working environment that are perceived as positive and should be further promoted.

In any case, the feedback from the staff meeting will provide important input for the design of the questionnaire, which will be prepared in the coming months for the next employee survey, due in 2026.

## Service agreement on working hours

### Capping overtime

The service agreement on working time regulations (DV Arbeitszeit) has been in force at Leuphana since the beginning

of last year. We already informed you about this in our PR-Info issue 1/2024. We would like to point out once again that, in accordance with section 2.5 (3) of the DV Arbeitszeit, any working time credit in excess of the specified maximum limit will be reduced at the end of each calendar month. A credit balance that exceeds this maximum limit will not be carried forward to the following month.

For full-time employees, a maximum limit of 100 hours of time credit applies. For part-time employees, this value is calculated pro rata on the basis of their regular weekly working hours in relation to their full-time employment. By way of example, this means

In the case of a 50% contract: If the time credit exceeds 50 hours, it is capped at 50 hours.

For a 100% contract: If the time credit exceeds 100 hours, it is capped at 100 hours.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our colleagues in the HR department or send an e-mail to [zeiterfassung@leuphana.de](mailto:zeiterfassung@leuphana.de).

## Recreational leave/educational leave/ Special leave

A frequent topic in our consultations is vacation, with everything that goes with it. We have taken this as an opportunity to provide you with some information here.

We expressly point out that the following information is not legally binding. We recommend that you contact the HR department and obtain your own information on the intranet or in legal regulations.

### Vacation

All tariff employees (including trainees) of Leuphana University of Lüneburg – both full-time and part-time employees – are generally entitled to 30 days of vacation per calendar year in accordance with Section 26 TV-L. According to § 26 TV-L, vacation must be granted in the current calendar year. **Vacation days from the previous year that have not been taken by September 30 at the latest are forfeited.**

According to § 4 BUrlG, the full vacation entitlement is acquired for the first time after six months of employment. However, it is common practice that, in many cases, vacation leave can also be taken earlier by agreement with the employer, but this then relates to the vacation entitlement acquired up to that point and not to the full annual vacation entitlement.

The agreement on vacation planning is generally made by mutual agreement between the employer and employee. Specifically for Leuphana, this means that vacation must be agreed with the supervisor. You can find more detailed information on the intranet about what to bear in mind when applying for leave. Taking leave is only legal with the employer's consent. It is therefore advisable to obtain this approval before booking a trip.

As a general rule, all leave requests must be considered on a case-by-case basis and weighed against the interests of the company.

If vacation requests are rejected, this must be justified in writing by the supervisor. Reasons may, for example, be urgent operational concerns or the vacation requests of other employees that deserve priority from a social point of view. If a leave request is rejected, employees can informally request the co-determination of the staff council by sending an email to [turlaub@leuphana.de](mailto:turlaub@leuphana.de). Particularly in situations in which vacation agreements are usually made verbally, we strongly advise you not to accept a verbal refusal, but to insist on a rejection in writing and to request the co-determination of the staff council.

The entry of leave in SAP does not count as a leave request, unless you have such an arrangement in your teams with your superiors. The SAP entry only records leave that has already been approved.

If an employee falls ill during vacation and submits a sick note, the vacation days forfeited due to illness will be credited. Please note that this case requires a sick note from a doctor.

### Leave of academic and artistic employees during the lecture period:

When taking leave, academic and artistic staff must take into account the fact that their teaching obligations are tied to certain periods. The background to this is that it would not be practical to set vacation periods during lecture-free periods without exception, as too many members of the academic and artistic staff would be absent at the same time to ensure that the duties arising during the lecture-free period (e.g. research, examinations, teaching duties, excursions, training and further education) could be carried out. It is therefore generally possible to take leave during the lecture period if the existing teaching obligations are not affected by this and are properly fulfilled.

### Educational leave

The Lower Saxony Education Leave Act (NBildUG) grants employees the right to educational leave to participate in recognized educational events. Recognition must be granted by the Agency for Adult and Continuing Education (AEWB) in accordance with the Lower Saxony Education Act. The entitlement does not apply if the employee already receives leave to attend educational events under other laws or agreements. Educational leave can also be claimed at Leuphana after six months of employment at the earliest and comprises five working days per calendar year. The entitlement can also be split over several events in the calendar year. Educational leave is automatically carried over to the following year if it is not taken. In individual cases, it is also possible to claim educational leave for the two previous calendar years together with the educational leave entitlement for the current year. In the event of a change of employer, training leave already granted will be taken into account.



### Special leave / time off work

Special leave and time off work for employees are governed by §§ 28, 29 TV-L.

Special leave under the TV-L (collective agreement for the public service of the federal states) in Lower Saxony refers to the possibility of being released from work without affecting vacation (in the traditional sense) or the employment relationship. This is a special form of leave of absence that can be granted for various reasons. The exact conditions and entitlements depend on the specific circumstances and the employer's discretion. In summary, special leave under TV-L is an opportunity for employees to be released from work for important reasons, such as deployment as a disaster relief worker, without any loss of pay.

## Mailing list of the staff council

Not every report, not every tip-off from the Staff Council is big enough to be the subject of a direct circular email. We want to reserve the newsletters for really important topics. Nevertheless, we would like to share information with you from time to time. This could be anything from a reminder about after work to a reference to interesting articles on employment law.

As part of the WORKING LEUPHANA campaign, we have set up a mailing list to which we would like to invite you.

### How to register?

<mailto:gutearbeit.L-on@leuphana.de>

### JETZT ANMELDEN

#### Personalrat-Mailinglist

1. Mail an [gutearbeit.L-on@leuphana.de](mailto:gutearbeit.L-on@leuphana.de)
2. kommentarlos auf Mail „Confirmation Request“ antworten



Could we do something better?

Do you have new topics for us?

Would you like to talk about your work in confidence?

**Please let us know!**

[personalrat@leuphana.de](mailto:personalrat@leuphana.de)

We would like to get to know you personally and perhaps you would like to get to know us too!

Feel free to invite us to your team meeting, your interdepartmental jour fixe, the colloquium or a collegial coffee break!