



# Management guidelines



HELMHOLTZ  
CENTRE FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
RESEARCH – UFZ

# Mission

As an international competence centre for the environmental sciences, we investigate the complex interactions between humans and nature, influenced by global change. In close cooperation with decision-makers and representatives of civil society, we develop system-based solutions as a means of better managing complex environmental systems and overcoming environmental problems.

This includes the management of water resources; the consequences of changes in land use on human living spaces and on biological diversity; the effect which chemicals have on the environment and on human health, and strategies for adapting to climate change.

Solving these problems not only requires a sturdy scientific basis; it also calls for environmental research, currently dominated by the natural sciences, to become increasingly interlinked with the humanities, social sciences and law. Environmental research needs to take its lead from environmental problems and learn to deal with complexity, uncertainty and a strong

connection to practice. This requires an exchange of knowledge, understanding and communication, the combination of various skills and specialisations, the involvement of decision-makers and affected parties from the fields of business, politics and public life – in short, integration at the very highest level.

This is a challenge and a task which we (the more than 1,000 people working at the UFZ) are prepared to face up to.

Our aim is to reveal ways of achieving a balance between economic and social development on the one hand and the long-term protection of our basic means of subsistence on the other.



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# Preamble

As managers, we see our role as encouraging, enabling and teaching our staff members, with their widely differing qualifications, to jointly fulfil the UFZ's mission. The UFZ is tasked with important duties in the field of research, in improving Germany's outlook and global prospects regarding the environment and sustainability, and in its role as an important regional employer. Its staff sees the UFZ as the basis of their livelihood, as well as the central focus of their professional work.

For us, carrying out our duties as managers means great responsibility, calling upon us to constantly scrutinise our own skills, actions and use of resources.

As a guide and benchmark for our work, we have undergone a joint process to develop our management guidelines.



# 1

## Being aware of how we see ourselves

**Managerial authority is based far more on professional and social skills than on any hierarchical order.**

**For us, this means:**

- We set an example through
  - reliability and dependability,
  - authenticity and personal integrity,
  - being open and fair with one another,
  - loyalty towards and identification with the UFZ,
  - personal and professional improvement, and
  - enthusiasm about our work and results.
- We owe a duty to scientific discovery.
- We make decisions and accept responsibility for them.



# 2

## Guaranteeing scientific quality

**Scientific work is the UFZ's key task. As leaders in the field of science, it is our job to ensure that this work remains of high quality in terms of originality, relevance, independence and transparency, while at the same time adhering to the rules to maintain good scientific practice.**

**For us, this means:**

- We are obliged, as managers, to develop our skills further, adding to them through cooperation with partners in science and practice.
- We stand for a systemic approach in environmental research, and support both interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary cooperation.
- We see junior staff development as a fundamental element of our scientific culture.
- We cultivate a culture of open, respectful discussion, whatever people's position within the hierarchy.
- We commit to contributing our expertise to the discourse with science, society and business.



# 3

## Establishing common goals

**Our goals derive from our mission. They are the basis for our motivation and identification. They act as a guideline and are needed to run working groups and organisational units.**

**For us, this means:**

- We establish goals jointly through processes on every level, and check that they are put into practice.
- We ensure that goals are challenging, concrete and realistic.
- We communicate our goals clearly within and outside the UFZ.



# 4 Taking responsibility for staff

**Our success depends substantially on the creativity, ability and commitment of our staff. Encouraging these attributes is our most important task as managers.**

**For us, this means:**

- We know that intrinsic motivation is a basic prerequisite for commitment and creativity.
- We recognise, appreciate and encourage our staff's strengths and offer means of further developing them.
- We promote a climate of mutual esteem and trusting cooperation.
- We ensure that they maintain a healthy work-life balance.



# 5

## Living out a culture of communication

**The size, diversity and social roots of our research centre pose major challenges to our culture of communication, which places an emphasis on treating one another objectively, constructively and respectfully. Our staff's ideas and suggestions are very important to us.**

### **For us, this means:**

- We feel committed to a culture of communication which involves listening and letting people have their say.
- We communicate aims, decisions and steps to be taken, in a transparent manner.
- We provide access to necessary information and expect staff to use it.
- We notice, identify and acknowledge success.
- We give our staff feedback and expect them to do the same.
- We offer our staff an open ear and take their concerns seriously.
- We look for solutions together instead of avoiding problems and conflict.





# 6 Working in teams

**We develop socially relevant system-based solutions for complex environmental problems. This calls for teamwork to bring together expert knowledge from the fields of science, society and administration.**

**For us, this means:**

- We create background conditions which encourage teamwork.
- We organise flexible teams and structure them according to the requirements of the tasks to be solved.
- We understand teamwork as a process resulting from the dynamic interaction of various disciplines and actors.
- We encourage people to develop and build upon individual skills to achieve a common goal.
- We appreciate shared success and recognise each team member's individual contribution.



# 7 Encouraging change

**Scientific visions and developments in the environment and society are the basis for our aims and mark out our playing field. These dynamics require all our members of staff to undergo constant change and innovation.**

**For us, this means:**

- We provide space for people to come up with and achieve new ideas.
- We have the courage to take scientific risks and offer a secure basis for doing so.
- We expect and encourage people to willingly go through the changes this requires.
- We create a context in which they can react flexibly to new challenges and unexpected situations.



# 8

## Promoting interculturalism and internationality

**Internationality and interculturalism are the building blocks for vibrant science and research. It thus comes as no surprise that we promote a culturally open working environment which encourages people to connect.**

**For us, this means:**

- We demonstrate and expect openness and mutual respect in intercultural cooperation.
- We develop further intercultural skills.
- We promote the active integration of international staff in our working environment.
- We create conditions in which international staff can work effectively.





## Imprint

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