

Charter of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences

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Table of contents

Preamble

Part One: General Provisions

Section 1 Legal Status, Seat, Responsibilities

Section 2 Self-Government and University Bodies

Section 3 Student Initiative

Section 4 Involvement of Members and Affiliates

Part Two: University Bodies and Organizational Units

Chapter I: Central Organization

Section 5 Management of the University

Section 6 Responsibilities of the University Steering Committee

Section 7 Strategy Forum

Section 8 Academic Senate

Section 9 Responsibilities of the Academic Senate

Section 10 Committee for Intersectional Gender Equality Work and Equal Opportunities Officers

Section 11 Committee for the Improvement of Study Conditions

Section 12 Special Needs Officer for Students with Disabilities or Chronic Illnesses

Section 13 Doctoral College

Section 14 Sustainability Committee

Section 15 Ethics Committee

Section 16 Animal Welfare Committee and Animal Welfare Officers under the Animal Welfare Act [*Tierschutzgesetz* – TierSchG]

Section 17 Representation of the Interests of Student Assistants

Section 18 Associated Institutes

Chapter II: Decentralized Organization

Section 19 Faculties

Section 20 Faculty Council

Section 21 Study Commissions

Section 22 Dean's Office

Part Three: Final Provisions

Section 23 Publications and Announcements

Section 24 Entry into Force and Transitional Arrangement

Preamble

“Wir für morgen” (Together for tomorrow) As a university of applied sciences, Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences sees itself as an innovative, sustainable and therefore future-oriented educational and research institution. Its aim is to provide students with a contemporary academic education for future-proof action competence, which promotes subject-specific and interdisciplinary skills as well as the development of open-minded personalities who act responsibly in their professions and in society. The focus is on the close integration of theory and practice to enable successful, sustainable personal and professional development. Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences offers space for encounters on attractive campuses and offers students global perspectives. Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences is also strongly networked with the region. With sites in Osnabrück and Lingen, the university provides impetus for economic and social development, particularly in the surrounding area. It also helps to meet the demand for skilled workers by training international graduates.

Application-oriented research and teaching are at the heart of the university's efforts to make innovative and sustainable contributions to solving societal challenges. Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences is aware of its responsibility to secure and promote the next generation of academics. This also includes creating and securing an environment that is conducive to doctoral research.

The members and affiliates of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences ensure that these goals are achieved on the basis of freedom, equality, democracy, tolerance, humanity, and international cooperation. They are committed to respecting these values and to assuming their responsibility for society and the environment. The university actively promotes social, ecological and economic sustainability in its areas of action.

As a learning organization, the university promotes diversity among students, faculty, and staff, and critically reflects on its structures and processes with regard to mechanisms of discrimination. It actively promotes respectful, appreciative, and supportive interactions and is committed to zero tolerance of racism or discrimination based on gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, social situation, social background, religion or belief, disability, appearance, or age. The university supports the compatibility of studies, career, and diverse lifestyles. It ensures a trust-based work culture in a family-friendly working environment. A positive feedback culture, the encouragement of active participation in committees, flexible working time models, clear rules and processes, transparent functions and roles, as well as open communication make the university a place of cultural development. Healthy professional and personal development should provide the framework for this. Space for personal responsibility and empowerment is encouraged.

In order to live up to its role and responsibility as a facilitator and co-creator of the comprehensive social, cultural, technological, and economic innovation and transformation processes that have already begun and will continue to take place in our region and beyond, Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences needs a stable yet adaptable structure. Its Charter is intended to ensure this.

Part One: General Provisions

Section 1 Legal Status, Seat, Responsibilities

(1) ¹Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences is a public body maintained by the Stiftung "Fachhochschule Osnabrück". ²The seat of the university is in Osnabrück; it has sites in Lingen (Ems) and Osnabrück. ³The university fulfills its responsibilities through close cooperation between the university bodies and the bodies of the Stiftung "Fachhochschule Osnabrück".

(2) The responsibilities of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences result from section 3 of the Lower Saxony Higher Education Act [NHG].

(3) In fulfilling its responsibilities, Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences is guided by its profile and self-conception as stated in the preamble of its Charter.

Section 2 Self-Government and University Bodies

(1) ¹Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences is self-governing. ²Persons elected to an office or function in the self-governing body may refuse to serve only for good cause. ³In the case of resignation from an office or function, as well as at the end of a term of office, the duties shall continue to be performed until a successor has been appointed, unless a deputy has been appointed to perform the duties. ⁴Women and men should be equally represented on all university bodies, i.e., women and men should each constitute at least 40 percent of the voting members.

(2) ¹The members of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences have the right and the duty to participate in the self-government and the fulfillment of the university's responsibilities in university bodies, advisory boards, and committees with special tasks. ²In accordance with the profile and self-conception of the university, they work to develop and operationally exploit strategic development potential for the university. ³The same applies to affiliates of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences, insofar as they are involved in self-government and the fulfillment of the university's responsibilities. ⁴Further details are set out in section 4 paragraph 6.

(3) ¹Faculties or similar organizational units shall be established for tasks relating to research, art, teaching, the promotion of young academics and artists, continuing education, and services in accordance with section 36 paragraph 2 sentence 2 of the NHG. ²All provisions of this Charter relating to faculties shall apply mutatis mutandis to similar organizational units. ³The University Steering Committee shall decide on the establishment, modification, and dissolution of faculties and similar organizational units. ⁴In justified cases, the university may formally subdivide faculties or similar organizational units. ⁵The University Steering Committee shall decide on the structure of a faculty or similar organizational unit on the proposal of the respective Dean's Office or the corresponding body of a similar organizational unit.

(4) ¹The central bodies of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences are the Academic Senate and the University Steering Committee. ²The central bodies of the Stiftung "Fachhochschule Osnabrück" are the Foundation Board and the University Steering Committee.

(5) The decentralized bodies of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences are the faculty councils, the Dean's Offices, and equivalent bodies of similar organizational units.

Section 3 **Student Initiative**

¹The students of the university may demand that a university body discuss and decide on a specific matter for which it is responsible according to the Lower Saxony Higher Education Act [NHG], if the initiative is signed by at least three percent of the students. ²The initiative must be submitted in writing to the university body responsible for the matter, naming a contact person. ³If an application concerns a matter for which the Academic Senate or a faculty council or an equivalent body is responsible, the discussion and decision should be open to the university public. ⁴The contact person shall be invited to act as rapporteur and shall be informed in writing of the outcome without undue delay.

Section 4 **Involvement of Members and Affiliates**

(1) ¹Who counts as a member of the university is regulated in section 16 paragraphs 1 and 1a of the NHG. ²The members shall elect the representatives of their groups to the Academic Senate, faculty councils and equivalent bodies separately in free, equal, and secret elections. ³Persons who, by virtue of their office, are members of a university body in an advisory capacity shall not be eligible for election to that body.

(2) Members of university bodies shall have equal voting rights, unless otherwise provided by law.

(3) University members may not be favored or discriminated against because of their self-government activities.

(4) ¹Members of university bodies may not participate in deliberations and decisions if this could be of particular advantage or disadvantage to themselves, their spouses, registered partners, relatives up to the third degree, relatives by marriage up to the second degree, or persons represented by them by law or by power of attorney. ²Further details are set out in section 21 of the Federal Administrative Procedures Act [*Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz – VwVfG*] and in other regulations and guidelines of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences.

(5) ¹Persons who work at Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences without being a member are affiliates of the university. ²In particular, the following have the status of affiliates:

- honorary professors;
- part-time professors;
- visiting academics;
- lecturers, provided that they meet the conditions set out in sentence 1;
- auditors who have been admitted;
- honorary senators;
- scholarship holders, unless they have a legal relationship with Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences that justifies membership;
- the permanent employees of the General Students' Committee (AStA) as a sub-entity in accordance with the staffing schedule;
- doctoral students who are supervised within the framework of cooperative doctorates at Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences, provided that they do not have the status of research assistants and are not members of the university on the basis of their employment contract;
- retired full-time university staff who worked at the university on more than a temporary or visiting basis;
- members of associated institutes, provided that they are not members of the university;
- members of Science to Business GmbH.

(6) ¹Affiliates of the university shall have no voting rights. ²Affiliates have the duty and the right to participate in the fulfillment of the university's responsibilities within the scope of their capabilities. ³To this end, they may, in individual cases, be entrusted with self-government and other university tasks by the competent university body. ⁴Excluded from this are:

- tasks with personnel or budget responsibility, unless they involve self-raised external funding;
- tasks performed within bodies of the university;
- tasks performed on a committee or commission.

⁵Affiliates have the right to use the scientific institutions and facilities within the scope of the university's statutory mission and with the approval of the appropriate internal bodies.

Part Two: University Bodies and Organizational Units

Chapter I: Central Organization

Section 5 Management of the University

(1) ¹Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences is led by a University Steering Committee. ²In addition to the President, the University Steering Committee consists of five Vice Presidents, one full-time (Senior) and four part-time. ³The Senior Vice President or the Senior Vice President for Human Resources and Finance shall be the Budget Officer as defined in section 9 of the State Budget Code [*Landeshaushaltsordnung* – LHO]. ⁴The University Steering Committee shall establish further details in its rules of procedure and schedule of responsibilities.

(2) ¹The part-time Vice Presidents shall be appointed from among the members of the university for a term of four years. ²The President shall submit to the Academic Senate an overall proposal or individual proposals. ³If the Academic Senate approves the proposal(s), the Foundation Board shall decide on the proposal(s) on its own authority. ⁴The workload of the Vice Presidents should be distributed equally. ⁵The part-time Vice Presidents shall be released from their other official duties in accordance with the extent of their workload. ⁶Further details for professors, academic staff, artistic staff, and senior lecturers are set out in the Teaching Obligation Regulation at Higher Education Institutions [*Lehrverpflichtungsverordnung* – LVVO].

(3) ¹The part-time Vice Presidents should belong to different faculties or similar organizational units. ²In order to do justice to the diversity that has developed at Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences, this must be taken into account in the decision of the Academic Senate. ³This applies in particular to efforts to achieve gender parity in management. ⁴A member of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences engaged at the Lingen site should be a member of the University Steering Committee.

(4) ¹The President represents the university externally, chairs the University Steering Committee, determines the guidelines for the work of the University Steering Committee, and is primarily responsible for the strategic development of the university. ²Within these guidelines, each Vice President shall perform the tasks within their area of responsibility independently and under their own responsibility. ³Further details shall be set out in the rules of procedure of the University Steering Committee.

(5) The University Steering Committee shall establish its own rules of procedure.

Section 6 **Responsibilities of the University Steering Committee**

(1) ¹The University Steering Committee leads the university and shapes its development, taking into account the profile and self-conception of the university. ²It exercises the decision-making powers vested in it by law, by its Charter, or by resolutions of its bodies, and implements the resolutions of the Academic Senate. ³It is responsible for all matters not assigned to another body by the Lower Saxony Higher Education Act [NHG].

(2) ¹The University Steering Committee forms departments. ²The provision of section 37 paragraph 4 sentence 4 of the NHG remains unaffected. ³The allocation of responsibilities and representation within the University Steering Committee shall be bindingly regulated in the rules of procedure and implemented in the schedule of responsibilities.

(3) The University Steering Committee proposes the University Development Plan to the Academic Senate and concludes agreements with the heads of faculties and similar organizational units to achieve the development goals.

(4) The University Steering Committee decides in particular on

- the conclusion of a target agreement;
- the business plan;
- the task- and performance-based allocation of resources at the university;
- the establishment, modification, or dissolution of faculties and other organizational units;
- the structuring of a faculty or similar organizational unit on the proposal of the respective Dean's Office or a body that is considered to be of equal status;
- the introduction, substantial modification, and closure of degree programs;
- the approval of examination regulations;
- proposals for professorial appointments.

(5) ¹In urgent cases, the University Steering Committee may convene the Academic Senate at short notice, and arrange for any other university body to be convened at short notice, and request that certain matters be discussed with its participation and decided in its presence. ²If the necessary decision cannot be taken in time, the University Steering Committee shall take the necessary measures itself and shall immediately inform the competent university body of the measures taken.

(6) ¹The University Steering Committee is responsible for the regulatory oversight of the university's bodies and the student body. ²The regulatory powers of the Stiftung "Fachhochschule Osnabrück" as the university's funding body apply accordingly.

(7) The University Steering Committee may convene meetings of the members of any status group.

Section 7 **Strategy Forum**

(1) ¹The Strategy Forum brings together the University Steering Committee, the faculties, similar organizational units, and the central university services with the goal of achieving a holistic strategic orientation and its implementation at the university. ²It works together in a trusting, participatory manner for the benefit of all members of the university and for the university itself. ³It also serves to inform each other regularly about important developments and plans.

(2) ¹The members of the Strategy Forum are as follows:

1. the members of the University Steering Committee;
2. the deans of the faculties and the heads of similar organizational units;
3. the Central Equal Opportunities Officer;
4. a member of the General Students' Committee (AStA);
5. a member of the Staff Council.

²The heads of central scientific facilities and central departments are consulted according to the agenda. ³They have the right to submit proposals to the Strategy Forum.

(3) ¹The Strategy Forum is chaired by the President. ²He or she shall also receive timely proposals for the agenda.

(4) ¹The Strategy Forum shall meet at least three times per semester in closed session to discuss common strategic and structural issues as well as the success of the implementation of the agreed university strategies, taking into account the relevant benchmarks of success.

²It establishes a common understanding of

- the profile and self-conception;
- university development planning;
- program development planning;
- the resulting resource requirements, including infrastructure.

³The communication of the results, in particular to the Academic Senate and the Foundation Board, shall be governed by the rules of procedure of the Strategy Forum. ⁴The decision-making powers of other university bodies shall remain unaffected.

(5) The Strategy Forum shall establish its own rules of procedure.

Section 8 **Academic Senate**

(1) ¹The Academic Senate consists of seven voting members from the group of professors and two members each from the groups of academic staff, technical and administrative staff, and students. ²The term of office of the student members is one year, and that of the other members is two years. ³The votes of the members of the student group shall count double on matters relating to the evaluation of teaching; the members of the group of technical and administrative staff shall not vote on these matters.

(2) ¹Members of the Academic Senate in an advisory capacity are:

- the members of the University Steering Committee;
- deans and heads of organizational units similar to faculties;
- the full-time Equal Opportunities Officer;
- a member of staff representation;
- a representative of the General Students' Committee (AStA);
- the member of the Foundation Board elected by the Academic Senate, unless they are an elected member of the Academic Senate.

²The following may attend meetings of the Academic Senate as guests with the right to speak:

- a staff member of the Office of Legal Affairs;

- the Professorial Appointments Officer on agenda items related to the professorial appointment procedures;
- the Special Needs Officer for Students with Disabilities or Chronic Illnesses;
- the person representing the interests of student assistants;
- the person representing doctoral students.

³At the invitation of the Academic Senate, members of the Foundation Board may attend meetings of the Academic Senate with the right to speak. ⁴If they are unable to attend, the deans and the head of an organizational unit similar to a faculty may be represented by a member of the Dean's Office or the corresponding body of a similar organizational unit, and the full-time Equal Opportunities Officer may be represented by her elected representative.

(3) ¹The President shall chair the Academic Senate in accordance with section 41 paragraph 4 sentence 5 of the NHG. ²He or she shall be responsible for convening the meetings and for their preparation and follow-up. ³If he or she is prevented from doing so, the member of the University Steering Committee designated to represent them in accordance with the rules of procedure of the University Steering Committee shall chair the meeting.

(4) ¹The Academic Senate may appoint a spokesperson for the Academic Senate from among its members. ²Further details are set out in the rules of procedure of the Academic Senate. ³The elected person speaks for the Academic Senate in or to the bodies, commissions, and committees of the university in matters in which the Academic Senate's participation is provided for in accordance with the Lower Saxony Higher Education Act [NHG] and regularly exchanges information with the President. ⁴The term of office ends with the term of office of the respective Academic Senate.

Section 9 **Responsibilities of the Academic Senate**

(1) ¹The Academic Senate bears special responsibility for the realization of the strategic goals of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences, which are contained in its profile, its self-conception, and in the University Development Plan. ²The Academic Senate adopts

- the Charter and its amendments with a two-thirds majority of its members;
- the development plan in agreement with the University Steering Committee;
- equal opportunities planning in agreement with the University Steering Committee and in consultation with the full-time Equal Opportunities Officer;
- the regulations of the university, unless this responsibility is assigned to a faculty, a similar organizational unit, or another body in accordance with the Lower Saxony Higher Education Act [NHG] or this Charter.

(2) ¹The Academic Senate participates together with the Foundation Board in the election and nomination or appointment of the President and in the election of the Senior Vice Presidents in accordance with section 38 and section 39 paragraph 1 of the NHG. ²A joint search committee of the Academic Senate and the Foundation Board is formed to prepare the Academic Senate's nominations. ³Further details are set out in the "Regulations for the Preparation of the Academic Senate Proposal for the Nomination or Appointment of Senior Members of the University Steering Committee". ⁴The appointment of the part-time Vice Presidents is regulated in section 39 paragraph 2 of the NHG and in section 5 paragraph 3 of this Charter.

(3) ¹The Academic Senate elects one member of the university as a member of the Foundation Board and participates in the appointment of the other five members of the Foundation Board in accordance with section 60 paragraph 1 sentence 2 no. 1 of the NHG

by reaching agreement with the responsible ministry. ²The decision on the agreement shall be prepared by a commission to be appointed by the Academic Senate under the chairmanship of the President. ³Further details are set out in the rules of procedure of the Academic Senate.

(4) The Academic Senate shall comment on all matters of fundamental importance to self-government, especially those arising from the Strategy Forum, and on the

- establishment, modification, and dissolution of faculties and similar organizational units;
- introduction, substantial modification, and closure of degree programs;
- preparation of the business plan;
- conclusion of a target agreement;
- dedication of professorships.

(5) The Academic Senate shall reach agreement with the University Steering Committee on the appointment and allocation of the departments of the University Steering Committee, taking into account section 5 paragraph 2 sentence 2.

(6) ¹The Academic Senate may establish and dissolve committees and commissions to perform the tasks assigned to it. ²Further details are set out in the rules of procedure of the Academic Senate.

(7) ¹The Academic Senate decides on honors for persons who have rendered outstanding services to Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences. ²Proposals for honors must be submitted to the Academic Senate in text form and must be substantiated. ³They must be signed by the President and at least three other members of the Academic Senate. ⁴An honor requires the approval of two-thirds of the voting members of the Academic Senate.

(8) ¹The University Steering Committee shall be accountable to the Academic Senate in all matters of self-government within the scope of its decision-making authority. ²The Academic Senate must be regularly informed about events of importance for the development of the university and the Foundation, in particular about

- the target agreement with the federal state;
- the development planning and the development status of the faculties and similar organizational units, in particular the appointment of professors;
- the development planning and status of the central facilities, including the central university services;
- the budget and the economic situation of the university;
- the implementation of the resolutions of the Academic Senate.

Section 10 Committee for Intersectional Gender Equality Work and Equal Opportunities Officers

(1) ¹The Academic Senate shall form a Committee for Intersectional Gender Equality Work consisting of three members from each of the groups mentioned in section 8 paragraph 1 of the Charter, the majority of whom shall be women, which shall develop proposals for gender equality measures and advise the Academic Senate, the University Steering Committee and the full-time Equal Opportunities Officer. ²In particular, the Academic Senate, upon the proposal of the full-time Equal Opportunities Officer, shall determine the duties of the

committee. ³It is elected by the members of the respective status group in the Academic Senate.

(2) ¹Following a public call for applications, the Academic Senate elects, on the recommendation of the Committee for Intersectional Gender Equality Work, a full-time Equal Opportunities Officer, whose rights and duties are set forth in section 42 of the NHG, and her deputy for a term of six years, or eight years in the case of re-election. ²According to section 42 paragraph 1 sentence 3 of the NHG, the appointment can, with the approval of the Academic Senate, be made for a further term of office without a call for applications. ³The full-time Equal Opportunities Officer heads the Equal Opportunity Office and may convene meetings.

(3) ¹The faculties, similar organizational units, and the central university services each have their own decentralized Equal Opportunities Officer. ²They are responsible for the gender equality tasks of their organizational units, in particular for participating in development planning, in the preparation of the Gender Equality Plan, and in structural and personnel decisions of their organizational units. ³They shall be involved in personnel measures; section 42 paragraph 3 sentence 2, second half-sentence, sentence 3 and sentence 4 of the NHG shall apply mutatis mutandis. ⁴They are not bound by specific orders and instructions. ⁵The rights of the full-time Equal Opportunities Officer shall remain unaffected; in particular, she shall be solely responsible for approving deviations from the women's quota in professorial appointment committees pursuant to section 26 paragraph 2 sentence 5 of the NHG and for commenting pursuant to section 26 paragraph 2 sentence 7 of the NHG, and for the right of objection pursuant to section 26 paragraph 2 sentence 8 and section 42 paragraph 4 of the NHG.

(4) ¹The Equal Opportunities Officers shall form the Council of Equal Opportunities Officers for mutual coordination and support. ²The full-time Equal Opportunities Officer convenes the Council and chairs its meetings. ³The Equal Opportunities Officers shall represent each other.

(5) ¹The decentralized Equal Opportunities Officers and their deputies shall be nominated by the members and affiliates of the respective organizational unit in the equal opportunities conferences of the organizational units in accordance with section 10 paragraph 3 sentence 1 and elected by the faculty council or the corresponding body of a similar organizational unit or appointed by the university management for the central university services. ²The election or appointment shall be made in agreement with the full-time Equal Opportunities Officer. ³The term of office is two years, for female students one year. ⁴Re-election or reappointment is possible.

(6) Further details are set out in the Academic Senate Policy on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Mandate.

Section 11 **Committee for the Improvement of Study Conditions**

(1) ¹Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences establishes a Committee for the Improvement of Study Conditions (SQK). ²The SQK consists of 14 voting members. ³Voting members are:

1. one representative of the group of students from each faculty and each similar organizational unit;
2. two further representatives of the student body;

3. one representative of the group of professors from each faculty and each similar organizational unit;
4. one representative from the group of academic staff;
5. one representative from the group of technical and administrative staff.

(2) ¹The Vice President for Academic Affairs / Provost chairs the meeting without voting rights. ²He or she shall be represented by the Senior Vice President as the Budget Officer as defined in section 9 of the State Budget Code [LHO].

(3) ¹The other members of the University Steering Committee, and the Deans and Academic Deans of the faculties and similar organizational units may attend the meetings of the SQK in an advisory capacity. ²The full-time Equal Opportunities Officer and a member of staff representation may also attend the meetings in an advisory capacity.

(4) ¹The members and one substitute each shall be appointed by the members of the respective status group in the Academic Senate for a term of two years, in the case of the group of students for a term of one year. ²The respective status groups in the faculties and similar organizational units have the right to propose nominees for 1. and 3. ³The right to propose nominees for 2. shall be exercised by the student parliament.

(5) ¹A substitute shall be appointed for each voting member, taking into account paragraph 4. ²Equal representation of men and women shall be taken into account.

(6) Further details are set out in the guidelines for the use of funds for the improvement of study conditions, which shall be adopted by agreement between the University Steering Committee and the Committee for the Improvement of Study Conditions after the Academic Senate has given its opinion.

Section 12 **Special Needs Officer for Students with Disabilities or Chronic Illnesses**

(1) The university is committed to promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities or chronic illnesses and takes their special needs into account in planning and development.

(2) ¹To represent the interests of students with disabilities or chronic illnesses, the Academic Senate elects a representative for a two-year term. ²This person advises the university bodies and students with disabilities or chronic illnesses and, in particular, works to ensure that students with disabilities or chronic illnesses are not disadvantaged in their studies and can make use of the university's services as far as possible without outside help. ³The responsibilities of the Academic Deans under the law governing examinations remain unaffected.

(3) ¹Any member of the university who holds an employment or service relationship with the university and who, by virtue of their professional qualifications and professional history, can be expected to have the experience and knowledge necessary to perform the duties of the office shall be eligible for election. ²The person elected shall be appointed by the President and shall be released from other official duties to a reasonable extent in order to perform the duties. ³The University Steering Committee, the Dean's Offices of the faculties, equivalent bodies of units similar to faculties, and the heads of other organizational units shall be obliged to provide information to the Special Needs Officer within the framework of the tasks referred to in paragraph 2. ⁴The Special Needs Officer may make recommendations and statements to all university bodies and shall not be bound by instructions in the performance

of their duties. ⁵They shall report on their activities to the Academic Senate at least once a year.

Section 13 **Doctoral College**

(1) ¹By offering its Doctoral College, Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences supports and qualifies its doctoral students who write their doctoral theses at this university. ²The main tasks of the Doctoral College at Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences are to:

- advise on all aspects relating to doing a doctorate at Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences;
- provide assistance in identifying sources of funding for the duration of the doctoral research project;
- provide skill-building programs and opportunities to support and complement subject-specific work;
- foster internationalization to promote personal and professional development.

(2) ¹Doctoral students who are supervised at Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences in the context of their doctoral studies have access to the Doctoral College. ²Further details shall be set out in the Doctoral College Regulations.

Section 14 **Sustainability Committee**

(1) ¹Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences recognizes its responsibility to contribute to the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as amended, for sustainable development on an economic, social, and environmental level. ²The university has a Sustainability Policy and monitors compliance with it.

(2) ¹The Sustainability Committee discusses and evaluates the university's climate protection and adaptation measures, as well as strategic planning and developments, with regard to their social, climate, and environmental compatibility. ²It advises the university on its Sustainability Policy and, in collaboration with external stakeholders, on the university's contribution to achieving the SDGs.

(3) The Sustainability Committee reports to the Academic Senate once a year, and can propose strategies and projects in line with the SDGs at Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences.

(4) ¹The Sustainability Committee consists of eight voting members elected by the members of each status group of the Academic Senate:

1. one representative from the group of students;
2. one representative from the group of professors from each faculty and similar organizational unit;
3. one representative from the group of academic staff;
4. one representative from the group of technical and administrative staff.

²The committee shall elect a chairperson to serve as the liaison to the Academic Senate.

(5) ¹Members of the University Steering Committee may attend meetings of the Sustainability Committee in an advisory capacity. ²The same applies to the full-time Equal Opportunities Officer and a member of staff representation.

(6) Further details shall set out in the Sustainability Committee Regulations.

Section 15 **Ethics Committee**

(1) ¹The Ethics Committee of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences supports researchers by advising them on ethical and data protection aspects of research projects.

²This is without prejudice to the responsibility of the researchers for the research project and its implementation.

(2) ¹The Ethics Committee acts at the request of researchers. ²The committee makes the following decisions on applications, which are communicated in writing: approval of the application, request for rework, rejection of the application. ³The “approval of the application” decision confirms that the Ethics Committee has provided ethical and data protection advice on the application prior to the start of the project. ⁴Further details are set out in the “Regulations on the Establishment and Procedure of a Committee for Ethics at Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences (Ethics Committee)”.

Section 16 **Animal Welfare Committee and Animal Welfare Officers under the Animal Welfare Act [*Tierschutzgesetz – TierSchG*]**

(1) ¹At Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences, research and teaching are conducted on and with animals. ²The university is therefore particularly committed to the welfare of animals used in research and teaching.

(2) ¹The University Steering Committee of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences appoints at least one Animal Welfare Officer according to section 10 paragraph 1 of the Animal Welfare Act [*Tierschutzgesetz – TierSchG*]. ²The details, in particular the duties of the Animal Welfare Officer, the required qualifications, the appointment procedure, and the position of the Animal Welfare Officer are set out in the Animal Protection Experiment Ordinance [*Verordnung zum Schutz von zu Versuchszwecken oder zu anderen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken verwendeten Tieren – TierSchVersV*].

(3) ¹At Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences, the University Steering Committee establishes an Animal Welfare Committee according to section 10 paragraph 2 sentence 3 of the TierSchG in conjunction with the requirements of the TierSchVersV in order to support the Animal Welfare Officer(s) in fulfilling the tasks assigned to them. ²Details of the members and duties are set out in the TierSchVersV.

Section 17 **Representation of the Interests of Student Assistants**

(1) ¹The interests of student assistants are represented by a person from the group of students. ²This person works to ensure that working conditions for student assistants are appropriate and handles complaints from individuals concerned.

(2) ¹The representation of the interests of student assistants is appointed by the General Students’ Committee (AStA). ²Further details are regulated by the student body under its own responsibility within the framework of regulatory oversight.

Section 18 **Associated Institutes**

(1) ¹The University Steering Committee can recognize a non-university, predominantly academic institution as an institute of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences (associated institute) by resolution or at the request of a faculty council or an equivalent body of a similar organizational unit, provided that it is comparable to an academic institution of the university, academic freedom is guaranteed, and it promotes the fulfillment of the tasks of Osnabrück

University of Applied Sciences. ²Recognition is limited to five years and may be renewed for additional five-year periods. ³For the duration of the recognition, the institution is entitled to use the name "Institute at Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences". ⁴The University Steering Committee shall revoke the recognition as an associated institute if the requirements according to sentence 1 are no longer fulfilled; the faculty council or the equivalent body of a similar organizational unit and the Academic Senate shall be given the opportunity to comment before the decision is made.

(2) The details of the cooperation shall be set out in a cooperation agreement between the university and the associated institute.

Chapter II: Decentralized Organization

Section 19 Faculties

¹Faculties and similar organizational units fulfill the tasks of the university without prejudice to the overall responsibility of the university and the responsibility of the central bodies for their respective areas. ²They implement the university's tasks, profile, and self-conception on the basis of the university's development planning, and to this end conclude target agreements with the University Steering Committee. ³Together with the committee referred to in section 10 paragraph 3 sentence 2, they draw up the Gender Equality Plan for their areas, ensure the quality of teaching, continuing education, research, and technology transfer, and take care of their young academic talent. ⁴They report regularly to the Academic Senate on the performance of their duties.

Section 20 Faculty Council

(1) ¹The faculty council consists of seven voting members from the group of professors and two members each from the groups of academic staff, technical and administrative staff, and students. ²Section 8 paragraph 1 sentences 2 and 3 shall apply mutatis mutandis. ³The decentralized Equal Opportunities Officer of the faculty is a member of the faculty council in an advisory capacity.

(2) The Dean shall convene the meetings of the faculty council and chair them without the right to vote.

(3) If the Dean is prevented from attending, they may be represented by a member of the Dean's Office in accordance with section 22 paragraph 1 sentence 1, and the full-time Equal Opportunities Officer may be represented by her elected representative.

(4) ¹The faculty council shall decide on all matters of fundamental importance affecting the entire faculty, unless they fall within the remit of the Dean's Office. ²In particular, it decides on

- faculty regulations, in particular all study program regulations and those whose scope of application extends to members and affiliates of the faculty, as well as regulations on the use of its facilities;
- measures for evaluation and quality assurance and for the further development of teaching;
- measures to promote research and to strengthen technology transfer within the faculty;
- measures for the promotion of young academic talent.

³All regulations adopted by the faculty council must be approved by the University Steering Committee.

(5) ¹The faculty council is responsible for the preparation and approval of proposals for professorial appointments. ²Further details are set out in the Appointment Regulations of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences.

(6) ¹The faculty council decides on the faculty's Gender Equality Plan. ²A faculty's Gender Equality Plan shall be submitted to the Academic Senate for its opinion and for the purpose of reaching an agreement with the University Steering Committee.

(7) The faculty council shall give its opinion on the introduction, substantial modification, or closure of degree programs.

(8) ¹The faculty council may establish committees and commissions to perform the tasks assigned to it. ²Further details shall be set out in the rules of procedure of the faculty council.

(9) The faculty council must be regularly informed about events of importance for the development of the faculty, in particular about the budget and the economic situation of the faculty.

(10) The faculty council shall establish its own rules of procedure.

(11) All of the provisions of this section shall apply mutatis mutandis to the equivalent bodies of similar organizational units.

Section 21 **Study Commissions**

¹In accordance with the instructions of the University Steering Committee regarding the number, size, responsibilities, and faculty assignment, the university shall form study commissions composed of an equal number of full-time professors and students with voting rights. ²The group of academic staff and the group of technical and administrative staff should each be represented with at least one advisory vote. ³The faculty council or equivalent body of a similar organizational unit should consider degree program affiliation in selecting members of study commissions.

Section 22 **Dean's Office**

(1) ¹The Dean's Office consists of the Dean and the Academic Dean or Deans. ²The Dean's Office may include more than one Academic Dean. ³The members of the Dean's Office are released from their other official duties according to the extent of their workload.

(2) ¹To be elected Dean, the person must be a professor in the Faculty. ²The Dean is elected by the faculty council for a term of four years. ³A second term in office is only two years if the person to be elected declares in writing before re-election that they will serve only for that period.

(3) ¹The faculty council may provide in the Faculty Regulations for the office of an Assistant Dean or Vice Dean, who shall assume representative duties and departmental responsibilities in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Dean's Office. ²Paragraph 1 sentence 2 and paragraphs 2 and 9 shall apply mutatis mutandis.

(4) ¹Academic Deans are elected by the faculty council for a term of two years on the recommendation of the study commission(s) composed of the group of professors. ²In exceptional cases, a member of the teaching staff belonging to the group of academic staff

may also be elected. ³Elections shall be held so that the regular terms of office of the Academic Deans of all faculties begin and end at the same time. ⁴If a new election is required during that term, the election shall be for a correspondingly shorter or longer term in order to achieve synchronous terms. ⁵If a term of one year or more remains on the day of the election, the new Academic Dean shall be elected for the remainder of the term. ⁶If a shorter term remains on the day of the election, the new Academic Dean shall be elected for the remainder of the term and the subsequent term.

(5) The election of all members of the Dean's Office requires the confirmation of the University Steering Committee.

(6) ¹A deputy may be elected for a member of the Dean's Office for a period of one semester, provided that

- a) there is good cause, and
- b) the permanent replacement of the member is unreasonable for the other members of the Dean's Office.

²Good cause includes, but is not limited to

- a) long-term illness, or
- b) temporary extraordinary family responsibilities.

³The provisions of paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4 shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

(7) ¹The Dean's Office manages the Faculty. ²The Dean's Office is responsible for all faculty matters, unless the Lower Saxony Higher Education Act [NHG] provides otherwise. ³The Dean's Office implements the decisions of the faculty council and is responsible to it. ⁴It decides on the business plan of the Faculty.

(8) The Dean's Office shall establish its own rules of procedure, taking into account the authority of the Dean to issue directives, which shall, in particular, define the areas of responsibility of the members of the Dean's Office.

(9) ¹The faculty council may remove members of the Dean's Office by a three-fourths majority of its members, subject to confirmation by the University Steering Committee. ²The term of office of the Dean shall not end until the removal has been confirmed. ³The removal of an Academic Dean may be proposed by the respective study commission by a two-thirds majority of its members.

(10) The Dean

- presides over the Dean's Office;
- establishes guidelines for the Dean's Office;
- represents the faculty within the university;
- concludes agreements on development goals with the University Steering Committee on behalf of the faculty;
- is responsible for the personnel development of staff at the faculty;
- ensures the appropriate development of degree programs and teaching;
- works to ensure that the members and affiliates of the faculty perform their duties, without prejudice to the responsibility of the Academic Deans; and
- is the superior of the members of the group of academic staff and the group of technical and administrative staff.

(11) ¹Academic Deans are responsible for ensuring the provision of courses and student advisory services, as well as for the administration of exams. ²They work to ensure that all members and affiliates of the faculty fulfill their teaching and examination responsibilities.

(12) ¹In urgent cases, the Dean's Office may convene the faculty council and request that certain matters be discussed and decided in the presence of the faculty council. ²If the decision cannot be taken in time, the Dean's Office shall take the necessary measures itself and shall immediately inform the faculty council and the University Steering Committee of the measures taken.

(13) ¹The Dean's Office must object to unlawful decisions of the faculty council and demand that they be rescinded or modified. ²An objection has a suspensive effect. ³If the faculty council fails to remedy the situation, the Dean's Office shall inform the University Steering Committee.

(14) The Dean may convene plenary meetings of the individual status groups of the faculty.

(15) All of the provisions of this section shall apply mutatis mutandis to the equivalent bodies of similar organizational units.

Part Three: Final Provisions

Section 23 Publications and Announcements

¹Publications according to section 71a of the NHG as well as official announcements of the university and the Stiftung are issued in the electronic official gazette on the university's website. ²Unless otherwise provided by law or regulation, the publication or announcement shall be deemed to have been made at the end of the day on which the corresponding file was first made generally accessible on the internet.

Section 24 Entry into Force and Transitional Arrangement

(1) ¹This Charter shall enter into force on the day after its publication in the Official Gazette of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences. ²At the same time, the previous Charter of April 9, 2015, as last amended by the Second Amendment Order of December 19, 2018, shall cease to apply.

(2) ¹The provisions of section 7 serve to test a new model of governance at Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences. ²In accordance with section 46 paragraph 2 of the NHG, this trial is intended to accelerate and improve decision-making processes and to support the development of the profile of Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences. ³The period of validity of section 7 is initially limited to the duration of the trial period of five years from the entry into force of this Charter in accordance with section 46 paragraph 2 sentence 1 of the NHG. ⁴This trial shall be documented and evaluated in accordance with section 46 paragraph 2 sentence 4 of the NHG and a report shall be submitted to the responsible ministry no later than three months prior to the end of the trial period.

(3) The regulations and guidelines set forth in this Charter shall be developed or adapted within 24 months of the date of entry into force of this Charter.