

Guideline for the Career Development Talk

between the Head of Institute and newly recognized KIT Junior Research Group Leaders

KIT strives for predictable and reliable career perspectives for young scientists. To this end, four models have been established at KIT for subsequent junior scientists' careers after the postdoc phase. These are associated with a considerable increase in experience and knowledge and prepare for the assumption of a leading position. They are aimed both at scientists who want to stay at KIT and at those who aspire to a career elsewhere (KIT 2025).

Reason for the Career Development Talk

The recognition as a KIT junior research group leader (JRGL) marks the transition from career level R2 *Recognized Scientist* to career level R3 *Established Scientist* at KIT.¹ This also concludes the postdoc phase (orientation phase), which at KIT is limited to three years, and leads to a subsequent junior scientist career which is usually set for 4-6 years and results in the qualification as a scientific leader and manager (R4 *Leading Researcher*).

→ The KIT executive board recommends to have the career development talk between the head of institute and the KIT junior research group leader within 3 months of the recognition of the KIT JRG.

Aim of the Career Development Talk

KIT junior research group leaders strive for an academic career in a management position – usually a professorship. This can be a tenure-track professorship at KIT via KIT *Excellent Tenure*, a permanent W3 professorship outside of KIT, or a permanent position at KIT as an *Established Scientist*. The most important aspects of the career development talk are to outline individual possibilities and perspectives based on the four models for subsequent junior scientists' careers (see below), to clarify the requirements and deadlines for them, and to plan further steps.

→ Subsequently, the junior research group leaders should know their options at KIT and initiate the next steps with the support of the head of institute and, if necessary, the division to successfully pursue the respective career model.

Career Models and Key Aspects for the Career Development Talk

W1 Option: Is there interest in establishing a thematically suitable W1 professorship at KIT?

→ In this case, immediate coordination between the head of institute and the head of division is necessary. A speedy procedure is crucial to ensure that the funding of the junior research group can largely cover the six-year term of the W1 professorship. Furthermore, the deadlines regarding the eligibility for W1 professorship in the KIT *Quality Assurance Concept* (QSK) must be observed. Provided that its criteria are met, an appointment to a W1 professorship is possible as a result of a regular appointment procedure managed by the division in accordance with the *special regulation for externally evaluated junior research group leaders and for junior research group leaders already recognized at KIT* (§3 QSK).

- **Model 1: Tenure-track professorship** for a long-term commitment to KIT.
The goal is to obtain a permanent professorship at KIT.
- **Model 2: Junior professorship without tenure track** as a qualification instrument
The goal is to assume a permanent professorship outside of KIT.

¹ The status as a KIT junior research group confirms that the junior leaders have prevailed in an internal or external competition and lead a scientifically and financially independent research group.

B. Qualification for KIT Junior Research Group Leaders without a W1 Professorship

Leading a recognized junior research group at KIT includes managing own resources and offers significant scientific independence. The junior research group leaders participate in teaching and supervise their own doctoral candidates as KIT Associate Fellows. (KIT 2025).

- **Model 3: Leadership of a junior research group aimed at tenured employment at KIT** as an *Established Scientist* with further development and advancement opportunities.
→ In this case, the prerequisites, criteria, and schedule for initiating a tenure procedure at KIT (EVA procedure) need to be clarified.
- **Model 4: Leadership of a junior research group as a qualification instrument**
The goal is the assumption of a professorship or management role outside of KIT.
→ In this case, the prerequisites, criteria, and time schedule for achieving the qualification goal of W3 eligibility need to be defined, taking into account the necessary duration of the temporary position and the individual possibilities for temporary employment.

Involvement in teaching and examination activities

To ensure participation in teaching and the supervision of their own doctoral candidates in models 3 and 4, the involvement of junior research group leaders in teaching and examination activities is to be promoted. This can be achieved by obtaining the status of *KIT Associate Fellow*, acceptance as habilitation candidate, or by taking on a teaching assignment. All three formats can be combined.

→ Prerequisites/ requirements: Especially for junior research group leaders who take on large-scale research tasks, the connection to one of the KIT departments is crucial to achieve their qualification goals. They should be actively supported if needed.

- **KIT Associate Fellow:** As KIT Associate Fellows, heads of a recognized KIT junior research group can participate in teaching (min. 2 SWS) and supervise doctoral students in their group.
→ Prerequisites/ requirements
 - Acquisition of a second doctoral position or transfer of supervision for a second doctoral position within the junior research group.
 - Affiliation with a KIT department: application and 2 SWS compulsory teaching
 - Prompt action, as the junior research group should usually run for at least two more years at the time of application.
- **Habilitation** Alternatively or in addition to the *KIT Associate Fellow*: a habilitation at KIT should be completed after notification within a period of usually five years (early submission possible), taking into account subject-specific aspects.
→ Prerequisites/ requirements:
 - Affiliation with a KIT department
 - Prompt action: notification and acceptance as habilitation candidate
 - Transfer of teaching responsibility
- **Teaching assignment:** A teaching contract may additionally be arranged in order to grant junior research group leaders teaching and examination authority for independently conducted courses, which they do not necessarily possess in full as *KIT Associate Fellow* or habilitation candidate.

Option of Upgrading the Pay Scale to E14/15

KIT junior research group leaders typically assume personnel responsibility for the first time and independently supervise doctoral candidates. While the career step to R3 within the framework of a W1 professorship or an externally evaluated junior research group inevitably entails a renegotiation

of salary, the review of the pay grade by Human Resources (PSE) must be initiated individually for internally recognized KIT junior research groups.

→ Prerequisites/ requirements

- Review of pay grade in consultation with PSE: Is the upgrade to E14 already justified based on the supervision of 3 persons on at least E13? Evaluation of the “difficulty of research tasks for independent and responsible handling”?
- Identification of required achievements for reclassification, such as securing additional doctoral positions, increasing the standard of research projects, obtaining higher-value third-party funding, etc.
- Clarification of financing: options of the institute or third party funding and the sustainability of them.

Further information

General

- [KIT 2025 - Umbrella Strategy of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology](#)
- [Personnel development concept of KIT](#)
- [Statutes to ensure good scientific practice at KIT](#)

About W1 professorship

- [Concept Paper KIT Excellent Tenure](#)
- [Quality Assurance Concept for Junior Professorships and Tenure-Track Professorships at KIT](#)
- [Guidelines for Appointment Procedures for W 1, W 2, and W 3 Professorships at KIT](#)

On the management of junior research groups

- [Recognition as "KIT Junior Research Group"](#)
- [KIT Rules for the Procedure for the Establishment of the Status of a "KIT Associate Fellow"](#)
- [Habilitation regulations of KIT](#)
- [Assessment interview](#)
- [Termination procedure at KIT](#)
- [Career paths for permanent scientists at KIT](#)