

Millions for Research-oriented Teaching

Under Their Program for More Quality in Teaching, the Federation and Federal States Support the KIT Proposal for an Early Integration of Students in Research Projects



Research-oriented studies will be offered by KIT under the program "Lehre hoch Forschung" (research-based education). (Photo: Sandra Göttisheim, KIT)

Intensive research-based education is a major element of studies at Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). It is subject of the proposal "KIT – Lehre hoch Forschung", with which KIT has won the second round of the Qualitätspakt Lehre. With this program, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Federal States support universities in enhancing studies conditions and teaching quality. For its proposal "Lehre hoch Forschung", KIT will presumably be granted up to EUR 8.5 million from the 2012 summer semester.

"At KIT, the principle of education follows research applies: We do not only convey theoretical knowledge and expert competences, but also integrate the students in current research projects and processes during all studies phases," says Professor Jürgen Becker, Chief Higher Education Officer at KIT. "With our successful proposal, the merger of the university sector and research sector of KIT will also be advanced in education." According to Becker, research-oriented education is a characteristic feature of KIT and the basis of

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a successful career in industry and society.

The proposal “Lehre hoch Forschung” is aimed at offering in the future a wide scope of problem-based, research-oriented practical exercises and projects to students in early semesters already. The students shall be given insight into fundamental and research-relevant aspects. Inter- and trans-disciplinary competences shall be conveyed.

The planned or already started (pilot) projects are aimed at sustainably improving learning and studies conditions at KIT. In parallel, expert knowledge in the respective discipline will be considered. Among others, a service point for “problem-oriented teaching” shall be established at the Department of Informatics. Here, projects of student teams shall be coordinated. Standardized requirements and learning objectives will ensure a high teaching quality. A new concept for team projects in early studies phases is being implemented already. It was developed by the Department of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology together with students, the objective being to interlink fundamentals and practical work and, thus, increase the motivation of students and understandability of learning contents. At the Department of Architecture, structured design studios – a “school of architectonic thinking” – are to be established, where students are to learn not only design as a method, but also to work on research aspects in cooperation with e.g. the KIT Energy Center or the KIT Humans and Technology Focus. In addition, a number of other offers will be made by all departments, including the study courses of pedagogics.

Parallel to these measures, a process shall be established to support students in preparing better for the requirements of learning in problem- and research-oriented projects and practical exercises. For this purpose, KIT will establish an IT-based self-monitoring and self-management scheme, by means of which students will be assisted in learning and examination management that is frequently considered to be problematic. After the pilot phase, the experience gained and concepts developed are to be transferred to other studies courses and departments.

The second element of the proposal is the constant increase in the quality of education at KIT. For this purpose, KIT will extend the support offers made by its central institutions, e.g. the House of Competence (HoC). Employees working in the research sector of KIT are planned to be integrated to improve the faculty-student ratio

and to offer close-to-research education to the students. According to KIT's proposal, a central contact partner will support cooperation, initiate exchange, and coordinate the qualification of the staff in the future. The activities shall be complemented by comprehensive qualification and support offers for new professors and a wrap-up of the teaching evaluations under didactic aspects.

In the second round of the Qualitätspakt Lehre, 102 German universities, Universities of Applied Sciences, and Universities of Arts and Music will be granted about EUR 400 million by the Federal Republic of Germany until 2016 to improve studies conditions and teaching quality. In total, the federation will make available about EUR 2 billion for all projects funded under the Qualitätspakt Lehre until 2020. "We want to offer to the increasing number of students good studies conditions and support them on their way to a successful graduation. This is why the Federal Government invests in the quality of education at universities," said Professor Annette Schavan, Federal Minister of Education and Research. "Particular emphasis is placed on projects that offer to the students in the first semesters the help and orientation that will be so important later on during their studies." In the second round of the Qualitätspakt Lehre, 169 universities submitted 135 proposals to the Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz (Joint science conference) for the funding period from summer semester 2012 to the end of 2016.

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is a public corporation according to the legislation of the state of Baden-Württemberg. It fulfills the mission of a university and the mission of a national research center of the Helmholtz Association. KIT focuses on a knowledge triangle that links the tasks of research, teaching, and innovation.

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