

The background of the slide features a detailed, circular seal of the University of Jena. The seal depicts a bearded man in a fur-trimmed robe and cap, holding a sword. The Latin inscription around the border reads "MISIT HOC ANNO: COMIT. DOGERE" at the top and "THVR: MARCHIO:" on the left. A banner across the center contains the word "UNIVERSITAS".

## Hiring procedures – An overview

### Do's and don'ts

# About me

## Prof. Dr. Hans-Dieter Arndt (\*1971)

- Gymnasium in Bayern und Niedersachsen, Abitur **1990**
  - Chemiestudium in Ulm, Marburg, Auslandssemester London, Diplom **1996**
  - Promotion **1997-2001** HU Berlin
  - Postdoc **2002-2004** Caltech, Pasadena
  - Nachwuchsgruppe **2004-2011** MPI + TU Dortmund, davon **2004-2010** EN
  - **2010/11** u.a. Rufe FMP Berlin, FSU Jena, Uni Wien
  - Seit 2011 W3-Professur für Organische Chemie, FSU Jena
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- Mitglied RdF **2013**, Prodekan **2017-2020**, Dekan **2020-2023**, Senator **2025-**
  - Mitglied Berufungskommissionen seit **2012** (> 25, intern/extern)
  - Gutachter für vergleichende Verfahren seit **2014** (W2, W3, W1ttW2, W1ttW3)
  - Vorstandsmitglied ADUC seit **2021**
  - Fachkollegiat DFG **2024-**, Mitglied Auswahlgremium Emmy-Noether Chemie
- 
- Eigene Forschung: Synthese komplexer Moleküle, Medizinische Chemie, Tool compounds, Chemische Biologie



Verteidigung 2002



ExInI 2024



Emmy-Noether-Treffen Chemie 2007

# A typical hiring procedure / Berufungsverfahren

## Many steps for quality control and legal reasons

- „Freigabeantrag“ of faculty with president/rector determines denomination, hiring committee, teaching assignments, basic resources
- „Ausschreibung“ in public media (Die Zeit, DHV Magazin, Webpages)
- „Bewerbung“ in written (electronic) – typical: cover letter, cv, publication list, project list, cooperation partner list
- First selection round by committee to identify 4-8 candidates for personal interviews, based on application materials (confidential)
- Personal interviews: 1. Research presentation; 2. Teaching rehearsal; 3. Interview with the committee; 4. „Soft events“ (dinner, visits, etc.)
- Second selection round by committee to identify 2-4 candidates for external review (confidential)
- Evaluation of the external reviews by the committee in the context of personal impression (!)
- Recommendation of a short list to the faculty based on external reviews AND outcome of personal interviews
- Faculty council votes (confidentially) on recommendation
- President/rector agrees/disagrees on recommendation
- University senate votes on short list (confidentially) – sometimes still binding, often non-binding to president/rector
- Hiring offer is made, negotiations are scheduled
- Negotiations are completed, documented in written, and accepted by both sides
- Hiring document („Berufungsurkunde“) is issued by president/rector and/or minister of science in the state
- Only by handing out the „Berufungsurkunde“ to the candidate the procedure is legally completed!
- Duration: From 1 year (fast: FSU Jena!) to >2 years (slow: unmotivated faculty, preferred candidates decline, president „has issues“...)

# Die Ausschreibung – the advertisement

## Background

- The only really legally binding statement from the university with respect to content!
- Qualifies denomination (research and teaching area) and specifies research and teaching focus
- The deadline given does not close the procedure - its open until the position is legally filled!
- But: Commissions will start to work after the deadline is closed!
- Any further actions after the deadline are to the discretion of the commission, who must have a reason!
- Commissions may „headhunt“ after evaluating the applications (for gender, talent, „Bestenauslese“ etc.)

## Do's

- Read carefully. EVERY WORD! **ITS THAT IMPORTANT!**
- Specifically prepare your materials to the requirements given.
- Try to work actively with every aspect.
- Stress your fit to the ad in the personal interview!
- Be daring, but stay deliberate
- Provide all information asked for!
- Meet the deadline, ideally one day early

## Dont's

- Not reading the ad or just extracting what you like from it
- Ignoring the ad because somebody told you that „its not important“
- Putting your ego (or the location/institute) „over the ad“
- Narrowing your stature because you believe you will „not fit anyway“
- Not providing information asked for because it might „not look good“
- Missing the deadline. Really bad style.
- Apply to an institution where you really never want to be.

# Die Bewerbungsunterlagen – application materials

## Background

- The material will be used to assess your formal qualifications and your general fit to the advertisement
- Its a personal declaration, „proof“ (copies of certificate etc.) might be compiled in an appendix but is only compulsory when specifically asked for in the advertisement. (But may be asked for later in the procedure)
- Mostly database systems are used, or the package is to be emailed to the dean's office. Aggregate one single PDF for this purpose!
- Commissions must browse and evaluate dozens, sometimes >100 applications, in rather short time! Help them! They will love you!
- You cannot change your cv, but you can spark interest – the materials document your professionalism and attention!

## Do's

- Comply to all requirements and to the advertisement!
- **Be as clear and as organized as possible.**
- Use fonts and styles that can be read by everyone and that would be appreciated by the field you apply for!
- Write a short, but personal and specific cover letter (1-2 pages) that specifies your interest and your fit to the position
- Provide research and teaching statements only when asked for (but then: pay attention to detail! And stay short with it!)

## Dont's

- Not complying to requirements given
- Being impersonal or ignorant about the place you apply with
- Using the same cover letter all the time – they will recognize!
- **Listing internet links instead of sending materials. HORRIBLE!**
- Shying away from giving personal information, family status and a nice „Bewerbungsfoto“! People are hired, not publication lists!
- Stress the obvious. Bore the reader. Ego-shooting. Window-dressing.
- Being excessively long or detailed, especially when not being asked.



# Die Berufungskommission – the hiring committee

## Background

- This commission is established by the faculty council to handle all of the procedure, usually by voting
- Its typically led by a professor from the specific area, by the dean, or the vice dean (depends)
- **The commission is always heterogenous, most members will not be from your specific area!**
- Typically 1-2 external members are involved, as well as PhD scientists and students (Example: 5 Prof, 2 PhD, 2 students)
- The commission decides by majority of votes, but needs majority of the professoral votes (§5 GG).
- A representative from the senate („Berufungsbeauftragter“), gender measurement officer etc. usually participate, too
- Students and gender measurement officer typically make independent votes to the senate. They do not vote in the commission.
- **You will never know how the internal discussions will go. Plan to convince them all!**

## Do's

- Be open and friendly to everyone.
- Provide all information asked for. Most of them don't know you!
- **Stay neutral and objective at all instance**
- You may ask the dean who the head of the commission is, if you really need to know (usually he/she will invite you – and if not, knowing doesn't matter!)

## Dont's

- Aggressively trying to find out the composition of the commission.
- Believing in „your friends“ or your portfolio (papers, awards, funding)
- Ignoring common wisdom and commission heterogeneity.
- Stressing the obvious. Ego-shooting. Ignorance.
- Believe that the commission is your enemy. It is not!
- **Negativism of any sorts!**

# Das persönliche Interview – the personal interview

## Background

- Your application materials suggested that you could (!) fit to the position and are interesting enough to be invited
- Scheduling and elements of the interview will be given to you in advance (sometimes only 2-3 weeks before)
- Important: The commission wants to find out if you will really be fitting, and if your qualifications match your cv (or even excel it)
- **Its your duty to convince and demonstrate, not theirs to find out „by reading your papers“ or „your application“ (they surely will not)**
- Typical elements: Research presentation, teaching rehearsal, interview with commission, visits, meetings with students/staff, lunch/dinner

## Do's

- Plan with plenty of buffer time. Sleep well. No alcohol.
- Ideally, stay the night before as well. Scout your ways.
- Dress well, but do not overdress. Bring a second set of clothing!
- **Be attentive at all times and stay polite, even if stressed.**
- Have all materials prepared and carry a copy on an USB stick!
- Stick to the science and all necessary social aspects.
- You may join when alcohol is offered at dinner, but stay with 1-2 units max.!

## Dont's

- **Not being prepared! Improvisation will never work!**
- **Being uninformed about the local research environment.**
- Leaving the impression that being invited is not important to you.
- Rushing in late, or leaving early – instead use all the time you get!
- Inappropriate or aggressive clothing, massive jewelery, showing-off.
- Declining invitations for lunches, dinners etc. – always go!
- Excessive eating or drinking of alcohol, even when invited.
- Being ostentative or discriminatory about lifestyle issues.
- Not circumventing treacherous triggers on sex, religion, politics...

# Das Vorsingen – the research presentation (30-45min)

## Background

- This is to assess your didactic qualifications in communicating your science – not at all unimportant!
- It should allow also to assess your scientific vision, your research program, and implicitly, possible collaborations.
- This is not a talk on a high-end specialists conference – take the position's denomination as a guide!
- Use your mother tongue if allowed – you will be better and more convincing.
- Expect very general, absurdly uninformed, but also tricky specialist questions. All of them should be handled clearly and honestly!

## Do's

- „Übung macht den Meister“
- Speak out loud, slowly. **Stay in time. Absolutely!**
- Unload your slides. Less is more. Be as clear as you can.
- Show all the highlights that you can show.
- Create a story that makes curious for the next chapter
- Make sure that you have a scientific mission, and identify obvious unknowns that really deserve to be investigated.
- „Tell, what you are going to tell, tell, and tell what you have told.“

## Dont's

- Low voice, speaking too fast, not speaking to the audience
- Busy slides. Messy schemes. Distracting details.
- Long tables! Too much text! Complex equations.
- Leaving out descriptors/units at axes of diagrams etc.
- Only compiling a „my best papers published“ show.
- Not being knowledgeable about the data and methods presented.
- Expecting that all the audience has your level of knowledge.
- Being ignorant, aggressive, or evasive during the Q&A session.



# Die Lehrprobe – the teaching rehearsal (10-15min)

## Background

- This is to assess your didactic qualifications in teaching – very revealing!
- It also allows a general assessment about your general knowledge of the subject, and your ability to address a totally different audience.
- Ask for the room and technical means in advance. Adapt: Sometimes you have no black board at all, sometimes only a black board...
- It is always a „real“ teaching situation, that must be fitted into the regular teaching of a course at the interviewing institution
- Inform yourself about courses and fitting modules and/or ask for the level aimed at (B.Sc. or M.Sc.)
- **Wenn die Lehrprobe nicht explizit auf Englisch gefordert wird, unbedingt komplett auf Deutsch halten!**

## Do's

- **„Übung macht den Meister“**
- Speak out loud, slowly, and stay in time. Absolutely.
- Stay as close to your regular teaching style as possible.
- Use slides wisely. Ideally, prepare a mix of materials.
- Address and involve the audience, but deliberately.
- Demonstrate some blackboard teaching.
- Make sure that you show how this teaching rehearsal fits to the curriculum of the module, and create a take-home message.

## Dont's

- Low voice, speaking too fast, not speaking to the audience
- Busy slides. Messy schemes. Distracting details.
- **Making the teaching rehearsal a review on current research. NEVER!**
- Being too simple or too demanding at the desired teaching level
- Reeling off a „slide only“ presentation!
- Making and (even worse) not correcting obvious mistakes.
- Slimily ingratiating with the audience, inappropriateness.
- Heavy use of online tools, questionnaires, „too funny punchlines“.

# Das Kommissionsgespräch – the interview

## Background

- **This is about your future plans and about your general fit to the faculty directions. Not about the past!**
- Elements are often similar: Self-presentation of the future (have a small 2-3 slides presentation handy!), vision for the next 5-10 years, presentation of fit and/or joint project/initiatives, questions to professional aspects of the job, infrastructure requirements etc.
- **Even excellent candidates tend to terminate themselves here – by excessive self-centeredness, or by overwhelming the commission!**
- You will be asked if you have questions, too. Have specific questions prepared that do not offend anybody – to the package offered with the position, options to change study courses, CRCs in the planning, needs of the institut/faculty, dual career etc.

## Do's

- **Present clear, stepwise concepts how your research program will be integrated with the local initiatives**
- Know about funding formats, have a funding strategy
- Plan your infrastructure needs in onion shell style („absolutely necessary“, „important“, „nice to have“, „future dream“).
- Have a realistic group structure and growth plan developed.
- Plant seeds for future research projects.
- Name some colleagues you would approach for joint projects

## Dont's

- **Presenting again on your science and your heroic achievements**
- Not knowing about local colleagues and their reserach directions
- Staying purely technical, methods based
- Planning projects with colleagues that are (or will soon be) retired
- Overwhelming the commission with big, rough ideas („I am planning the following CRC“, „my next excellence cluster plans necessitate...“)
- Strict demands on infrastructure or making bad comments about it.
- **Never talk negatively about places, competitors, or colleagues!**

# Die Begutachtung – the external review

## Background

- The commission will select the 2-4 most promising candidates for external review by 2-4 referees, sometimes international, too.
- This is again paper-based, but the external referees can use anything else to provide judgement, too.
- The external referees are regularly asked to rank the candidates, but may also give assessment on specific questions that may help the commission in decision making (fit to the place, similarity/differences to research groups already active, development potential, etc.).
- **The ranking is often taken as a guide, but can be modified by the commission in light of the personal impression of the candidates.**
- From here on, you will either get notified, or may ask the dean/head of commission why you not have been chosen in the end.

## Do's

- **Make yourself known in the community early by presenting on conferences of broad appeal to your subject.**
- Good application materials. If unsure, ask your mentor!
- Being a good citizen of your science at all times – the community has more sense for it than you may ever imagine!
- **Even if you will not be successful this time, a second chance will come. Learn from all that you have experienced!**

## Dont's

- **Hiding yourself or only making contact to your nearest neighbors**
- Messy application materials.
- Being overly ego-driven, superficial, or aggressive in your trade. The community will know, and typically sees no value in promoting it...
- Only relying on impressive grants or paper lists – it takes more!
- Not listening to mentors, or overhearing their soft-spoken points.
- **Blaming others for your failure, or accuse institutions for staged or corrupt procedures. Its not true in >90% of the cases!**