

Unit for Co-operation between Science and the Working World (KoWa)

The **Unit for Co-operation between Science and the Working World (KoWA)** of the Saarland University focuses its aims on intensifying and networking scientifically supported social and labour-market competence in the fields of science, university and the working world through research, teaching, further education and other knowledge-orientated services such as publications, information, organizational consultancy and coaching.

In first place, and with the financial support of the Chamber of Labour (Arbeitskammer) of the Saarland, the Unit for Co-operation initiates intramural research **relevant to the working world**. Annually, an invitation for research offers on an issue of current relevance to the working world is published, on the basis of which the working world can be supplied with knowledge that is not only of economic interest but also provides the basis for social innovation.

For working people, to take an example, this means that the Unit for Co-operation examines research results with a view to evaluating their effects on the situation of the working population as well as on their personal plans for their societal future and their social security.

In recent years, research on the following topics has been carried out:

- "Transitions in the working world"
- "Coping strategies in the working world for students"
- "Quality management in education"
- "Work-life balance"
- "The European job market"

At the Saarland University alone, seven researchers were involved in the research project "Coping strategies in the working world for students", in order to prepare students more effectively for their future rôle in the working world and to instil them with social, individual and methodological skills such as conflict management, ability to work in a team and to counsel. In these projects, the students were shown ways and means of breaching the gap between university and job more efficiently and systematically. All these research results are available in book form or at <http://www.uni-saarland.de/kooperationsstelle>.

In second place, the Unit for Co-operation has attractive offers for partners and interested parties both in the scientific community and the working world to take part in **socially innovative seminars relating to the working world and research- and knowledge-based services**. The Unit processes the results of scientific research, endeavouring with the assistance of experts from the labour market and universities to adapt and transfer them to the practical needs of those interested and involved. The practically orientated publication on "Active improvement of the atmosphere at the work-place" as well as the seminars held on "Conflict management" are examples of the aim of improving the social situation – in this case job satisfaction and the ability to work in a team – of employees. It goes without saying that highly-motivated workers can produce superior results for their company or for the university institute for which they work.

The personal dialogue between superiors and employees can also be an important auxiliary factor, providing that it permits of mutual feedback in the sense of both "approval" and "criticism" and that it aims at fostering the job-satisfaction of those working for companies, universities or organisations. Against this background, the Unit for Co-operation promotes the de-

velopment of communicative competence aimed at strengthening co-operative communication and a culture of mutual esteem in companies, organisations and universities. The Unit for Co-operation achieves these aims through further education and training, teaching, presentation, events, publications, information portals, organisational consultancy and coaching. The topics of seminars organized by the Unit for Co-operation for companies, organisations and universities last year included:

- “The Management and Mediation of Conflicts”
- “Competence to Start a New Job”
- “Competence in Moderating”
- “Competence in Counselling”
- “Conducting Difficult Interviews with Employees”
- “System Analysis in Organisations”
- “The Culture and Counselling of Organisations”
- “A Productive Approach to Improving the Atmosphere at the Workplace”
- “How to Offer Legal Advice the Right Way”
- “How to Conduct Economic and Legal Talks”
- “Work-Life-Balance for Individuals in Organisations and Societies”
- “Universities? Compatible with Family Life?”
- “Workshop for the Future”

The Unit for Co-operation is part of the Saarland University and maintains close contact with the Chamber of Labour (Arbeitskammer) of the Saarland and the DGB (German Confederation of Trade Unions) Saar. These Members of the Advisory Council are supplemented by representatives of the University of Applied Sciences (HTW), the Ministry of Science and the Government Office of the Saarland. A Standing Commission advises and guides the Unit for Co-operation in the fulfillment of its tasks.

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