



STOP OUTSOURCING – REINTEGRATION OF CLEANING STAFF INTO OUR UNIVERSITY

An initiative of the union groups of GEW and ver.di at the University of Kassel, supported by the Staff Council

**REINIGUNGSKRÄFTE ZURÜCK
AN DIE UNI KASSEL**

SCHLUSS MIT OUTSOURCING

Eine Initiative der Betriebsgruppen
von GEW und ver.di an der Uni Kassel
mit Unterstützung des Personalrats

The Situation of the Cleaning Staff at the University of Kassel

At the University of Kassel, the toilets, offices, seminar rooms and corridors are cleaned by around 100 cleaners. In the early 2000s, many public institutions outsourced their building cleaning - including the University of Kassel. Since then, the colleagues have been working for external cleaning companies and are no longer employed by the university. The working conditions are characterized by short-term employment contracts, massive work intensification, time stress and intimidation.

We are therefore calling for the reintegration of the cleaning staff into the University of Kassel.

A Life on Probation

The university tenders the cleaning services every 3+1 years. Within this tender period, the external companies issue contracts of 6 to 18 months. This means that cleaning staff, who have been working at the university for over ten years, have to register as unemployed at the job center every 6 months and live with the uncertainty of being employed again. These short-term contracts mean an ongoing probation period, during which cleaning staff are constantly threatened with being fired or not getting a new contract if they "fail" in some way, e.g. by taking sick leave.

Deprofessionalization of Cleaning

The sector minimum wage in cleaning is undermined in practice by unpaid overtime and the increase of cleaning areas per hour. A proper cleaning performance is not possible under the strict time limits in external cleaning. The constant fluctuation of cleaning companies and personnel leads to a deprofessionalization of cleaning.

Insourcing - the University has it in hand

The university's argument against reintegration is that it would be too expensive to pay the cleaning staff according to the collective agreement of the state of Hesse (TV-H). The classification of the cleaning staff in the salary group 2 TV-H would be more expensive than the current system of external cleaning, which still generates profits for the cleaning companies. The cleaning staff are the victims of the massive cost pressure.

It is a question of budgetary priorities whether the university employs colleagues with permanent contracts and better working conditions for the permanent task of cleaning or continues to commission external companies, where precarious working conditions are part of the business model.

There is an Alternative

The Justus-Liebig University in Gießen is a positive example: The cleaning staff are a fixed part of the university and are paid according to the collective agreement of the state of Hesse - to the great satisfaction of all parties involved. The colleagues at the University of Gießen report on reliable cleaning performance, simple agreements and regular training for the cleaning staff. They belong to the staff and are represented by the Staff Council.

When the Hessian state government indirectly called on the universities to outsource around two decades ago, the Head of the university in Gießen opposed this, referring to the social responsibility of the university. Only a small part of the cleaners was outsourced initially. Instead, the University of Gießen reorganized the cleaning under the participation of those affected and the Staff Council, calculated areas, times, developed cleaning guidelines and integrated the outsourced part of the cleaning again.

The example from Gießen shows that it is indeed possible for cleaning staff to be part of a university community and experience significantly better working conditions and appreciation.

What You Can Do Now

Are you willing to make a change to the unbearable conditions here at the University of Kassel? Do you want all cleaning staff to be part of the university again? Do you think it's important that the cleaning work is properly paid and valued?

Then sign the attached postcard and send it to the Staff Council by 25th June 2025.

You will also find a pre-addressed return envelope. If you have any questions, please contact: verdi@uni-kassel.de

Action

Tuesday, 24th June 2025, 6 PM

Panel Discussion: Clean Business? Working Conditions of Cleaning Staff at the University of Kassel with:

- Prof. Dr. Jana Costas (Researcher, Europa-Universität Viadrina)
- Jana Faber (Staff Council Uni Kassel)
- Theodora Fischer (Cleaning Staff and Workers' Council Member)
- Dr. Oliver Fromm (Chancellor of Uni Kassel)
- Jan Meyer (IG BAU Union Secretary)

Moderation: Dr. Maren Kirchhoff (Uni Kassel)

Location: Gottschalkstr. 28a, Kassel, ZUB Room

Wednesday, 2nd July 2025

Handing over of Postcards to the University Management

Let's show our solidarity with our colleagues in the cleaning department and demonstrate that we are not satisfied with the outsourcing of the cleaning. Enough with the catastrophic working conditions in the external cleaning companies!

For decent working conditions for all who work at our university!