

# One year professor in Bamberg and one year of BamNLP\*

Roman Klinger

2025-01-15

## Introduction

I am starting to write this post around christmas 2024, at the end of the first year in which I started to work at the University of Bamberg, where I got a full professor position and am heading the research group on “Fundamentals of Natural Language Processing”, to which we refer colloquially as “[BamNLP](#)”. With this post, I’d like to reflect a bit on the first year and what I think went well and where I could have done things differently. Perhaps my observations are helpful for some people when they find themselves in a similar situation. But I mostly write this to understand better what happened in the last months.

I started in Bamberg in March 2024 and it is my first “Full” professor position. Before coming here, I have been on a tenured position in Stuttgart, at the [IMS](#), a pretty large institute which covers a lot of areas of natural language processing and manages its own programs on NLP for both a bachelor and a master’s degree. The classes are also popular amongst students of computer science programs.

I’ve been happy there, and was very fortunate to be able to work with some very talented Ph.D. students who I funded either through third party grants I applied for or who came with their own funding to work with me at the institute.

## Motivation to Move to Bamberg

The question at the time I received the offer from Bamberg was of course, for me, if I should move. Stuttgart has this quite popular program, I was able to work with great Ph.D. students (and Master’s and Bachelor’s students). The environment at the IMS is great, with three full professors and a set of other research groups.

I decided to move for a couple of reasons:

---

\*Published as blog post at <https://www.romanklinger.de/blog/2025-01-15-one-year/>

- I had a tenured position, but only that – I did not have a yearly budget by the university I was responsible for, I did not have positions I could fill, funded by the university. Everything I wanted to do, I needed to ask other professors in the institute for money or I needed to apply for third party funding. While that practically worked fine, it did not really give me a feeling of absolute independence and freedom to do what I want to do.
- I needed to embed myself in the teaching program – I could not freely decide what to teach, because the classes and the structure was somewhat settled.
- I felt comparably invisible to other professors in other institutes or more central administrations. That made it difficult to start collaborations across faculties and disciplines. That was mostly a university-internal issue, and not an issue with collaborations outside of Stuttgart, because from outside, I think it was not really transparent what my role was.
- The salary was not as good as it could be. Minor point, but also one.

There were also reasons which made Stuttgart very attractive to stay – my life centered (and still centers) around that city, my wife lives here, we have our main apartment here. Of course going away is also a challenge for life outside of work.

In short, I hoped to get:

- A starting package to fund to start a new group.
- A yearly budget to do research with.
- Positions I could hire people on, with university/state money.
- A secretary and technical staff.
- A better salary.

I got all of that, but setting this up, building a group on natural language processing essentially from scratch was and is challenging.

That's all for the intro – just that you know what my starting point was. Now I'll discuss the various decisions I needed to make.

Medium sized city vs. comparably small town

Stay in established environment or start something new

Stay in existing, safe private environment or move away

Quick start vs. slow start

Social environment: let it happen vs. actively developing it

Group meetings, retreats; embedding in existing environment vs. building something yourself

Buy laptops or desktop computers

Buy GPU servers or rent resources in computer cluster/cloud

Get a lot of office space or be close to other research groups

Develop teaching independently of other courses and embed yourself in the existing programs

Accept these students who did not take any courses with you yet or wait until people have a good fundament

Continuing existing collaborations vs. developing new collaborations based on the new environment

[\[Download this post as PDF\]](#)