

Guide to personnel development in the Leibniz Association

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Introduction

People are at the heart of the Leibniz Association. The achievements of the Leibniz institutes rest on the knowledge and commitment of their employees. It is their enthusiasm, talents and skills that shape our Association and enable excellent research and knowledge transfer. Consequently, the Leibniz Association aspires to develop its employees, with their individual interests, needs and expectations, to the best of its ability and in reliable structures. The Leibniz Association regards personnel development as a field of action in which relevant and attractive options are made available to staff in all status groups and career stages, based on the shared interests of employers and employees. The coordinated decentralised structure of the Leibniz Association opens up a wide range of possibilities for individuals to develop, adapt, share and scale development measures in a self-organised manner in line with their development needs. For the Leibniz Association, an agile personnel development approach, with a focus on people and their individual development potential in the workplace, is an essential part of our organisational culture. It is the key to satisfaction, staff loyalty and innovation.

The purpose of this guide is to give all 21,000 or so managers and staff a clear overview of the personnel development principles, options and practices in the Leibniz Association. The Leibniz Association has committed to continue developing and strengthening these in the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation IV (PFI IV). This guide builds on relevant guidelines and standards that have been adopted by the General Assembly in the past, and have subsequently been implemented at the institutes in line with their specific work contexts and requirements. The personnel development principles formulated in these documents are collated and presented in the first part of this guide. The second part gives an overview of the personnel development measures at Association level, which cover all career levels from doctoral researcher to top management. Numerous offerings, particularly in leadership development, are aimed at both scientific and administrative staff, and incorporate cross-sector perspectives on good leadership and collaboration.

This guide will be continually updated to incorporate ideas from current discussions and new documents. The idea is to produce a third part to the guide that will present a collection of best practice examples of personnel development measures in the Leibniz institutes that focus on different priorities.

1. Fundamental documents for personnel development

1.1. Guiding Principles for our Actions

The Guiding Principles for our Actions lay the foundations in terms of the values that underpin personnel development in the Leibniz Association. They set out the values that guide us in our joint work.

Managers and staff act honestly, with respect for the dignity and integrity of others, and they respect, value and promote diversity. In our dealings with one another, this includes being open to questioning our own convictions and expectations. We actively champion equality and oppose all forms of discrimination. We are staunchly opposed to all forms of harassment and bullying. Managers take on responsibility for promoting scientific careers and professional progress. We have a particular commitment to fairness when exercising managerial and supervisory responsibility.

1.2. Guidelines on Career Development

The Leibniz Guidelines on Career Development and the addendum on Structuring the Doctoral Phase and Career Models in Research Infrastructures encompass the key principles and measures relating to tailored support for early-career researchers. The Leibniz Association advocates optimum working conditions and an environment that facilitates creative and innovative research.

Leibniz institutes create suitable conditions for the development of scientific personnel in order to enable better planning and open up transparent career paths in science and research and beyond. In the case of PhDs, they set a basic planning horizon of up to four years, which ensures that the qualification goal will be met, while creating enough scope for candidates to acquire further skills, for instance in academic teaching, committee work or science communication. Postdoc training starts with an orientation phase devoted to networking, potential analyses and career planning, which sheds light on suitable and attractive career paths. Close supervision by managers and external mentors is essential here. Where individuals opt to remain in research, the subsequent consolidation phase creates conditions to facilitate increased publication activity, scientific independence and the assumption of leadership functions as a junior research group leader.

The Leibniz Association views career support for roles in research infrastructure as a separate area with its own specific requirements. Since this is an area in which clear definitions of job profiles, training routes and career paths have often been lacking, the Leibniz institutes are tackling the task of developing new career profiles and trying out support tools. Fields of action here include developing more infrastructure training options, tandem supervision of training, infrastructure sabbaticals and aligning new job adverts with internationally established job classifications. Recommended measures are based on a skills matrix for research infrastructure jobs developed by the Leibniz Association.

Key supporting tools in career development include training supervisors for advisory roles, structured doctoral programmes, the right to participate in committees, work-

family reconciliation measures, international networking, mentoring options, and seed and gap funding.

1.3. Equality Standards

Through its Equality Standards, the Leibniz Association aims to eliminate structural disadvantages faced by women and achieve gender equality.

The Leibniz Equality Standards formulate five principles of working culture, of which three are closely linked to personnel development. The first principle emphasises that achieving gender equality is a duty of leadership, and identifies increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions as a target. Personnel development plays a key role in this. The second principle elevates gender equality to a pervasive guiding principle, and identifies personnel development as one of the management tasks in which equality must be incorporated. The third principle highlights the role of the equality officers. Among other things, equality officers take on important advisory and supporting roles when assisting female researchers in all career stages. The equality officer's involvement in personnel development, as regulated by law, is to be observed. The institutes are regularly asked to report back on their implementation of these standards.

1.4. Promoting diversity

In its Statutes, the Leibniz Association defines the promotion of gender equality and diversity as an important tool for achieving its goals. Diversity aspects play an important role in recruitment and career development. Being sensitive and supportive when dealing with staff who have non-traditional educational backgrounds, who come from other countries, or have family care duties or disabilities is essential. Equitable participation in further training measures, disabled access to research infrastructure, and English-language versions of all relevant information and communications are ensured to the best of our ability. The Leibniz inklusiv! network advises managers and staff on providing support for employees with disabilities. An Executive Board project group is currently looking at targets and potential additional measures to promote diversity.

1.5. Guide to mental health

The guide to Mental health during the PhD focuses on a career phase with particular stress risks. Since these risks are nevertheless not restricted to qualification phases in the academic system, the guide is of practical relevance when it comes to looking after the health of all employees.

Building on a culture of particular attentiveness and care, the Leibniz institutes acknowledge their responsibility to break down the taboo surrounding mental stress in the workplace and to promote mental health. Measures are implemented in three areas: raising awareness, prevention and counselling. Information events for staff and training sessions for managers help raise awareness. They lay the foundations so that stress risks can be identified early and addressed as appropriate. Building on these, prevention measures cultivate a working environment that is conducive to the promotion of mental health. These measures might, for instance, include training on working techniques or

time management that enable the participants to structure challenging tasks and carry them out in an efficient manner. Counselling is used in advanced cases of serious mental stress. Those affected can make use of external counselling centres away from their Leibniz institute that preserve their anonymity. All Leibniz institutes have the option to sign a framework agreement with the Leibniz Institute for Resilience Research (LIR), which offers professional anonymous counselling.

1.6. Code for Good Research Practice

In its Code for Good Research Practice the Leibniz Association commits to implementing the standards of good research practice, and honest, quality-assured research processes, as well as investigation procedures in the event of suspected scientific misconduct.

In terms of personnel development, the standards of good research practice underscore the responsibility of managers in selecting, supporting and advising staff. With regard to staff selection, due consideration is given to gender equality and diversity. Career support is offered in line with individual needs. At the same time, managers at Leibniz institutes make sure that an appropriate balance is achieved between instruction and individual responsibility for the career stage in question, and that employees are given increasing autonomy so that they can develop their own careers. Finally, honest career guidance, training and advice opportunities are offered.

2. Personnel development measures at the Association level

2.1. Overarching measures

Personnel development measures at Association level are open to all employees, wherever appropriate.

As well as offering programmes tailored to different career stages, the Leibniz Leadership Academy regularly puts on general events that are open to anyone who is interested. Leibniz Leadership Lunches take place every two months. Each one focuses on a key aspect of leadership, such as resilience, self-management or diversity.

The wide range of online training options, such as the [Haufe Learning Platform](#), are used by both administrative and scientific staff. The courses can be completed in German or English, with low-threshold access provided via the Leibniz shared licence.

All interested employees can also access special training offers, such as the workshop series on research information systems (RIS) with the accompanying RIS Wiki, and the praxis workshops on due diligence/risk management when collaborating with foreign research partners.

2.2. Administrative staff

Research-supporting and administrative staff at both management and operational level regularly discuss various specialist topics in a number of established exchange and networking formats, where they share information and offer mutual support.

These formats include the Administrative Committee (VA), consisting of the administrative directors of the Leibniz institutes, which meets three times a year, the working groups for law and personnel, finance, IT, dual training and sustainability management, and other information-sharing formats, such as the procurement day, data protection day and third-party funding day, which are also open to operational research-supporting staff. Supplemented by specialist contributions from external experts, these formats offer staff the opportunity to acquire new information, exchange views and learn together and from each other.

In addition, various education and training formats have been developed over recent years that are open to employees in all areas across the entire Leibniz Association. These include online formats that can be used by all institutes, such as the [academa](#) online learning units in public administration.

New formats have been developed by staff at the member institutes in a bottom-up process. For example, the “LKCB vernetzt” series of online sessions, primarily for procurement staff from the institutes, grew out of the procurement day. External and internal talks on technical aspects of public procurement provide an opportunity for participants from different institutes to learn from one another and expand knowledge in the area of procurement.

“Leibniz bildet Gemeinschaft” is another training and networking option that is open to all Leibniz institutes. Half-day and full-day training sessions provided by external experts on administration topics are held at Leibniz Headquarters and at Leibniz

institutes on a rotating basis. There are plans to extend this format to include more topics and subject areas, such as compliance.

2.3. The doctoral phase

Measures to support early-career researchers are generally specific to the individual Leibniz institutes. They take account of special disciplinary aspects and are aligned with needs that are identified in day-to-day contact with the target group. This enables them to create tailored offers and support formats in areas like project management, networking and third-party funding. Personnel development measures at Association level supplement these provisions and are deployed in areas where they can be expected to be particularly valuable. The value they bring may include the composition of the group of participants, pooling institutional resources, improving interdisciplinarity or the visibility of the measure.

Leibniz Graduate Schools offer doctoral researchers the chance to complete their PhD in an excellent collaborative and transdisciplinary research environment. To this end, Leibniz institutes collaborate closely with universities, often in the context of Leibniz ScienceCampi. At national level, the Leibniz PhD Network, which has been active at Association level since 2016, is an important contact point for networking and training and represents the interests of doctoral researchers in the Leibniz Association. As an interdisciplinary network, it is aimed particularly at supporting networking between doctoral researchers in different disciplines. In addition, it regularly organises workshops to develop cross-disciplinary skills such as project management and science communication. The largely independent way in which it plans and runs needs-appropriate formats is characteristic of the organisational culture of the Leibniz Association, where personnel development is implemented independently and in an inclusive and agile manner.

The Leibniz Dissertation Award is awarded annually in two categories: Humanities & Social Sciences and Natural & Technical Sciences. It is a way for the Association to recognise two outstanding PhD dissertations from member institutes. The prize is worth 5,000 euros. Numerous prizewinners have gone on to hold leadership positions in science, industry and society.

The Leibniz Leadership Academy is in the process of developing Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) for doctoral researchers to prepare them early for future leadership roles. MOOCs are also a good way to support doctoral researchers when it comes to supervising students and student research assistants – those early management tasks that are often taken on during this early career stage. Ultimately, the MOOCs will raise awareness of leadership as a topic per se and help doctoral researchers structure successful collaborative relationships with their managers and supervisors.

2.4. Postdoc (orientation phase)

Leibniz institutes also have their own support provisions in place for the postdoc phase that take account of the specific training needs of postdocs. These are supplemented by activities at Association level. The Leibniz Association cultivates partnerships with the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings and the Science and Technology in Society (STS)

Forum, enabling excellent early-career researchers to take part in these highly regarded events. Together with Deutsche Journalistenschule (DJS), a journalist training institution in Munich, the Leibniz Association regularly organises DJS meets Leibniz workshops, bringing together students from DJS with young researchers from Leibniz institutes to practise intensive interview situations and stimulate a discussion about science journalism and the relationship between the media and science. For researchers interested in setting up a company, the Leibniz Association offers a professional Start-Up Advisory Service. It provides ongoing, customised support throughout the spin-off process.

The Leibniz PostDoc Network has been active since 2017 and aims to represent the interests of postdocs both in the Leibniz Association and in the wider world, and to provide attractive networking and training opportunities. The workshops and webinars offered by the network address topics such as principles of teaching at university level, science communication and mental health. Alongside events on scientific career development, the network organises workshops dedicated to helping postdocs broaden their skills profile for jobs in industry, politics and non-profit organisations.

2.5. Postdoc (consolidation phase)

The two-year orientation phase is followed by a consolidation phase in the Leibniz Association lasting up to four years and characterised by increased publication activity and growing scientific independence, for instance as a junior research group leader. In this way, through customised programmes, the Leibniz Association supports excellent young researchers as they develop an independent profile and reliable career prospects in research.

The Leibniz Mentoring programme supports excellent female postdoc researchers from Leibniz Association institutes on the path to a professorship or other scientific leadership position. The comprehensive and varied programme puts female researchers in a position to steer their careers, expand their specialist networks and take on leadership tasks with confidence. At the core of the Leibniz Mentoring programme is a mentoring partnership between a manager and an early-career postdoc. This mentoring duo works together to promote the mentee's career development and receives structured, ongoing professional support during this process. In addition, the mentees benefit from an accompanying seminar programme consisting of process support and skills seminars to promote the acquisition of key qualifications for leadership positions, specifically those in science and research. It takes account of three training areas: career strategies, leadership skills and research funding.

Graduates of the programme are eligible to join the Leibniz Mentoring Network, which provides a platform for questions on career development and everyday leadership in science and research, for professional discussions across disciplinary boundaries, and for initiating joint projects. Annual meetings not only provide a place for discussion and networking, but also address current leadership topics in science and research and include training sessions.

Through its Leibniz Junior Research Groups programme, the Leibniz Association creates particularly attractive conditions for outstanding early-career researchers by

supporting their early scientific independence. This support opens up opportunities to take on the leadership of an independent junior research group, enabling them to establish themselves in their field and pursue their own research projects in an excellently equipped environment at an early point in their careers. The funding programme considers applications to set up a working group with a leader, as well as for further financial support in terms of personnel and material costs. Funding is provided for five years. The institute submitting the application contributes 40 per cent of the funding. As with the Emmy Noether programme of the German Research Foundation (DFG), time spent leading a junior research group can count as a habilitation-equivalent achievement. The recommended next step after leading a Leibniz junior research group is usually a professorship or comparable independent research role.

Women researchers continue to be under-represented at W2 and W3 professorship level, at around 30 per cent. This is where the Leibniz Programme for Women Professors comes in. It is hoped that providing five-year seed funding for the appointment of excellent female researchers to W2/W3 professorships will create an incentive to gradually increase the proportion of female professors – and consequently the number of women in top executive and middle management roles. The Leibniz Programme for Women Professors is aimed at excellent female early-career researchers and experienced women researchers with an outstanding international track record. For the former, the institute's commitment to offer the candidate a tenure-track or permanent professorship in conjunction with the partner university represents attractive, long-term career prospects. The funding programme considers applications for a post with a W2/W3 salary, and the establishment of a working group, along with financial support in terms of personnel and investment costs. Funding is provided for five years. The institute submitting the application contributes 40 per cent of the funding.

Events organised by the Leibniz Best Minds network strengthen networking and academic discussion between the women professors and junior research group leaders funded by the two programmes. With their funding approval, the recipients also receive an invitation to take part in the Leibniz Leadership Academy. The participation fees for this are reimbursed by the Leibniz Competition programme.

As well as running dedicated, customised programmes for the postdoc consolidation phase, the Leibniz Association nominates excellent female researchers on the path to a professorship for significant profile-building prizes and awards. For example, some researchers admitted to Die Junge Akademie, an academy for outstanding young academics, and recipients of the Heinz Maier-Leibnitz Prize awarded by the DFG were nominated by individual Leibniz institutes or by the Leibniz Association.

2.6. Senior managers

Leadership in science and research has always been and continues to be a complex task that presents senior managers with myriad challenges: dealing with volatile situations, managing diversity, planning horizons, international aspects, etc. In recent years, leadership in science and research has become a recognised topic and has been formalised and professionalised.

The Leibniz Leadership Academy set up by the Leibniz Association supports leaders, helping them to perform their roles as guiding, mobilising and culture-shaping personalities. The idea is for individuals to reflect on their leadership role in the context of their own experiences and challenges. The programmes present modern leadership theories and models that participants can use to enrich their personal toolbox and expand the courses of action available to them. They are aimed at all leadership levels:

The Leibniz Leadership Academy's Developing Leadership programme caters for junior research group leaders and others working in science and research with specific leadership prospects. Participants are usually in their first formal leadership role. Typical leadership challenges include the transition from employee to manager status, self-management and team management, communication as a leader and conflict management.

The Experiencing Leadership programme is aimed at employees in middle management positions, specifically those in research and research-supporting areas. Participants generally already have several years of leadership experience behind them. Typical leadership challenges addressed in this programme include how to lead in this "sandwich position", leadership style and communication as a leader, dealing with inter-cultural and interdisciplinary teams, and implementing and developing institute strategy and culture. The mix between research and research-supporting staff is particularly enriching for the participants' personal development, generating areas of friction and broadening perspectives on leadership in specific fields.

Particularly at the top management level, scientific and administrative leadership tasks are often closely related, so the Reflecting on Leadership programme is aimed at both scientific and administrative directors. One of the aims of this programme is to gain a different perspective on one's own leadership challenges with other directors in the group and to give oneself space and time to pause and reflect on one's own attitudes, habits and behaviours. This generates an extraordinarily high level of mutual understanding and trust and a robust network of scientific and administrative directors. The participation of pairs of directors from the same institute has proved particularly fruitful.