

Recommendations for diversity-sensitive structures and diversity-promoting measures at Leibniz institutions

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Introduction

In autumn 2021, the Diversity Core Group of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Working Group (AKCD), with the support of the Leibniz Main Office, organised a bilingual online conference titled "Promoting Diversity in the Leibniz Association: Challenges, Paths and Solutions" (Leibniz Conference: Diversity).

Approximately 120 participants from 57 Leibniz institutions gathered ideas and best practice examples from their diverse perspectives and experiences.

This document summarizes the measures that may contribute to the establishment of an institutional culture that promotes and includes diversity in each Leibniz institution. It is intended to support managers, diversity officers and other committed employees by offering suggestions for the establishment of structures and processes as well as the development and transfer of knowledge, skills and expertise, rules and standards, procedures, role expectations and values.

Structural anchoring of diversity and inclusion in the institutes

Diversity work at the Leibniz institutes should be defined as a management task and, analogous to gender equality work, should be a cross-cutting topic in all processes. For this purpose, structural anchoring can be achieved, for example by:

- Designating person at management level responsible for promoting diversity and inclusion
- Appointing diversity officers with a clear mandate, defined rights and obligations, as well as the creation of compensation formats (e.g., own positions, time compensation, contract extension) to aid retention and commitment within this position; Diversity Officers and (Gender) Equality Officers should be different persons
- Developing an action plan to promote diversity
- Requiring regular reports to the Supervisory Board about the evaluation of diversity-promoting measures implemented
- Creating annual reports to be sent to all employees on initiatives, successes, and challenges in diversity work
- Developing diversity monitoring
- Promoting bottom-up initiatives on diversity
- Creating on-boarding and offboarding documents that include agreements on collegial interaction (codes of conduct), fair working conditions (equal treatment vs. compensation of disadvantages) and diversity-promoting measures
- Certifying diversity measures (e.g. Total E-Quality, "Shaping Diversity" audit by the Stifterverband)
- Signing the Diversity Charter
- Insuring good visibility for the legally required Complaint Office according to AGG §13 with trained mediators and transparent complaint processes
- Encouraging broad representation of employees in the composition of internal committees and staff committees
- Fostering researchers and science support staff from all employment groups in diversity and inclusion measures.

Measures taken in the workplace to prevent or compensate for institutional or structural discrimination should also consider heterogeneity within groups and intersectionality.

Raising awareness of diversity and creating an open and inclusive working environment

All employees of Leibniz institutes should be proactively sensitized to diversity, for example by:

- Establishing an open culture of discussion about learning from (anonymized) discrimination to avoid repetition
- Using diversity-sensitive, inclusive language in the entire institute
- Providing access for all employees to information and discussions on diversity (especially those who are not yet familiar with the topic of diversity)
- Raising awareness through internal communication on topics related to diversity and collegial behaviour (intranet, meetings, newsletters)
- Providing opportunities for all employees to participate in the development of concrete measures (e.g., through surveys, the establishment of working groups, bottom-up initiatives)
- Creating (informal) meeting opportunities to hear about experiences of those from underrepresented groups or people with special needs (e.g., workshops, discussion groups, lunch break theme-tables)
- Creating secure networking formats for exchange within vulnerable groups
- Supplying infrastructure for all religious belief systems or personal choices (e.g. meditation/prayer room, food and drink awareness and options, etc.)
- Implementing routine short surveys on belonging and the work atmosphere
- Evaluating regularly and optimizing processes and procedures

Qualification of all employees for diversity

Regular internal and external training to promote non-discriminatory interaction in the working environment would be mandatory for all employees, for example in the areas of:

- Non-discriminatory communication
- Gender- and diversity-sensitive language
- German and English skills
- Dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds or worldviews
- Stereotypes
- Reduction of unconscious prejudices, e.g., sexual orientation and identity
- Addressing *all* employees, calling on them to participate to be strengthened in their skills

Recruitment procedures

Open, transparent, and fair selection and recruitment procedures for all employees (in accordance with the OTM-R Directive for EU researchers)¹ support the selection of candidates with the best potential and increase diversity. This can be implemented by:

- Transparent selection processes
- Avoidance of (unconscious) disadvantage through standardised procedures; training
- Guidelines and training for the equitable assessment of applicants, considering each individual's different circumstances
- Redefining "excellence" and appropriate selection criteria
- Remuneration for academic service (participation in committees, supervision of qualification theses)
- Diversity and inclusion strategies, codes of conduct, Total E-Quality,
- Work/life balance certifications and incentives for underrepresented groups (for example people with disabilities, people with caregiving responsibilities)
- Create positions for welcome officers or relocation assistance specialists who provide help in finding accommodation, procuring visas, bank accounts, administrative procedures, etc.
- Clear and accessible information about relocation matters on institute websites and links to this information within job advertisements

¹ OTM-R: Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment

- Job advertisements in English that define clear requirements for language skills
- Job advertisements in portals for underrepresented groups (barrier-free portals, portals with a focus on women in science and research, international portals)
- Training on and use of active recruitment
- Inclusive job advertisements that particularly address underrepresented groups, such as people with disabilities, people with caregiving responsibilities or Germans with “migration experience”
- Programs for visiting scholars and cooperation with dual-career networks to attract diverse employees
- Targeted cooperation with universities to train qualified researchers with disabilities to work at Leibniz institutes

Onboarding and integration of new employees

The sooner new employees find their way around their institute and at their new location, the faster and more adeptly they can get involved in their work. Non-German employees and junior professionals require particular attention. This assistance should be available digitally.

Here are several best practices from Leibniz institutes:

- Developing and implementing structured onboarding processes with clear responsibilities and workflows
- Ensuring that new employees receive necessary information, support, equipment and introductions upon arrival, e.g., by:
 - Creating Welcome Package(s)
 - Introducing a buddy or mentoring system (in person or online)
 - Providing a checklist for mentors and newcomers
 - Providing routing slips with important initial tasks/contacts
 - Defining the responsibilities of different contact persons
 - Providing support for finding accommodation
 - Assistance in finding childcare
- Transparent communication of the institute's culture (e.g., codes of conduct, regulations on working hours and mobile working, distribution of institute tasks)
- Establishment of joint Leibniz guest houses and childcare services in cities with several Leibniz institutes or corresponding partnerships with universities in the respective cities
- Supporting scholarship and grant-holders to get access to health insurance
- For internationals:
 - Information about processes outside the purview of the institute (visas, authorities, rental contracts) and their support
 - Information about the German research landscape and scientific culture (e.g., about the Leibniz Association, national and international networks, research funding)
 - Welcome courses on German culture, on living and working in Germany (e.g., information on contracts, insurance, taxes, formalities, and regulations)
 - Provision of guest houses for short-term stays (e.g., for visiting researchers or new employees before they find housing)

Linguistic integration

All employees should have access to relevant and important information relevant to them. To achieve this, institutes should:

- Make all essential documents available in German and English (e.g., employment contracts, leave requests, workflows, strategy papers, guidelines, important infrastructure offers, intranet, processes, and administrative procedures, written internal communication, emails)
- Bilingual options should be offered at institute events (public lectures, staff meetings, etc.) through simultaneous translation or subtitling

- Language skills for employees should be promoted (e.g., offering or financing German courses for non-German-speaking employees or offering or financing English courses for German employees in all institute departments)
- Special attention should be paid to English skills when hiring academic and administrative staff
- Guidelines should exist to promote diversity-sensitive and inclusive language and should be used in all internal and external communication
- All employees should be trained and sensitized accordingly

Accessibility and inclusion

Accessibility and inclusion should always be considered from the outset when developing measures and offers and should not be regarded as a time-consuming addition, for example:

- In the development of infrastructure offerings such as software or administrative procedures
- In training those responsible for special offers, e.g., on procedures for the recognition of international disability cards
- In improving structural conditions to promote people with disabilities
- Querying the needs of people with disabilities before events to best provide appropriate infrastructures and services
- Enabling the participation of people with reduced mobility and vulnerable groups through hybrid events
- Providing linguistic access for all (simultaneous translation, sign language)

Family-friendly and health-promoting working conditions

To promote family-friendliness and a health-promoting working environment, the following measures are recommended for the institutes:

- Creating offers that support caregivers (such as childcare and emergency childcare), negotiating contingents in daycare centers near institutes, assistance in finding of short-term childcare, e.g., during business trips
- Joint Leibniz childcare facilities in cities with several Leibniz institutes or partnerships with university institutions (visiting researchers often have short-term contracts and can therefore not make long-term reservations and language barriers often make access difficult)
- Spatially and temporally flexible working
- Hybrid events
- Providing low-threshold information, special resources or counselling services, including for employees with serious or longer-term physical or mental stress or illness or planned longer-term family-related absences
- Possibility of reducing working hours
- Providing trustworthy, professional, if appropriate, English-speaking resources such as contact details of babysitters, holiday care, counselling centres, psychologists or therapists
- Establishing confidential ombudspersons within management structures to counsel on health management
- Creating structures for the promotion of health with sufficient human and financial resources
- Providing advisory services for employees with care responsibilities
- If possible, special means and funds for extending contracts of junior researchers with caregiving or educational responsibilities, disabilities, mental or chronic illnesses, so that they can still achieve their career goals
- Improving work-life balance