

6 January 2012

The Leibniz Association Senate Evaluation Procedure

Basic Principles

as amended on 26 November 2024

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Basic principles underlying the procedure

I.

At regular intervals, but at the latest every seven years, Federal and *Länder* governments verify whether the institutions united within the Leibniz Association are still in fulfilment of the requirements for joint funding. This assessment is normally based on an independent evaluation and a status report by the responsible departments of the Federal government and the *Land* which hosts the institute (see also the Implementation Agreement on the Administrative Agreement between the Federal and *Länder* Governments on the Establishment of a Joint Science Conference [GWK Agreement] with regard to the joint funding of member institutions of the Leibniz Association (*Wissenschaftsgemeinschaft Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz e. V. – Leibniz-Gemeinschaft*) dated 27 October 2008 – Implementation Agreement WGL – AV-WGL).

As a rule, the Leibniz Association Senate is in charge of this independent evaluation. It manages the evaluation procedure and issues recommendations to the Federation and the *Länder* regarding the continuation of joint funding for Leibniz institutions (see also the Leibniz Association statutes).

The Senate decreed the following basic principles for the evaluation procedure on 6 January 2012.

II.

The procedure for the regular evaluation of Leibniz institutions comprises two stages.

The first stage leads to an evaluation of the Leibniz institution by a review board.

The second stage leads to a science-policy status report by the Senate which includes a recommendation to the Federal and *Länder* governments concerning the continuation of joint funding. The Senate's status report is based on the results of the first stage.

The consultations between the review board and Leibniz Association committees are confidential. The Senate will publish its status reports as well as the information on which they are based (attachment A of the Senate's status report: presentation of the Leibniz institution; attachment B: evaluation report; attachment C: statement by the Leibniz institution on the evaluation report). Until they are released, these documents are also to be treated confidentially by anyone involved in the procedure.

First Stage: Evaluation of a Leibniz Institution

1. Responsibility

The Leibniz Association Senate's SAE (Senate Evaluation Committee) conducts the first stage of the procedure.

2. Review board members

Review board members are:

- chairs appointed by the SAE
- experts
- one representative of the Federal and one of *Länder* governments

The review board should normally be composed of no more than 16 members in total.

2.1 Chairs of the review board

As a rule, the SAE nominates two of its own members to assume the chairmanship and vice chairmanship of the review board. The SAE ensures that chairs regularly include one subject specialist and one non-subject specialist member of the committee. For institutions pursuing similar disciplines, the SAE strives for continuity in the chairmanship of the review boards.

The review board chairs appoint experts to the review board. In doing so they ensure that there is no apparent conflict of interest, which they determine on the basis of the criteria specifically cited in attachment 1. They are also in charge of presiding over the review board and report back to the SAE on the evaluation visit.

2.2 Experts

Experts are national and international academics as well as recognised experts from other professional sectors (such as business, associations, authorities).

Review board chairs draw on the pool of experts compiled by the previous review board, as well as on suggestions of their own or those made by other SAE members, the Evaluation Office or the institution itself. DFG headquarters are regularly asked to make suggestions and, if required, other science organisations and specialist scientific associations in Germany and abroad, as well as international institutions are also consulted. Those who have been requested to act as experts are notified of the criteria to determine a potential conflict of interest (attachment 1). DFG headquarters are regularly notified of and asked to comment on the selection of experts. Review boards for institutions pursuing similar disciplines should be composed of some of the same board members.

The Leibniz institution is given the following opportunities to participate in the selection of review board experts:

(a) Prior to the selection of experts by the review board chairs:

- it can suggest a list of focus areas on which expertise ought to be available on the review board
- it can suggest experts on these focus areas, observing the criteria to determine a potential conflict of interest (attachment 1)

(b) Following the selection of experts by the review board chairs:

- it can comment on whether the experts cover the focus areas named by the institution
- it can comment on whether it sees a potential conflict of interest in the experts selected as per attachment 1

If review board chairs and the Leibniz institution fail to reach an agreement against the backdrop of these comments, the SAE chairs make the final decision, involving the evaluation commissioner at the Leibniz Association presidency.

2.3 Federal and *Länder* government representatives

The Federal government is normally represented on the review board by an SAE member of the relevant Federal Research Ministry who does not have supervisory responsibility for the institution which is to be evaluated.

The *Länder* are represented on the review board by an SAE member or delegate member who is not employed by the *Land* which hosts the institution which is to be evaluated.

3. Evaluation package and presentation of the Leibniz institution

The Leibniz institution prepares an evaluation package. Its purpose is to provide the review board with information on the institution's work and that of its Scientific Advisory Board and/or User Advisory Board since the last evaluation, as well as on the prospects for its future development. The Senate provides the institutions with a mandatory template to prepare the evaluation package.

Based on the evaluation package, the Evaluation Office prepares a presentation of the institution. Its purpose is to give the SAE and Senate as well as the Joint Science Conference (GWK) a concise, objective overview of the institution. This presentation will also be submitted to the review board.

The presentation is prepared in agreement with the Leibniz institution and in consultation with the responsible departments of the Federal government and the *Land* which hosts the institution as well as the review board chairs.

4. Evaluation visit

The review board will visit the institution. The purpose of the evaluation visit is to allow the review board to inform itself about the Leibniz institution over and above the evaluation package and to make an evaluation that is supported by all members.

The agenda will be determined by the review board chairs in agreement with the Leibniz institution. The following items are regular features of an evaluation visit:

- (a) preliminary consultations by the review board clarifying, in particular, the purpose of the evaluation procedure.
- (b) a presentation by the Leibniz institution outlining its overall concept and subdivisions (such as a poster session or a tour of the institution).
- (c) meetings of review board members with the leadership of the institution as well as with employees in the absence of senior staff.
- (d) a meeting with a member of the Scientific Advisory Board and, in case of existence at the institution, the User Advisory Board. As far as possible the Advisory Boards should be at least represented by its chairs. The boards may participate in the programme items of the evaluation visit that are open to the institution.
- (e) a meeting with representatives of the institution's collaborative partners: the Leibniz institution is asked to make suggestions, and in doing so, to consider the rectors or presidents of universities with which it makes joint appointments. The decision as to which collaborative partners will be invited is agreed between the Leibniz institution and the review board chairs.

The review board will meet in camera to prepare an evaluation of the institution based on the criteria laid out in attachment 3.

Guests of the review board will be invited to attend the evaluation visits, in which they are free to participate with the exception of the meetings in camera. Guests comprise: one representative each of the responsible departments of the Federal government and *Land* which hosts the institution (who are, as a rule, members of the institution's Supervisory Board), of the GWK and Leibniz Association headquarters (normally the spokesperson for the relevant section).

Prior to the final review board meeting in camera, the representative of the Leibniz Association will make a statement as to whether, in his or her opinion, the evaluation visit has been conducted fairly and in accordance with the principles laid down in the present document.

If the Leibniz Association representative or the Leibniz institution has any doubts as to whether the evaluation visit has been conducted fairly and in accordance with the principles laid down in the present document, the SAE will make a decision as to whether the objections should be taken into consideration in consultation with the evaluation commissioner at the Leibniz Association presidency.

5. Evaluation report

The review board's assessment will be summarised in an evaluation report. The evaluation report does not contain a recommendation regarding the continuation of joint funding for the Leibniz institution.

The Evaluation Office will draft the evaluation report based on the results of the evaluation visit. After verification and approval by the chairs, the draft will be submitted to all other review board members for verification and approval. Once all review board members have approved the report, it can no longer be altered.

If the review board is unable to reach an agreement on the evaluation report, even after arbitration by the SAE chairs, any assessments that deviate from the majority opinion expressed by the review board will be listed separately in the report.

6. Statement on the evaluation report by the Leibniz institution

The final evaluation report, as agreed upon by the review board, will be sent to the leadership of the Leibniz institution, to the responsible departments at the Federal government and the *Land* which hosts the institution, as well as to the SAE and Senate chairs. The institution's leadership may submit the evaluation report to its own committees. By doing so the members of these committees become party to the procedure and thus bound by confidentiality until the Senate's statement is released.

The Leibniz institution may make a statement on the evaluation report. This statement will be submitted to the SAE and the Senate together with the status report and the evaluation report.

If a Leibniz institution feels that the evaluation report violates the procedural principles defined in the present document, or that any facts in the evaluation report have been significantly misrepresented, it can apply to the SAE chairs for a reappraisal of the evaluation report by the evaluation group.

Together with the review board chairs and the evaluation commissioner at the Leibniz Association presidency, the SAE chairs will then decide whether this request is admissible and justified. The evaluation commissioner will be given the necessary access to the SAE evaluation package. If the Senate committee chairs, the review board chairs and the evaluation commissioner cannot reach an agreement, the SAE will make a decision on the institution's request.

If a request is justified, the review board will reconsider the evaluation report. The institution will then have the right to make a new, final statement on this new and final version of the agreed evaluation report. Even if the request is inadmissible or unjustified, the institution has the right to make a new and final statement.

7. Language

As a rule, the first stage of the evaluation procedure will be held in German unless the institution and review board chairs agree that it should be conducted in English.

8. Information resources for Leibniz institutions

The Evaluation Office offers Leibniz institutions which are due for evaluation a preliminary consultation to clarify procedural questions in the run-up to the evaluation. The Leibniz institution may turn to Leibniz Association headquarters for advice on the contents of the evaluation.

Second Stage: Senate's Statement on a Leibniz Institution

1. Responsibility

The Senate conducts the second stage of the procedure. The SAE prepares its resolutions.

2. SAE preparation of a Senate's statement on an evaluated Leibniz institution

The SAE prepares a recommendation for a science-policy statement by the Senate on the Leibniz institution that has been evaluated. The review board chairs provide the SAE with a draft recommendation that has been coordinated with the Senate committee chairs.

The SAE recommendation for a Senate's statement is based on the presentation of the Leibniz institution, the evaluation report and, if submitted, the institution's statement on the evaluation report.

It is also based on an oral report by the review board chairs as well as a hearing of the responsible departments of the Federal government and the *Land* which hosts the institution on the SAE.

3. Release of Senate's statement on an evaluated Leibniz institution

The Senate will consult on and release a science-policy statement on the Leibniz institution that has been evaluated. For institutions that receive a positive overall evaluation, the Senate's statement will, if applicable, address whether joint funding should be discontinued for individual subdivisions of the institution.

The Senate consultations are based on the SAE recommendations for a Senate's statement including attachments A: presentation; B: evaluation report and, if submitted, C: the institution's statement on the evaluation report.

The Senate will involve the SAE chair in its deliberations.

A Senate's statement includes, in particular, a recommendation on the continuation of joint funding by Federal and *Länder* governments. The Senate distinguishes between the following basic scenarios:

- the Senate of the Leibniz Association recommends that Federal and *Länder* governments continue their joint funding of the institution.
- the Senate of the Leibniz Association recommends that Federal and *Länder* governments continue their joint funding of the institution.

The Senate requests the institution (or the Scientific Advisory Board and/or the User Advisory Board or the Supervisory Board) to submit a report on the implementation of recommendations by a certain deadline. If it then proves necessary, the Senate will recommend that the Federal and *Länder* governments should prepone the next evaluation of funding eligibility.

- the Senate of the Leibniz Association recommends that Federal and *Länder* governments continue their joint funding of the institution.

The Senate furthermore recommends scheduling the next evaluation of funding eligibility for an earlier date than the regular seven-year interval: after an appropriate, individually agreed time period.

- the Senate of the Leibniz Association recommends that Federal and *Länder* governments discontinue their joint funding of the institution.