

## Leibniz Mentoring: Frequently asked questions

1. Is the programme also open to academics who have not obtained their doctoral degree?  
The Leibniz Mentoring Programme is only open to female academics with a doctoral degree, as it is designed to prepare them for managerial tasks and possibly a professorship.
2. How long may the doctorate have been completed at the time of application? Is there an age limit?  
Leibniz Mentoring is aimed at female scientists in the orientation and consolidation phase after their doctorate who are aiming for a leadership position in academia or in professional fields for which an academic qualification is a prerequisite. At the time of application, the doctorate should have been completed two to six years previously. If this requirement is deviated from, the reasons must be specifically explained. Bringing up a child automatically extends the period by two years per child.  
  
There is no age limit.
3. Can I apply if my contract ends in the course of the programme?  
Yes, participation in the programme is also possible in this case. Should the contract with the Leibniz Institute end during the programme period, the participant would have to bear the travel costs after the end of the contract herself, if applicable.
4. Is it acceptable to submit an application in English?  
Yes. German and English are the two languages that are accepted for applications.
5. How to submit the application? Apart from submission via e-mail, is it also possible to submit one's application via snail mail?  
The only accepted way to submit application documents is in PDF format via e-mail to [mentoring@leibniz-gemeinschaft.de](mailto:mentoring@leibniz-gemeinschaft.de). We must receive the application no later than the day of the application deadline.
6. Should the CV adhere to any special formal criteria or a minimum number of pages?  
The CV should be in tabular format. There is no minimum number of pages. The length of the CV is solely determined by the applicant's individual career path.
7. Why is it only allowed to list the five most important publications in the application?  
Only a maximum of five most important publications and exclusively published works may be listed in the application. With this standard, we want to contribute to an academic world in which the significance and quality of a publication count, but not the highest possible number of publications. After all, good and innovative research takes time.

8. Most of my scientific achievements are in the field of infrastructure. How can I take this fact into account in my application?

For applicants who are more likely to be based in the infrastructure part of their institution or who aspire to a further career in science management, publications may play a lesser role. These applicants should describe their scientific achievements in the field of infrastructure in their application. The following areas would be plausible: object-based and object-centred research, standards and systematics, data collection, data documentation (incl. metadata standards), long-term archiving and data provision (data management), data protection, software development, micropublications, technical and application knowledge relating to physical and digital materials (incl. restoration, archiving, laboratories or other components of scientific infrastructure), project management, application of scientific concepts, transfer and dissemination, legal and ethical issues.

9. Should the required letter of reference be submitted as part of the application documents or sent separately by the applicant's supervisor using the abovementioned e-mail address?

The general rule is that the letter of reference should be submitted together with the other application documents via e-mail to [mentoring@leibniz-gemeinschaft.de](mailto:mentoring@leibniz-gemeinschaft.de). However, if it proves necessary, the letter of reference can also be sent in a separate e-mail, e.g. by the supervisor.

10. Which person should reasonably write the reference letter?

The letter of reference has two aims. Firstly, it should be a recommendation from the institute's management board, consciously consenting to the researcher's application. The management board should play an active part in ensuring that the institute recommends a promising woman for this outstanding personnel development programme for future leaders. This means the letter of reference is a letter of support. We use this process to pursue the aim of making the entire mentoring programme and the individual mentees more visible within the institutes. If necessary, the actual subject-specific recommendation may be written by another senior person who has the subject expertise necessary to assess the applicant's achievements. In this case, the letter would be in two parts.

11. Does the Leibniz headquarters lend any assistance in my search for a mentor? Is there an official list of potential mentors that I may consult?

Mentoring is a key element of the programme. To maximise its potential, it is vital to select the right mentor. Mentees are requested to find their own mentors. They are in the best position to judge who would make an attractive mentor in terms of their own specialisation. However, the programme offers a range of tools to help find a mentor. A central tool is the preparatory workshop that takes place three months before the programme officially kicks off. Following an introduction to the mentoring programme, mentees attending the workshop use criteria the group has drawn up together to develop their ideal mentor profile. The Leibniz Mentoring Guideline also provides advice on how to find a mentor. In addition, the project coordinator has a list of potential mentors. Finally, the spokeswomen of the Alumnae Network will be happy to share their experiences and give advice. The contact persons can be found at <https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/en/careers/careers-in-research/taking-on-leadership-positions/leibniz-mentoring/leibniz-network-mentoring.html>.

12. Which are the criteria I could or should use for selecting my mentor?

The applicant determines for herself the criteria according to which she makes her decision. However, the applicant will receive support in drawing up these criteria during the preparatory workshop (see point 11). Her selection can be guided by subject-specific considerations or she can focus on the role-model represented by her preferred mentor. In general, however, the persons she names should be experienced, established managers whose judgement and opinions the applicant trusts. Depending on the career path the applicant aspires to take, it is not imperative that the mentor has worked in academic institutions exclusively. Rather, applicants are also allowed to choose mentors who are currently employed by institutions that are merely affiliated with the academic world.

13. Is it mandatory that the suggested mentor is a professor?

It is not mandatory that the suggested mentor is a professor. Their selection really depends on what the applicant expects from her mentor. However, all mentors should definitely be in an advanced stage of their careers.

14. Does the mentor have to be a member of a Leibniz Institute as well?

No, the mentor does not have to be employed at a Leibniz Institute.

15. Must/should the mentor be someone other than the mentee's immediate supervisor (institute director)?

In order to keep hierarchy out of the mentoring relationship, the mentee must not be in a position of dependency with regard to her mentor.

16. May the mentor work in an academic field that is different from my own?

Yes.

17. Is participation in the seminars of the process support (kick-off, half time and stocktaking) mandatory for the mentors?

The presence of the mentor at the kick-off, half time and stocktaking seminars is extremely desirable but not obligatory. On these occasions, not only mentees but also mentors are offered special training modules on the topics of mentoring and leadership.

18. Who pays the mentor's travel costs to the three mentor-mentee seminars (kick-off, half time and stocktaking)?

The mentor's travel and accommodation costs are paid by the Leibniz Association in accordance with the guidelines and cost limits of the German Travel Expenses Act (Bundesreisekostengesetz, BRKG).

19. In which language does the programme take place?

Leibniz Mentoring is conducted in German and English. This means that the process support seminars (preparation, kick-off, half-time, stocktaking) are offered bilingually and the compulsory seminars are each offered in German and in English. Of the four elective modules, two are held in German and two in English.

20. Are there any further obligations for mentees in addition to participation in the seminars?

Apart from participation in the competence seminars and the seminars of the process support, the mentees are not subject to any further obligations. However, it is assumed that the tandem of mentee and mentor will meet beyond the events and exchange ideas.

21. Who pays the mentee's travel and accommodation costs? Is there a dedicated fund for this within the Leibniz Association or do the institutes pay the costs from their own internal research funds?

The mentee's travel and accommodation costs are to be paid by their respective Leibniz Institute. Still, the applicant must clear this with her institute upon being accepted into the programme. The institute confirms that it will pay the travel costs by sending a completed and signed expenses coverage form. However, sending a declaration of expenses coverage is only necessary after the applicant has in fact been accepted into the programme.

22. Is it possible to make up for times absent that are due to maternity/ parental leave?

Coherence and group cohesiveness play an important role in determining the success of the programme. In order to enable mothers of young children to take part in the seminars even during maternity or parental leave, we offer a childcare service. Unfortunately, this means that it is not possible to attend missed seminars at a later date. An exception is the seminar on EU research funding in Brussels, for which no childcare provision is available. Participants who are on maternity or parental leave at the time of this seminar can attend the seminar the following year. Absences because of maternity leave (and absences covered by a doctor's note) do not affect whether or not a participant is awarded the certificate.