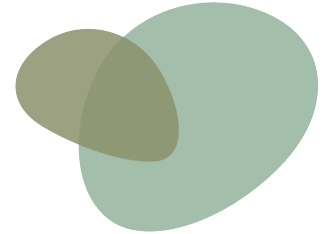


To the Directors of the Institutes
of the Leibniz Association



1st of December 2025

Call for applications Leibniz Mentoring 2026/27

Dear colleagues
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to send you the new call for applications for “Leibniz Mentoring”.

The programme supports excellent female researchers holding doctorates from institutions of the Leibniz Association on their path to a professorship or another leading position in academia. It is therefore an important strategic instrument of our Association to increase the proportion of women in scientific leadership positions, to promote cultural change towards more equal opportunities and to secure long-term scientific excellence.

The wide-ranging and diverse programme empowers female scientists to manage their careers in a targeted manner, expand subject-specific networks and confidently take on leadership roles.

The core of Leibniz Mentoring is the cooperation between an experienced senior leader as mentor and a female postdoctoral researcher as mentee. Leibniz Mentoring supports this so-called “tandem” in a structured way by providing professional process support. In addition, the programme offers accompanying seminars for mentees that promote the acquisition of key qualifications for leaders, especially in science.

Die Präsidentin

Prof. Dr. Martina Brockmeier

brockmeier@leibniz-gemeinschaft.de
T +49 30 20 60 49 - 400

Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

Chausseestraße 111
10115 Berlin

Offers for mentors provide impulses for the mentoring tandem as well as for everyday professional leadership and encourage the development of interdisciplinary networks.

The next round will start in September 2026. For more information, please see the enclosed call for applications and the flyer as well as our [website](#). The programme will be conducted in English and German.

I kindly ask you to disseminate the call for applications within your institution and to approach suitable candidates directly. Multiple applications per institution are possible.

Yours sincerely



Leibniz Mentoring

The Mentoring Programme for Female Scholars at Leibniz Institutes

The Leibniz Mentoring Programme supports highly qualified female postdoctoral researchers on their path to obtaining a professorship or another leading position in academia. The aim of the programme is to increase the proportion of women in top academic roles. It supports the participants in managing their careers in a goal-oriented manner, in expanding their subject-specific networks and in taking on managerial responsibilities with confidence.

The Programme

The core component of the 16-month Leibniz Mentoring Programme is the tandem consisting of mentor and mentee, complemented by a range of seminars on topics such as negotiation, network analysis, career planning, academic appointment procedures, etc. A seminar on European research funding is organized in cooperation with the Europe Office of the Leibniz Association and takes place in Brussels. Additionally, the mentees have access to process-oriented coaching throughout the programme's duration.

The programme is conducted in German and English.

Application documents

Applications are only possible via the [application form](#). They must include a curriculum vitae in table form, a list of the five most important publications, a letter of motivation and a current letter of recommendation from the institute's scientific director*. The letter of motivation should address the applicant's own career aspirations and expectations for the mentoring programme.

Application deadline is 8th February 2026.

Further information can be found at www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/en/mentoring.

Contact:

Dr Alexandra Schweiger

schweiger@leibniz-gemeinschaft.de

phone: +49 (30) 20 60 49-617

* in the sense of the person entitled to vote in accordance with the Statutes of the Leibniz Association



Doing the mentoring alongside your everyday work takes effort but that's exactly why it's good. For instance, when else do you get the chance to take a step back for two entire days and visualise your network? Or to concentrate on your own leadership skills? Most of the workshops taught us something that we could use and put into practice immediately



NELE KAMPA (MENTEE),
LEIBNIZ INSTITUTE FOR SCIENCE AND
MATHEMATICS EDUCATION, KIEL



We mentors also benefit from this programme. Lots of people think that if you've reached a certain age or professional status, then you've learned everything there is to learn. On the contrary: you can and should receive lifelong guidance – both professionally and personally. And the Leibniz programme is exemplary for this.



MICHAEL LEITZMANN (MENTOR),
PROFESSOR FOR EPIDEMIOLOGY AND PREVENTIVE
MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF REGENSBURG



I encountered the Mentoring Programme at the ideal moment of my career. As a fresh post-doctoral researcher, I was taking over more and more (leading) tasks at the time. The workshops, the exchange with other mentees and the tandem with my mentor helped and motivated me to face these new challenges.



DÖRTE HEGER (MENTEE),
RWI – LEIBNIZ-INSTITUTE
FOR ECONOMIC RESEARCH

CONTACT

Leibniz Association
Telephone +49 30 206049-653
Fax +49 30 206049-55
Chausseestraße 111
10115 Berlin
mentoring@leibniz-gemeinschaft.de

www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de

Leibniz Mentoring



Photo credits: Fabian Zapatka

Strategic career support for female academics

Aim

Through the Leibniz Mentoring Programme the Leibniz Association supports highly qualified female post-doctoral researchers on their path to obtaining a professorship or some other leading position. It supports the participants in managing their careers in a goal-driven way, and helps them expand their subject-specific networks and take on managerial tasks with confidence.

Target group

The Leibniz Mentoring Programme is aimed at female academics in the orientation and consolidation phase after their doctorate, who are striving for a leading position in science, or in professional fields for which a scientific qualification is a prerequisite. They must belong to an institution of the Leibniz Association. The selection criteria are: excellent research accomplishments and the recognisable pursuit of a leadership position in science and research.

Contents

- Structured and supervised mentoring partnership
- Seminars on the acquisition of key qualifications for future leaders, in particular in academia
- Seminar on European research funding in Brussels
- Essential fields of training: career strategies, managerial skills and research financing

Plus factors

- Certificate of acquired qualifications
- Access to the extensive Alumnae Network, annual network meetings
- Possibility of childcare during seminars



The Leibniz Mentoring Programme supports its outstanding female scientists and accompanies them on their journey to obtaining a leading position in academia. Thus it is an important strategic instrument of the Leibniz Association to achieve equal opportunities also at the highest positions in academia.



MARTINA BROCKMEIER,
PRESIDENT OF THE LEIBNIZ ASSOCIATION



Call for applications, language, term

The programme is advertised annually and runs in German and English. It starts in September and runs to January of the following year.

Information on the programme requirements, application documents and a detailed programme description can be found at www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/mentoring.

Accompanying offers exclusively for mentors

- An in-depth look at communication and leadership ideas and methods, in the context of both the tandem relationship and everyday leadership tasks
- Continuing professional support for tandem work
- Interdisciplinary network expansion

Leibniz Mentoring – Application requirements and selection criteria

Application requirements

1. The Leibniz Mentoring programme is aimed at female scholars in the post-doctoral orientation and consolidation phase who have set their sights on a leadership position in academia or in occupational fields that require a scientific qualification. Applicants may hold a position in either the scientific or science support field.
2. The applicant must have a valid employment contract with a member institute of the Leibniz Association at the time of application. Exceptions (applications before the start of the position) are possible, but must be justified separately. Scientists associated with the Leibniz institution are not entitled to apply.
3. There is no rigid age limit. It is recommended that the doctorate was completed two to six years prior to the application. Subject-specific peculiarities or special life circumstances are taken into account, so earlier or later applications are possible with specific justification. Child-rearing automatically extends the period by two years per child.

Selection criteria

- Excellent performance in research or science management/infrastructure
- Evidence that the applicant is pursuing the goal of achieving a leadership position in the science system
- Assumption of leadership responsibilities (to the extent possible in the specialist area)
- Success in securing third-party funds
- Teaching/ supervision experience
- Commitment to the scientific community
- Engagement in knowledge communication/ knowledge transfer
- Quality of the letter of recommendation

Supplementary notes on selection

1. The selection committee is required to take the whole researcher personality into account and to be open to interesting and less linear career paths. As a rule, the applicant's potential should be given a higher weighting than their nominal achievements (to date).
2. In order to achieve a professional evaluation, individual criteria may be weighted differently to do justice to the special features of disciplines and subject traditions. These include: academic age, places of publication, mobility, importance of prizes.
3. It is possible to include several candidates from the same institute in the programme. The decisive factor is the suitability of the candidates. At the same time, the committee should take into account that different disciplinary backgrounds enrich the exchange of ideas within the mentee group.
4. No more than the five most important published papers may be listed in the application. This requirement is intended to help ensure that the quality and significance of scientific work, and not the highest possible number of publications, is what counts in the scientific system.
5. Information on teaching is considered in detail in order to show the disciplinary breadth covered in each case.
6. The motivation letters should show how much the applicants have thought about the benefits of the programme for their specific situation, about their own needs and the next steps. A clear analysis of one's own situation and the short- and medium-term tasks and challenges in one's further career are a good prerequisite for deriving the greatest possible benefit from the programme.
7. For applicants whose academic performance is focused on infrastructure or who aspire to a career in science management, publications and teaching may play a lesser role. Their achievements may be in the following areas: 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.

8. German language skills are not a prerequisite for participation.

Dear Applicant,

Please find below, for your information, the questions contained in the online application form. Please note that you can only apply online.

Personal data

About you: Title, first name, last name

Your contact details: Telephone number, work e-mail address

Do you have children? If yes, please indicate the number and year(s) of birth.

Which language do you prefer for communication with us? German or English

Professional details

At which Leibniz Institute are you employed?

Which discipline does your research belong to?

What is your current position?

Institute address: Street and number, postal code, city

Your application

Please indicate the month and year of your doctorate (oral examination).

If you hold or have held positions of responsibility (e.g. spokesperson of an interest group, reviewer, editor, board member, commission member, etc.), please list them with the period of time:

Please specify your activities in the field of knowledge transfer/science communication:

Please indicate any third-party funding you have acquired (incl. scholarships):

Please indicate your teaching experience (type, topic and term of the event):

Please indicate your supervisory experience (staff, students, etc.):

Please indicate your experience abroad (period, organisation/institute and country):

Please indicate awards and prizes:

Please list your ten most important talks or poster presentations:

Please indicate memberships in scientific associations:

Here you can enter details of your non-academic volunteer work (e.g. your involvement in cultural organisations, sports, religious communities, clubs, or initiatives):

Had you previously applied to participate in Leibniz Mentoring? If yes, when?

Five most important publications

Please list your five most important publications and explain the importance of each in a maximum of 500 characters.

Please upload the following attachments as PDF files

1. Letter of motivation
2. Letter of recommendation from the scientific institute director
3. CV in tabular form

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your application?

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. 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. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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>.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

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

Yes.

15. 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.

16. 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).

17. 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 in English 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. Is there a fee for participating in Leibniz Mentoring?

No. Apart from the mentee's travel and accommodation costs, there are no costs for the Leibniz institution. The programme is financed entirely from the Leibniz Association's strategy fund.

21. 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 or cover the travel costs of accompanying caregivers for childcare. 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 possible. 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.