

Call for applications for the “Best Minds” funding programme: Leibniz Programme for Women Professors

Adopted by the Executive Board of the Leibniz Association on 10/11 October 2016; updated on 8/9 June 2020; last editorial revision on 24 May 2022

Contents

1. Aims of the programme	1
2. Scope of the programme.....	2
3. Eligibility criteria.....	2
4. Applications	2
5. Criteria for assessing applications.....	4
6. Reporting and quality assurance	5
7. Contact for questions and advice on applying.....	5

1. Aims of the programme

The Leibniz Association has set itself ambitious equality targets, which are enshrined in its standards on equality and those governing appointments to leading positions. To counter structural disadvantages and more comprehensively promote outstandingly talented women and their innovation potential, the Leibniz Association has developed the Leibniz Programme for Women Professors (W2/W3 pay scale – comparable to an associate or full professorship). This is intended to significantly increase the number of women in leading positions within the Leibniz Association’s member institutes. Reliable prospects are a particularly important decision-making criterion for academics when planning their careers, which is why the Leibniz Programme for Women Professors includes a tenure-track option.

The Leibniz Association plans to strengthen its strategic partnerships with universities, and will continue to let itself be measured by the number and quality of its university partnerships. Among other things, therefore, the Leibniz Programme for Women Professors is a tool for consolidating the substance and strategy of the Leibniz Association’s university partnerships, and for generating additional impetus for further joint appointments at middle management level within the Leibniz Institutes (especially at head-of-department level).

2. Scope of the programme

The Leibniz Programme for Women Professors is open to women in all disciplines who have an outstanding international track record. They will be granted a W2/W3 professorship position which is either permanent or which features a tenure-track option guaranteed by the university and the relevant Leibniz Institute. On the one hand, the programme is aimed specifically at the recruitment of early-career academics, for instance through fast-track appointments. On the other hand, the programme can also be used to attract more experienced academics with an outstanding international track record to the Leibniz Association by offering competitive conditions. When appointing candidates who are already employed at the Leibniz Institute, the appointment must offer a clear career step, in line with the aims of the funding programme.

Essential resources will also be provided. Participation in the Leibniz Leadership Academy is planned for the successful candidates.

Level of funding: Up to 1 million euros is available from central Leibniz Association funds. In addition, the Leibniz Institute grants a co-financing amount of at least 40% of the total volume. Therefore, a maximum project funding sum of approx. 1.7 million € can be aimed for.

Duration of funding: Five years (of which two years are funded by the Leibniz Institute in question)

At least a year before the end of the funding phase, the institute and the university will decide together whether to grant tenure to the professor.

In addition to other Leibniz Competition funding programmes, each Leibniz institution is also entitled to submit an application within this funding programme every six months. This programme can usually support up to five projects per procedure.

3. Eligibility criteria

External candidates as well as candidates working within the Leibniz Institute in question can be nominated. The funding begins with the appointment.¹

4. Applications

Applications must be directed to the Senate Competition Committee (SAW). Applications based on an already completed appointment procedure at the time of submission will not be considered. The application text and all documents must be submitted in English. The chairperson of the SAW will decide on any potential exceptions. The Leibniz Association Headquarters will provide an application template for every project proposal.

The proposed project must meet the following requirements: the application as part of the Leibniz Programme for Women Professors encompasses a five-year programme of work. The detailed project proposal (using the template provided) must not exceed a total length of 12 pages (excluding the bibliography). The page limit for resubmitted applications is 12.5 pages as these applications may comment on changes made in the application in the addendum. Administrative information and the financial plan are submitted directly via the electronic application system. The structure of the application is as follows:

¹ According to the [usage guidelines \(Verwendungsrichtlinie\) of the Leibniz Competition procedure](#), the appointment must occur no later than 18 months after the effective date of the funding agreement.

A) The candidate's academic qualification (weighting 40%)

- The candidate's curriculum vitae and academic achievements for the Leibniz professorship, including mention of her ten key publications and funding track record (one document, as an appendix)
- Two current letters of recommendation which refer to the candidate's academic performance (one of which must come from the Scientific Advisory Board of the Leibniz Institute submitting the application)

B) The candidate's research approach and field of research, and the significance of these to the Leibniz Institute and the scientific environment (weighting 40%)

- Statements by the candidate regarding their planned research activities and their motivation to conduct research at the Leibniz Institute in question
- Presentation of the contribution of the professorship – in terms of content and strategy – to the Leibniz Institute, the collaborating university and the scientific environment

C) Structural efficacy (weighting 10%)

- Presentation of the career step for the candidate, in line with the aims of the funding programme
- Incorporation in the academic system: planned national and international collaborations
- Contribution to internationalisation of the Leibniz Institute
- Supporting measures in line with the Leibniz equality standards² and the Leibniz diversity objectives as part of the establishment of the professorship; the institute's equality concept
- Concept to integrate the candidate into the Leibniz Institute (preparation for managerial role, leadership, research infrastructure where required)
- Consideration of the Leibniz Guidelines on Career Development³
- Presentation of the consideration given to the Leibniz recruitment standards⁴ in the selection procedure

D) Implementation and finances (weighting 10%)

- Presentation of the current level of development of the joint appointment with the university (W2/W3), fixed term/permanent; for fixed-term appointments: agreement between the institute and the university to secure the tenure track
- The resources promised to the candidate in the event of her appointment must be described. Any assurance of co-financing from the Leibniz Institute must also be described in its actual amount
- Presentation of the intended use of the funding in a finance plan which encompasses the direct and indirect project-related costs over the duration of the funding period, including an indication of the annual staff costs, material costs (including travel costs) and investments and a brief justification of their necessity
- Description of the quality assurance measures (e.g. adherence to the rules of good scientific practice)

² [Leibniz Equality Standards](#)

³ [Leibniz Guidelines on Career Development](#)

⁴ [Standards for appointments to academic management positions within the Leibniz Association](#)

For additional general information, please see the applicant guidelines for the Leibniz Competition.

5. Criteria for assessing applications

Academic excellence is the necessary criterion for funding.

The assessments should be guided by the following criteria that underpin the SAW evaluation.

Assessment of the candidate:

- The academic qualifications of the candidate, who has an outstanding international track record
- The candidate's career prospects

Assessment of the candidate's research approach and field of research, and the importance of these to the Leibniz Institute and the scientific environment:

- Academic and methodological excellence by international standards
- The chances of success for the research approach/field of research
- Incorporation in the academic strategy of the institute and the collaborating department of the university (structural concept) or scientific environment
- Catalyst function for the academic development of the Leibniz Institute submitting the application

Structural efficacy:

- Increase in the proportion of women academics in leading positions at the institute submitting the application
- Incorporation in the academic system: planned national and international collaborations
- Internationality: The funding of foreign academics and academics with international experience is expressly desired
- Contribution to implementing the Leibniz equality standards and realising the Leibniz diversity objective
- Concept to integrate the candidate into the Leibniz Institute (preparation for managerial role, leadership, research infrastructure where required)
- Consideration of the Leibniz career guidelines
- Adherence to the Leibniz recruitment standards

Assessment of the planned implementation and financial planning:

- State of proceedings for the joint appointment with the university (W2/W3 grade professorship), fixed term/permanent
- For fixed-term appointments: securing tenure track by means of an agreement between the institute and the university
- Assurance of co-financing from the Leibniz Institute, including its extent
- Appropriateness of the cost and finance plan, and of the quality assurance measures

6. Reporting and quality assurance

After two years, the funded projects will provide the SAW with an interim report (of no more than five pages in length, excluding all appendices), which focuses particularly on the extent to which the milestones formulated in the application have been achieved. The SAW will take note of this report and, where required, provide recommendations for the project. After the end of the funding phase, a final report will be submitted to the SAW. At least a year before the end of the funding phase, the institute and the university will decide together whether to convert the fixed-term professorship into a permanent position. All researchers involved in the project commit to conduct their research in compliance with the rules of good scientific practice.⁵

7. Contact for questions and advice on applying

Leibniz Association

Dr Karin Effertz

Division Leibniz Competition

Email: effertz@leibniz-gemeinschaft.de

Chausseestraße 111, D-10115 Berlin

Tel.: +49 30 206049 330

⁵ [Guidelines of the Leibniz Association on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice](#)