


Election Regulations

for the Election of the Members of the Review
Boards of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft
(German Research Foundation, DFG)



Disclaimer: This English translation of the Election Regulations is provided for informational purposes. The English text was carefully translated and reviewed for accuracy. In the event that the English and German versions of the Election Regulations permit different interpretations, the German text shall prevail.

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Part 1: General Provisions

§ 1 Structure of Review Boards, Election Cycle

1. The subject structure of the review boards and the number of their members shall be determined by the Senate according to § 6 No. 7 of the Statutes of the DFG. The Senate may subdivide review boards by subject areas and determine the number of elected members for each subject area. The Senate shall ensure that all areas of science and the humanities are covered by the review boards and that the review boards sufficiently honour the scientific interests of the subject areas as well as multidisciplinary concerns. Before the Senate makes a decision that may affect the interests of individual subject areas, it shall consult the leaders of the respective subject-area associations in a suitable form.
2. The members of the review boards are elected for four years by secret ballot. Re-election is not permitted for persons who have served on a review board for two full consecutive terms immediately before the election. The term for newly elected members of review boards begins with the inaugural session of the respective review board. The term of the members of the previous review board ends concurrently.
3. At least two representatives shall be elected for each subject area, according to the number of votes they receive. In the event of a tie, lots shall be drawn to determine the winner. If only one candidate receives any votes in a certain subject area, this subject area shall have only one representative by way of exception. If no candidate receives any votes in a certain subject area, or if all elected members resign before the end of their term, grant proposals belonging to this subject area shall be processed by the other subject areas on this review board. If a member resigns before the end of the term, the candidate who received the next highest number of votes shall succeed. In special cases (temporary withdrawal due to maternity or parental leave, or illness lasting more than six months), the succession may be temporary if the succeeding member consents.
4. Each review board shall elect one speaker and at least one deputy speaker from among its members.

§ 2 Right to Vote

1. The right to vote shall be granted to all persons working in scientific and academic research on, but not limited to, the first day of the voting period, in any of the following positions:
 - a) professor or junior professor in a member institution;
 - b) researcher in a member institution who has successfully passed an oral doctoral exam (or a comparable recognised qualification) before the first day of the voting period;
 - c) researcher with qualifications according to § 2 No. 1 a) or b) in an institution recognised by the Senate as a voting centre (cf. § 9 No. 2).
2. Persons who are affiliated with several member institutions or voting centres may vote only once. If they belong to a member university, they shall be registered to vote there.
3. Other researchers may be granted the right to vote by the Senate on an individual basis. Persons with qualifications according to § 2 No. 1 a) or b), who work in scientific and academic research on, but not limited to, the first day of the voting period, may be nominated as voters by members, voting centres, and certain research institutions authorised by the Senate to do so. The Senate may authorise the President of the DFG to determine which individuals shall be granted the right to vote.

§ 3 Number of Votes, Vote Splitting

1. Each voter has six votes.
2. Votes may be split between candidates for different review boards and/or different subject areas.
3. A voter may give up to three votes to the same candidate.

§ 4 Candidate Eligibility

The eligibility to serve on a review board shall be granted to all persons who have the right to vote according to § 2 and who belong to one of the following categories:

1. scientific and academic researchers employed permanently by a member institution or voting centre;
2. independent scientific and academic researchers (e.g. Heisenberg fellow or leader of a junior research group of the DFG, Max Planck Society, or similar institution) in a member institution or in an institution that has been declared a voting centre by the Senate;
3. independent scientific and academic researchers whom the Senate has granted eligibility on an individual basis through inclusion in the list of candidates.

§ 5 Incompatibility with Other Offices

A researcher can only be a candidate for one subject area, or for one review board if the review board is not subdivided into subject areas (cf. § 1 No. 1). Members of the DFG's Executive Committee, Joint Committee, the Grants Committees installed by the Joint Committee, and liaison officers may not concurrently serve on review boards. Election commissioners and their deputies according to § 9 No. 8 may not run for an election which they monitor.

Part 2: Candidate Nominations

§ 6 Submission of Candidate Nominations

1. Candidates may be nominated by:
 - a) the members of the DFG;
 - b) the scientific, academic and faculty associations which have been granted this privilege for the next election by the Senate;
 - c) the Donors' Association for the Promotion of Sciences and Humanities in Germany (Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft);
 - d) recipients of the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize.
2. Those entitled to submit nominations shall be informed by the President of the DFG of the criteria for the submission of candidate nominations.
3. Nominations must be submitted together with the nominee's written declaration of consent to the candidature.

§ 7 Compilation of the List of Candidates

1. The Senate shall review all submitted candidate nominations and compile the list of candidates by selecting from among the nominees. It may request those entitled to submit nominations to nominate additional candidates.
2. The list of candidates compiled by the Senate shall specify
 - a) the review boards including their subject areas;
 - b) the number of persons representing each subject area within a review board;
 - c) the candidates.

Part 3: Voting Procedure

I. General Regulations

§ 8 Decision on the Voting Procedure, Voting Period

1. The voting procedure shall be an online election (voting through the internet). If this is not possible for a regularly scheduled election, the election shall be by paper ballot (paper election).
2. The Executive Committee of the DFG shall decide the voting procedure before each election. At the same time, the Executive Committee shall determine the first and last day of the voting period (first and last date on which ballots may be cast). The voting period shall be four weeks for an online election and two weeks for a paper election.
3. The voting process for an online election is governed by the provisions in §§ 10–12. The voting process for a paper election is governed by the provisions in §§ 13–15. The general regulations in § 9 apply to both voting procedures.

§ 9 Voting Centres, Election Report

1. The member institutions of the DFG shall set up voting centres. The member institutions are responsible for proper conduct of the election.
2. The Senate may grant additional research institutions the right to set up voting centres and conduct the election under their own responsibility.

3. Each voting centre shall determine the number of researchers who have the right to vote there and communicate the number to the DFG Head Office by the requested date.
4. The DFG Head Office or a commissioned third party shall provide the election centres with the documentation necessary to conduct the election. The documentation required for online elections is specified in § 10, for paper elections in § 13.
5. Each voting centre shall forward the voting documentation provided to it to the researchers who have the right to vote there with the request that they cast their ballots within the period determined by the Executive Committee of the DFG.
6. Each voting centre shall draw up an election report according to specifications given by the DFG. This report shall be forwarded to the DFG Head Office by the date set by the DFG.
7. Voters not belonging to a research institution with a voting centre shall receive the voting documentation directly from the DFG Head Office or a commissioned third party. The DFG acts as voting centre for these individual voters.
8. The Senate shall appoint an election commissioner and a deputy commissioner to monitor the counting of the votes.
9. After all votes have been counted, the President of the DFG shall announce the preliminary result on the website of the DFG. The date of the announcement shall be stated on the website. After the deadline for contesting the election according to § 16 No. 2 has passed, the President shall announce the final election result to the Senate.

II. Special Regulations for Online Elections

§ 10 Voting Documentation

Voting documentation consists of the election notification including access information, and instructions on the voting process and the use of the voting portal. The voting portal allows voters to cast votes by electronic ballot via the internet.

§ 11 Casting of Ballots

1. Votes are cast electronically. Voters authenticate themselves by entering on the voting portal the access information provided in the election notification. The electronic ballot must then be completed electronically according to the instructions given in the election notification and on the voting portal.
2. The ballot is considered cast when the online voting system displays a confirmation stating that the voting process is finished.
3. The online voting system also permits the casting of invalid ballots.
4. Only properly completed electronic ballots that are submitted electronically during the voting period shall be included in the vote count.

§ 12 Counting of Votes

1. Votes are counted electronically after the voting period has expired.
2. The Senate commissioner according to § 9 No. 8 shall monitor correct vote counting and compliance with general election principles by the online voting system.
3. If the Election Regulations do not include clear provisions on whether a vote is valid, the Senate commissioner shall decide the validity of the vote.

III. Special Regulations for Paper Elections

§ 13 Voting Documentation

The voting documentation consists of a ballot, a copy of the Election Regulations, and a list of candidates.

§ 14 Completion of the Ballot

1. The ballot shall be completed according to the instructions printed on it.
2. The ballot shall be inserted into the green envelope, and the envelope shall be sealed tightly. To ensure ballot anonymity, this green envelope may not include any references

to the identity of the voter. The green envelope shall be placed into a larger, blue envelope which shall be marked with the voter's name.

3. Only properly completed ballots enclosed in the proper envelopes and received by the DFG Head Office by the deadline shall be included in the vote count.

§ 15 Casting of Ballots, Counting of Votes

1. The casting of the ballot shall be considered complete when the sealed envelope is received by the voting centre.
2. The voting centres shall verify whether each cast ballot is in compliance with the regulations and document this with a note on the voter list.
3. The voting centres shall send the cast ballots, together with the election report according to § 9 No. 6 and by the deadline specified therein, to the DFG Head Office.
4. Votes shall be counted after the deadline for contesting the election according to § 16 No. 2 a) has passed.
5. If the Election Regulations do not include clear provisions on whether a ballot is valid, the Senate commissioner as per § 9 No. 8 shall decide the validity of the ballot.

Part 4: Verification

§ 16 Contestation, Repetition of the Election, Retention Periods

1. The election may be contested by filing an appeal with the DFG Head Office if essential provisions of the Election Regulations have been violated and if this may have affected the outcome of the election.
2. a) Contestation of the election due to errors that have occurred before the end of the voting period is only possible within three weeks after the last date of the voting period (§ 8 No. 2).

- b) Contestation of the election due to errors in the preliminary election result is only possible within three weeks after the preliminary election result has been announced on the DFG website according to § 9 No. 9.
3. Election contestations as well as procedural errors censured by the President of the DFG ex officio, shall be adjudicated by an independent election rules and procedures committee of three members elected by the Senate. This committee shall decide whether provisions of these Election Regulations have been violated and whether the violation is significant. If no violation of the Election Regulations is found, or if the violation is insignificant, the committee shall declare the election result valid and reject the contestation or censure. If the committee concludes that a significant error has occurred, the committee shall propose to the President of the DFG that the election be repeated in its entirety or at certain voting centres.
 4. The President of the DFG shall in such cases order a repetition of the election according to No. 3.
 5. If the election is by paper ballot, the ballots may not be destroyed until any election contestations have been adjudicated. In any case they shall not be destroyed earlier than three months after the preliminary election results have been announced on the DFG website according to § 9 No. 9.
 6. If the election is by online ballot, the electronic data and a printout of the preliminary election results may not be destroyed until four years after the preliminary election results have been announced on the DFG website according to § 9 No. 9.