


# Election Regulations

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



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 is determined by the Senate of the DFG prior to each review board election. The Senate subdivides review boards generally by subject area and determines the number of elected members for each subject area and review board (at least two per subject area). It shall ensure that the full range of fields in science and the humanities is covered by the review boards and that the review boards take their disciplinary research interest and interdisciplinary relationships duly into account.
2. Members of the review boards are elected for four years by secret ballot. Members may be re-elected once. Succession according to § 1 No. 3 c) is treated like an election. Membership in a review board is thus limited to two terms, regardless of the duration of either term. Memberships in review committees prior to the introduction of the review board system in 2003 will not be considered. 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.
  - a) Candidates are assigned a ranking according to the number of votes they receive or, in the event of a tie, by a random draw. They are elected in the order determined by the ranking until the available places in the subject area or review board are filled. Candidates without any votes will be ranked in last place but are not taken into consideration.
  - b) If only one candidate receives votes in a certain subject area, by way of exception only one member will be elected for this subject area. If no candidate receives any votes in a certain subject area, or if all elected members, including all succeeding members in accordance with § 1 No. 3 c), leave before the end of their term, grant proposals assigned to this subject area will be considered by the other subject areas on this review board.
  - c) If a member leaves before the end of the term, the candidate who received the next highest number of votes will succeed that member. Candidates who did not receive any votes will not be considered. In consensus with the review board, a

succession process may, by way of exception, be refrained from on special grounds if the expected remaining time in office would be disproportionately short.

- d) With the consent of the succeeding member, temporary succession for a period of at least six months is permitted for special non-scientific reasons (especially maternity or parental leave, or serious illness). If the remainder of the term would be less than one year after re-entry, temporary succession is not possible.

## § 2 Right to Vote

1. To be eligible to vote, candidates must meet personal qualifications and be affiliated with a voting centre.
2. Individuals personally qualified to vote are:
  - a) researchers who have successfully passed an oral doctoral exam (or a recognised comparable degree examination) before the first day of the voting period, and
  - b) professors (including junior professors),provided they work in scientific or academic research on, but not limited to, the first day of the voting period.
3. Affiliation with a voting centre is always established if the academic research is conducted at a research institution according to § 9 No. 2 a) or b) (right to vote by virtue of institutional affiliation).
4.
  - a) Persons according to § 2 No. 2 who on, but not limited to, the first day of the voting period work in scientific or academic research but not at a research institution according to § 9 No. 2 a) or b) may be granted the right to vote on an individual basis by the President of the DFG. Nominees under this provision must be permitted to publish freely the findings of their academic research and must be integrated in the German research system.
  - b) Nominations of persons to be granted the right to vote on an individual basis can be submitted to the DFG Head Office up to six months before the beginning of the

voting period. Nominations may be submitted by research institutions that conduct academic research and that satisfy the conditions set out in § 9 No. 2 b) aa)-cc). Each eligible institution may nominate up to 100 persons engaged in scientific or academic research at the institution who satisfy the requirements of § 2 No. 2. See also § 9 No. 2 b).

- c) Individuals who have been granted the right to vote on an individual basis are automatically assigned to the DFG voting centre according to § 9 No. 2 c).
5. Individuals are also eligible to vote if they have been granted the right to stand for election by the Senate of the DFG according to § 4 No. 2. These persons are added to the list of individual voters and are therefore assigned to the voting centre for individual voters set up by the DFG according to § 9 No. 2 c).
  6. Voters may vote only once, even if they conduct scientific or academic research at more than one institution. If they conduct academic research at a member university, they must be registered to vote there.

### **§ 3 Number of Votes, Vote Splitting**

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

### **§ 4 Candidate Eligibility**

1. The eligibility to serve on a review board is granted to all persons who
  - a) have the right to vote according to § 2, and
  - b) are employed permanently as scientific or academic researchers, or work independently as scientific or academic researchers (e.g. as Heisenberg fellows or leaders of a junior research group of the DFG, Max Planck Society, or similar institution), and

- c) work in scientific or academic research at a research institution according to § 9 No. 2 a) or b).
2. Other independent scientific or academic researchers who meet the requirements according to § 2 No. 2 and No. 4 a) sentence 2 and are included in the list of candidates according to the process stipulated in § 7 are granted the right to serve as a candidate upon approval of the list of candidates by the Senate of the DFG according to § 7.
3. If a candidate transfers to another research institution after the list of candidates has been approved by the Senate of the DFG according to § 7, such a person will retain the right to vote and to serve as a candidate provided that the personal requirements according to § 2 No. 2 and No. 4 a) sentence 2 and § 4 No. 1 b) continue to be met.

## **§ 5 Incompatibility with Other Offices**

1. An individual as defined in § 2 No. 2 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).
2. Members of the DFG's Executive Committee, Joint Committee, the Grants Committees installed by the Joint Committee, liaison officers, and DFG liaisons at non-member universities may not concurrently serve on review boards.
3. Election commissioners who monitor the review board elections and their deputies according to § 10 may not run for an election which they monitor, and members of the Election Rules and Procedures Committee may not run for an election for which they have been appointed to the Election Rules and Procedures Committee by the Senate of the DFG according to § 18 No. 1.

## **Part 2: Candidate Nominations and List of Candidates**

### **§ 6 Candidate Nominations**

1. Candidates may be nominated by:
  - a) the member organisations of the DFG, non-subject related;

- b) the scientific/academic societies and faculty associations that have been granted this right for specific subjects 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), non-subject related.
2. The right to nominate candidates according to § 6 No. 1 b) may be granted to scientific/academic societies and faculty associations under consideration of the following points:
- a) the scientific/academic society or faculty association has been officially established,
  - b) its member structure is research-oriented,
  - c) it is integrated into the German research system,
  - d) its mission is research-oriented, and
  - e) its mission and members adequately represent the subject area in which the right to nominate is sought.
3. Institutions with the right to nominate candidates according to § 6 No. 1 a) and c) may nominate up to the same number of persons as to be elected in the relevant subject area. Institutions with the right to nominate candidates according to § 6 No. 1 b) may nominate a maximum of twice the number of persons as to be elected in the relevant subject area.
4. Nominations meeting the requirements under § 4 should also be submitted in consideration of the following points:
- a) academic and personal qualification of the nominees, ideally for the subject area as a whole and with a thorough overview of related disciplines,
  - b) balanced consideration of all subject areas,
  - c) adequate consideration of gender equality,

- d) adequate consideration of researchers at different stages of their careers.
5. Each candidate nomination must pertain to a specific person in a specific subject area in accordance with the relevant nomination rights. For each nominee, the DFG must receive a written declaration of consent signed by that nominee. This should generally be appended to the nomination. Only nominations received by the deadline can be included in the process of drawing up the list of candidates.

## § 7 List of Candidates

1. The Senate of the DFG shall approve the list of candidates according to the results of the steps in § 7 No. 1 a) to e). A cut-off date for updates according to § 7 No. 2 and for changes of personal information following approval of the list of candidates will be observed and announced on the website of the DFG.
- a) The Senate may change the subject areas assigned to the candidate nominations if this serves the purposes of § 1 No. 1 sentence 3.
- b) For each subject area, the number of candidates must be at least twice the number of persons (minimum number) and generally no more than three times the number of persons (maximum number) to be elected. In the circumstances described in § 7 No. 1 e), within the supplementation procedure, the Senate may exceed this maximum to the extent described there if the number of candidates of one gender is less than the total number of persons to be elected in the subject area.
- c) If, after assignment to a subject area according to § 7 No. 1 a), the minimum number is not reached in a given subject area, the Senate shall nominate additional persons until the number corresponds to twice the number of persons to be elected (mandatory supplementation).
- d) If, after assignment to a subject area according to § 7 No. 1 a), the maximum number is exceeded in a given subject area, a limitation procedure must take place in which the nominees will first be ranked by the number of nominations received. Nominations in a subject area with more than five nominations form the highest ranking group, within which no further ranking takes place. If this ranking would result in the inclusion of only one person or several persons of a ranking group in



the list of candidates, the candidates in this ranking group only will be selected by random draw. The draw must be carried out in a way that promotes gender equality by striving to ensure that each gender is represented with at least one-third of candidates, if possible.

- e) After having supplemented (§ 7 No. 1 c)) or limited (§ 7 No. 1. d)) the number of candidates where necessary, the Senate may nominate additional persons at the subject-area level such that each gender is represented by a number of candidates corresponding to the number of persons to be elected in a subject area (optional supplementation).
2. If reasons precluding a person's candidature become known after the Senate of the DFG has approved the list of candidates, but before the cut-off date according to § 7 No. 1 sentence 2, such persons will be removed from the list. Such reasons may be, for example: withdrawal of candidature, death.

## **Part 3: Voting Procedure**

### **I. General Regulations**

#### **§ 8 Decision on the Voting Procedure, Voting Period**

1. The voting procedure will be conducted online (voting through the internet). If this is not possible for a regularly scheduled election, the Executive Committee of the DFG may decide to hold the election by paper ballot (paper election).
2. The Executive Committee of the DFG determines the first and last day of the voting period (first and last date on which ballots may be cast) prior to each election. The voting period will be four weeks for an online election and two weeks for a paper election.
3. The President of the DFG may postpone the election at short notice or extend the voting period on compelling grounds.
4. The voting process for an online election is governed by the provisions in §§ 12–14, and the voting process for a paper election is governed by the provisions in §§ 15–16. The general regulations in § 9–11 apply to both voting procedures.

## § 9 Voting Centres, Election Report

1. Voting centres will be set up for the election; they are responsible for the proper conduct of the election.
2. A voting centre is generally set up by
  - a) the member organisations of the DFG, with the exception of scientific associations;
  - b) on request, other research institutions at which more than 100 persons who meet the requirements of § 2 No. 2 conduct scientific or academic research, provided these institutions
    - aa) are integrated in the German research system
    - bb) are funded on a non-profit or entirely public basis
    - cc) allow their members to freely publish research results in a generally accessible form.

The request must generally be submitted by a deadline announced in ample time by the DFG. Upon approval by the Executive Board of the DFG, the institution must establish the voting centre.

  - c) the DFG for voters according to § 2 No. 4 and 5, who do not belong to a research institution according to § 9 No. 2 a) or b) (individual voters).
3. The obligation to set up a voting centre according to § 9 No. 2 a) or b) may only be disregarded in specially justified exceptional cases and only with the consent of the Executive Board of the DFG.
4. Each voting centre determines the number of researchers who are eligible to vote there and communicates the number to the DFG Head Office by the requested date.
5. The DFG Head Office provides the voting centres with the documentation necessary to conduct the election. The documentation required for online elections is specified in § 12, for paper elections in § 15.

6. Each voting centre forwards 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. The voting centre must ensure that each person eligible to vote through the relevant institution firstly has the opportunity to participate in the election and secondly receives only one set of voting documentation.
7. Each voting centre must draw up an election report according to specifications given by the DFG. This report must be forwarded to the DFG Head Office by the date set by the DFG.

## **§ 10 Election Monitoring**

The Senate shall appoint an election commissioner and a deputy commissioner to monitor the election, particularly the counting of the votes.

## **§ 11 Announcement of Election Results**

1. After all votes have been counted, the President of the DFG will announce the preliminary result on the website of the DFG. The date of the announcement must be stated on the website.
2. After the deadline for challenging the election according to § 17 No. 2 b) has passed or after election verification according to §§ 17–18 has been completed, the President will establish the final election result by announcement to the Senate of the DFG.
3. Information as to which institutions nominated which candidates and how many institutions submitted nominations will be published at the same time the preliminary and final election results are announced.

## **II. Special Regulations for Online Elections**

### **§ 12 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.

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### **§ 13 Casting of Ballots**

1. After voters authenticate themselves by entering on the voting portal the access information provided in the election notification, they may complete and cast their electronic ballot.
2. The ballot is considered cast when the online voting system displays a confirmation stating that the voting process is finished.
3. Abstentions will be counted as invalid votes.
4. Electronic ballots that have not been properly completed will be deemed invalid.

### **§ 14 Counting of Votes**

1. Votes are counted electronically after the voting period has expired.
2. The commissioner of the Senate of the DFG according to § 10 shall monitor correct vote counting and compliance with general election principles by the online voting system.
3. In case of doubt, the commissioner of the Senate of the DFG shall decide the validity of a vote.

## **III. Special Regulations for Paper Elections**

### **§ 15 Voting Documentation**

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

### **§ 16 Casting of Ballots and Counting of Votes**

1. The ballot must be completed according to the instructions printed on it.
2. The casting of the ballot is considered complete when the sealed envelope is received by the voting centre.

3. The voting centres must verify whether each cast ballot is in compliance with the regulations and document this with a note on the voter list.
4. The voting centres must send the cast ballots, together with the election report according to § 9 No. 7 and by the deadline specified therein, to the DFG Head Office.
5. Votes will be counted after the deadline for challenging the election according to § 17 No. 2 b) sentence 2 has passed. Only properly completed ballots enclosed in the proper envelopes and received by the DFG Head Office by the deadline will be included in the vote count.
6. In case of doubt, the commissioner of the Senate as per § 10 shall decide the validity of a ballot.

## **Part 4: Formal Election Verification**

### **§ 17 Admissibility**

1. Election verification will take place only in response to election challenges or reprimands.
2. Election Challenges
  - a) Election challenges must be declared and justified to the DFG in writing and addressed to the DFG Head Office.
  - b) Challenges must be submitted within three weeks after the preliminary election results have been announced on the DFG website according to § 11 No. 1. In the case of paper elections, challenges due to errors that have occurred before the end of the voting period may only be raised within three weeks after the last date of the voting period according to § 8 No. 2.
  - c) The President of the DFG shall reject any inadmissible election challenges.
3. Reprimands

The President of the DFG may issue reprimands for violations of provisions of the Election Regulations up to the end of the meeting of the Election Rules and Procedures Committee established according to § 18 No. 1.

### **§ 18 Justification**

1. The grounds for election challenges as well as reprimands by the President of the DFG will be adjudicated by an independent Election Rules and Procedures Committee appointed in due time before the election period by the Senate. This committee will consist of five members. The committee is quorate if three of the five members are present.
2. The challenge or reprimand is deemed justified if the provisions of these Election Regulations have been violated and the violation is considered significant. A violation involving more than one percent of all ballots cast will always be deemed as significant.
3. If no violation of the Election Regulations is found, or if the violation is deemed insignificant by the Election Rules and Procedures Committee, the President of the DFG shall reject the challenge or retract the reprimand as unjustified.
4. If the Election Rules and Procedures Committee determines that the challenge or reprimand is justified, the President of the DFG shall choose appropriate measures to be taken, such as a repeat of the election in its entirety or at certain voting centres.
5. The President of the DFG may submit in writing challenges that are obviously unjustified to the Election Rules and Procedures Committee for rejection. If all five members of the Election Rules and Procedures Committee agree, the President of the DFG shall reject such a contestation as manifestly unjustified.

### **§ 19 Retention Periods**

1. If the election is by paper ballot, the ballots may not be destroyed until any election challenges have been adjudicated but no earlier than three months after the preliminary election results have been announced on the DFG website according to § 11 No. 1.

2. 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 § 11 No. 1.