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The DFG's Equity and Diversity Concept

After an extensive consultation and discussion process, the responsible statutory bodies of the DFG adopted an "Equity and Diversity Concept" in 2022 with the aim of promoting diversity. Here the DFG is seeking to address the issue of diversity at various levels, both in its own funding activities and within the German research system as a whole.

All efforts are geared towards raising scientific quality and participation through equity and a broad spectrum of perspectives. Measures to this effect are to be implemented successively in the years to come.

Gender equality will continue to be a major focus of the DFG's activities in the future.



The DFG defines diversity as the individual, structural and social differences and commonalities between human beings, and therefore between researchers, too. In addition to sex and/or gender, it includes other aspects such as age, ethnic origin and nationality, sexual orientation, religion and ideology, disability or chronic/long-term illness as well as social origin (e.g. economic situation, non-academic family background, migration history).



What is the DFG?



The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) is Germany's largest research funding organisation and central self-governing body of the research community in Germany. It supports research projects in all scientific disciplines at higher education institutions and other research institutions.

To this end, the DFG develops procedures for reviewing and evaluating funding proposals that ensure the best projects are selected. As members of the DFG's statutory bodies elected by the scientific community, researchers themselves determine how funding is allocated as well as being involved in other decision-making processes.

The DFG helps shape the overall conditions and standards of research, maintains dialogue with society, policymakers and industry, and supports the transfer of research findings to practical application. Particular attention is paid to fostering international cooperation, academic careers, gender equality and diversity in science and the humanities.

The DFG is organised as an association under private law. Its members are universities, non-university research institutions, scientific associations and academies of science and the humanities. In order to carry out its tasks, the DFG has an annual budget of more than three and a half billion euros at its disposal, most of which it receives from Germany's federal and state governments.

English



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Equity and Diversity in Science and the Humanities

Equity and Diversity in the DFG's Funding Activities



Gender equality and diversity as part of the DFG statutes



According to § 1 Section 2 of the DFG statutes, gender equality and diversity in research are aspects of particular concern.

In spite of a positive trend in recent years, women continue to be underrepresented in many research disciplines. Further efforts and incentives are required here. The DFG also pro-actively promotes diversity at the structural level.

“Diverse perspectives in research and the consideration of the experience and characteristics of all those working in science are key requirements for excellence.”

(Katja Becker, DFG President)

Equity and diversity measures implemented by the DFG

The DFG promotes equity and diversity by implementing measures in its funding programmes. These include the following:

- ▶ consideration of personal circumstances in the review (periods spent raising children or caring for relatives, a person’s state of health, etc.),
- ▶ project extensions and the provision of additional funding for staff where individuals have had to remain academically inactive for family or health-related reasons,
- ▶ the Standard Allowance for Equity and Diversity,
- ▶ gender inclusion funding for spokespersons under the coordinated programmes,
- ▶ the family allowance for Emmy Noether Group Leaders,
- ▶ consideration of periods of childcare when setting the proposal submission deadline in the Emmy Noether Programme,
- ▶ a lump sum allowance to cover childcare costs for reviewers and committee members,
- ▶ individual consultation.

Mitigating bias

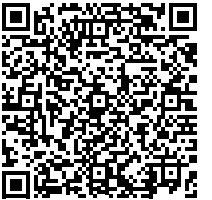


(Unconscious) prejudice and bias are inherent mechanisms in everyone’s thinking that help people arrive at decisions swiftly. They can lead to distorted judgements and discrimination. Bias can affect scientific evaluation and decision-making processes, too – with potential consequences for merit-based selection.

In order to make unprejudiced decisions that ensure equity and diversity and are purely based on scientific criteria, such bias should be mitigated as far as possible. The DFG therefore focuses on raising awareness among researchers, reviewers and committee members.

Voluntary commitment on the part of members

Since 2008, DFG member organisations have undertaken to comply with personnel and structural standards for a sustainable gender equality policy in research.



In 2022, these standards were extended to include the aspect of diversity, and they were renamed “Research-Oriented Equity and Diversity Standards” (FOGD, Forschungsorientierte Gleichstellungs- und Diversitätsstandards). The aim of the FOGD is to “sustainably promote equality in the research system among all persons of different genders, backgrounds, experience and characteristics”.

It remains a central objective to increase the share of women at all academic career levels, including in the top positions. What is more, compliance with the FOGD is a relevant criterion for decision-making in certain DFG funding programmes.

