

Guide for setting target quotas for 2025 to increase the proportion of women in science and research in the Leibniz Association

Acknowledged by the Executive Board on 15 June 2021

1. Background

Increasing the proportion of women in science and research is a research policy goal of the updated **Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation for the period 2021 to 2030 (PFI IV)**, which was adopted by the German federal and state governments in 2019. Setting target quotas in line with an organisation-specific cascade model creates a tool that makes this goal mandatory, specific, realistic and measurable. It is to be included in reporting within the annual Joint Initiative monitoring programme, taking into account the Leibniz Association's target agreement for the first half of the PFI IV period. For the Leibniz Association, gender equality, the provision of equal-opportunity structures and processes, and support for career development in science and for collaborations and internationalisation are key components of the strategy to attract excellent scientists.

2. The cascade model – key points for implementation in the Leibniz institutions

The cascade model is now well established as a tool for setting targets to achieve equality between women and men at all relevant career stages in science and research. The German Council of Science and Humanities advocated this model in its recommendations in 1998, and again in 2007 and 2012.

The basic idea behind the cascade model is that the target for the proportion of women at a higher career level is based on the proportion of women on the career level below. In order to put the cascade model into practice in the Leibniz institutions, specific **target quotas** must be calculated for each institution for all career levels, both in terms of pay grades and management levels. These target quotas should be ambitious but realistic. The Leibniz Association recommends that its member institutions take account of the expected staff turnover rate when setting their target quotas, and that they align their equality measures with these quotas and with the association-level target quotas set by the Leibniz Association in the context of the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation (see below). As a rule, particular attention should be paid to increasing the proportion of women in scientific leadership positions.

The Leibniz Association makes the following recommendations to its member institutions for setting up a cascade model with target quotas:

1. The cascade model should be based both on pay grades (grouped together, where appropriate) and on management levels of scientific staff within the institution. Deputies are not counted if they belong to a lower cascade level. For instance, a head of department who also acts as deputy director of the institute but is not a member of the board would be classed as management level 2 (see below).
2. The target quotas should be set for the first half of the period covered by the Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation IV, i.e. **for the year 2025**, and fixed in the programme budget of the Leibniz institution in consultation with the equal opportunities officers. The target quotas set for 2025 should not be adjusted each year in line with the quotas actually achieved, but kept as a target for 2025.
3. As a rule, when setting target quotas, institutions should take account of the expected **staff turnover rate** at each cascade level (estimated, where appropriate, based on the experience of previous years).
4. The proportion of women at the reference level becomes the **benchmark for the gender balance when appointing new staff** at the pay grade or management level above. In cases where the proportion is higher than 50%, institutions can act on the assumption that there is gender parity in the fluctuating portion of the workforce.
5. The **target quota** for a pay grade or management level is calculated based on the level of female representation achieved in the fluctuating portion of the workforce, and the proportion of women remaining in the non-fluctuating portion of the workforce. The calculation must take account of the annual increase in benchmark values on the lower cascade levels. As soon as a pay grade or management level achieves gender parity, a target quota of 50% can be assumed for this career level.
6. Before the target quotas are fixed in the programme budget, they should be adapted, where appropriate, to other **institution-specific circumstances**, such as special features of career paths in the institute or discipline in question, or more precise knowledge of foreseeable new appointments beyond the statistical staff turnover rate.

3. Implementation of the cascade model at Leibniz Association level

In the Leibniz Association’s reporting activities as part of the Joint Initiative monitoring programme, the **target quotas** are broken down as follows:

Pay grades	Management levels
Grade 5: W3/C4	Level 1: Institute directors
Grade 4: W2/C3	Level 2: Heads of department

Grade 3: E15/A15/E15Ü/A16/W1	Level 3: Heads of research, junior research and working groups
Grade 2: E14/A14	
Grade 1: E12/E13/A13	

The annual data request includes the proportions of women for these pay grades and levels at all Leibniz institutions in order to calculate the target quotas for the Leibniz Association as a whole, in line with the cascade model. As part of the reporting for PFI in 2021, the Leibniz Association has set the following target quotas:

	Actual quota 2020	Target quota 2025
	by pay grade	
Grade 5: W3/C4	22%	33%
Grade 4: W2/C3	32%	44%
Grade 3: E15/A15/E15Ü/A16/W1	26%	36%
Grade 2: E14/A14	36%	50%
Grade 1: E12/E13/A13	48%	50%
	by management level	
Level 1: Institute directors	19%	30%
Level 2: Heads of department	27%	40%
Level 3: Heads of research/junior research groups	35%	45%

When calculating its target quotas for 2025, the Leibniz Association assumes that staff turnover will be the same as the average for each cascade level in the previous Joint Initiative period. In addition, in line with the DFG's corridor model, it assumes by way of simplification that women who are recruited in the target period will also be retained. This avoids the target quota falling in the event of lower benchmark quotas on lower cascade levels, and achieves a larger or smaller increase in relation to staff turnover. The Leibniz target quotas also take into account the annual changes in reference quotas on the lower cascade levels, producing dynamic increases up to 2025, taking into account the previous year's target quotas.

4. Other Leibniz Association measures to promote equality between women and men

To help reach the target quotas, the Leibniz Association has intensified the development of central measures and funding programs. The member institutions of the Leibniz Association can currently take advantage of the following opportunities:

1. The **Leibniz Programme for Women Professors**, a Leibniz Competition programme, provides targeted support for top female academics from all disciplines to increase the proportion of women in leadership roles. Successful candidates are appointed to a W3 or W2 professorship – either a permanent post or one with a tenure track. The programme is financed by Leibniz Competition funds for five years. In addition, within the framework of **all projects funded through Leibniz Competition programmes**, it is possible to provide financial support, on request, specifically for measures designed to make it easier to balance family commitment with a scientific career. This helps make working conditions in science and research more family-friendly.
2. The **Leibniz Mentoring** programme supports excellent female postdocs on their path to a scientific leadership position or professorship. In particular, it gives them access to career support networks. The accompanying support programme promotes the acquisition of key qualifications for leadership positions, specifically those in science and research. The Mentoring programme is supplemented by an **Alumnae Network**.
3. The Leibniz Association supports its member institutions in their efforts to obtain **certification regarding reconciling work and family life**: the Leibniz *audit berufundfamilie* network addresses all institutions of the Leibniz Association that have, or intend to obtain, *audit berufundfamilie* certification, and is a platform for making contacts and for exchanging experience regarding improvement measures. The network organises an annual meeting and joint workshops.
4. The association also monitors **implementation of the Leibniz Equality Standards** and provides **recommended courses of action** for the Leibniz institutions. It regularly assesses implementation progress and publishes its findings in a report.
5. The Leibniz Association regularly arranges **central information events, meetings and workshops** on equality, offering a platform and exchange forum for this issue.
6. Together with the Diversity Network, the **equality officers/women's representatives** of all Leibniz institutions form the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Working Group. From their ranks they elect a spokeswoman's council and, together with the Leibniz Association – and with its financial support – organise annual conferences for networking and ongoing training. A **professionalisation programme for equality officers** offers three further training modules each year with target group-specific content on the conceptual and legal principles of equality work.
7. As well as informing targeted measures to promote equality between women and men and direct support for family-friendly measures and structures, these targets also feed into **evaluation standards for central quality assurance processes** in the Leibniz Association. Implementation of the Leibniz Equality Standards is one of the evaluation criteria for project proposals in all four Leibniz Competition funding programmes. In addition, implementation of equality in the institutions is one of the factors considered in the Leibniz evaluations and in the procedures for admission and strategic expansion of Leibniz institutions.

Additional equality measures are taken by individual Leibniz institutions, supported by guidelines and recommendations developed in the governing bodies of the Leibniz Association. Particularly relevant in this context are the Guiding Principles for our Actions, the Leibniz Equality Standards and the Standards for Appointments to Academic Management Positions within the Leibniz Association. In addition, the Equality Implementing Agreement (AV-Glei) is applied via individual agreements signed between the Leibniz institutions and their awarding authorities.