

Guideline for the appointment of ombudspersons at the Leibniz Institute for the Analysis of Biodiversity Change (LIB)

Status: May 2022

Preamble

The guideline for the appointment of ombudspersons and their deputies at the Leibniz Institute for the Analysis of Biodiversity Change (LIB) is based on the "Guideline of Good Scientific Practice in the Leibniz Association" approved by the General Assembly of the Leibniz Association on November 18, 2019. This guideline provides under § 4 point 4) for the election of one or more decentralized ombudspersons as "a point of contact in case of disagreements, allegations and disputes". The guideline is further adapted specifically for the LIB. Further, it is guided by the Leibniz Code of Good Scientific Practice approved in November 2021.

I. Requirements and tasks of the ombudspersons and deputies

The "Guideline for Good Scientific Practice in the Leibniz Association" describes the tasks of the decentralized ombudsperson under § 4 point 5) as follows: "The decentralized ombudspersons advise the scientists of the member institution and mediate in conflicts related to good scientific practice. They can make statements to the management of the respective Leibniz institution and contribute to ensuring a culture of good scientific practice and scientific integrity in the Leibniz institution. They also investigate allegations of scientific misconduct in a formal procedure. If it becomes apparent in the course of such a review procedure that a conclusive clarification of the allegations is not possible at the level of the respective institution or that the conduct of the procedure is prevented by exceptional circumstances, the decentralized ombudspersons shall submit the matter to the Leibniz Ombudsman Board. This does not affect the possibility of turning to the "Ombudsman for Science" Board."

It further states, under § 5 point 1), "Reports and procedurally relevant information about scientific misconduct are to be submitted in writing to the central ombudsman board of the Leibniz Association, which will usually acknowledge receipt within one month."

The ombudspersons and deputies shall act independently and may not be members of the Directorate of the LIB. They advise the scientific employees of the LIB and mediate conflicts related to good scientific practice. Scientific employees and associated persons are here considered to be all employees/active persons at LIB who perform research tasks at the institute or are involved in research tasks. This includes technical assistants, bachelor students, master students, fellowship-holders and associates without contract that are registered and involved in research tasks.

Ombudspersons shall hold office in an honorary capacity, independently and free from direction. They shall be supported in the performance of their office by all involved parties.

The core duties of the ombudspersons and their deputies at LIB are:

- Contact point for disagreements, suspicions, disputes and arbitrations in the context of good scientific practice.
- Advising scientific employees and associated persons (see above) on all questions concerning good scientific practice and mediating conflicts related to good scientific practice.
- Active communication of the rules of good scientific practice and contribution to making scientific integrity a natural part of the work of scientific employees and associated persons at the LIB.
- Statements on cases of suspected scientific misconduct.
- Reviewing allegations of scientific misconduct through a formal process.

II. Electable (passive voting rights).

There should always be one ombudsperson and one deputy (in case of concern of bias or inability to act) elected on a parity basis for each LIB site (Bonn and Hamburg), as well as on a gender basis.

The ombudsperson(s) and their deputies shall be elected from the scientific employees of the LIB who

- have completed a doctorate
- have been contractually employed at the LIB for at least 6 months,
- perform scientific research tasks,

- regardless of whether they are employed for an indefinite or a limited period of time.

Only members who are available for the entire term of office (3 years) should stand for election. Members of the directorate, the staff council and the centre directors are not eligible for election. A nomination for election will only be considered if the nominee has declared his/her willingness to accept the office. It is recommended to elect as ombudspersons scientists of integrity with management experience (starting with the professional supervision of students). One ombudsperson and one deputy should be elected for each location (Bonn and Hamburg), if possible with equal gender representation. The ombudspersons and their deputies should represent as many different hierarchical levels as possible.

III. Persons entitled to vote (active right to vote)

Entitled to vote are

- a) all scientific staff members employed at the LIB
- b) Collection Managers
- c) as well as all members of the "International LIB Graduate School",

all persons carrying out scientific research tasks, regardless of whether they have a permanent or temporary employment contract.

IV. Election and deselection of the ombudspersons and their deputies in the LIB

- The ombudspersons are elected by secret ballot by the eligible scientific employees (voters, see above) of the LIB.
- The term of office is three years. A single re-election is permitted.
- All eligible voters of the LIB may nominate "Eligible" persons (see III). A nomination for election will only be considered if the nominee has declared or confirmed his/her willingness to accept the office in writing and formless (analog or digital).

All eligible persons (candidates) are included in the election list; the election committee decides on objections to the validity of the list.

Formation and tasks of the election committee

1. The election shall be conducted by an Election Committee with equal numbers of members from the Bonn and Hamburg sites. Members of the election committee are not eligible for election as ombudspersons or deputies and are appointed by the institute's director.
2. The appointed election committee shall ensure that the secret ballot is properly conducted.
 - a) At least two months before the election, members with passive voting rights (see II) are invited by the election committee to stand for election. In the case of insufficient participation after three weeks, all those eligible will be put up for election. These then have a period of two weeks to have themselves removed from the electoral list. The election committee shall advertise the election no later than 21 days before the election date. It must allow postal voting, as well as on-site voting at both the Bonn and Hamburg sites.
 - b) For all eligible voters who are prevented from voting in person on Election Day, an absentee ballot is possible upon informal, written application (e.g. via email). The request for an absentee ballot must be received by the election committee at least 14 days before the election date. The documents required to conduct the election will be sent together with an election envelope addressed to the election committee and bearing the sender's address of the eligible voter(s).
 - c) The election ballot must contain the places of the election, the day and period of the election, and the list of candidates.
 - d) The list also serves as the ballot paper and shall be sent to each eligible voter together with an unmarked ballot paper envelope no later than eight days before the day of voting (by mail in the case of absentee voting, or via the LIB internal mailboxes).

In addition, the election notice including the election list shall be made available to all eligible voters together with these election regulations 21 days prior to the election date

- i. by posting at one location per site (Hamburg and Bonn),
 - ii. by making it available for consultation at the reception/administration (Hamburg and Bonn),
 - iii. via e-mail as well as via the LIB-internal wiki.

3. The election committee will supervise the proper voting and count the votes.

4. The result is communicated in writing to the scientific institute directorate (and to the staff council for information).

5. The result of the election will be announced by the institute director in the next in-house meeting.

V. Regulation for the deselection of the ombudspersons and their deputies

According to the "Guideline for Good Scientific Practice in the Leibniz Association" § 4 point 4), the deselection of the respective ombudsperson should be ensured in the event that long-term reliable fulfillment of tasks no longer appears possible or there is no longer confidence in the proper fulfillment of tasks. For the initiation of the deselection, the scientific institute director must be informed and a committee with equal gender representation must be appointed. For successful deselection, at least two thirds of the eligible voters of the LIB for the election of ombudspersons and their representation LIB must agree. The ombudsperson affected must be heard before the decision to deselect is made.