



Leibniz-Institute of
Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries



Forschungsverbund
Berlin e.V.

The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

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The Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB) of the Forschungsverbund Berlin e.V. (Research Consortium Berlin) adopts the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers as outlined by the European Commission (ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm). The first part of the European Charter for Researchers contains the “General Principles and Requirements applicable to Researchers” which are integrated into IGB’s “Rules of good scientific practice”. The Code of Conduct and the second part of the Charter are aligned to the organizational structure and conditions of IGB and the Forschungsverbund Berlin e.V. as follows:

1. European Charter for Researchers: General Principles and Requirements applicable to Employers and Funders

Recognition of the profession

All researchers employed at or collaborating with IGB are recognised as professionals and treated accordingly. This commences at the beginning of their careers, namely at postgraduate level, and includes all levels, regardless of their classification at national level (e.g. employee, postgraduate student, doctoral candidate, postdoctoral fellow, civil servant).

Non-discrimination

No member of IGB will discriminate against researchers in any way on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition.

Research environment

The directorate of IGB strives to create the most stimulating research and training environment which offers appropriate equipment, suitable facilities and various additional opportunities including support for remote collaboration through research networks. Special attention is paid to the international exchange of scientific knowledge. This is facilitated by, e.g., colloquia to which every scientist of IGB can invite speakers, the IGB international fellowship programme, as well as the full support to attend international conferences and to visit other laboratories at any time.

Specific employees are trained to take responsibility for national or sectoral regulations concerning health and safety in research and maintenance.

Working conditions

IGB aims to ensure that the working conditions for researchers, including disabled researchers, provide, where appropriate, the flexibility deemed essential for successful research performance in accordance with existing national legislation and with national or sectoral collective bargaining agreements. IGB provides working conditions that allow both female and male researchers to combine family with work and career development. There exists an agreement between the directorate of the Institute and the workers’ council to guarantee every employee the right to flexibly combine home office with attendance time for restricted periods of family necessities. On an individual basis, exceptions from the already flexible working time can be offered.

Scientists are encouraged to broaden their networks and expertise by delegation to other institutions.



Stability and permanence of employment

IGB strives to ensure that the performance of researchers is not undermined by instability of employment contracts. However, in early academic research careers enhanced mobility is a prerequisite for success. Thus, IGB supports the completion of projects to gain optimal output. Doctoral candidates are financed for at least 3 years in order to complete the doctoral project. For postdoctoral researchers, IGB clearly states and communicates the temporal perspective of employment. For tenure track positions, clear requirements and guidelines exist to allow objective decisions. Scientists are evaluated according to these guidelines at regular intervals, and the outcome is discussed jointly with the department head and the director of the Institute. IGB is thus implementing and abiding by the principles and terms laid down in the EU Directive on Fixed-Term Work.

Funding and salaries

IGB abides by the pay scale in accordance with existing national legislation and with national or sectoral collective bargaining agreements to ensure that all employees, regardless of age or position, enjoy fair and attractive conditions of funding and/or salaries, including adequate and equitable social security provisions (including sickness and parental benefits, pension rights, and unemployment benefits). IGB aims to reduce the amount of doctoral candidates holding fellowships /scholarships to avoid the lack of adequate social security provisions. IGB has implemented an international fellowship programme to support career-development during short-term stays at the Institute, concurrently avoiding exploitation of candidates due to missing social security provisions.

Gender balance

In order to increase the number of female scientists in leading positions IGB aims at gender balance at all levels including a stepwise increase in the proportion of females from low to top career levels. Precise measures are defined for periods of two to five years in accordance with the Leibniz Association and the Forschungsverbund Berlin e.V. as well as the German Research Foundation (DFG). An equal opportunity commissioner is elected at regular intervals by the IGB staff members. She/he is involved in all recruitment processes, participates at all meetings of the board of directors, and oversees the development of the multiannual plans for the improvement of gender equality at IGB. In order to bridge the gap between individual career levels, and to reduce the strong decline of female scientists with increasing level, IGB secures institutional funds to financially support measures, guarded by a dedicated commission for the advancement of female scientists and young families. IGB provides information on and encourages participation in specific mentoring or qualification enhancement programmes for female scientists at all professional levels.

Value of mobility

IGB clearly recognises the value of geographical, intersectoral, inter- and trans-disciplinary and virtual mobility, as well as the mobility between the public and the private sector, as important means of improving scientific knowledge and the professional development at any stage of a researcher's career. IGB fully values and acknowledges any mobility experiences at the different career levels, taking into account potential financial and organisational restrictions. Past and present mobility is highly valued in the recruitment process. IGB's international fellowship programme, international graduate schools, and the increasing number of formal collaborations with institutions worldwide further support the mobility of researchers. Information on the portability of social security provisions in accordance with national legislation is provided by the administration. The portability of grants is usually determined by the granting agency.



IGB strives to provide all relevant documents and information in German and English to ensure transparency and supportive working conditions to the increasing number of international scientists. Further, IGB provides English language training to its administrative and technical staff to improve the interaction and communication with foreign scientists at all levels. At the same time, IGB offers German classes to foreign staff members, in particular at the remote location of IGB-Stechlin.

Access to research training and continuous development

IGB supports all researchers at any stage of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, by offering opportunities for professional development and improving employability through access to measures for the continuing development of skills and competencies. A structured doctoral programme, offering regular courses and individual coaching on both soft and hard skills, depending on the doctoral candidate's needs, prepares students for their career inside and outside of academia. On demand, IGB strives to procure funds for the participation in professional external and in-house trainings.

Annual appraisal meetings between each employee and the department head or supervisor allow for jointly reviewing past performance and for identifying and implementing future aims and individual needs. All employees have the possibility to talk to their superiors, department heads, and the director of the institute concerning the specific career development. An open platform exists at the Institute to spread the relevant information on specific training opportunities, job announcements, or funding opportunities to all IGB members concerned.

Intellectual Property Rights

IGB follows the "Rules of Good Scientific Practice" recommended by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and has issued its own interpretation of these rules. All superiors are obliged to familiarise new employees with these rules. It ensures that researchers at all career stages appreciate the benefits, in particular, through the appropriate protection of Intellectual Property Rights, including authorship and copyright. The "Rules of Good Scientific Practice" define which rights belong to researchers and/or to their superiors, to IGB or other parties. Further regulations may be included in funding or specific collaboration agreements, specifically with respect to external commercial or industrial use. The general administration of the Forschungverbund Berlin e.V. (Research Consortium Berlin) provides legal guidance upon request.

An Ombudsperson is elected who supports the implementation of the "Rules of Good Scientific Practice" at IGB and who serves as a mediator in conflicts concerning these rules, e.g. when conflicts related to authorship emerge.

Co-authorship

Co-authorship is viewed positively at IGB when evaluating the performance of staff members, as it is evidence of a constructive approach to the conduct of research. Indeed, IGB allocates a high percentage of its institutional funds to individual researchers based on their performance. Publications are a major component in quantifying the performance. Co-Authors share credits allotted to a publication, thus encouraging intra- and cross-institutional collaboration. Cross-institutional collaborations are supported through special initiatives, e.g. the Leibnitz PAKT programme, international graduate schools, and short-term fellowships broadening IGB's international research network. In-house collaborations are strongly encouraged and collaborative projects get high priority within IGB. This is considerably enforced by the crosscutting research domains that connect research activities across departmental boundaries, as well as the recently established "Frontiers in Freshwater Sciences" programme.



Supervision

All doctoral candidates, early stage researchers, and scientists hired through external funding have at least one institute-funded scientist who takes immediate responsibility for guidance and support to aid the performance of their professional duties. This commitment is clearly outlined in the Institute's "Rules of Good Scientific Practice".

The expertise and suitability of a responsible person is evaluated by a commission judging all funding application prior to their submission. The obligations of supervisors for doctoral candidates are additionally defined in the doctoral guidelines. In case of conflict and disagreement with a supervisor there are dedicated persons responsible for mediating and improving the situation: ombudsperson, workers' council, doctoral programme coordinator, department head, and finally the IGB director.

Teaching

Teaching is an essential component in training the next generation of ecologists and fishery scientists, and for disseminating knowledge. Therefore, teaching is considered a highly valuable task of a researchers' career path at IGB. Through formal affiliations and joint professorships with several universities in the region, senior researchers at IGB have teaching obligations albeit at a very reduced level compared to regular university staff. The formal affiliation, however, enables IGB to link to students and research programmes at universities and to provide doctoral candidates and junior scientists an opportunity to gain teaching experience. At the same time, teaching responsibilities at IGB are at a level that does not prevent its researchers, particularly at the beginning of their career, from carrying out their key research activities. To underpin the importance of teaching, it is a further component of the Institute's evaluation/appraisal system. IGB scientists involved in teaching are encouraged to participate in training courses provided at the respective university for teaching and coaching activities as part of their professional development. However, IGB does not consider it a formal obligation, thus enabling person-specific paths and development plans.

Evaluation/appraisal systems

IGB has implemented an evaluation/appraisal system for all researchers, including senior researchers, which consists of two distinct parts: First, the scientific performance using publications, project funds acquired, and teaching as key indicators (at the research group level) is used to distribute institutional funds. Second, superior and employee jointly judge the success of the past year's plans and define the aims and obligations for the forthcoming year in the annual appraisal meeting. The outcome of this meeting is documented and signed by both parties to ensure transparency and mutual commitment. If the agreed performance is met, or even exceeded, a bonus is added to the regular salary of the respective scientists ("Leistungsbezogene Vergütung").

Complaints/appeals

IGB has, in compliance with national rules and regulations as well as with the regulations set forward by the Leibniz Association, established several persons responsible to deal with complaints/appeals of researchers, including those concerning conflicts between supervisor(s) and early-stage researchers. The ombudsperson deals with any problems/questions concerning good scientific practice, the equal opportunity commissioner deals with all problems/questions related to gender and family issues, the workers' council and the department heads are the first to mediate conflicts concerning supervision, and the doctoral programme coordinator is additionally involved in all issues concerning doctoral candidates. The disabled employee commissioner handles any problem or request attributed to disabled employees. These persons provide all research staff with confidential and informal assistance in resolving work-related conflicts, disputes and grievances, with the aim of



promoting fair and equitable treatment within the institution and thereby improving the overall quality of the working environment. The Institute's director is of course involved in any conflict solution on demand. In severe cases, professional external mediation is called in by IGB.

Participation in decision-making bodies

IGB created various commissions dealing with relevant issues. These commissions consist of scientists with the required expertise representing as many groups of interest as possible. They debate certain topics and provide solutions or proposals which are then evaluated and ratified by IGB's board of directors. IGB considers it desirable that researchers are represented in the relevant information, consultation, and decision-making bodies of the institutions for which they work. This participatory approach is considered the base in protecting and promoting their individual and collective interests as professionals, in ensuring state-of-the-art regulations and in actively contributing to the functioning of the Institute. There are dedicated persons defending the interest of groups that need special attention and support (e.g., the equal opportunity commissioner, the disabled employee commissioner, the doctoral representatives, the workers' council) who are automatically involved in all processes concerning the group they represent and support.

An annual retreat of scientists ensures opportunity and time for in-depth discussions on general structural and conceptual topics of the Institute.

All doctoral candidates elect representatives biannually. These representatives meet with the IGB director regularly to discuss relevant topics. They keep up a continuous dialogue with the doctoral programme coordinator. They plan and organise annual doctoral retreats, which help discussing relevant topics, get special trainings, and socialise and exchange experience among peers.

Recruitment

IGB ensures that the entry and admission standards for researchers, particularly at the beginning of their careers, are clearly specified, facilitate access for minority groups or for researchers re-entering to a research career, in accordance with national law and the guidelines of the Leibniz Association. Aims in terms of enhancing the proportion of women in science and giving preference to disabled researchers are stated in all job announcements.



2. The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

Recruitment

IGB strives to establish recruitment procedures, which are open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable, as well as tailored to the type of positions advertised. Advertisements list a broad description of knowledge and competencies required, but are not too specialised in order not to discourage the most suitable applicants. IGB has clear and accessible regulations for advertising positions, which include input from the workers' council and the equal opportunity commissioner at all stages. Positions have, at the least, to be advertised within the Forschungsverbund Berlin e.V. (Research Consortium Berlin), on the IGB webpage, and through the Federal Employment Office. Research positions are of course additionally advertised internationally, e.g. on the Euraxess portal. To attract the best applicants, however, position openings are usually spread through international societies, personal networks, newspapers etc., depending on the offered position. IGB lists a contact person with each advertisement, who provides information on the working conditions and entitlements, including career development prospects, upon request. The time allowed between the advertisement of the vacancy or the call for applications should be at least 4 weeks, but for external applications longer time spans are used to ensure application of optimal candidates. Calls for applications contain as many details on the positions as possible, i.e. requirements and expectations, potential payment level, duration, duties and responsibilities, contact person.

Selection

Selection committees bring together diverse expertise and, where appropriate and feasible, include members from different disciplines or levels and with relevant experience to assess the candidate. The workers' council and the equal opportunity commissioner and, if applicable, the disabled employee commissioner, are participating in all selection processes.

Transparency

Candidates should be informed, prior to the selection, about the recruitment process and the selection criteria, the number of available positions and the career development prospects. They should also be informed after the selection process as well as about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications, upon request.

Judging merit

The selection process takes into consideration the entire range of experience of the candidates. While focusing on their overall potential as researchers, their creativity and their level of independency are considered, too. This means that merits are judged qualitatively as well as quantitatively, focusing on outstanding results within a diversified career path and not only on the number of publications. Consequently, the importance of bibliometric indices is properly balanced within a wider range of evaluation criteria, such as teaching, supervision, teamwork, knowledge transfer, management skills, capacity to become innovation leaders, and public awareness activities.

Variations in the chronological order of CVs

Career breaks or deviations in the chronological order of a CV should not be penalised, but regarded as an evolution of a career, and, consequently, as a potentially valuable contribution to the professional development of a researcher towards a multidirectional career track. Candidates are



therefore allowed to submit evidence-based CVs, reflecting a representative array of achievements and qualifications appropriate to the post for which the application is being made.

Recognition of mobility experience

IGB encourages and supports the mobility of its researchers, e.g., to stay in another country/region, in another research setting (public or private institutions), or to shift to another discipline or sector, whether as part of the initial research training or at a later stage of the career. The IGB mobility programme is a highly valuable contribution to the professional development of researchers. At the same time it enriches IGB's international culture and fosters the exchange of ideas and methods.

Seniority

The levels of qualifications required should be in line with the needs of the position and not be set as a barrier to entry. Recognition and evaluation of qualifications should focus on judging the achievements of the person in light of her/his circumstances. As professional qualifications may be gained at an early stage of a long career, the pattern of lifelong professional development is also recognised.

The duration of postdoctoral appointments is either regulated by project duration or institutional limitations. The employment period is specified in the position advertisement as well as in the contract. Opportunities of contract extension are communicated in the beginning. Emerging possibilities are communicated timely.

General appointments

All new appointments include a probation period which is clearly described in the contracts. During this period both the employee and the employer can cease the contract on a monthly notice. This enables both parties to test the working style and enhances the development of conflict-free and productive working conditions.

Postdoctoral appointments have to take into consideration the overall career perspectives of the applicant, including professional appointments at other institutions. It needs to be considered that a postdoctoral status is in general a transitional one, by offering and supporting further professional development for the individual researchers to prepare them for their career both within and outside of academia.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Tockner', written over a horizontal line.

Prof. Dr. Klement Tockner
(Director of the Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Urban', written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Manuela B. Urban
(Deputy Head of the Forschungsverbund Berlin e.V.)