

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

DIVERSITY AND APPRECIATION

As the world's largest library of science and technology and one of the key infrastructure facilities in Germany and Europe, we are very much aware of our responsibility towards our employees and users. We want to make a significant contribution to promoting the development of a modern, democratic society based on information, knowledge, innovation and creativity. We can only do this together with our workforce of around 600 people from more than 30 different countries. The diversity we have is a gift that we gratefully accept and want to acknowledge, promote and leverage. Driven by digital and social change, we are making our institution fit for the future and ensuring the best possible working conditions in which diversity, equality and opportunity play a pivotal role.



Professor Dr Sören Auer – Director of TIB



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PROFILE

As the German National Library of Science and Technology, TIB provides research, science, industry and business with literature, information and infrastructure. Its mission is to preserve recorded knowledge for the future and to provide the latest information, regardless of time and place. The library is committed to openness – open access to information, publications and research data: it works to make information and knowledge more easily accessible, more transparent and more reusable. TIB holds a world-unique science and technology collection, including knowledge objects such as audiovisual media and research data. In its capacity as a university library, TIB ensures that Leibniz Universität Hannover – one of Germany’s leading universities of technology – is supplied with information.

As an information centre for the digitalisation of science and technology, TIB conducts applied research and development in order to generate new services and improve existing ones. Its key areas of research are in the fields of data science & digital libraries, scientific data management, non-textual material, open knowledge, open science and visual analytics. TIB provides scientific content and digital services to its specialist and research communities at www.tib.eu, supporting researchers at all stages of their scientific work.

TIB is a member of the Leibniz Association, which connects 97 independent research institutions. Besides addressing issues of social, economic and ecological relevance, Leibniz institutes conduct basic and applied research, and provide scientific infrastructure and research-based services. The association also identifies focus areas for knowledge transfer, and advises policymakers and the general public. Within the Leibniz Association, TIB is subject to a comprehensive and independent quality assurance review process.

TIB is a German public-law foundation of the Federal State of Lower Saxony, based in Hannover. The foundation exclusively and directly pursues charitable purposes. Due to its importance for the country as a whole, TIB is funded jointly by the German federation and the federal states.

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY

Active diversity, equality and opportunity have been embraced by TIB for years, and are firmly embedded in the organisation in the form of strategic and ethical guidelines. One of the library's key structural goals is to continuously improve and enhance the prevailing conditions. In doing so, we want to support an organisational and staff culture that creates a nutrient medium for value-driven action, contributing to how we interact with each other and with our environment – society at large, and our users, partners and sponsors.

Numerous measures have been, and will continue to be, taken to ensure that TIB remains an attractive employer, leading it successfully into the future. All aspects of equal opportunities are considered to be an integral part of management tasks at all levels. Comprehensive arrangements for reconciling career interests and family life are firmly established, and are continuously adapted and developed to meet specific needs – such as in times of a pandemic.

TIB signed the Charta der Vielfalt (Diversity Charter) in 2022. By doing so, we are committed to the aim to create an appreciative work environment for all our employees – irrespective of age, ethnic background and nationality, gender and gender identity, physical and mental abilities, religion and worldview, sexual orientation and social background. Appreciating and promoting diverse potential, competencies and talents opens up the opportunity for innovative and creative solutions in our world of work.

To implement the Charta der Vielfalt, we will cultivate an organisational culture characterised by mutual respect and appreciation. We create the foundations for our managers and employees to acknowledge, share and live these values. They are accorded particular responsibility to do so. We consistently review our human resource processes, and ensure they live up to the diverse competencies and talents of all employees, as well as satisfy our performance expectations. In addition, we will make the content of the Charter the topic of internal and external dialogue, as well as keeping our staff informed about the value of diversity and involving them in implementing the Charter.

1. FOUNDATIONS OF THE GEP

In its activities, TIB is governed by the following guidelines and principles:

- The General Act on Equal Treatment (AGG), Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_agg/
- The Lower Saxony Equal Rights Act (NGG), Lower Saxony Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Equality https://www.ms.niedersachsen.de/startseite/frauen_gleichstellung/gleichberechtigungsgesetz/neues-niedersaechsisches-gleichberechtigungsgesetz-ngg-in-kraft-13869.html
- DFG Research-Oriented Standards on Gender Equality (2017); 2020 Summary and Recommendations on the “Research-Oriented Standards on Gender Equality” of the DFG, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft
- The Equality Implementing Agreement (AV-Glei); Leibniz Equality Standards 2016; Guide for setting target quotas for 2025, Leibniz Association
- Cooperation Agreement with Leibniz Universität Hannover
- TIB’s Equal Opportunities Plan

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE

To ensure a continuous process in the context of promoting diversity, equality and opportunity, TIB’s measures are regularly evaluated and updated annually in cooperation with the responsible divisions and in compliance with current requirements.

External evaluation:

- Given TIB’s long-standing participation in TOTAL E-QUALITY – an initiative that promotes equal opportunities for women and men and diversity in the workplace – an independent panel of judges assesses whether TIB is able to strike a balance between economic requirements and the interests of its employees by implementing suitable human resource strategies to establish equal opportunities. The TEQ award for equality and diversity is conferred every three years – in 2022, TIB received the award for the seventh time in succession.

- Obligations to report to third parties such as competent ministries, funding agencies and committees ensure external monitoring.

Internal evaluation:

- Relevant KPIs are systematically collected and evaluated on a regular basis (for example, under-representation in various pay grades).
- Giving employees the opportunity to provide information in (anonymous) internal staff surveys ensures that matters such as gender equality issues can be investigated.
- Networking with similar institutions is a valuable way of sharing experiences and comparing best practices.

3. RESOURCES

The role of Women's Officer or Equal Opportunities Officer (EOO) has been institutionalised at TIB since 1993, and as such has been supporting the management in gender equality issues for around 30 years.

The EOO is appointed for four years and elected by secret ballot by the staff. The current incumbent has been in office since 2007. The full-time EOO is given 75% time off for her duties. To relieve the EOO for the duration of her appointment, a colleague takes on her original responsibilities for 20 hours per week. Another colleague supports the EOO as Deputy EOO as and when required.

To accomplish her tasks, the EOO sits on several key committees (such as the TIB Foundation Council). Since many decisions and measures concern TIB's HR and strategic development as well as HR management, the EOO can raise gender equality and diversity aspects in these bodies at an early stage. For example, the Equal Opportunities Officer worked on TIB's core issue of enhancing and improving the organisational and staff culture in a gender-sensitive way. The result was a definition of values and principles that facilitate respectful cooperation and are intended to raise awareness and provide guidance for all colleagues.

Strong internal networking with the Management, Organisational Development, the Training Officer, the Inclusion Officer and other actors – such as in the area of internal

communication – ensures support in the updating and adaptation of strategies and measures for equality and diversity.

The Equal Opportunities Officer cooperates with the Equal Opportunities Office of Leibniz Universität Hannover (LUH) and with the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Officers of the Leibniz Association and other institutions. Networking and peer exchange helps the EOO to continuously review her office's measures and increase efficiency, while gaining inspiration for new developments. TIB always ensures that the EOO and her deputy are able to participate in professional development activities and networking events.

Low-threshold, barrier-free information on diversity, equality and opportunity is prepared centrally on the EOO's internal platform, together with the names and addresses of contact persons, enabling access by all TIB members.

4. DATA AND FIGURES

As of December 2021, TIB had 599 employees, 42% of whom were male and 58% female. Employees are divided into academic staff and academic support staff. Academic staff members are those in positions at the highest qualification level (i.e. E13 and higher of the Lower Saxony Public Sector Collective Agreement of the Federal States) who work in research and development and/or provide academic services. The majority of the TIB workforce are academic support staff or infrastructure staff. TIB aims to achieve equality and gender balance at all levels – especially in the areas of leadership and decision-making.

When it comes to managerial positions, the Leibniz Association defines parity as 45%, as opposed to the arithmetical definition of 50%. Some of the specified requirements have already been met. TIB continues to strive to increase the proportion of women in the coming years, particularly at the level of research group leader, junior research group leader and working group leader. TIB's strategic structural goals stipulate that in the next few years, the aim is to fill E15/E14 positions with as equal a number of women and men as possible. This also applies to increasing the proportion of women on pay grade 1 (E12/E13/A13) from 40% to 50%.

The proportion of men among science support staff is to be increased.

5. MEASURES TO ACHIEVE THE EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Numerous measures have been taken to promote diversity, equality and opportunity within TIB.

For example, appointments to internal committees of strategic importance are made according to the roles and responsibilities of individuals – irrespective of gender or cultural background. In external committees such as the TIB Foundation Council, the Scientific Advisory Council and the Users' Council, legal requirements for the composition of committees with women and men are complied with, ensuring a good balance.

There are plans to offer more training courses on diversity, equality and opportunity issues for all staff members. This also includes awareness-raising measures in the form of specific programmes, such as training on unconscious bias and sensitisation courses to enhance intercultural competence. These measures are intended not only to foster cooperation within TIB, but also to give employees with external contacts a sense of assurance. Gender aspects are also being integrated into the existing training programme for executives on the basis of questions such as: What opportunities can digitalisation offer to promote a family-oriented management and corporate culture?

In addition, managers can receive intensive coaching. Workforce teams and divisions are offered workshops, also in larger groups and off-site, to discuss contentious issues and jointly develop solutions.

An important element of TIB's culture is the use of gender-neutral language to reflect gender diversity – women, men and non-binary people. Gender-neutral language increases the visibility of diverse gender realities and seeks to address all genders. Gender-sensitive wording means using and applying language in a way that ensures that all people are addressed in an equally visible and appreciative way. In written German texts, TIB uses the "gender colon", which stands for the diversity of gender identities (using the German word for employees as an example: Mitarbeiter:innen – the male form + gender colon + the female suffix). As an alternative to forms that make gender visible, TIB also uses gender-neutral forms such as substantive participles or adjectives to name groups of people (for example: Mitarbeitende (literally meaning people who work), Studierende (literally meaning people who study)). TIB also takes care to ensure a diverse representation of gender in graphics, figures and tables; it refrains from using stereotypical or clichéd representations, and strives to represent diversity. Guidelines and social language development provide orientation for both spoken and written language.

In view of the shortage of skilled workers and the efforts to be an attractive employer with gender- and family-friendly conditions, TIB intends to position its existing measures more prominently. The options for flexible working hours and work locations, the extensive

possibilities for balancing family responsibilities with official duties, as well as the diversity embraced at TIB and the library's egalitarian organisational culture enable staff to strike a good work-life balance.

6. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Thanks to its wide range of alternative forms of employment, TIB is able to respond to the individual needs of its employees, helping them to reconcile family responsibilities with their careers and achieve a healthy work-life balance. The drive to digitalisation in the wake of the pandemic years is having a positive effect on organisation and processes – efficient and effective working structures are being maintained, continuously developed and embedded at TIB.

Flexible working time models enable employees to care for family members while remaining in employment. Staff have the option of working between 20 and 40 hours per week. Hours that become vacant due to a carer having to reduce their working hours at TIB will be covered by their colleagues, or a job advertisement will be issued to fill the vacant hours.

The option of alternating teleworking jobs has been in place since 2003 – the number of teleworking jobs currently installed is 32 (as of 2021). At least one working day must be spent in the office. TIB equips one of the employee's rooms with the hardware and software needed to complete the tasks, in compliance with ergonomic standards. Office furniture and other equipment such as a desk, an ergonomic office chair and adequate lighting are also provided. Individual weekly working days are specified in consultation with the line manager.

Employees also have the option of working from any location using a work laptop. The initial application to the employee's line manager is approved for a period of up to six months, after which a longer-term agreement is also conceivable. Staff may also switch workplaces, giving them the flexibility to spend some of their working day at TIB and the rest of their working hours elsewhere.

The need for employees to care for family members is growing in importance. According to the Lower Saxony Care Act (Act to Improve Compatibility between Family, Care and Work), employees can be partially released from work to care for a family member for a period of up to 24 months. Weekly working hours can be reduced to 15 hours per week at short notice, and the employee can be given additional days off. It is also possible to extend telework at short notice for the purpose of providing care. Colleagues faced with the need to manage a suddenly occurring care situation receive support from the Leibniz Universität Hannover care hotline and can obtain useful information on the internal

website of the Equal Opportunities Officer, such as on local companies that are able to offer flexible assistance at short notice. TIB's flexible working hours from 06:00 to 20:00 enable staff to arrange their working time individually in line with their care duties.

Considerateness among teams with colleagues who have family responsibilities is a matter of course – this enables workable solutions to be found for all staff with regard to annual leave, staff presence, late shifts and meeting times. During the pandemic, the working time frame for parents was extended from 20:00 to 22:00 to enable them to manage their homeschooling duties and working time more effectively.

TIB's extensive cooperation with Leibniz Universität Hannover means that children of TIB staff have the option of participating in holiday care activities such as holiday camps. The university's Family Service also assists in the case of emergency care at short notice, and offers a wide range of information on all childcare matters.

In the course of family-related career breaks, parental leave and re-entry, TIB permits both short-term and longer-term leave of absence. Staff may reduce their working hours or take leave of absence in order to care for children up to the age of 18. They may also participate in further training during their leave of absence. An extensive familiarisation period makes it easier for carers to return to work. TIB will keep an equivalent position free for them throughout their leave of absence.

The extensive use of digital tools for communication and collaborative cooperation that was embraced during the pandemic is an aspect that will be continued, playing a key role in helping ensure a healthy work-life balance.

7. ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

The digital transformation is also a challenge for TIB – work processes, tasks and requirements are changing. These changes can create uncertainties and fears among the workforce. In partnership with its employees, TIB therefore seeks to find responsible and socially acceptable solutions at an early stage, and create sustainable jobs. Internal and external events and workshops are held to help prepare staff for the digital transformation, giving them the opportunity to state their wishes and expectations of their future tasks and how staff will work together as colleagues in the future. Employees' existing competencies and potential are acknowledged and promoted. For example, members of TIB have the option of completing in-house job shadowing in other teams and areas in good time, enabling them to switch to other tasks at an early stage if necessary.

TIB has a workforce of around 600 people from more than 30 different countries, spread over ten locations: this degree of diversity offers great opportunities for our staff to achieve

the best work results, thanks to the different perspectives and broad knowledge of these various cultures. At the same time, however, diversity can also be a challenge. Shared values, mutual understanding and effective communication are fundamental elements of harmonious coexistence.

TIB operates bilingually – in German and English – and uses a variety of information channels to reach and inform all employees, regardless of their language. Relevant documents and basic information (such as strategic concepts and annual reports) are available in both languages. Circulars are sent to staff in both languages, and information on the library’s intranet is presented bilingually.

English is the predominant language of TIB’s research and development departments. Consequently, language courses for both languages are offered by internal colleagues and external instructors.

A variety of in-house events encourage face-to-face encounters. Formats such as “Teams introduce themselves” and “Joining...” give all staff the opportunity to familiarise themselves with other divisions, tasks and sites. Social events such as library festivals, summer get-togethers, Christmas parties and works outings are the ideal place for staff to get to know each other, and to establish and develop contacts without any barriers. This is particularly the case for temporary project staff and for colleagues who often work from home. The “consultation hour” gives all employees the opportunity to share their thoughts and views with the Director.

The “staff forum”, consisting of working-level members, is a special internal communication tool. It acts as a means of employee participation, contributing to a transparent, cooperative organisational culture. In a growing and changing organisation that covers a wide range of tasks and services, the staff forum also offers the opportunity for employees to connect and cooperate across the boundaries of organisational units. It enhances an understanding of interrelationships, and contributes to the cohesion of the organisation. Feedback from this forum and the resulting requirements are shared with the management level.

Regular employee surveys, including anonymous ones, give staff the opportunity to make suggestions for improvement in terms of working atmosphere, leadership, equipment and further training, diversity, equality and opportunity. Survey results are broken down by gender, indicating whether a certain gender feels discriminated against, e.g. when it comes to promotion, tasks or workload.

Internal communication is supported by a newsletter containing contributions from across the library. Intensive use is made of the internal intranet and wiki as a collaborative working tool.

8. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

For TIB, strategic human resources management means meeting changing requirements with an adapted use of staff and resources. By offering sustainable professional development, a wide range of training and staff development opportunities, flexible working models and employee participation, TIB seeks to secure a skilled workforce, even under the conditions of the digital shift, demographic change and skills shortages.

Job vacancies are published in regional, national and increasingly also in international newspapers and journals; networks, specialist communities and social media are additionally used. The wording of job advertisements is gender-sensitive, and includes diversity aspects alongside the professional criteria: “Severely disabled candidates with comparable qualifications will be given preferential treatment. We welcome applications from all nationalities.” Employees’ own networks help to target people of the gender that is under-represented in this area.

New positions are advertised as being suitable for part-time employment, task permitting. It does not matter whether it is a position with or without management responsibility – part-time management is successfully practised at TIB.

Job interviews are conducted in an unbiased and comprehensible manner with maximum transparency. All applicants are asked the same questions, ensuring that their answers can be compared fairly and equally. All genders are invited for interview if the application situation allows it. The Equal Opportunities Officer is permitted to attend all interviews and cast her vote accordingly.

There is currently only one woman on the six-member management team – TIB aims to increase the number of female members as soon as there is any fluctuation. Likewise, the library hopes to increase the proportion of female programmers in its IT department, for example.

With regard to professorships, however, TIB has succeeded in achieving equal representation: the four existing professorial positions are filled by two women and two men.

The qualification of early career researchers has been established, and is continuously developed and evaluated at regular intervals. A supervisory, mentoring and training programme for PhD students and postdoctoral researchers ensures they receive thorough training. Support for publishing and participation in relevant congresses give early career researchers to opportunity to access their respective specialist community. TIB gives

researchers the option of assuming a leadership role in project groups and (junior) research groups at the library, as a career-enhancing opportunity.

In the area of research and development, numerous researchers are financed through externally funded projects. Once projects have been completed, TIB endeavours to continue employing staff, where suitable – in most cases, these are again fixed-term projects. TIB's goal is always to ensure the continuation of employment.

Due to reductions in the working hours of many employees, temporary part-time contracts are advertised to replace colleagues who are on leave. These part-time positions are also an opportunity for entry-level employees to start a career in research. TIB endeavours to retain good staff by continuing to employ them on a temporary or, if possible, permanent basis.

The library is aware of the need for lifelong learning, and encourages all employees to develop their competencies and skills. Five training days a year can be used for this purpose – additional days will be approved if required. Interested employees can choose from a wide range of internal and external training courses and programmes to suit their individual needs. Besides the courses offered by TIB, options provided by Leibniz Universität Hannover and other institutions are also open to staff for this purpose. For employees to be able to combine learning and family life, some training courses take place in the mornings as well as in the afternoons.

Employees in managerial positions need to develop a new understanding of leadership: changed working arrangements, the flexibilisation of working time and place, and the diversity of cultures within the workforce call for special skills. To promote these skills and foster the development of leadership qualities, TIB offers its executive staff an intensive development programme.

Extensive professional development, such as training courses or executive degree programmes, is supported by giving the employee additional days off or enabling them to take leave of absence for the duration of the programme. Employees may also reduce their working hours. In the case of continuing education that cannot be undertaken while in employment, leave of absence is granted to enable employees to acquire an additional qualification.

TIB is actively involved in the qualification of young people – the library provides training for people to become media and information service specialists (FaMI) and bookbinders. There are also plans to provide training in the field of electronic data processing for people to become IT specialists. TIB also offers a wide range of internships, job shadowing and traineeships.

9. GENDER ASPECTS IN RESEARCH AND TEACHING

A wide range of research projects are conducted at TIB – not only to improve existing services, but also to develop novel services.

Throughout the entire research process – from the conception and definition of research questions, to the implementation of projects and the resulting outcomes – there is a requirement to address structural equality aspects and to take into account the importance of gender. By focusing on different genders, potentially different life realities and needs can be comprehended, possibly enhancing the quality of the research process. In the same vein?, such consideration can help avoid subsequent costs, incurred due to incorrect or inadequate results, e.g. in product development. Researchers also focus on the questions of whether the research findings are relevant to gender and whether they are presented in a gender-sensitive way.

Especially when it comes to the composition of research teams, active gender equality efforts should take centre stage. Gender equality is taken into account accordingly in administrative and personnel decisions, too. It is also recommended to use diverse groups of respondents when applying certain methods and tools such as usability tests, interviews and group discussions.

A diversity-oriented gender-sensitive perspective is particularly relevant in the research field of artificial intelligence, in which TIB is actively engaged. Many AI systems “learn” on the basis of a large volume of data. Both the quality of the data – and in particular its diversity in this case – and the way it is handled by the person on whom the algorithm is based determine whether the application has an unintended discriminatory effect. If, for example, there is a one-sided selection of training data, this can lead to bias, which in turn may have discriminatory consequences. TIB’s research teams are sensitive to these issues.

In addition to gender, other aspects may also play a role in creating inequality in research – these also need to be addressed: age, background, education, religion, sexual orientation, place of residence, physical disability, and so on.

Research institutions must do more to address important issues such as women in STEM subjects, demographic change and skills shortages. Integrating the development of gender competence into learning and teaching is an adequate way to respond to the current challenges.

10. MEASURES AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

TIB has zero tolerance for discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace. This stance is clearly documented and communicated in a way that is accessible to all staff members – and is a core element of TIB’s value-driven action.

All employees are urged to report incidents of this kind. Such incidents will be systematically investigated and dealt with. Relevant information on the procedure and the contact details of responsible persons and ombudspersons are available on the intranet. All contact persons are bound to secrecy. Additional external counselling services are available in the form of the Psychological Counselling Centre at Leibniz Universität. Information brochures issued by Leibniz Universität provide useful advice on how to respond to conflicts and discrimination.

To increase the sense of security, at least two employees are on duty together at each library site during off-peak opening hours. In addition, an external security service is on duty at several sites, providing extra security

The measures presented in the context of promoting diversity, equality and opportunity are regularly evaluated, further developed and continuously updated.

IMPRINT

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