

The Gender Equality Plan of the Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History in Potsdam

as amended on 8 June 2026

Preamble

The Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History (ZZF) conducts research into German and European contemporary history in the 20th century, as well as the current ways in which this past is addressed. The Institute's academic work is currently organised into five departments and the Directorate. In addition to basic research, the provision of research infrastructure and the transfer of knowledge are central areas of activity for the ZZF.

In 2009, as part of its admission to the Leibniz Association, the ZZF committed to implementing research-oriented gender equality standards. The objectives and measures set out in the equality plan are based on the Implementation Agreement to the Framework Agreement on Research Funding concerning the Equality of Women and Men in Joint Research Funding (AV-Glei, as amended, most recently on 22 April 2016), the Gender Equality Act of the State of Brandenburg (LGG), the research-oriented gender equality standards of the DFG, which the Leibniz Association has adopted and supplemented (as of 5 July 2017), and the Guidelines for the Work of Gender Equality Officers in the Leibniz Association in their latest version (2021). The ZZF and its management are also committed to implementing a family-friendly human resources policy that encompasses all forms of care work.

This gender equality plan updates the assessment carried out in June 2023, as well as the specific objectives and measures to improve gender equality for women at the ZZF. It has been drawn up by the ZZF Executive Board and the Gender Equality Officer for a period of three years and replaces the gender equality plan dated 15 June 2023. The ZZF is thus developing a structural and HR-related gender equality strategy which, in addition to specific measures to address the under-representation of women in certain status and salary groups and in the holding of positions on decision-making and advisory bodies, also aims to promote a working culture at the institute that is inclusive both in terms of gender and diversity.

1. Objectives and measures for equality at the ZZF

The ZZF is committed to fundamental objectives and measures to ensure equal opportunities and parity within the institute, both now and in the future.

1.1 Recruiting women for academic positions, particularly leadership roles

The ZZF prioritises the recruitment of women where there is equivalent suitability, competence and professional performance. Job advertisements are written in gender-neutral language and take into account gender equality aspects that have been shown to lead to an increase in applications from women. Women are specifically targeted and encouraged to apply for vacant positions. When filling roles in areas where women are under-represented, at least as many women as men should be invited to interviews or selection rounds. The Gender Equality Officer must be involved in all these steps; she may exercise her right to speak at any stage of the recruitment process, submit statements and exercise her voting rights in the selection of staff.

1.2 Targeted and sustained support for women's career progression within and outside the Institute

Gender equality considerations must be taken into account in all HR decisions at the ZZF. This includes striving for and maintaining gender parity in management positions. It also involves the deliberate promotion of women's careers through targeted training initiatives and support for female colleagues in their career decisions across all areas of work and at all career stages.

This also includes the establishment of onboarding procedures, particularly for new female managers, and the provisioning of funding for further training (individual measures as well as workshops for specific target groups).

1.3 Promoting women in science and research and raising their profile within the discipline and in the public eye

The management of the ZZF and the staff representatives are committed to fostering a culture of appreciation and understanding at the institute. This includes openness in communication amongst staff and transparency in decision-making processes. It also involves regular dialogue with staff and the provision of further training opportunities.

The ZZF management promotes a wider range of publication formats. Both analogue and digital formats for the dissemination of research findings and knowledge transfer are to be equally valued and promoted. Furthermore, collaborative working processes and corresponding presentations of results are to be increasingly encouraged.

The ZZF regards it as its duty to promote career paths both within and outside academia and research. To increase the visibility of women at the ZZF and within the research community, care is taken to ensure a balanced representation of participants when planning panels, events and conferences, both by the ZZF and by participating partners. So-called "all-male panels" are not permitted at events organised or co-funded by the ZZF.

1.4 Improving working conditions for female staff at the ZZF

1.4.1 Dealing with sexual harassment and discrimination

The ZZF condemns and prohibits all forms of discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual violence. All ZZF staff members, particularly those in management roles, are responsible for ensuring that sexually discriminatory behaviour does not occur within their areas of responsibility. Sexualised discrimination and violence include any sexually suggestive verbal or non-verbal behaviour that is sexually offensive or humiliating. Management is obliged to take immediate action upon becoming aware of cases of sexual harassment and discrimination; such action must not be to the detriment of the person concerned. Sexualised discrimination and violence are generally directed against women, but all those affected must be afforded equal protection regardless of their gender identity. The Gender Equality Officer is a potential first point of contact for those affected; she is bound by professional confidentiality and may only provide information to the Executive Board with express permission. Measures to protect against discrimination, harassment and violence at the ZZF must be implemented in accordance with the measures set out in the *Code of Conduct* (September 2021).

1.4.2 Further improvements to the conditions for balancing family and work

Flexible working hours for staff with children requiring care or relatives in need of care are already standard practice at the ZZF. As a rule, therefore, departmental meetings, management appointments and staff meetings take place in the morning and early afternoon. In 2021, the ZZF concluded a works council agreement on working hours, in which core working hours have been defined. In specific, assessed cases, the ZZF can offer support in finding and securing childcare arrangements for staff, for example during lectures or conferences at the ZZF, as well as for individual business trips, if private childcare does not appear feasible. A barrier-free family room is available to all ZZF staff. The ZZF's Human Resources department advises employees on the wide range of options for flexible working hours in connection with family commitments. Part-time work during parental leave is supported accordingly for all employees upon request.

1.4.3 Gender-sensitive communication

Gender-sensitive language, which aims to reflect a person's social gender, is the preferred choice in the ZZF's official communications. On 22 January 2019, the Institute's management decided to include the so-called gender star (*) in all new statutes and regulations of the ZZF. The aim is to represent men, trans* people, women and inter* people in their diversity of gender identities in an appropriate and equal manner.

1.4.4 Funding for gender equality measures

The ZZF allocates an annual sum of €10,000 from its budget to the Gender Equality Officer to promote equality.

2. Role of the Gender Equality Officer at the ZZF

To implement equality standards and achieve the stated objectives, the institute's management works together with the appointed **Gender Equality Officer** – in the case of the ZZF, the **Gender Equality Collective**.

The Gender Equality Collective sees its role as achieving a general improvement in working conditions at the ZZF through the structural changes intended and achieved by equality work, which benefits all staff equally.

2.1. Appointment

The Executive Board appoints the Gender Equality Collective for a term of four years on the basis of an election by the female staff of the ZZF. The size of the Gender Equality Collective is limited to a maximum of four members, of whom no more than two may be on fixed-term contracts.

The elected members take on the work of the Gender Equality Officer as a collective on an equal footing. In formal legal terms, one person is nominated from among them as chair. The regular rotation of the chairmanship is announced to the general assembly of women and put to a vote. The collective determines the rotation and informs the Executive Board thereof.

For participation in committee meetings or appointment committees, the Gender Equality Collective appoints an active member from its ranks. Conflicts of interest are avoided.

2.2. Rights and duties of the Gender Equality Officer at the ZZF

All duties, rights and obligations of the Gender Equality Officer and her deputies (carried out at the ZZF as the Gender Equality Collective) are governed by federal (Article 2, Section 25 of the Federal Equality Act) and state legislation (Section 22 of the Brandenburg Equality Act) and the AVGlei. The duties of the Gender Equality Officer include, in particular:

- Supporting the department/institution in implementing and complying with legislation
- Active participation in all personnel, organisational and social matters of the department that have an impact on gender equality (including recruitment, promotions, pay grading, transfers, assignment of higher-level duties, training and staff development measures, analysis of the workforce structure, drafting of the gender equality plan, and appointment to committees).

The Gender Equality Officer is actively involved in all relevant planning, discussion and decision-making processes. In doing so, the Gender Equality Officer decides for themselves which equality issues they will be consulted on. The provisions set out in the preamble apply here. The Gender Equality Officer has the right to comment on all matters concerning the department and thus performs an advisory and supervisory role. The planning phase always begins when the process goes beyond mere 'brainstorming'. The Gender Equality Officer is

involved in all new appointments, fixed-term or permanent contract renewals, and the conversion of fixed-term contracts to permanent ones; in the case of appointments made in cooperation with universities, the ZZF Executive Board actively advocates for the participation of the ZZF Gender Equality Officer in the appointment committees.

The Human Resources department supports the Gender Equality Officer by providing direct information on personnel matters. Together with the Executive Board and the administration, a regular analysis of the employment structure is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Gender Equality Plan. Regular meetings, usually held quarterly, therefore take place between the Gender Equality Collective, the Executive Board and the Head of Administration.

Since 2022, the Gender Equality Officer has been granted a voting right in all selection interviews for the filling of vacant posts. The Gender Equality Collective contributes to the drafting of job advertisements for vacant posts by providing comments. The Gender Equality Officer is entitled to further training and professional development measures insofar as they relate to equality issues. The Gender Equality Officer undertakes to regularly inform ZZF staff about equality issues and to provide advice upon request. A general meeting of women may be convened at least once a year; this may also take the form of a video conference.

The Gender Equality Collective works closely with the Works Council, and regular dialogue with the Works Council is institutionalised. Regular dialogue also takes place with the PhD student representatives and the Diversity Officer.

Support for equality work:

The Executive Board recognises the Gender Equality Collective's strong commitment to the development of the Institute. To support the participation of fixed-term staff as Gender Equality Officers, the Executive Board offers compensatory time off. This is funded from the institutional budget. In this regard, attention is paid to Section 2 (Duration of fixed-term contracts; fixed-term contracts due to third-party funding) of the WissZeitVG: periods of leave amounting to at least one-fifth of regular working hours for the performance of duties in a staff or disabled employees' representative body, of duties as a women's or equality officer, or for the exercise of a mandate compatible with the employment relationship. The respective duration of the fixed-term employment contract is extended by 20% for the Gender Equality Officer and one deputy. This is intended to compensate for disadvantages in career development for Gender Equality Officers on fixed-term contracts. Furthermore, involvement in the ZZF's committees during the process of converting fixed-term contracts to permanent ones is to be particularly recognised. If doctoral candidates are acting as Gender Equality Officers, appropriate financial support will be provided to enable them to complete their doctoral studies; this is granted in addition to the usual extension options. The role is further supported by the provision of a student assistant. This post is funded from the budget.

2.3. Outlook

Following the positive experiences of recent years, the idea of the Gender Equality Collective is to be retained. Many goals have been achieved; however, even with parity achieved, the work of this committee remains necessary to ensure the sustainability of the work and to continue to guarantee fair and transparent procedures.

3. Review and analysis of the staff structure

3.1 Further development of gender equality work at the ZZF

Since the last evaluation in 2019, gender equality work at the ZZF has made significant progress. Following a period during which the Gender Equality Officer post was vacant and a lengthy discussion process, the idea for the new format of the Gender Equality Collective emerged at the 2021 Women's General Assembly. It consists of four female colleagues who share the responsibilities of the Gender Equality Officer on an equal footing. The first collective was elected in February 2022 and appointed by the Executive Board. The election and appointment of the currently active collective took place in December 2023. Continuity in the work was ensured by the ongoing involvement of one female colleague in both successive committees.

Equality at the ZZF thus enjoys, in comparison with corresponding bodies at other Leibniz Institutes, extensive co-determination rights and solid financial resources. Furthermore, the collective format has proved exceptionally effective in terms of the distribution of tasks and the associated, not insignificant, workloads. The composition of the Gender Equality Collective – spanning departments and career levels – ensures visibility and influence within the institute.

In regular discussions between the collective and the Executive Board, it was agreed that the respective active participant would have a voting right in personnel decisions, which applies to bodies whose composition is not regulated by law. It was further agreed that a representative of the Gender Equality Collective would attend meetings of the Institute's management, the Scientific Advisory Board and the Board of Trustees. An additional representative of the Gender Equality Collective may attend the agenda item on equality at meetings of the Scientific Advisory Board and the Board of Trustees.

The collective runs training sessions for female staff once or twice a year and organises regular meetings for female staff to facilitate informal discussion. In addition, the Gender Equality Collective holds an annual retreat to review its work and plan future tasks.

3.2 Analysis of the staff structure and objectives achieved

The ZZF has achieved gender parity at all management levels. The goal of implementing gender parity at the senior management level was achieved with Gabriele Metzler's appointment on 15 November 2025. From October 2024 to November 2025, a female head

of department also took on the role of acting deputy director on an interim basis, a position that was abolished following Ms Metzler's appointment.

Gender parity at the second management level was achieved through the introduction of dual leadership and the appointment of the head of the new Department V in 2023. Since 2023, all heads of the research support units (Public Relations, Library, Publications) have also been women.

In recent years, the ZZF has made considerable efforts to attract and support women for academic positions. Currently, 60% of the 126 staff members are female (75 female, 50 male, 1 non-binary).

Among permanent staff funded from the university budget, the proportion of female employees is 58% (46 female, 33 male, 1 diverse) and among third-party-funded positions, it is 63% (29 female, 17 male).

The proportion of women in academic posts is 53%. Whilst the proportion of women in fixed-term third-party-funded posts is 62%, it is 40% in permanent in-house posts.

At the level of academic department heads (E15 and above), there is parity. This has been achieved over the last three years through the introduction of dual leadership with female and male department heads. In non-academic department heads (library, public relations, publications, administration), all leadership positions are held by women. The 'Public History' division is also under female leadership (E14). In E14 positions in the academic sector, however, the proportion of women has fallen further to 17% (1 woman, 5 men), compared to one-third in 2023 (3 out of 9) and 36% (4 out of 11) in 2019. For E13 positions, the proportion of women has risen to 56% (28 women, 21 men, 1 person of diverse gender) compared to 53% (18 out of 34 people) in 2023 and 45% (14 out of 31 people) in 2019.

Among associate doctoral students, the proportion remained constant at 65 per cent compared to 2023 (22 out of 35 people, 12 male, 1 non-binary).

A key area of concern regarding gender equality remains the publicly funded academic posts in pay grade E14, all of which, with the exception of one post, are permanent (1 woman, 5 men). Although the reclassifications and promotions of women already employed at the ZZF carried out in recent years have contributed to an increase in the proportion of women in the higher pay grades (particularly in E15), a lack of staff recruitment has led to a decline in the number of women in the lower pay grade of E14.

4. ZZF's Commitment for 2026

As in the 2019 and 2023 equality plans, the ZZF has set itself ambitious targets that go beyond the requirements of the AV-Glei, the DFG and the Leibniz Association (cascade model) and are intended to ensure equal opportunities and gender parity.

- Advertised permanent posts for research assistants (E13 and E14) should preferably be filled by women. For existing permanent posts (across all departments), the possibility of higher pay grading for female staff in all departments should be examined and, where appropriate, implemented.
- At the ZZF, advertised posts for third-party funded projects are to be filled on an equal basis.
The proportion of research staff employed through third-party funding now stands at 62% (24 out of 39 staff) compared to 52% (13 out of 25 posts) in 2023. Nevertheless, the voluntary commitment remains in place that, where there is an odd number of vacancies in third-party funded projects, the majority of posts will be awarded to women.
- For the filling of budget-funded and third-party-funded posts, the Institute's management undertakes to specifically and individually invite qualified women to apply. At least as many women as men must be invited to interviews (exceptions must be justified). All selection committees must be composed of equal numbers of men and women.
This target, established in 2019, has been largely implemented and is standard practice at the ZZF. Continued attention must be paid to approaching qualified women and documenting this process.
- The ZZF's committees should be composed of an equal number of men and women (insofar as this is to be determined by the ZZF itself).
In those committees where, according to the statutes, proposals may be submitted by the ZZF, attention shall be paid to ensuring gender parity. Thus, the Scientific Advisory Board, whose members are put forward for election to the Board of Trustees by the ZZF Executive Board upon the recommendation of the ZZF Executive Board, shall always consist of five women and five men. When individual members of the Scientific Advisory Board step down at the end of their term, their positions are filled accordingly. This also applies to members of the Board of Trustees proposed to the General Assembly by the ZZF Executive Board who do not belong to this body by virtue of their office. The ZZF's Gender Equality Officer holds an annual meeting with the Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board and maintains close contact with the Board of Trustees.
- The existing prevalence of women is not maintained at the postdoctoral level ('leaky pipeline'). Therefore, positions should be advertised in such a way as to make the prospects for possible extension or permanent appointment transparent.

- Female research support staff are supported through targeted further training measures and, provided the relevant conditions are met, have the opportunity for higher pay grading or to receive corresponding allowances.
- Recruitment procedures, even for interim positions, are designed to be transparent; all vacancies are advertised at least within the Institute.
- Long-term start-up funding is awarded preferentially to highly qualified women.
- When filling management positions, the gender and diversity competence of applicants is taken into account in the evaluation process.
- The Executive Board advocates to the BMBF for transitional arrangements regarding care, parental leave or illness and documents these efforts in writing. The Executive Board advocates to third-party funding bodies for the implementation of a simpler and more practical way to access funds for childcare during business trips.
- An evaluation of the implementation of these objectives is to be carried out by the Executive Board, the Gender Equality Officer and the Works Council as required, but no later than three years after this voluntary commitment comes into force. The results will be communicated to all staff members of the institution and the governing bodies of the ZZF.
- The Board of Trustees and the Scientific Advisory Board of the ZZF shall participate in monitoring this voluntary commitment and shall be regularly informed by the Institute's management and the Gender Equality Officer regarding the implementation of these objectives.

Potsdam, 8 June 2026

The Gender Equality Plan was signed in June 2026 by the Executive Board and all members of the Gender Equality Collective.