YOUR PARTICIPATION IS NEEDED - Survey among all Leibniz doctoral researchers!

How do working conditions of doctoral researchers at Leibniz Institutes and Research Museums differ across and within sections? How can work responsibilities, private and family life be arranged? Do international doctoral researchers feel integrated at their institutes?

In order to assess these and many more questions on working conditions, career development, and equal opportunities at Leibniz Institutes and Leibniz Research Museums, the working group “Diversity, Equal Opportunities, Working Conditions” prepared a survey for all doctoral researchers of the Leibniz Association. It is accessible now! Based on its results, the Leibniz PhD Network can enter into an exchange with policy makers and other stakeholders.

Therefore, every single completed questionnaire is important! Take **20 minutes** of your time and fill out the survey by **12th of January 2017**.

How to access the survey? You should have received the access link by email from your PhD representatives. If not, contact your PhD representatives, your section officer, or the contacts provided below.

All answers will be handled anonymously. It will not be possible to either track the institute or the interviewee.

For any questions contact:
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Science Communication Conference - First joint event of N²

Long planned and often announced, it finally happened! On 6^{th}-8^{th} November 2017, 150 doctoral researchers of the N² networks gathered for their first joint event. It was an exciting and dense program, also involving the interested public during the “Science beyond borders” festival, which was framed by the Berlin Science Week.

Most impressive was the talk of Sam Illingworth – subtle slides, optimally tuned body language, and impressive use of language. He set out to connect poetry and science with own and foreign examples and it was a pleasure to listen. On top, this was a contribution to the field of science communication that widened the boundaries, formerly fenced in responsibility towards tax payers and Twitter, finding the right spin for a story, and presenting science and data in a non-misleading way - all covered by neat workshops during this conference.

Truly, kudos have to be given to the organizers – doctoral researchers devoting their spare time: the picks of speakers, coaches, and caterers were almost all sweet cherries. Scientifically correct irritation on physics in Hollywood movies (worst: The Core) with
Sascha Vogel was just as great as listening to the honest, uplifting, and pitying (because we do not have teaching obligations) words of Onur Güntürkün. Poster sessions, art presentations (including exciting live performance), pub quiz, and panel discussion – it was a lot to take in. Apart from this, only a tiny flaw cast a shadow on the event: the first coffee break did not include coffee. “As this is all about communication: you’re not supposed to drink coffee, but to discuss and stimulate each other as if you were the coffee!” - well then, carry on!

Text: Jeanne Wilbrandt (ZFMK)

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**Finding the peace of mind at the Max Planck PhDnet meeting in Mainz**

While the N2 Joint Event was still ongoing in Berlin, the Max Planck PhDnet assembled for its annual General Meeting at the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry in Mainz. Approximately 100 PhD representatives and interested doctoral researchers from all over Germany (and even from some European institutes) followed the invitation to discuss the current situation of doctoral researchers in Max Planck Institutes, learn something about self-management and develop plans for the future of their PhD network.

The second day of the meeting opened with a presentation of the results of the PhD survey, which has been conducted among Max Planck doctoral researchers in 2017. The survey covered various topics such as the supervision of the PhD, potential consequences of a stressful work, and discrimination due to the sexual, ethnic, religious, or family background. The presentation sparked a lot of discussion among the PhD representatives, showing their high interest and commitment in improving the daily lives of doctoral researchers at Max Planck Institutes. Among other things, the survey proved that happiness and life satisfaction decreases over the time of a PhD and is negatively correlated with the average number of working hours per week. The presentation of Julia Krampitz on self-management and happiness nicely followed-up on this. She made the photographer happy by starting her talk with a relaxation exercise and motivated the participants to think more about rewards and leisure time.

Traditionally, the spokespersons of the other PhD networks are also invited to attend the general assemblies and present their networks and collaboration in N². Jan-Lucas, our spokesperson, and Konstantin Kuhne, the spokesperson of the Helmholtz Juniors, were delighted to share some very fresh impressions of the N² Science Communication Conference. They also presented the N² political statement as a second recent achievement of N². The three networks will continue to work for the interests of the fellow doctoral researchers. In the Max Planck PhDnet, the newly elected spokesperson Jana Lasser will take over in January. Congratulations to Jana and the whole steering group, we are looking forward to working with you!
Meet the PhD Agreement Group!

The PhD agreement group is a subgroup within the working group of diversity, equal opportunities, and working conditions of the Leibniz PhD Network. The group's task is to develop an agreement between PhD candidates and their institutes that aims to be valid for all Leibniz institutes. Among others the topics of the agreement are supervision, career options, advanced training and working hours. Besides developing a basic agreement for all, we also take into account the different sections and research areas within Leibniz and their possible specifics. Of course, we will also consider the results of the survey group to take a closer look at the actual conditions that should be improved by an agreement. In the end we want to present a fundamental agreement that all PhD representatives and candidates can use to either develop a PhD agreement for their institute or modify and improve their existing one.

Now, meet the people behind the group!
Saskia Ripp
For my PhD I am investigating the user’s perspective of using online grammars at the Institut für Deutsche Sprache (IDS) in Mannheim. I am one of the two coordinators of the working group and organize the working steps and meetings. During the work on a PhD agreement in my institute I realized that a template from the network could be of a great help, which is why I joined the working group. In my spare time I enjoy playing (beach) volleyball, going to concerts or simply relaxing on my couch with a good book.

Rosa Grote-Galvéz
I am doing my PhD at the Bernhard-Nocht-Institute for Tropical Medicine (BNITM) on Chagas disease, which is the most important neglected disease in Latin America. I am one of the two coordinators of the working group. In my opinion, young scientists should have more courage to demand good working conditions which (among others) could be promoted by a PhD agreement. Besides research, I am a mom (my kids are 14 and 8 years old) and I like to go cycling.

Wietje Nolte
In the framework of my doctorate, I research the role of long non-coding RNA and its influence on metabolic processes in cattle at the Leibniz-Institute for Farm Animal Biology (FBN) in Dummerstorf. I am a new member of this working group and am particularly interested in the compilation of interinstitutional PhD guidelines. I spend a lot of my leisure time on horseback but also enjoy painting and drawing.

Carolin Dittrich
I started my PhD in 2016 at the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, where I investigate the Ecology and Life History of the European Common frog. As a member of the PhD representatives of my Institute, I participated in the formulation of our own agreements for PhD students, which became operative this year. Therefore, I can contribute hands-on experiences to the group. In my free time I like to travel, being out in nature or listening to music.
Carlo Marzini
In my project, I am dealing with functional diversity of prokaryotes in the plant rhizosphere, which is part of the Biodiversity Exploratories. I started my PhD in May at the German Collection for Microorganisms and Cell Cultures (DSMZ) in Braunschweig. During our PhD Network meeting this year in Rostock I realized that the working conditions for PhDs are highly diverse in the Leibniz Association. Therefore, working on equal conditions is a major point where I think everyone will benefit from.

The PhD agreement group has many more members and gathers experience from a lot of Leibniz institutes. You find them here:

Daniel Graeber  Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW)
Gregor Jatzlauk  Forschungszentrum Borstel, Leibniz-Zentrum für Medizin und Biowissenschaften
Günther Krämer  Leibniz-Institut für Neue Materialien (INM)
Josephine Kerutt  Leibniz-Institut für Astrophysik Potsdam (AIP)
Kerstin Pawletko  Heinrich-Pette-Institut, Leibniz-Institut für Experimentelle Virologie (HPI)
Laura Blank  Weierstraß-Institut für Angewandte Analysis und Stochastik (WIAS)
Lisa-Marie Braun  Leibniz-Institut für Gewässerökologie und Binnenfischerei (IGB)
Markus Kantner  Weierstraß-Institut für Angewandte Analysis und Stochastik (WIAS)
Martin Penzel  Leibniz-Institut für Agrartechnik und Bioökonomie (ATB)
Martin Wengenmayr  Leibniz-Institut für Polymerforschung Dresden (IPF)
Matthias Riekert  Leibniz-Institut für Wissensmedien (IWM)
Oliver Scholle  Leibniz-Institut für Präventionsforschung und Epidemiologie (BIPS)
Peter Wegenschimmel  Leibniz-Institut für Ost- und Südosteuropaforschung (IOS)
Kathrin Zöller  Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung (ZZF)
Sebastian Samer  Leibniz-Institut für Neurobiologie (LIN)
Yannick Brasse  Leibniz-Institut für Polymerforschung Dresden (IPF)