

Senate and Presidential Committee Guidelines on Impartiality Issues in Appointment Procedures

(to be forwarded to appointment committee members and external referees)

Criteria for Conflict of Interest

The basic principle is that appointment committee members and external referees must possess the impartiality towards applicants that is required for objective evaluation. They must not have a close connection to the professional development of or any private interest in any applicant.

1. Absolute Conflict of Interest Criteria excluding any participation in the appointment committee or as external referees:
 - Applicants
 - Persons likely to gain a direct advantage or disadvantage from the activity or from the decision taken
 - Family members of applicants
 - Persons employed for money by an applicant or by an appointment committee member, or acting as a member of their managing board, supervisory board, or similar institution
 - Persons who have already submitted a professional opinion or reference in the same case, outside of their function as appointment committee members
 - Former incumbents of the professorship offered
2. Relative Conflict of Interest Criteria excluding any participation in the appointment committee or as external referees of applicants qualified for the nomination list¹:
 - Close scientific cooperation, e.g. joint research projects or joint publications² within the last 5 years
 - Membership or imminent move of an appointment committee member or external expert to the same institute within Leibniz Universität or to the same non-university institution as the applicant
 - Scientific cooperation with applicants who are working (or have worked within the last 5 years) as acting professors at the institute offering the position
 - Teacher or pupil relationship through the function of supervisor in case of a doctorate, or of referee in case of a habilitation, within the last 6 years
 - Employment relationship within the last 6 years
 - Current or previous activities in advisory boards of applicants' institutions, e.g. in scientific advisory boards
 - Participation in mutual assessments in the last 12 months
 - Affiliation of research staff members with the institute offering the position, where their jobs are directly attached to the professorship
 - Chairmanship in the appointment committee, if held by a committee member belonging to the same institute as the position offered
3. Furthermore, the following points are to be observed when appointing external referees:

¹ Advisory participation in the appointment committee is possible at the request of the committee or the faculty council, provided neither national nor international experts are available.

² Joint publications are understood as jointly authored newspaper articles, books, book chapters, dictionary articles, jointly edited books or single /special issues of journals. However, this does not refer to appointment committee members publishing papers in a work whose editor is an applicant (or vice versa), nor does it refer to joint activity in editorial committees of journals.

- Applicants may not propose external referees themselves.
- Applicants must not be asked to send records required for assessment directly to the external referees.

Examination and Handling of Impartiality Issues in Appointment Procedures

The following procedure is destined to ensure impartiality:

1. Impartiality Check after Examining all Applications:

Appointment committee members discovering, upon receipt of all applications, that in view of the above-mentioned criteria a conflict of interest exists, must place this on record at the beginning of the first appointment committee meeting. Based on the above criteria, the appointment committee decides if there is a case of conflict of interest and if so, how to deal with it.

2. Handling of Impartiality Issues:

In case of conflict of interest, the respective committee members may participate in the pre-selection. They must not, however, comment on those applicants who have given cause for conflict of interest. Moreover, they must leave the meeting room while these applicants are being discussed and voted upon. They may be readmitted to the meeting only after the vote has been taken on these applicants. Should the applicant remain on the shortlist, the member considered partial must be replaced in the appointment committee. The faculty council nominates a person (e.g. a substitute) to take part in the appointment committee as soon as possible. Where neither national nor international experts in the respective field are available to act as substitutes, the persons considered partial may at the most act in an advisory function for the appointment committee.

Decisions taken during the process with a minority of professors may be confirmed after resumption of membership or admission of new professorial members. For the final vote on the list proposal at the latest, the majority of the group of professors must be ensured.

3. Final Vote:

In the concluding session and the final vote on the list, more than half of the voting committee members must be present, and the group of professors must command the majority of votes. For a decision to be taken, an absolute majority is required.

If external professional opinions or references are not required due to the presence of at least three external committee members from outside, all external members must be present at the final vote.

4. Impartiality Check in Selection of External Referees:

In the discussion on the selection of external referees, the criteria for excluding conflict of interest must be applied. External referees are requested to provide a written declaration of their impartiality towards the applicants at the beginning of their references.