

## **Helmholtz Guideline**

### **on Diversity and Inclusion**

*adopted by the Assembly of Members of the Helmholtz Association  
on June 16, 2020*

#### **Preamble – “Diversity is a fact, inclusion is an act”**

Our point of departure is the simple principle that people are diverse. Our organization currently has 40,000 employees who differ from each other in a variety of ways. These include their personal ways of life or personal living situations, gender, ideologies, biographies and origins, skills and aptitudes, outer appearances, and numerous other aspects. We see this sum of differences between people—which we refer to as “diversity”—as an irrefutable fact.

We deliberately refrain from sub-categorizing the concept of diversity into nationality or gender, for example. By taking this approach, we opt for a broad understanding of diversity to reflect the fact that, firstly, the people within each sub-category also differ from each other, and secondly, that, in the future, categories might play a role that do not appear relevant to us now.

We view **inclusion** as the act of shaping our organizational culture so all persons are taken into consideration and have the same opportunities to exercise their influence, participate, and continue to develop as individuals. Successful inclusion is demonstrated by the fact that the people who work at our Centers and with us experience an atmosphere of respect and fairness, appreciation and belonging, safety and openness and know that they can fully develop their talents and grow as individuals.

## 1. Diversity is valuable and worthy of protection!

Helmholtz conducts top-level research of a global caliber and is dedicated to solving major issues and challenges facing society. The diversity that our employees bring to the organization is a key factor for the success of this innovative research because diversity fosters maximum creativity and allows us to incorporate a wide range of perspectives on the same issues—scientific, technical, administrative, and strategic. This makes diversity an incredibly valuable resource for us—one that we want to promote, utilize, and safeguard to our strategic advantage.

At the same time, protecting diversity at all times is a value that Helmholtz is committed to upholding without reservation. People all around the world are marginalized, threatened, or persecuted because they “are different” in one way or another, in both academia and life in general. One of the basic requirements for our work is that this simply must not happen at any of the Helmholtz Centers.

## 2. Organizational culture influences diversity and inclusion!

To us, an organization’s culture consists of both its official structures and processes as well as informal, unwritten rules. In particular, we believe an organizational culture includes the following:

- shared attitudes (values, ways of doing things, etc.)
- the behavior of the people in the organization (e.g., leadership and communication)
- the basic assumptions shared by the people in the organization (e.g., ways of assessing certain situations)
- the general conditions an organization creates to achieve its goals (e.g., processes and structures as well as spatial conditions)
- a shared vision (“Where do we want to go?”).

We are aware that the various organizational cultures at the Helmholtz Centers have a decisive impact on diversity there—in other words, the Centers’ cultures can promote or impede diversity.

In order to create ideal conditions for diversity, we need to constantly raise awareness of the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion and examine our organizational cultures on a regular basis so we can further improve them. If we do this successfully, the effects will be evident both within Helmholtz and beyond. It boosts the satisfaction, motivation, and loyalty of those working here and allows us to present ourselves as an attractive employer.

### 3. Diversity and inclusion—our aims for Helmholtz and each of the Helmholtz Centers

- 1) Based on these guidelines, all Helmholtz Centers and the Helmholtz Head Office are to develop and put into practice a **shared understanding of inclusion, and an organizational culture that is sensitive to diversity**.
- 2) We expect, as a minimum requirement for this shared understanding, that all Helmholtz Centers act in a legally compliant way (**diversity compliance**) with respect to the diversity aspects laid down in Germany's federal constitution (Basic Law) and the General Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG). Not only official structures, but also unwritten rules that violate these statutory provisions are unacceptable.
- 3) The Centers and Head Office will support each other and exchange information regularly in order to implement and continually encourage diversity and inclusion at the Centers and to establish a **culture that is sensitive to diversity**. Initial proposals and recommendations to this end are included in the attachment to this guideline. A culture that is sensitive to diversity extends far beyond simple compliance and must be based on a deeply rooted, internal attitude shared by our leadership and employees that creates an atmosphere of mutually respectful interactions and trust.
- 4) The **executive level** bears responsibility for the topics of diversity and inclusion at all Helmholtz Centers.

## Attachment

### General recommendations:

- Every Helmholtz Center signs the Charta der Vielfalt (Diversity Charter) ([www.charta-der-vielfalt.de](http://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de)).
- The following resources contain a comprehensive catalog of suggestions and potential measures that can be used to achieve the above-listed goals:
  - [www.charta-der-vielfalt.de](http://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de)
  - [www.allbright-stiftung.de](http://www.allbright-stiftung.de)
  - <https://instrumentenkasten.dfg.de>
  - [www.gleichstellungsplan.info](http://www.gleichstellungsplan.info) (in German)
  - [www.total-e-quality.de](http://www.total-e-quality.de)
- The topics of diversity and inclusion will be incorporated into the Centers' individual strategies (e.g., with the aim of being an attractive employer).
- Each Center establishes fixed, transparent, and effective procedures for dealing with non-scientific misconduct (especially discrimination, sexual harassment, workplace bullying, and the abuse of power).

### Areas of action to create a culture of diversity and inclusion:

- Facilitating individual ways of life (e.g., combining work and family/care or personal life, work/life balance)
- Helping management develop diversity and inclusion skills (e.g., anti-bias training to foster awareness or coaching sessions and workshops to enhance skills)
- Creating fair general working conditions (e.g., personnel processes that are sensitive to diversity)
- Promoting gender equality (e.g., by means of target ratios, gender-sensitive language)
- Preventing sexual harassment in the workplace
- Preventing abuse of power and workplace bullying
- Inclusion of international employees, particularly with respect to language
- Participation of people with disabilities
- ...

Recommendations for implementation: Diversity assessment, setting targets, and measures:

- For the adopted measures to become effective, they need to be adapted appropriately to the required action and integrated into the organization. For this reason, we recommend determining the *status quo* so that specific actions can be identified as an initial step, based on our shared vision.
- This can be used as the basis for defining specific goals and developing a strategy to achieve these goals that is underpinned by tailored measures.
- During the implementation, the Helmholtz Centers may find it helpful to consult external—e.g., legal—expertise.