

FOUNDATION OF GERMAN HUMANITIES INSTITUTES ABROAD (DGIA)

Principles of the Tasks and Processes of Quality Assurance in the DGIA Foundation

In accordance with Art. 6, Para 3, Item 5 of the DGIA law, the Board of Trustees monitors the “activities of the institutes and other bodies of the foundation and arranges the evaluation of the institutes”. The principles of evaluation are listed in detail in the DGIA statutes. To guarantee a scientifically adequate and transparent quality assurance process, the Board of Trustees adopted principles¹ for the tasks and processes at its meeting on 26 November 2009:

1. Principles of Quality Assurance

The Board of Trustees of the DGIA foundation arranges the external evaluation of the institutes in foreign countries at an interval of normally seven years. Interim perspective reports conducted by each of the academic advisory councils of the institutes are intended to provide the Board of Trustees with information and discussion material on the one hand, while ensuring on the other that the institutes make use of other expert reports on quality assurance, thus enabling them to prepare for the external appraisals. At least one perspective report is prepared within the regular evaluation period.

The evaluation of the institutes of the DGIA foundation is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. Its comments and opinions are based on the self-portrayal of the institute (Appendix A), the assessment report of the external commission (Appendix B) and the comments of the institute on the appraisal report (Appendix C). The Board of Trustees deploys commissions to prepare its resolutions and comments. The Board of Trustees and commissions are supported by the joint central office, which organizes and coordinates the quality assurance process that includes the evaluations as well as the preparation of the perspective reports by the respective advisory councils. The last seven years are usually evaluated.

2. Evaluation Dates

The ten institutes that currently belong to the DGIA foundation are evaluated every seven years. The cycle begins in 2011.

¹ Following a recommendation of the Academic Council of 9 November 2007, the principles of quality assurance of the DGIA foundation are based on the criteria of the Leibniz Community (cf. <http://www.wgl.de/?nid=evqu&nidap=&print=0>).

2011	1
2012	2,3
2013	4
2014	5,6
2015	7
2016	8,9
2017	10
2018	1

After consulting the Directors' Assembly, which coordinates with the Academic Advisory Council, the Board of Trustees determines which institutes are to be evaluated at the latest during the last meeting of the year for the next year but one. The central office notifies the director of the institute in question about the pending evaluations and the sequence of the evaluation process. It also sets the inspection appointment in coordination with the institute and chairman of the commission. The sequence of the evaluation must be scheduled in such a way that the results are available two months prior to the date on which the Board of Trustees convenes to discuss them.

3. Information Discussion

At the request of the institute, a staff member of the central office visits the institute to explain the principles of the evaluation process and inspection procedure. The institutes can take advantage of the consultancy and support with the preparation of documentation that the central office provides.

4. Members of the Evaluation Commission

The Board of Trustees appoints up to nine members of the evaluation commission with voting rights. The voting members should reflect the academic spectrum of each institute, but at least one member should belong to another faculty represented in the foundation. Academics from the host country, universities and non-university institutions should be represented. With the exception of the final discussion (Item 8), a representative of the academic advisory council appointed by the institute should be, and a non-voting representative of the Directors' Assembly can be, invited to attend the commission discussions.

At the beginning of the appointment process, the institute provides the central office with a list of the specialized areas which the institute believes should be covered. On the basis of this list, to which remarks can be added by the chair of the Board of Trustees, the central office requests that the academic institutions represented on the Board of Trustees (DFG,

MPG, AvH and WGL) and each professional association (Art. 12 HVO) submit recommendations for eight places before requesting recommendations from the institute for the ninth. The institute is given the opportunity here to raise objections in writing against each of the recommendations of the academic institutions. Objections must be justified, whereby the non-coverage of the specialized areas of the institute by the individual recommendations and the presumption of partiality are regarded as permissible reasons. The Board of Trustees decides on the admissibility of objections. More recommendations than there are seats on the commission must be submitted to the Board of Trustees for the appointment of the academic commission members. The Founders' Association and BMBF (Federal Ministry for Education and Research) each appoint one advisory member.

The central office presents the recommendations, including the information on possible reasons for partiality, to the Board of Trustees for a decision. The board elects the members, installs the commission and elects the chair of the commission at the recommendation of the chair of the Board of Trustees, who invites the newly elected persons to participate in the evaluation commission and, with reference to the principles of partiality which apply to the evaluation process of the DGIA foundation (Appendix 1) and which are modelled on the DFG criteria, requests that they present any possible reasons for partiality.

With the letter of invitation, the commission members are also provided with information on the profile of the DGIA foundation and the peculiarities of its institutes.

5. Cooperation Partners

The institute makes recommendations to the central office regarding the cooperation partners who should be invited to an interview within the scope of the inspection of the institute. The chair of each commission decides on the number of cooperation partners to be invited under consideration of the ratio between the amount of time and money involved and the expected amount of information that will be acquired. A total of three cooperation partners should not be exceeded.

6. Documentation

In preparation for the commission inspection, the institute presents a self-portrayal which also serves as a reply to the questionnaire enclosed as Appendix 2. The self-portrayal should be forwarded to the central office no later than two months prior to the inspection of the institute.

7. Agenda for the Inspection of the Institute

In coordination with the institute, the central office prepares a draft agenda for the inspection of the institute within the scope of the evaluation process. The chair of the commission reaches a decision on the draft. The commission can decide to alter the agenda during the inspection.

8. Inspection of the Institute

The commission holds a preliminary meeting before starting the inspection. With the support of the Managing Director, the Chair informs the commission about the evaluation process of the DGIA foundation, the criteria to be applied (Appendix 3), the peculiarities of each respective institute and the tasks of the commission members within this process. The chairperson reminds the members of the commission about the confidentiality of the process and requests that they declare any possible reasons for partiality. On the basis of the written documentation submitted by the institute, the commission then convenes an initial round of discussion which serves in particular the collection of questions to be put to the institute.

If any reasons for partiality which were not disclosed in advance by the consultant in question or by the institute become known during the inspection, the chair of the commission decides on the further involvement of the consultant in the evaluation process.

The chairperson assigns the members of the commission to the departments or main work areas of the institute. The commission members visit the areas assigned to them during the inspection. If additional written information is requested from the institute by the commission during the inspection, it must be presented to the central office no later than one week after the inspection of the institute for immediate forwarding to the commission.

It is the task of the managing director to monitor the correctness of the procedure and comment on it at the end of the inspection. It is the task of the advisory council representative to provide information on the work of the council since the last evaluation and report on the development of the institute from the point of view of an external academic.

The commission convenes a final meeting at the end of the inspection at which the guests outlined in Item 4 are given the opportunity to present their views of the evaluation. The voting members of the commission then formulate the crucial points of the evaluation and most significant recommendations.

At the end of the inspection, the chair of the commission gives the director of the institute an initial appraisal of its development. He or she should be accompanied by the managing director here.

A member of the central office keeps internal minutes of all discussions conducted by the commission (as the basis for preparing the draft assessment report). Excluded from this are discussions held in parallel by parts of the commission during visits to individual departments.

9. Objection by the Institute

If the institute has any doubts concerning the orderly conducting of the inspection, it can lodge an objection in writing with the central office within two weeks of the termination of the inspection. The central office forwards the objection to the chair of the commission and chair of the Board of Trustees who then decide jointly on its admissibility.

10. Minutes and Assessment Report

The central office prepares the draft assessment report upon completion of the inspection. The assessment report is coordinated first with the chairperson, then with the remaining voting members of the commission. Proposed amendments are documented by the central office and worked into the assessment report, which is then coordinated in another round with the voting members of the commission. It is adopted once all members of the commission eligible to vote have given their consent.

If there is a lack of agreement among the voting members of the commission, the chair of the Board of Trustees must mediate. If necessary, he or she can convene another meeting of the commission. If no agreement is reached, the positions of the majority, minority and/or deviating votes of individual consultants are recorded in the assessment report. Advisory members and guests can add deviating positions.

Once the assessment report has been adopted by the commission, its contents can only be amended in special circumstances (see Item 12). All changes require the further consent of all voting members of the commission. The chair of the commission is responsible for the contents of the assessment report and, jointly with the managing director, for the correct and orderly execution of the process, too.

Failure to respond within a set deadline of at least three weeks is also regarded as the consent of the voting members of the commission as defined by these regulations, whereby a written reminder, for which an e-mail is sufficient, must be issued a week before the

deadline is due to expire. Special reference to this must again be made when forwarding the first draft of the assessment report. The assessment report may contain no recommendations which go beyond the delivered opinion.

11. Comments of the Institute on the Assessment Report

The central office sends the adopted assessment report to the institute no later than six weeks prior to the meeting of Board of Trustees at which the evaluation of the institute is to be dealt with. Although the assessment report is provided confidentially to the director of the institute, he or she is permitted to pass it on to the academic advisory council. The confidentiality obligation applies to everyone involved until the assessment report is published by the DGIA foundation as part of the delivered opinion of the Board of Trustees.

The institute can lodge written comments on the assessment report with the central office within three weeks of its receipt by the institute director. If no comments have been received by this point in time, the Board of Trustees processes the assessment report without consideration of any comments made by the institute. The institute's comments on the assessment report are attached to the comments of the Board of Trustees as an appendix.

12. Objection by the Institute

Once it has been adopted, the commission's assessment report can no longer be amended. In special, exceptional circumstances, however, the institute can apply for reprocessing by the commission by lodging an objection with the central office. Objections must be submitted in writing with justification by the institute management within two weeks of the receipt of the assessment report. They are only admissible in the following instances:

- The assessment report infringes the procedural principles contained in this document.
- The assessment report contains incorrect or incomplete facts.

Complaints about the infringement of procedural principles concerning the partiality of consultants or non-inclusion of an institute's specialized areas can only be raised using the objection procedure outlined in Item 4 or, if the reasons for possible partiality are known, during the inspection of the institute using the objection procedure outlined in Item 9.

The central office forwards the objection to the chair of the commission and Board of Trustees who reach a joint decision on its admissibility and consideration. If an objection is admissible and justified, a new assessment report must be drawn up and approved by the commission. This assessment report must be reprocessed by the central office in accordance with Item 11, sentences 1 and 2. The institute has the opportunity to make a

final comment in accordance with Item 11, Para. 2 within two weeks of the receipt of the assessment report or notification that the objection was inadmissible or unjustified.

13. Board of Trustees' Meeting

The members and permanent guests of the Board of Trustees usually receive the self-portrayal of the institute, assessment report and comments of the institute two weeks before the meeting. In addition to this, the chair of the Board of Trustees also receives the minutes of the inspection of the institute if available in accordance with Item 8.

The assessment report is presented by the chair of the commission at the Board of Trustees' meeting. The Board of Trustees then issues a statement under consideration of all aspects and votes.

After the meeting, the chair of the Board of Trustees notifies the director of the institute of the content of the statement. The central office forwards the statement with appendices to the institute and BMBF. The statement and appendices are then published on the DGIA foundation's web pages.

14. Confidentiality

The members and guests of the commission and Board of Trustees, as well as the employees of the DGIA foundation are committed to confidentiality in regard to the contents of the evaluation process. It is in particular not permitted to pass on minutes, assessment reports, comments and statements in full or in part to any persons not authorized to peruse them in accordance with the regulations laid down in this document, or to give any unauthorized persons information concerning the contents of the evaluation.

Inquiries from the press for the contents or results of evaluations are either rejected before adopting the statement of the Board of Trustees by all persons involved in the evaluation process, with reference to the confidentiality of the process, or passed on to the central office which can give information on procedural questions.

15. Deadlines

If not determined in this document, the standard time periods for the individual steps of the evaluation process can be taken from the flow chart attached to this document as Appendix 4.