

By-laws of the Heidelberg Center for the Environment (HCE) at the University of Heidelberg

In its meeting of 10 May 2022, the University Senate adopted the following amended by-laws for the Heidelberg Center for the Environment (HCE) of the University of Heidelberg in accordance with § 19 (1) sent. 2 no. 10 of the State University Act (*Landeshochschulgesetz*; LHG).

Preamble

The Heidelberg Center for the Environment (HCE) was founded in 2011 as a research network of the University of Heidelberg, to serve as an interface for disciplinary expertise from the life sciences, natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences in selected environmentally relevant special fields. Since 2019, it has been funded as an interdisciplinary incubator under the excellence strategy. In light of climate change, environmental changes, and resource scarcity, as well as the socio-economic transformation processes needed due to this, the HCE performs and supports interdisciplinary research relevant to the environment. Its research activities range from problem analysis to development and critical assessment of solution strategies. Further fields of action include interdisciplinary environmental science teaching, promotion of junior researchers, and knowledge transfer to society. With the goal of exploiting the full research potential of the comprehensive university of Heidelberg, the HCE maintains local, regional, and international cooperations with university and non-university partner institutions.

§1 Organisational Form, Goals, and Tasks

- (1) The HCE is an interdisciplinary scientific network of the University of Heidelberg.
- (2) It
 - bundles research activities in the field of environmental sciences, involving scientists from the four fields of focus aligned with defined special fields,
 - periodically reviews achievement of research targets associated with the defined special fields and defines new special fields if required,
 - coordinates and supports interdisciplinary teaching and training events on subjects relevant to the environment,
 - initiates and coordinates environmentally relevant transfer activities in the areas of communication, advisory service, and application.
- (3) Within the scope of its tasks, the HCE is open to all scientists represented at University of Heidelberg for interdisciplinary cooperation.

§2 HCE Members and General Meeting

(1) HCE members shall be the personal members of the HCE as named in the annex. The extended board of the HCE shall decide on the admission of new members (§ 3). Applications must be submitted in writing.

Criteria for admission shall include, in particular, evidence of environmentally relevant research activities, as documented by relevant research projects and publications.

(2) Interested persons with environmental expertise from outside of the University of Heidelberg may apply for the status of associate members with an advisory position but without any voting rights.

(3) Membership in the HCE shall end upon leaving the University of Heidelberg, by individual declaration of resignation, or by resolution of the extended board if the criteria for admission as a member cease to be met.

(4) All HCE members form the general meeting. It shall be prepared and chaired by the executive director (ED) (§ 3 (1)). It shall meet at least twice a year.

Its tasks include:

- a. development of proposals for election of the board (§ 3 (1)) and the extended board (§ 3 (2))
- b. election of the board and the extended board
- c. discussion of the board's annual activity report

Official reports and proposals on matters of staff, material, and financial resources and their distribution.

(5) The general meeting shall have a quorum if at least 33% of the HCE members participate in it.

§3 Management Structure

(1) Board

The board shall consist of the executive director (ED) and two deputies as well as the head of the office with an advisory vote.

The ED and their deputies shall be elected by the general meeting from among the professorial members of the HCE. One deputy shall be elected from the life and natural sciences (fields of focus 1 and 2), and the other one from the humanities and social sciences (fields of focus 3 and 4).

The ED shall manage the current business and shall prepare the annual activity report of the HCE, each supported by the HCE office (para. (3)). They shall represent the HCE on the University Commission for Research and Strategy and other university boards. The ED may delegate tasks to other board members.

The term of office of the ED and their deputies shall be two years each. One re-election shall be possible. Members elected by succession shall hold office until the end of the regular election period. Board members may be voted out of office at a general meeting with a majority of two-thirds of the votes of all members of the HCE. The ED and their deputies shall be appointed by the Vice-Chancellor.

The board shall govern the HCE; it shall be responsible for any matters related to the HCE, except where such matters are the responsibility of other agencies, boards, or bodies by law, regulation, these by-laws, or other university by-laws.

Board decisions shall be passed by simple majority. If there is a tie, the ED's vote shall be decisive.

(2) Extended Board

The extended board comprises the board members plus four additional HCE members, each representing one of the four fields of focus. The representatives of the four fields of research shall be elected by the general meeting. The term of office of the elected members of the extended board shall be two years each. One re-election shall be possible. Members elected by succession shall hold office until the end of the regular election period. The elected members of the extended board may be voted out of office at a general meeting with a majority of two-thirds of the votes of all members of the HCE.

The extended board shall meet at least once per semester.

The extended board

- shall advise the board on any fundamental matters of the HCE
- shall decide on selection of the research projects of the HCE on the board's proposal.

Board plans regarding allocation of funding from the university's excellence strategy shall require approval from the extended board.

(3) Office

The office shall support management of the HCE; it shall be headed by a scientific managing director (MD). The superior of the MD shall be the ED. The MD shall perform the following tasks independently in coordination with the board:

- a. Organisation of periodic colloquia (e.g. Heidelberger Brücke),
- b. Organisation of scientific conferences and periodic networking events with non-university partners,
- c. Coordination of research activities and monitoring of application procedures,
- d. Support of transfer activities of HCE members (in coordination with the responsible Vice-Rector's office or Communication and Marketing),

- e. Provision of information material, establishing and maintaining the HCE website (in coordination with Communications and Marketing).

§4 Financing and Administration

- (1) The HCE and its projects shall be financed by third-party funding as well as by funding provided to it by the rectorate, including funds from the university's excellence strategy.
- (2) Staff and material resources of the HCE shall be managed by the office, subject to supervision of the board.
- (3) The rectorate's responsibilities shall not be affected by this.

§5 Research Projects

Projects that receive funding from HCE funds shall be distinguished from those that receive funding from other sources.

Research projects with HCE funding

- (1) The HCE board shall conduct two project tenders per year on subjects of environmental science with a focus on subjects from the HCE special fields.
- (2) Projects to be funded shall be selected following funding criteria transparently formulated and communicated by the board in advance.
- (3) The projects to be funded shall be selected in a two-stage procedure. Following a pre-selection based on written applications, applicants are invited to present their projects orally.
- (4) The decision on selection shall be made by the extended board. Decisions shall require a simple majority. If there is a tie, the ED's vote shall be decisive.
- (5) Selected projects will be submitted to the rectorate for final decision.

Research projects without HCE funding

Research projects that meet the eligibility criteria but that are funded from other sources may be associated as HCE projects by the board upon request, subject to the approval of the extended board.

§6 Cooperation with Other Institutions

- (1) The HCE board engages in regular exchange of information on activities, research subjects and goals, as well as on the planned HCE project tenders, with other bodies of the university excellence strategy (in particular the Research Councils of the fields of focus, the directorates of the research incubators Marsilius Kolleg and the Interdisciplinary Center for Scientific Computing as well as HEiKA).
- (2) The HCE may also cooperate with institutions from outside of the university in order to perform its tasks. Cooperation contracts and other agreements

may be concluded by the Vice-Chancellor of the university upon the board's proposal for this purpose.

§7 Final Provisions / Effective Date

- (1) The university's general rules of procedure shall apply to the proceedings in the boards of the HCE, except where otherwise specified in these by-laws. The boards of the HCE may also adopt rules of procedure.
- (2) The HCE shall be evaluated periodically, but at least every five years. The above version of the by-laws shall enter into effect on the first day of the month following its publication in the Vice-Chancellor's gazette. It thereby replaces the by-laws of 13/11/2020 (gazette no. 18/2020).

Heidelberg, 11/05/2022

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Bernhard Eitel

Vice-Chancellor