




# Welcome package

Prepared by the Working Group *Welcome Package*

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Leibniz Association  
Chausseestraße 111  
10115 Berlin



[en] As the Leibniz PhD Network we welcome you to the Leibniz Association and hope you enjoy your time at your institute. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask the PhD representatives at your institute or the Leibniz PhD Network. Good luck with your PhD!

[de] Als das Leibniz PhD Network heißen wir dich herzlich willkommen in der Leibniz Gemeinschaft und wünschen dir viel Spaß an deinem Institut. Falls du Fragen hast, kannst du dich immer gerne an die PhD representatives deines Institutes oder das Leibniz PhD Network wenden. Viel Glück mit deiner Promotion!

[dsb] Jako Leibniz PhD Network witamy tebję wutšobnje w zjadnošćnstwje Leibniz a žycymy wjele wjasela na twojim instituće. Gaž maš pšašanja, móžoš se pšecej wobrošiś do PhD-ego zastupnika na twojim instituće albo do Leibniz PhD network. Wjele gluku z promociju!

[es] Como el Leibniz PhD Network, te damos la bienvenida a la Asociación Leibniz y esperamos que disfrutes tu tiempo en tu instituto. Si tienes alguna pregunta, no dudes en consultar con los PhD representatives de tu instituto o con el Leibniz PhD Network. Suerte con tu doctorado!

[fr] Au nom du Leibniz PhD Network, nous te souhaitons la bienvenue au sein de l'Association Leibniz et espérons que tu passeras un agréable moment dans ton institut. Si tu as des questions, n'hésite pas à contacter les représentants des doctorants de ton institut ou le Leibniz PhD Network. Bonne chance pour ton doctorat!

[nl] Als Leibniz PhD Network heten we je hartelijk welkom in de Leibniz Gemeenschap en wensen je veel plezier in je nieuwe instituut. Bij vragen kun je gerust terecht bij de PhD representatives van jouw instituut of natuurlijk het Leibniz PhD Network zelf. Veel succes met je promotie!

[zh] 跨过大山大河，穿过人山人海，不知道您有没有到达您心目中的远方，但这一定是一场诗意的相逢。欢迎您加入莱布尼茨协会，祝您诗酒年华，阳光灿烂；愿您以梦为马，勇攀高峰！期待与您在 Leibniz PhD network 中相遇，与我们联系，祝您成功！

[pt] Em nome da Leibniz PhD Network, damos boas-vindas a você à Associação Leibniz, e esperamos que desfrute o período em seu instituto. Se tiver alguma pergunta, não hesite em consultar os representantes dos doutorandos do seu instituto ou a Leibniz PhD Network. Sucesso no seu doutorado!

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## Welcome to the Leibniz Association!

We hope that you will have a pleasant journey as a Doctoral researcher both in terms of academic and personal life. This welcome package aims to help you making that journey smoother. It is a guideline of suggested steps to go through before (and during) a PhD at a Leibniz institute. Whether you are a German **Doctoral researcher**<sup>1</sup> or an international Doctoral researcher, you will find tips and contacts to help you settle in your new environment.

The Leibniz Association (Leibniz - Gemeinschaft or Wissenschaftsgemeinschaft Gottfried Wilhelm *Leibniz* e.V. [aka WGL]) consists of five sections in which currently 96 (June 2020) institutes and research museums are located throughout Germany. The number of institutes varies over the years as new members come in, or institutes leave the WGL after a non-positive evaluation procedure.

### Section A

(23 institutes)

Humanities and Educational Research

### Section B

(18 institutes)

Economics, Social and Spatial Sciences

### Section C

(24 institutes)

Life Sciences - Biodiversity & Health

### Section D

(23 institutes)

Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Engineering

### Section E

(9 institutes)

Environmental Research



<sup>1</sup> see <https://patthomson.net/2014/02/03/whats-with-the-name-doctoral-student/> for an explanation of the term

## The ZFMK - Leibniz Institute for Animal Biodiversity

[Zoological Research Museum Alexander Koenig \(ZFMK\)](#) – Leibniz Institute for Animal Biodiversity ...

... is one of the major natural history research museums in Germany. It has earned international reputation in the documentation, research, and interpretation of animal biodiversity. The ZFMK conducts biodiversity research based on taxonomic expertise, with a special focus on systematics, evolutionary research, biogeography, genomics, and biodiversity monitoring.

ZFMK houses three chairs ([Systematic Zoology](#), [Molecular Biodiversity Research](#) and [Biodiversity Monitoring](#)) of the University of Bonn and has a cooperation agreement with the university. Scientists of ZFMK participate in teaching activities for bachelor and master studies of the Biological Faculty, University of Bonn, and they supervise masters' and PhD theses. Beyond the curricular courses, ZFMK offers special training activities in organismic biology for zoologists (lectures, courses, labs, excursions both home and abroad).

### **Brief history of ZFMK:**

**1900** Founded as private zoological museum by Alexander Koenig (1858–1940).

**1912** Foundation stone ceremony for the present building.

**1929** Due to financial losses, the First World War and the Russian revolution, Alexander Koenig was forced to turn over the museum to the Prussian government.

**1934** The museum was completed with governmental funds in 1934 and received the status of an independent research institute.

**1957** The Koenigsteiner Abkommen lays the foundation for the current financial arrangement with state and federal government contributions.


**1985** First evaluation by the Wissenschaftsrat (German Science Council) and confirmation as member institute of the “Blaue Liste” (Koenigsteiner Abkommen institutes).

**1997** Foundation of the “Leibniz Gemeinschaft” with ZFMK as member.

**2006** Positive assessment of its performance and a confirmation for its funding eligibility to the Leibniz Association.

**2013** Positive assessment of its performance and a confirmation for its funding eligibility to the Leibniz Association. ZFMK became an independent foundation under public law.

The NRW state department responsible for the ZFMK is the *Ministry of Culture and Science (MKW)*, the federal department responsible for ZFMK is the *Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)*.



Research at ZFMK is traditionally based on the extensive scientific collections with about 5.8 Million objects including voucher specimens and BioBank material (DNA & tissues, as of June 2020). A classical domain of ZFMK is the production and publication of taxonomic revisions and monographs as well as the conservation of specimens and the provision of taxonomic and faunistic literature.

In recent times, the ZFMK has extended its research in the area of systematic zoology by important fields dealing with the global biodiversity crisis. Numerous ecological faunistic projects ZFMK focus on molecular biodiversity research and biodiversity monitoring. During the past decade the institute has developed applications of taxonomic knowledge and is leading innovative technological developments in the fields of genomic and automated biodiversity assessments.

The development and application of modern tools for genomic analyses in the Center for Molecular Biodiversity Research is relevant for the generation of data on species diversity and genetic diversity within species. Methods developed for automated molecular and visual monitoring of species diversity combined with modelling of species distribution form the basis for novel research approaches analysing biodiversity change.

## The ZFMK International Graduate School - Z I G S

Since 2019 the ZFMK is running its own graduate school, which offers structured mentoring and supervision for PhD candidates. Even though ZIGS itself does not offer funding, the goal of this program is to support early steps in a scientific career and help to develop personally tailored options.

In order to achieve this goal, we offer an accompanying program of seminar series, lectures, practicals and soft skill workshops. These activities are organized in time block structures with obligatory and facultative courses in order to fit into the usually tight schedules of many research projects. By opening the training program to all young scientists at ZFMK, every Master and Bachelor student, as well as Post-Doctoral researchers, may also benefit from the Graduate School.

Further details can be found here:

<https://www.zfmk.de/en/research/promotion-and-education/zigs-zfmk-international-graduate-school>

**Contact Person:** [Dr. Matthias Geiger](mailto:m.geiger@leibniz-zfmk.de) (+49 228 9122-258 / [m.geiger@leibniz-zfmk.de](mailto:m.geiger@leibniz-zfmk.de))

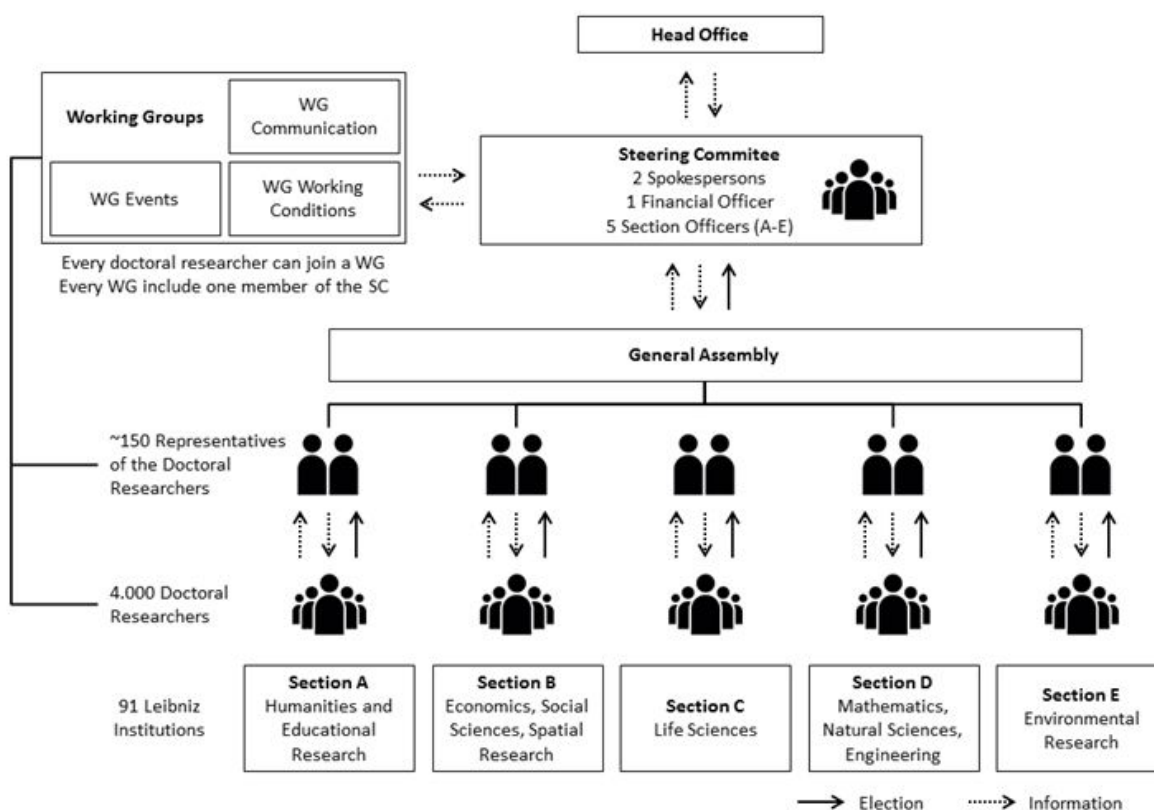
## Getting familiar with the Leibniz PhD Network



The Leibniz PhD Network represents around 4,000 doctoral researchers from all Leibniz institutes. The network has a bottom-up structure (see organigram on page 4). In the annual General Assembly, two spokespeople, a treasurer, and five section spokespeople are elected to coordinate and represent the network. However, a substantial part of the work takes place in the working groups, in which all doctoral researchers are welcome to participate. The network aims to improve working conditions, provide a forum for discussion and get involved in general policy making for doctoral researchers.

Reach out to the doctoral representative and/or the doctoral program coordinator of your institute to learn more about the network and how to get in touch.

For further details on ongoing work and possibilities of participation, visit <https://leibniz-phd.net/>.



**Organigram of the Leibniz PhD Network.** Elected doctoral representatives from their respective institutes come together once a year at the General Assembly, where the steering committee is elected.

The Leibniz PhD Network is a founding member of N<sup>2</sup>, the Network of Networks, together with the Max Planck PhDnet and the Helmholtz Juniors. N<sup>2</sup> unites more than 15,000 doctoral researchers of Germany's non-university research organizations to discuss the future of science to gain political weight when working to improve the situation of the doctoral researchers. You can find more information about N<sup>2</sup> at: <http://n2-network.net/>.

## Before leaving home

It is important to start getting familiar with some of the German bureaucracy and culture before arriving in Germany. We have compiled a couple of important points for you to take into consideration:

### Visa

Apply for visa as soon as possible, usually at a German Embassy in your country. Please verify with your embassy the list of documents required for Student-Visa application. **Important:** At your embassy, make sure you ask for approved copies of your undergrad degree, masters degree and maybe even birth certificate. It is also helpful to translate them into English if you don't have an international version.



Non-EU researchers will likely be asked for a **temporary health insurance** in order to receive the Visa. Often the Visa process will include this and within 90 days you need to register for the permanent health insurance. More on health insurance can be found further below .

## Accommodation

ZFMK has two guest rooms that can be available for rent over the initial months. As they are heavily booked make sure to ask for availability as soon as possible. Also asking colleagues via the mailing list can help to find something for short-term. Airbnb is not too famous in Germany and usually not the most affordable option, but students often rent their existing rooms when they travel or leave during semesters holidays on local facebook pages (e.g. 'WG & Wohnung +your\_city gesucht'). Otherwise you can make use of the following search engines to look for accommodation:

- <https://www.immobilienscout24.de>
- <https://www.kalaydo.de/immobilien>
- <https://www.wg-gesucht.de>
- <https://www.immowelt.de>
- <https://www.ebay-kleinanzeigen.de>

To rent an apartment you will usually have to provide:

1. An income proof, usually in the form of an *Einkommensnachweis* or a *Bürgschaft*
2. A *Schufa*, a financial solvency certificate
3. A *Mietschuldenfreiheitsbestätigung*

- **Schufa**

It is a federal credit standing certificate. As a newcomer to Germany, you cannot get this document. Ask your landlord if you can provide other documents like the upcoming two instead.

- **Einkommensnachweis**

This is a monthly income statement. You can print it out directly from your bank website. In case you have not received any salary because you have not started your PhD yet, a copy of your working contract usually works fine.

- **Bürgschaft**

This is a bail certificate signed by someone with steady income (e.g. your parents) committing to cover your rent in case you are unable to do so.

## Getting started in Germany

There are a couple of useful guides on studying in Germany:

- <http://www.uni-goettingen.de/downloads/FlippingBook/webr2017/HTML/files/asets/basic-html/index.html#1>
- [https://www.daad.de/medien/deutschland/nach-deutschland/publikationen/siden\\_2016\\_barrierefrei.pdf](https://www.daad.de/medien/deutschland/nach-deutschland/publikationen/siden_2016_barrierefrei.pdf)
- <https://www.studying-in-germany.org/>

With a focus on **Bonn**: <https://www.uni-bonn.de/studying/international-students>

## Arriving in Germany

When arriving in Germany you will need to follow some common procedures such as:

### Registration

You are obliged to register your arrival in Germany, after you found a permanent residence, at the registration office (*Bürgeramt* or *Einwohnermeldeamt*) in your city/district. After registering you will have your *Anmeldebestätigung* or *Meldebescheinigung*, this document is needed for a few more tasks in Germany (i.e. opening a bank account and visa extension). So you should do the registration as soon as possible, usually within 14 days of arrival - do not procrastinate there might be fees if you take too much time.

For most cities you can register for an appointment online on the homepage of your city. On the spot appointments can be done, but *Bürgerämter* are usually busy places, so they do come with quite some waiting time. Keep in mind that if you move to another flat, you also have to update your registration at the *Bürgeramt*. For the registration you will probably need (still check within your district the exact documents you need to take along):

- **Your passport**
- **Rental contract**
- **A signed confirmation from your landlord, that you rented your flat**

Check the **City of Bonn** website for the exact procedure:

<https://www.bonn.de/microsite/en/services/formalities/registration-of-residence.php>

When you're at the *Bürgeramt*, make sure to ask for favors your city offers to new residents. Free tickets to the museum, coupons for restaurants or **even welcome money**. Also say that you are a student, because that may include additional benefits!

## General support for foreigners

Some cities offer a program called *Migrationsberatung für erwachsene Zuwanderer*, in short MBE. This counselling for adult foreigners might help you with getting a long-term visa or finding a place to live. Googling the term 'MBE +your\_city' should quickly give you the link to your specific MBE and how to get in touch with them.

For **Bonn** this can be a good start:

<https://www.bonn.de/microsite/en/services/for-expats/index.php>

## Opening a bank account

There are several banks you can register; all of them will ask you for your residence confirmation document (*Meldebescheinigung*), which you receive from the 'Bürgeramt'. Common choices are:

- **Sparkasse**: public bank with many ATMs
- **Volksbank**: cooperative Bank, also quite many ATMs
- **Postbank**
- **Commerzbank**
- **DKB**: Online bank with good conditions, but they are a bit more restrictive in opening bank accounts
- **Online Banks** like N26 or ING

Don't forget to ask your bank about cash withdrawal conditions abroad (for credit cards as well). They are often costly. You can compare what different banks offer here (in German): <https://www.check24.de>

## Getting a SIM-Card

You can buy a SIM-Card directly from telecommunication providers (e.g. O<sub>2</sub> and Vodafone) or in a supermarket (e.g. REWE or Aldi). If you intend to stay for a short term, you may buy a prepaid card. Do not forget to take your passport along. You might also be requested to show a residence registration document (e.g. *Anmeldung*).

You can compare different options for phone contracts/sim cards here (in German):

<https://www.verivox.de>

## Health Insurance

In Germany, health insurance companies usually do not offer student discount for doctoral researchers. You can choose between statutory insurance (*Kassenversicherung*, i.e. TK and AOK) and private insurance (*Privatversicherung*, i.e. MAWISTA Science and Continentale). Private insurance may be cheaper on the short term but be aware that fees increase as you age. The first option is the most common one among German citizens and people who plan to stay for a long time.

Keep in mind that if you are hired directly by a Leibniz institute you will be asked to which health insurance you are registered, since your institute covers half of the fees. The second half will automatically be subtracted from your gross salary. If you are a stipend holder and you need to cover health insurance on your own, know that some organizations will provide extra health insurance money upon request.

You can compare health insurance providers here (in German):

<https://www.check24.de/gesetzliche-krankenversicherung/>

Note: To prepare your work contract, the institute will ask you to provide a social security number (*Sozialversicherungsnummer*). If it is your first job in Germany and you chose a statutory insurance, they will provide you with this number. If you chose a private insurance, you have to apply to get this number from the *Deutsche Rentenversicherung*.

## Extend your visa by applying for a residence permit

Usually, within 90 days of arrival in Germany, you are required to obtain permission from the German Federal Government to remain and work in Germany for a longer period of time. This permission is known as *Aufenthaltstitel*. To get one, you need to make an appointment with the *Ausländerbehörde* in your city. Since there can be long waiting lists for appointments, contact the *Ausländerbehörde* in your city as soon as possible.

The documents needed depend on the specific visa you are applying for, but generally include:

- Passport;
- *Anmeldung*;
- Work contract;
- Rental contract;
- A biometric photograph of correct size;
- A proof of health insurance, or *Mitgliedsbescheinigung*; the *Mitgliedsbescheinigung* is not simply the health insurance card but a formal

letter from the insurance company stating that you are a member. You can ask your health insurance provider to send you this document.

- Paying a fee (credit cards are usually not accepted).

## Driving License

Your driving license might not be valid in Germany and you might have to get an additional international driving licence. For more information on this topic: <https://handbookgermany.de/en/live/driving-licence.html>

## Getting started at ZFMK

### Institute information

Official website: <https://www.zfmk.de/en>

Intranet: *access will be granted after you have been checked-in*

Mailing lists: *after receiving the official [name@leibniz-zfmk.de](mailto:name@leibniz-zfmk.de) email address you will be added automatically to the general mailing list. Sending a "Hello I am here!" to [students@zfmk.de](mailto:students@zfmk.de) will make sure you are also added to the student & ZIGS mailing list.*

### Enrolment

ZFMK is not licenced to deliver a doctoral degree. Therefore, you need to enrol at a university (usually University of Bonn) to get your PhD. Doing a doctorate at ZFMK is via the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Bonn. The official rules can be found here:

[https://www.mnf.uni-bonn.de/promotion/leitfaden-en?set\\_language=en](https://www.mnf.uni-bonn.de/promotion/leitfaden-en?set_language=en)

Before you can officially register for your doctoral studies, you must first find a supervisor at ZFMK who will assist you during your doctorate. The enrolment as Doctoral researcher comes with some benefits like free sports courses, free usage of the public transportation system, cheaper entry to museums or soft-skill training lessons. Check back with the website of the Argelander Competence Center of the University of Bonn for for junior scientist for further details:

[https://www.uni-bonn.de/research/argelander-program/Argelander\\_Competence\\_Center](https://www.uni-bonn.de/research/argelander-program/Argelander_Competence_Center)

## Life as a Doctoral researcher

- **PhD agreement**

This document includes a list of duties and rights for doctoral researchers and their supervisor

[https://www.zfmk.de/dateien/dokumente/supervision\\_agreement\\_zfmk\\_0.pdf](https://www.zfmk.de/dateien/dokumente/supervision_agreement_zfmk_0.pdf)

- **Graduate programme**

These programmes offer workshops and soft skills trainings for doctoral researchers and also Master and Bachelor students at ZFMK. The University of Bonn offers a graduate programme as well.

<https://www.zfmk.de/dateien/dokumente/currimods.pdf>

<https://www.uni-bonn.de/research/argelander-program/events-and-opportunities>

- **Student Club at ZFMK**

The student club meetings are a perfect place for making new friends, get acquainted to life at ZFMK and chat about research ideas and problems. Make sure to have your email address added to the mailing list ([students@zfmk.de](mailto:students@zfmk.de)).

## People of interest

If you are facing issues in your work environment, there are different people you can get in touch with:

- **Ombudsperson:**

The ombudsperson (or mediator) of ZFMK can advise you and help you solving conflicts with coworkers or with your supervisor for instance. He is also the contact person for misconduct regarding scientific practises.

*Dr. Bernhard Huber, [b.huber@leibniz-zfmk.de](mailto:b.huber@leibniz-zfmk.de), 0228 9122 294*

The Leibniz Association also has an ombudsperson:

<https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/en/research/good-scientific-practice/ombudspersonen/>

- **Equal opportunities representatives:**

They enforce equal opportunities and chances for all genders, minorities, and for disabled people at all levels of employments and career. In experiences of inequality, discrimination and sexual harassment at work, the representatives can be contacted. She also provides support for child care and other family-related issues.

*Dr. Eva Bärmann, [e.baermann@leibniz-zfmk.de](mailto:e.baermann@leibniz-zfmk.de), 0228 9122 264*

- **PhD Coordinator - ZIGS**

The ZIGS coordinator at ZFMK oversees many aspects of the PhD-program. He can help you with questions regarding the PhD-Agreement or initial steps at your institute.

*Dr. Matthias Geiger, [m.geiger@leibniz-zfmk.de](mailto:m.geiger@leibniz-zfmk.de), 0228 9122 258*

- **PhD representatives:**

The tasks of the PhD representatives is to offer opportunities to optimize the working environment for Doctoral researchers and to improve information exchange between the various Leibniz institutes.

*Jana Flury, [j.flury@leibniz-zfmk.de](mailto:j.flury@leibniz-zfmk.de), 0228 9122 401*

*Tobias Spanke, [t.spanke@leibniz-zfmk.de](mailto:t.spanke@leibniz-zfmk.de), 0228 9122 401*

- **Working councils:**

Elected by the employees of your company to represent their interests and ensure compliances with Works Constitution Act. The members offer their help for fixing problems and treat your problems strictly confidentially.

*Dr. Christoph Mayer, [c.mayer@leibniz-zfmk.de](mailto:c.mayer@leibniz-zfmk.de), 0228 9122 403*

The **IT department** is there to help solve computer-related issues. The **facility manager** of your workplace is also there for any kind of technical assistance (changing a lightbulb, getting furniture, etc.).

- IT department: *Thorsten Hermann, [t.hermann@leibniz-zfmk.de](mailto:t.hermann@leibniz-zfmk.de), 0228 9122 296*
- Facility manager: *Michael Huse, [m.huse@leibniz-zfmk.de](mailto:m.huse@leibniz-zfmk.de), 0228 9122 278*

## Important documents

After starting at your institute, you will receive some very important documents that you should keep. These include your payroll, health insurance documents, pension fund records and social security number.

## Miscellaneous

- Institutional forms and templates: *Intranet News...:\Info-Formularcenter*
- The handbook of ZFMK is currently being revised and will be available as WiKi document in late summer 2020.
- The [Alexander Koenig Gesellschaft \(AKG\)](#) offers small grants for travel expenses or other activities related to working at ZFMK. Check back with your supervisor whether it might make sense to apply for support.