

# Dahlem Konferenzen<sup>®</sup>

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## **Purpose**

The Dahlem Konferenzen are held to promote the exchange of scientific ideas and information, to stimulate cooperation between scientists, and to define avenues of future research.

## **Concept**

Progress in understanding complex systems—whether in science or in society—requires interdisciplinary research. Yet, specialists must understand each other across disciplinary lines if they want to collaborate.

The Dahlem Konferenzen offer a unique possibility for researchers from various disciplines to approach topics from their own perspective while combining their experience. The aim of the Konferenzen is not necessarily to reach a consensus, but to identify gaps in knowledge, to find new ways of approaching contentious points, and to indicate the direction of future research.

## **Themes**

Leading scientists submit workshop proposals on themes that

- are directed toward innovative, interdisciplinary research
- are of high-priority interest to the disciplines involved.

The proposals are submitted to the Scientific Advisory Board of the Konferenzen for consideration.

## Program Advisory Committee

A Program Advisory Committee is formed for each workshop based on the recommendations of the Workshop initiator(s). Approximately one year before the workshop, this committee convenes to decide on the scientific program, define the goals of the workshop, and select the themes for debate. Approximately 40 participants are invited on the basis of their expertise and international reputation in the relevant research topics. In addition, a young German scientist can be invited who has demonstrated outstanding potential in field(s) related to the Workshop theme.

## The Dahlem Workshop Model

The Dahlem Konferenzen employ a unique format for scientific deliberation (*the Dahlem Workshop Model*) in which the invited participants meet in four interdisciplinary working groups to illuminate the workshop theme from a variety of perspectives. The basis for the group discussions are background papers written by selected participants before the workshop. These papers review particular areas of the workshop theme and pose fundamental questions for the future of research on that theme. During the workshop, each group prepares a report summarizing the results of its deliberations. Two to three workshops a year are held with this format.

## Dahlem Workshop Reports

The group reports are published together with the revised background papers as a Dahlem Workshop Report. The reports are published as books by MIT Press.

## History

In 1974, the Dahlem Konferenzen were established by the *Stifterverband for die Deutsche Wissenschaft* in cooperation with the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* to promote communication and cooperation between scientific disciplines and individual scientists. Since 1990, the Dahlem Konferenzen have been a part of the Freie Universität Berlin. To date, ninety-five Dahlem Workshops have been organized with over 4000 participants. Basic costs are covered by the Freie Universität Berlin.

## Name

Dahlem Konferenzen are named after the Berlin district of Dahlem, which has a rich tradition as a scientific location. Today, several Max Planck Institutes, the Freie Universität Berlin, and the Wissenschaftskolleg are located there.