

Rules of procedure for the commissions

Preamble

The following rules of procedure regulate the working methods and procedures of the commissions in accordance with § 5 (Bodies) and § 9 (Commissions) of the statutes of the Society of Virology (Gesellschaft für Virologie e.V.), GfV.

First version dated November 21, 2024.

§ 1 Adoption and amendment of the rules of procedure

The rules of procedure may be amended by the executive board at any time. Amendments to the rules of procedure may be proposed in writing to the executive board by the chairs of the commissions.

§ 2 Commission work

The standing commissions are an essential part of the GfV and are responsible for specific topic-related tasks. The names of the commissions should be chosen to reflect their respective tasks. The objectives, expectations, and tasks of each committee are defined in more detail in § 4.

The members of the respective commissions meet regularly, either digitally or in person, during the year. The number of meetings, the organization, the agenda and the participants are determined individually by the commissions, whereby at least one meeting of the commission should take place per calendar year.

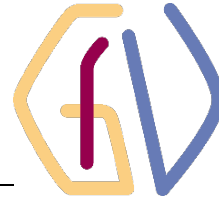
Statements developed within the committees must be coordinated with the executive board before publication. Ideally, these statements should be published exclusively through the GfV executive board. Additionally, news, approved statements, and publications originating from the committees may be forwarded to the scientific coordination and the News & Views commission for further dissemination via the GfV newsletter and social media channels.

§ 2.1 Establishment of a commission

To form a commission, a relevant and long-term topic-related task must be defined. Proposals for the establishment of new commissions may be submitted to the executive board by members of the GfV. The decision to establish a commission is made by the executive board in collaboration with the advisory board during a joint meeting.

§ 2.2 Cooperation with other professional societies

The standing commissions work together with other professional societies and with corresponding commissions of the German Association for the Control of Virus Diseases (DVV). Joint commissions may also be formed with other scientific societies.



§ 2.3 Dissolution of a commission

If a commission ceases its activities and regular meetings in the long term or if the relevant and long-term topic-related task no longer exists, the executive board may dissolve the commission. A request for dissolution may also be submitted to the executive board by the chairs of the respective commission. The decision to dissolve a commission is made by the executive board in collaboration with the advisory board during a joint meeting.

§ 3 Membership and chair of the commissions

A commission generally consists of one chairperson with a deputy or two co-equal chairpersons and additional members.

§ 3.1 Membership in a commission

Members of the commissions may include both GfV members and non-GfV members. The prerequisite for commission membership is the relevant expertise. Applications for membership in a commission can be submitted at any time in the form of a one-page letter of motivation or through a personal conversation with the commission chair. Any potential conflicts of interest (e.g., due to existing industry collaborations) must be disclosed. The commission chair may also directly approach suitable individuals and invite them to join the respective commission. In coordination with the commission chair, the members of the commissions are appointed by the executive board and the advisory board.

A call for new commission members can be requested by the commission chair. With the approval of the executive board, this call will be promoted by the scientific coordination and the News & Views commission via the newsletter, social media channels, and the GfV booth at the annual conference.

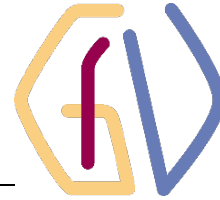
§ 3.2 Chair of a commission

The chair of a commission is reserved for GfV members. The commission members internally nominate a chairperson by a simple majority and communicate this decision to the executive board and the scientific coordination. Upon approval by the executive board, the chair is provisionally appointed and officially elected by a majority vote at the next general assembly in accordance with § 9 of the statutes. The election of commission chairs at the general assembly can be conducted as a block vote. The term of office is three years.

The elected commission chair, according to § 8 of the statutes, is a member of the advisory board of the society and participates in joint meetings of the executive board and the advisory board with voting rights. If a commission has two co-equal chairs who both attend the meeting, it must be determined in advance who will exercise the voting right. The commission chair reports on the activities of the commission at least once per business year during an executive board and advisory board meeting.

§ 3.3 Termination of membership in a commission

Membership in a commission can be terminated at any time by notifying the commission chair and the scientific coordination of the GfV. If a chairperson resigns, the commission must promptly appoint an interim successor and notify the executive board. In cases of inactivity for over one year, commission members may be removed at the request of the chair. For this purpose, the chair must inform the scientific coordination, which will forward the matter to the executive board. The executive board/scientific coordination will make an effort to contact the member in question before proceeding with the exclusion.



§ 4 Commissions

The following list of existing commissions serves to present the work program of each commission. The content, formulated by the individual commissions, is intended to describe each commission on the homepage of the Society of Virology.

§ 4.1 Antiviral Therapy

The joint commission “Antiviral Therapy” of the DVV and GfV addresses various aspects of antiviral prophylaxis and therapy. The commission contributes to updating existing guidelines, initiating new ones, and informing the scientific community about current developments in antiviral therapy. It participates in updating the German standard reference for anti-infective therapy (Brodt et al., 2024; ISBN 978-3132423435). Tabular overviews of antiviral medications are regularly updated and made freely available on the GfV website. The freely accessible interpretation systems for evaluating antiviral therapies are also linked there. The commission is involved in managing the clinical-virology.net platform for the online presentation of infection numbers for respiratory viruses and bacteria, as well as gastroenteritis pathogens in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. Its work is coordinated with the Section for Antiviral Therapy of the Paul Ehrlich Society (PEG).

§ 4.2 Genetic Engineering

The “Genetic Engineering” commission is involved through the “Central Commission for Biological Safety” (ZKBS) in the risk assessment of microorganisms, safety classification of genetic engineering activities, necessary safety measures in genetic engineering facilities, and potential risks of releasing or marketing genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Members of the commission represent the field of virology as experts in the ZKBS. Virologists appointed as experts in the ZKBS for other fields may also be invited to join the GfV commission for Genetic Engineering.

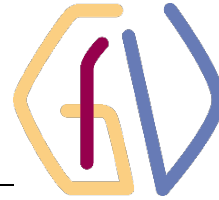
§ 4.3 University Affairs, Research Funding, International Relations

The “University Affairs, Research Funding, International Relations” commission of the GfV advises the GfV executive board on strategic issues related to virology at universities and non-university research institutions. It provides guidance to GfV members on research funding and appointment procedures. At the request of the GfV executive board, the commission also undertakes tasks related to maintaining relationships with international professional societies.

§ 4.4 Immunization

The joint commission “Immunization” of the DVV and GfV deals with various aspects of specific prophylaxis against viral infections. The commission supports the GfV executive board in addressing inquiries on topics related to specific antiviral prophylaxis, such as the efficacy or safety of approved products. To address the multifaceted topics with broad expertise, the commission includes not only members from university and scientific institutions but also members from federal agencies (Paul Ehrlich Institute, Robert Koch Institute) and national immunization committees (STIKO, STIKO-Vet, National Immunization Committee (A)).

The commission aims to scientifically process vaccination-related topics for the interested scientific community both within and outside the GfV and to provide public education on questions of broad interest. Networking with German-speaking neighboring countries and other scientific societies, such as the DGFI, is intended to enable a better-coordinated approach in communicating important vaccination issues.



The commission's tasks include the following:

1. Representing the GfV in public inquiries on current vaccination topics.
2. Preparing statements to raise awareness of potential issues caused by vaccination gaps and to increase the general acceptance of vaccination recommendations.
3. Regularly commenting on drafts from federal agencies, including new vaccination recommendations (STIKO) or regulations/laws related to vaccines (BMG).

§ 4.5 Teaching, Advanced and Continuing Education

The "Teaching, Advanced and Continuing Education" commission of the GfV represents the interests of the field of virology in student education and training, in qualifying advanced education (specialist physician, specialist virologist), and in continuing education. For this purpose, it participates in the development and adaptation of laws, licensing regulations, and training and learning goal catalogs, among others. Additionally, the commission advises the board regarding the "Specialist Virologist" certification ("Zertifikat Fachvirolog*in") of the GfV.

§ 4.6 Guidelines

The joint "Guidelines" commission of the DVV and GfV contributes virological expertise to the creation and revision of guidelines that include virological aspects. To this end, the commission regularly reviews currently valid and revisable guidelines of the AWMF and offers its support to the leading specialist societies. Another task of the commission is to identify missing guidelines on clinically relevant virological issues and, if necessary, to coordinate the development of such guidelines together with other specialist societies. If guidelines in the original domain of clinical virology are lacking, they are developed under the leadership of the DVV and GfV.

§ 4.7 National Reference Centers and Consultant Laboratories / Virological Surveillance

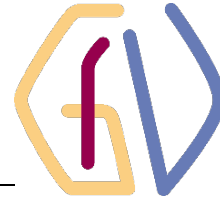
Members of the commission include the heads of the virological National Reference Centers (NRZ) and Consultant Laboratories (KL), as well as their deputies. A list of the NRZ and KL for the current appointment period is available on the Robert Koch Institute's homepage in the section "Infection Protection/NRZ and Consultant Laboratories" ([List of all National Reference Centers and Consultant Laboratories](#)).

The commission aims to support discussions and coordination among the NRZ and KL on joint scientific, technical, professional, and organizational public health issues and to improve virological surveillance in Germany.

The tasks of the commission include organizing the regular exchange:

1. among all virological NRZ and KL,
2. with non-virological NRZ/KL (through the leadership of the "Standing Working Group of NRZ/KL of the DGHM"), and
3. with the Robert Koch Institute (through the office of the Scientific Advisory Board for Public Health and Microbiology).

Additionally, the commission represents the interests of the NRZ and KL in collaboration with the GfV board to the Federal Ministry of Health.



§ 4.8 News and Views

The task of the "News & Views" commission is to inform GfV members, the scientific community, and the interested public. For this purpose, it utilizes the GfV's accounts on platforms such as LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/101310005/>) and X (<https://x.com/GesVirologie>). The information shared includes press releases and statements published on the GfV homepage, conference announcements, job offers, and calls for virological research funding, scholarships, and awards. Furthermore, the commission shares references to significant current events related to virology (e.g., outbreaks, epidemics, pandemics) and outstanding virological publications (particularly by GfV members), as well as general-audience information on virological topics and research.

The commission can publish posts on its own initiative or at the initiative of the GfV board, other GfV commissions, or individual GfV members. Major campaigns or posts of significant public interest require internal commission coordination and approval by the commission chair(s), potentially in consultation with the GfV board and the affected commissions. All other posts can be published by any member of the "News & Views" commission under mention of their personal author abbreviation (e.g., MB, EW, etc.).

The aim is to disseminate posts consistently across all GfV social media channels. English should serve as the standard language to reflect the internationality of the virology research community. Only posts of broader public interest should be written in German, possibly accompanied by an English translation in a separate post.

§ 4.9 Security-Relevant Research in Virology

The task of the "Commission for Security-Relevant Research in Virology" is to inform the virological scientific community and members of the GfV about regulatory mechanisms for security-relevant virological research in Germany and to keep them updated on the public and media discourse on this topic, including its international context. A special focus is placed on virological research on potentially pandemic viruses with dual-use potential.

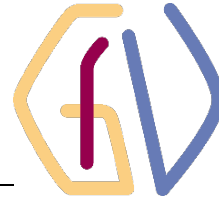
To fulfill its responsibilities, the commission uses its own website, which includes a publicly accessible section for publishing contributions such as position papers and activity reports (after approval by the board) as well as information on interviews and other relevant publications or events. Additionally, a password-protected members' area and a dedicated commission email address are established to facilitate direct interaction between GfV members and the Commission.

The commission organizes topic-specific workshops in consultation with the board, which are held online or in person as needed and are open to GfV members and potentially other participants. Another key responsibility of the commission is representing the interests of GfV members to media representatives and other scientific community bodies, for instance, through preparing statements and interviews.

To support early-career researchers, the commission offers informational and advisory services regarding the rights and obligations associated with security-relevant research.

§ 4.10 Animal Experimentation and Animal Welfare

The "Commission for Animal Experimentation and Animal Welfare" is the newest commission of the GfV and consolidates expertise on the legal framework and processes of animal experiments. The



commission drafts position papers as needed and responds to inquiries about animal rights, animal experiments, or alternative methods. Additionally, it fosters networks with other commissions of scientific societies (e.g., the German Society for Immunology (DGfI)) and scientific alliances (e.g., the Initiative for Transparent Animal Testing and Understanding Animal Research).

The commission is composed of individuals with backgrounds in veterinary medicine, human medicine, or natural sciences, and its members bring extensive experience in virological and laboratory animal research. The goal of the commission is to promote ethical standards and scientific methods in animal experimental research in virology and to ensure compliance with the highest animal welfare guidelines.

Expectations for the commission

1. Independence and transparency: The commission operates independently of political and economic influences and is committed to the greatest possible transparency in its decision-making processes and recommendations.

2. Expertise in laboratory animal science: Members of the commission should come from various (veterinary) medical and scientific fields, contributing their deep expertise in laboratory animal science and virology to make well-rounded, informed decisions and recommendations.

3. Ethical responsibility: The commission consistently upholds and strives to improve ethical standards in its work. It adheres strictly to the 3Rs principle (replace, reduce, refine).

Responsibilities of the commission

1. Position papers: The commission provides input on legislative drafts from the EU, federal, or state levels concerning animal welfare and the conduct of animal experiments.

2. Responding to inquiries on animal welfare, animal experiments, and alternatives: The commission addresses inquiries from the GfV regarding animal welfare, animal experiments, and alternative methods in the context of basic and applied virological research.

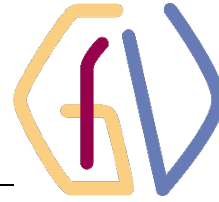
3. Networking with other societies and scientific alliances: The commission collaborates with other societies and scientific alliances to represent the interests of laboratory animal researchers while prioritizing the highest standards of animal welfare.

4. Proactive position papers: The commission proactively prepares position papers to highlight the interests of researchers in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland regarding legal regulations, approvals, and the conduct of animal experiments. By engaging with legislators, the commission aims to strengthen these research hubs.

Goals of the Commission

1. Promoting animal welfare: Ensuring that all animal experimental research is conducted with strict attention to the well-being of animals.

2. Improving research practices: Continuously enhancing scientific methods and practices to increase research quality and significance while minimizing the use of animals.



3. Increasing transparency: Advocating for openness and transparency in animal experimental research through regular reporting and public communication of the commission's work.

4. Ethics and legal certainty: Ensuring that animal experiments are conducted within secure legal and ethical frameworks. The commission identifies legal uncertainties in practice and communicates them to lawmakers, aiming to standardize the approval processes for research projects.

5. Raising public awareness: Promoting public awareness and understanding of the necessity and ethical challenges of animal experimental research.

Final Remarks

The scientific commission for animal experimentation and animal welfare aims to support ethically responsible and scientifically sound virological research practices. Its work seeks to enhance public trust in research while ensuring the protection of animals in science, maintaining research freedom.

§ 4.11 Virus Disinfection

The joint "Virus Disinfection" commission of the DVV and GfV informs the scientific community about new aspects and methods of virus disinfection, contributes to position papers and guidelines, and represents virological expertise in various federal authorities and institutions.

§ 4.12 Virus Diagnostics

The joint "Virus Diagnostics" commission of the DVV and GfV informs the scientific community about new developments in virus diagnostics and represents virological expertise at various federal authorities, the German Medical Association ("Bundesärztekammer"), and other commissions to foster collaboration and the exchange of knowledge.

The tasks of the diagnostics commission are diverse and include providing opinions on diagnostic reforms, legislative proposals, or diagnostic methods. Additionally, the commission promotes the exchange of ideas on virological diagnostic issues and participates in the development of test concepts and their regulatory requirements. Examples include future working groups for Next-Generation Sequencing (NGS), the In Vitro Diagnostic Regulation (IVDR), and communication with other societies such as the German Society for Hygiene and Microbiology (DGHM).

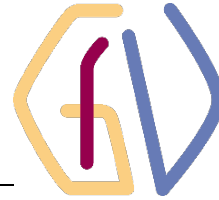
In the field of quality assurance, the commission works closely with INSTAND e.V. and provides scientific support for proficiency testing in virus diagnostics.

§ 4.13 Viral Infections during Pregnancy

The joint "Viral Infections during Pregnancy" commission of the DVV and GfV provides virological expertise for the creation and revision of guidelines related to viral infections during pregnancy. It prepares statements on legislative procedures and represents virological expertise in the Committee for Maternity Protection ("Ausschuss für Mutterschutz"), particularly in Subcommittee II (Chemical Hazards) and its working group on "Biological Agents."

§ 4.14 Viral Safety in Transfusion and Transplantation

The joint "Viral Safety in Transfusion and Transplantation" commission of the DVV and GfV addresses general and specific issues related to viral safety in transfusions and transplants and issues recommendations on current aspects of viral safety. This is done in close collaboration with relevant



professional societies, expert panels, the RKI (Robert Koch Institute), and the PEI (Paul Ehrlich Institute).

§ 4.15 Zoonoses and Viral Infections in Animals

The “Zoonoses and Viral Infections in Animals” commission is composed of representatives from responsible federal authorities such as the FLI (Friedrich-Loeffler-Institute), RKI, and PEI, as well as the One Health platform and representatives from the field of virology at veterinary and human medicine educational institutions in German-speaking countries. It coordinates collaboration between the GfV, federal authorities, and the One Health platform, informs the scientific community, and prepares statements on current issues in this area.

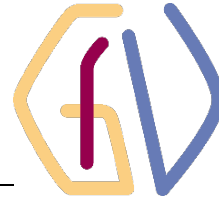
The commission aims to develop well-founded recommendations for monitoring, controlling, and preventing zoonoses and viral infections in animals, with the overarching goal of promoting the health of humans and animals. Commission members should come from diverse disciplines to ensure comprehensive and informed decision-making. The commission seeks to advance understanding of zoonoses and viral infections in animals and to educate the public about the risks and preventive measures associated with zoonoses.

Expectations for the commission

- 1. Independence and transparency:** The commission operates independently of political and economic influences and is committed to the highest level of transparency in its decision-making processes and recommendations.
- 2. Expertise in zoonoses and viral infections in animals:** Commission members should come from various fields, including veterinary medicine, human medicine, epidemiology, virology, natural, and environmental sciences.
- 3. Ethical responsibility:** The commission upholds and continuously improves ethical standards in its work.

Tasks of the commission

- 1. Position papers:** The commission provides opinions on current outbreaks of zoonoses and viral infections in animals.
- 2. Responding to inquiries on zoonoses and viral infections in animals:** The commission responds to inquiries from the GfV on zoonoses and viral infections in animals within the context of ongoing outbreaks, virological basic research, and applied research.
- 3. Networking with other societies and scientific alliances:** The commission collaborates with other societies and scientific alliances to represent the interests of researchers working on zoonoses and viral infections in animals, with particular consideration for animal welfare.



Goals of the commission

- 1. Improving research practices:** Critically evaluating scientific methods and practices to enhance the quality and reliability of research on zoonoses and viral diseases in animals.
- 2. Increasing transparency:** Promoting openness and transparency in research on zoonoses and viral infections in animals through reports and public communication about the commission's work.
- 3. Raising public awareness:** Promoting public awareness and understanding of zoonoses and viral infections in animals.

§ 5 Entry into force of the rules of procedure

The present rules of procedure were developed by the executive and advisory board in collaboration with the commission chairs and adopted during the board and advisory council meeting on November 21–22, 2024, in Düsseldorf.