

The German Network of Electron Microscopy Groups (IGEME)

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All laboratories with electron microscopes, whether they are run by small groups or large core facilities, experience similar challenges and requirements in operating their instruments. Safety, maintenance and repairs of equipment, investments in new systems and add-ons, specification and accounting of fees including fiscal considerations and intellectual property rights are some of the most important topics. In addition, the organisational forms of the various laboratories differ. In contrast to service-based facilities, user-based units also have to concentrate on user management, cooperations and training.

To discuss and share experiences and to form a platform of common interest, we founded and developed the German network of electron microscopy groups (called IGEME) as a work group of the German society for electron microscopy (DGE). In the past four years, we have already had five meetings with more than 30 participating groups from universities and public research institutes all over Germany. Each meeting had a main topic such as financing, usage regulations, and research funding opportunities. Nevertheless, the hot topics user fees, access regulations, maintenance (contracts) and funding are always included in the discussions.

This contribution by the spokespersons of IGEME will report on how to organise a work group like ours and on our attempts to keep the meetings interesting and meaningful for all laboratory sizes. Additionally, we will present an overview of the major topics and discussions covered in the last meetings. Due to specific funding options and laws in Germany, this might include some topics that are typically German. However, we will also focus on subjects that presumably are of interest for all electron microscopy groups worldwide.

http://www.dge-homepage.de/dge_index_e.html