Leibniz Universität Hannover

Teaching Constitution

A joint frame of reference for teaching and academic programmes at Leibniz University Hannover

"Embodying and designing the teaching of the future together."

Leibniz University Hannover (LUH) understands teaching as a central task which the university as a whole takes responsibility for and further develops. It aims to offer nationally and internationally competitive research-oriented degree programmes that are attractive in terms of both content and instruction. Leibniz University Hannover views its educational role as consisting particularly of qualifying students in such a way that they can take responsibility for and contribute to tackling social, ecological and economic challenges.
In keeping with the work of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, which was characterised by interdisciplinarity and academic expansiveness, LUH supports its students within the disciplines and across them. LUH addresses its offers at all individuals with a university entrance qualification and strives for a high level of diversity within the student body. The international nature of the student body and international linkages with partner universities, particularly within the European university network EULiST (European Universities Linking Society and Technology), are central focuses. As a learning organisation, LUH supports innovation and the willingness to undergo transformation. It aims to create working and learning environments that promote health, are sensitive with respect to diversity and enable individuals to fully develop their potential.
This Teaching Constitution provides all LUH members with a framework of overarching shared values, requirements and core themes. Central to this is the commitment of all members to the future-oriented design and development of teaching and learning. The Teaching Constitution was developed by students, teaching staff, administrative staff members and the university management as part of a dialogue-oriented process and with the necessary discipline-specific differentiation. It will be further developed on an ongoing basis.
The LUH's governance bodies ensure that the Teaching Constitution is implemented and put into practice. This is done with the help of an action plan containing specific measures. The plan is used to implement and monitor the statements laid out in the Teaching Constitution. A review of the implementation status takes place every two years under the guidance of the Vice President for Teaching and Academic Programmes..

Guiding principles for teaching and academic programmes at LUH

The following guiding principles form the basis for the further development of academic programmes and teaching at LUH.

Guiding principle – Considered and transformative capacity to act

LUH understands the considered, transformative capacity to act as a qualification for applying acquired knowledge and skills in society, in both professional and private life. This capacity to act is an essential prerequisite for initiating, designing and driving transformation processes in the context of education for sustainable development.

The teaching and academic programmes at LUH provide students with space for reflection. They enable them to analyse their actions and to further develop their capacity to act in dynamic living environments and work contexts that are characterised by contradiction and ambiguity.

Guiding principle – Skills-oriented focus in the study programmes

The teaching and academic programmes at LUH support students in developing their skills and enable them to apply academic methods and ways of thinking in contexts with complex challenges, to develop innovative concepts and solutions, and to competently evaluate these.

Guiding principle – Reflexive teaching and learning

Reflexive teaching and learning link the processes of knowledge transmission, experience acquisition and skills development. The LUH creates attractive learning environments that support these processes and thereby promote individuals' effectiveness and personal responsibility for their actions. The foundation for this is an appreciative and dialogue-oriented culture of learning which is supported at all levels. A central aspect of this lived culture is joint, constructive exchange between teaching staff and students about the design and delivery of teaching through the use of feedback instruments and suitable formats for teaching evaluation.

At LUH students are seen as contributing, active and independent learners who take responsibility for their individual learning and development process, proactively shape this process and take effective measures to ensure the success of their own studies. The teaching staff reflect on their teaching offers and teaching formats and develop them on an ongoing basis, with the goal of supporting the transmission of expert knowledge and the development of students' skills as well as expanding their own teaching skills. They also integrate their research expertise in recognition of the interconnectedness of research and teaching.

Guiding principle – Discursive design and promotion of a community characterised by solidarity

It is necessary that different goals, which also draw on and relate to one another, be agreed for the areas of teaching and academic programmes. LUH takes on the coordination of these requirements and supports the results-oriented discussion forums. The inclusion of students in the processes for developing teaching and strengthening student participation in teaching are central focuses of the teaching and working culture at LUH.

In LUH's teaching and academic programmes, diversity is understood as an opportunity. A lively discourse and the incorporation of diverse perspectives are seen as important elements in developing a community characterised by solidarity.

Guiding principle – Transformation of study programmes and teaching formats

Living and working environments are changing fundamentally as a result of socio-ecological upheavals and increasing digitalisation. LUH is also addressing these changes in its study programmes and teaching formats, developing them accordingly. This process is also taking into account the interests and living environments of the students, which are increasingly diverse in economic and social terms.

The selection of teaching formats is based on the skills-related goals, the disciplines, the point in the course of study, the mobility opportunities and the type of degree. LUH supports its teaching staff in developing didactically appropriate teaching and learning concepts, ensures that the structural framework conditions are in place, and provides teaching and study rooms and digital tools.

Action areas

The following action areas for the further development of teaching and academic programmes at LUH are derived from the guiding principles.

Action area – Skills-oriented degree programmes

LUH has set the goal of developing all curricula in a skills-oriented manner, designing modules accordingly, and expanding the integration of project assignments (e.g. problem-, research- and challenge-based). All degree programmes should have skills-oriented degree programme profiles and transparently provide information about the subject-specific requirements and the key qualification objectives. As a guiding maxim for action, skills-orientation encompasses all levels of teaching and academic programmes. Its implementation is defined in a subject- and discipline-specific manner as part of the development of degree programmes and the design of modules, courses and examinations. The didactic and methodological design of the courses focuses on students' skills development and supports their collaborative and individual learning strategies.

Action area – Study organisation and study conditions

LUH has set the goal of improving study conditions on an ongoing basis, of creating developmental spaces for students and teaching staff for this purpose, and of taking into account diverse interests and perspectives in the process.
In order to facilitate individual development pathways, synchronous and asynchronous teaching, group work and self-study are combined within courses in an appropriate way. Additionally, barrier-free access to study programmes is made possible, barrier-free teaching and learning materials are developed and provided in accordance with the legal requirements and the needs of international (exchange) students are taken into account.

Action area – Examination design and examination formats

LUH has set the goal of regularly evaluating, further developing and improving examination formats, while also ensuring a didactically based examination frequency that supports learning. Examinations should contribute to supporting a scientifically based and considered capacity to act. The specificities of the disciplinary cultures are taken into account in the selection of examination types. In accordance with constructive alignment, the aim is to achieve a good fit between the learning objectives, learning exercises and examination exercises. The learning objectives are formulated first, and based on these, the content is chosen and agreed upon. Teaching and examination methods that support these objectives are then selected.
Electronic examination formats also need to be taken into account. The examination concepts are didactically based and demonstrate an appropriate level of subject-oriented variation. There is an adequate balance of summative and formative assessments and examinations.

Action area – Student participation

LUH has set the goal of designing effective and barrier-free participatory formats for students in order to promote both student participation in governance bodies and student engagement. LUH views the student body as a central status group and integrates students into those facilities and governance bodies responsible for the further development of teaching and academic programmes. The participatory rights of students in the governance bodies, the meeting rules and the decision-making processes are transparent. Student councils are included in faculty- and subject-specific processes and decisions. The various forms of student participation are made possible, supported, valued and recognised.

Action area – Professionalisation and teaching-skills development

In order to develop future-oriented study programmes and teaching formats, LUH has set the goal of supporting teaching staff and those staff who support teaching in their role as the architects of this transformation process and in fulfilling the tasks. It provides developmental and experimental spaces and creates incentive systems. Opportunities to obtain further qualifications, continuing education formats and services are developed on an ongoing basis and provided consistently. Professionalisation measures are intended to give teaching staff guidance and confidence in designing their teaching in accordance with this Teaching Constitution and to support students in their learning and study process in the best way possible.
LUH ensures that the central aims of the Teaching Constitution are also reflected in recruiting and onboarding processes. Supervisory staff view themselves as role models, support innovation and embody an appreciative culture that allows for mistakes and feedback. Engaged teaching is promoted through incentive mechanisms. Like the further development of teaching, trend-setting innovations receive particular recognition and appreciation from the faculties and the Presidential Board through the awarding of teaching prizes.

Action area – Quality management and evaluation

LUH has set the goal of reviewing developments in the academic programmes and teaching on an ongoing basis through reflection on and evaluation of the quality of everyday teaching and studies. As a system-accredited university and a learning organisation, it views the process of evaluations in the framework of re-accreditation processes as an opportunity for qualitative development. LUH takes into consideration all of the framework conditions for university studies: the curriculum-based design of study programmes, learning processes, the examination culture and examination management, and the design of teaching and study rooms. Reflection and evaluation are the joint tasks of all individuals and institutions involved in academic programmes and teaching, in keeping with their responsibility for helping shape these areas. This reflection and evaluation draws on data and discussion, with the participation of all status groups and, where advisable, the incorporation of external expertise.In line with the idea of reflection for the purpose of quality management, this Teaching Constitution is also understood as a living and dynamic frame of reference. It will be evaluated and further developed with respect to its effectiveness every two years under the guidance of the Vice President for Teaching and Academic Programmes..

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