

# MISSION STATEMENT TEACHING

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# MISSION STATEMENT TEACHING

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## 1. PROVIDING OPTIMAL EDUCATION FOR OUR STUDENTS<sup>1</sup>

The University of Klagenfurt strives to fulfill the legal mandate to educate through science in teaching (Section 3 (2) Universities Act) in the optimal way. The efforts aim at graduates acquiring profound scientific competencies, a critical attitude, a scientifically based sharpened reflectivity and judgement as well as a strong sense of responsibility. A high level of self-responsibility of students is expected. The guiding principle of all actions is the realisation of the Humboldtian ideal – the link between research<sup>2</sup> and teaching.

In order to accomplish this goal, the members of the university align their actions to achieve a high quality in teaching and to further develop their teaching in terms of qualitative didactics and methodology. Quality and dedication in teaching is to be taken into account adequately with all personnel-related decisions. The guiding principle for the design of the scientific range of studies is a “future viability” – quite literally. This means above all the ability to be able to deal with conditions changing very quickly and with insecurities.

Starting with a broad education in the basics and methods, the range of studies is consistently adjusted to meet current and future challenges. All members of the university – teaching staff, learners and administrative personnel – are obligated equally and based on partnership to the goal of providing optimal education for our students. The common effort is shaped by fairness and mutual appreciation and respect.

Universities are appointed to serve scientific research and teaching. Research and teaching are closely linked with each other. Research-guided teaching is an essential feature of university teaching and is considered as a consistent principle. Research and teaching are equally important in the task fulfillment of universities. There is no reciprocal trade-off.

## 2. PROVIDING OPTIMAL MENTORING FOR OUR STUDENTS

Teaching at the University of Klagenfurt is guided by the paradigm of the community of teaching staff and learners; teaching and learning is considered as a process, with teaching staff and students taking an active and equal part in it. Expecting a high degree of self-responsibility, teaching staff see their task especially in mentoring students in their pursuit of knowledge and education in the optimal way. The conditions are convenient at the University of Klagenfurt because in almost all degree programmes there are good faculty-student ratios. Specifically, providing optimal mentoring for our students means

- *to assure a high-quality and individual counseling in all stages of the degree programmes,*
- *to align courses with the principles of a dialogue, to encourage active participation in the teaching and learning process and being open for questions and suggestions,,*
- *to adequately consider the variety of students regarding learning prerequisites and learning styles,,*
- *to establish an open learning environment that is adequate to the scientific knowledge,,*
- *to give students feedback about their achievements and – if appropriate with regard to the form of achievement – also about their strengths and weaknesses,*
- *to make learning goals, the expectations regarding learning activities of students and the exam performances transparent,*
- *to prioritize the justified expectations of students when organizing the learning programme.*

## 3. SELF-RESPONSIBILITY OF STUDENTS

The University of Klagenfurt respects and protects the rights and freedoms of students. Students understand university education as a valuable good, as a chance to be dealt with responsibly and sustainably.

- *approach the range of courses with curiosity, active interest and a genuine willingness to occupy themselves intensively with the content,*
- *use the guidance services provided by the university and familiarize themselves sufficiently with the framework of their degree programmes (curriculum, examination regulations etc.),*
- *understand themselves as designers of their degree programmes and shape high-quality teaching,*
- *participate actively in the dialogue about the high-quality development of teaching,,*
- *join participative forms of teaching offers,*
- *give the necessary feedback to teaching staff and other students.*

<sup>1</sup> “Providing optimal education and mentoring for our students” – Item 2 of the guidelines of the development and profile development in accordance with the development plan 2019-2024, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> In the spirit of pursuing active research that is up to date with the latest developments.

## 4. INNOVATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING FORMATS

The University of Klagenfurt feels reinforced in the assumption that in-person teaching enables an indispensable quality of teaching and learning – especially after the forced restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Teaching staff and learners use the good faculty-student ratio in almost all degree programmes in order to cultivate an intensive personal exchange. The convenient conditions for a direct exchange are a quality feature in teaching which is consistently used.

Nonetheless, innovative, especially digital formats of teaching and learning are welcome. Different eLearning tools are seen as means to increase teaching quality and complement classroom formats didactically and/or raise the flexibility for students. The University of Klagenfurt stands for an open teaching and learning culture and is committed to eliminating barriers – if possible – and it supports the development of new teaching-learning forms and course types. Attendance-independent formats are – originating from the principle of providing optimal mentoring for our students (no. 2) – welcome.

## 5. DIVERSITY AS GAIN

The University of Klagenfurt understands diversity as gain. The diversity of the students due to various characteristics (origin, age, gender, educational background, with care responsibilities, professional activity ...) is deemed as a chance to initiate educational processes and shape these in line with an open society. The members of the university show consideration for the diversity of students and their different conditions.

The number of employed students, students with care responsibilities and first academics at the University of Klagenfurt is significantly higher than the federal average. Equal opportunities in access to education are of great importance to the University of Klagenfurt. As such, it shows consideration to various prerequisites of students and creates favourable study conditions for them. These include especially

- *the development and support of attendance-independent teaching and learning formats, including the use of digital media as well as*
- *special guidance and support services.*

## 6. INTERNATIONALITY

Internationality is a characteristic of universities and the international dialogue and exchange are essential conditions for high-quality teaching. For the University of Klagenfurt, internationality is also of particular importance due to the geographic location. Internationality in teaching has many dimensions. It starts with the alignment of the range of programmes and courses, which should also prepare graduates for an international and intercultural job market. In order to attract international students, the offer of degree programmes and courses taught in English – taking specific prerequisites and objectives of subjects into account – is continuously increased. Students planning a study-related stay abroad are supported in the optimal way. A continuous quality assured expansion of the network of partner institutions opens a variety of possibilities for student experiences abroad. The university supports offers and actions facilitating international experiences on campus. An essential aspect of internationalisation in teaching is the support of cross-border exchanges of teaching and administrative staff.

## 7. INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Assuming that the mastering of complex problems requires an interdisciplinary approach, the University of Klagenfurt welcomes and supports interdisciplinary collaboration across the entire range of programmes and courses. The conditions for interdisciplinary collaboration at the University of Klagenfurt are favourable (campus university with short distances).

## 8. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

The University of Klagenfurt is aware of the high social responsibility stipulated by law. The university supports the dialogue with various players in the region and strives for a continuous development of a scientifically based exchange, for a realisation of equal opportunities regarding participation in education and for a stop or a permanent turn-around of the brain drain in Carinthia. A high-quality and attractive range of programmes and courses is an essential instrument in the process. In addition, the University of Klagenfurt stands for an open and liberal society; their members are consistently committed to providing help, tolerance, integration and the respect of human rights as well as standing up against discrimination, xenophobia, racism and any form of political extremism and totalitarianism in teaching.

## 9. CONTINUING EDUCATION

The University of Klagenfurt regards itself as a place of lifelong learning; continuing education is traditionally part of its strength. The University of Klagenfurt considers a quality-assured scientific further training as a profile-building part of the range of courses offered.