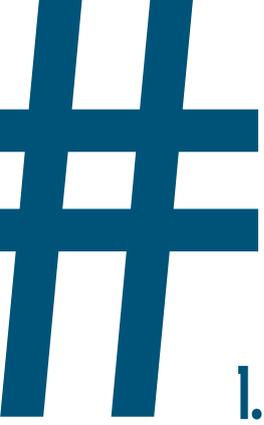




## MISSION STATEMENT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF POTSDAM

Dated April 15, 2020

The aim of academic teaching at the University of Potsdam is to enable students to carry out research and scientific work and to deal critically with scientific information. With this goal in mind, teaching is inseparably linked to both individually conducted research and the main research topics of the University of Potsdam. This goal requires a dedicated commitment from students to their university studies, both inside and outside the classroom. The University of Potsdam's Mission Statement for Teaching and Learning defines fundamental values with regard to teaching and studies. It has a binding character for teachers and students as it is reflected in the curricula of the degree programs and provides orientation for all members of the university.



# I. RESEARCH ORIENTATION

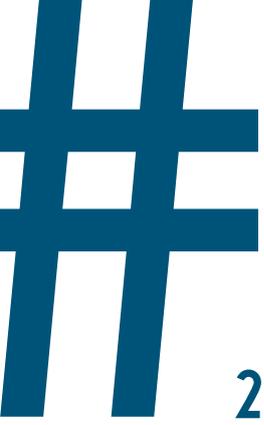
The University of Potsdam prepares its students for a variety of activities in society through academic teaching, imparting knowledge on both the foundations of as well as the developments in research; including sound subject-specific expertise, knowledge of essential methods and cross-cutting competences.

## **1.1 Research processes are made tangible.**

Research-oriented education already begins at Bachelor level, where research elements are integrated into teaching. From the first semester onwards, the University of Potsdam not only teaches specialist knowledge, but also highlights how this knowledge was created through research. The research-oriented approach applies to profession-oriented study programs, too, for example in the field of teacher training or law. Student education is designed to integrate non-university and international research institutions, schools and companies.

## **1.2 Research-oriented specializations are created.**

Components that deepen students' knowledge of research aspects can be integrated into the degree programs. At Bachelor level, students are introduced to independent research by teaching staff; at Master level, they are guided when working in research projects. In PhD programs, students work on research projects independently, regularly exchanging ideas with supervisors and mentors.



## 2. CAREER ORIENTATION AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

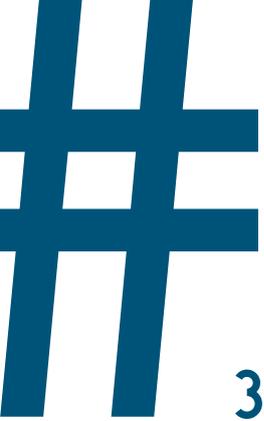
Many fields of professional activity are characterized by constantly changing requirements and by increased complexity. The University of Potsdam empowers its graduates for challenging activities in various career paths as well as for lifelong, independent learning. Being the only university for teacher training in the state of Brandenburg, it is committed to providing teacher training that is based on the current state of research, combined with a high percentage of practice phases.

### **2.1 Requirements for career orientation and personal development are developed in a discipline-specific manner.**

Potential fields of activity and their requirements are taken into account when developing or improving degree programs. In addition to subject-specific and methodological skills, the degree programs also provide communication and personal skills. For this purpose, project-oriented modules may be used, enabling students to acquire skills in areas such as time and project management, digital media, leadership and teamwork. Through individual counseling by the university's Career Service, students also gain an insight into possible fields of activity and professional practice.

### **2.2 Students at the University of Potsdam are supported in their individual development and are enabled to reflect on possible professions and fields of activity.**

Prospective students will not only be informed by the University of Potsdam about the contents of their studies, but also about related professional fields of activity of the degree program they are interested in before they begin their studies and in the introductory study phase. At the University of Potsdam, students actively develop the ability to criticize and judge, enabling them to reflect on the professional, social and ethical dimensions of their actions. Students are taught various key competencies, for example through the "Studiumplus" program for general studies.



## 3. INTERDISCIPLINARY AND MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEACHING

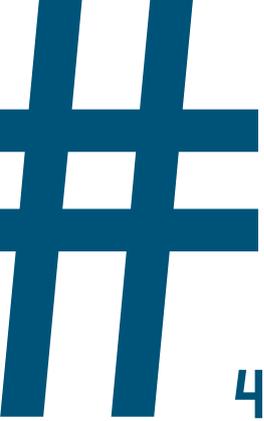
Many of the graduates' future fields of activity require both specialist knowledge and the ability to quickly familiarize themselves with the content and working methods of other scientific (or specialist) disciplines. Degree programs at the University of Potsdam respond to these requirements with interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teaching that focuses on problem orientation within a common topic.

### **3.1 Boundaries of individual disciplines are recognized and potentials for interdisciplinary cooperation are identified.**

A prerequisite for the realization of interdisciplinary work is the identification of respective interdisciplinary potential by teachers. The University of Potsdam intends to create space for mutual exchange on interdisciplinary work – temporally, physically and digitally. This exchange should not be limited to the University of Potsdam, but can also be conducted nationally and internationally within the framework of research projects. This also applies to multidisciplinary degree programs, where opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching between the participating subjects are realized to the greatest possible extent.

### **3.2 Degree programs at the University of Potsdam may include a share of interdisciplinary teaching.**

Teachers and students have the opportunity to get involved in interdisciplinary projects and to apply them in joint teaching. This applies to international formats of teaching, too. Within the framework of interdisciplinary modules, common problems can be examined from the perspective of different disciplines.



## 4. TARGET GROUP-SPECIFIC TEACHING

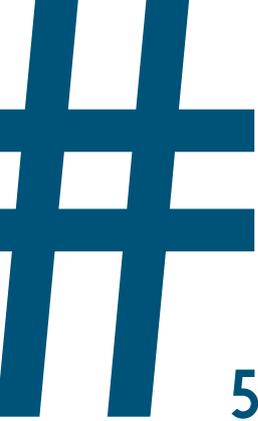
Teaching at the University of Potsdam is aligned with the different personal circumstances and the subject-specific prior knowledge and skills of students. Active and autonomous student participation is fundamental for effective target group-specific teaching. Students are supported and comprehensively advised according to their needs. Teaching staff members at the University of Potsdam recognize the diversity of the student body.

### **4.1 When working with learning groups, target-group-specific differentiations of methods and learning objectives are promoted and established in the long term.**

The divergent subject-specific prior knowledge among students is taken into consideration. In accordance with their prior knowledge, they are supported in their studies in terms of content and organization. Teaching staff members are offered further training for the practical implementation of internal differentiation within learning groups.

### **4.2 The process of entering an undergraduate degree program is facilitated by orientation activities; and the transition to a Master's degree is a guided process.**

The University of Potsdam offers a wide range of orientation support services for prospective and current students, which are made visible through the university's existing digital channels. Online self-assessments make it easier for prospective students to decide on a particular course of study. A culture of welcome eases the transition from undergraduate level to a Master's program. Introductory and bridging modules facilitate access to Master's programs, in particular to interdisciplinary Master's programs, for graduates of various disciplines and with different native languages.



## 5. STUDENT AND COMPETENCE ORIENTATION

The University of Potsdam provides student- and competence-oriented teaching to ensure that students learn to deal with a wide variety of requirements in a situationally appropriate, responsible and successful manner. The focus is just as much on specialist knowledge as it is on the acquisition of methodological, social and personal skills and abilities. Teaching, learning objectives and examinations will continue to be adjusted to each other.

### **5.1 Degree programs at the University of Potsdam and their modules, courses and examinations are designed in a notable competence-oriented way.**

Study commissions are expected to work together with the Deans of Studies to develop subject-specific criteria with regard to the definition of student and competence orientation in the faculties. Teaching staff and students discuss which competences should be acquired in the context of the degree program.

### **5.2 Teaching staff members integrate competence orientation into their teaching and make it transparent to the students.**

Individual course and module objectives developed by the lecturers are reflected in subject-specific, competence-oriented offerings. One of the focal points of the university's continuing education offers in higher education didactics is to provide impulses with regard to competence-oriented teaching.