



Digital Teaching Strategy of the University of Greifswald

The University of Greifswald lends great importance to digitisation that serves as an instrument in the strategic development of the university: in addition to the formulation of a Digitisation Strategy, the establishment of an E-Administration Office, the Digital Education Unit and the digitisation of teacher education, the office of Pro-Rector of Research, Transfer and Digitisation was created in April 2021.

Teaching at the University of Greifswald takes place on site; digital teaching and learning formats are integrated into university teaching in areas in which they are appropriate, sustainable and suitable for complementing the in-person teaching. We understand digitisation as a tool for the development and elaboration of innovative, research and application-oriented teaching and learning scenarios, which expand the classroom beyond the boundaries of university premises and international borders, and foster family-friendliness, inclusion and equal opportunities. Teachers and students make use of digital media to specifically increase learning success. Students also use the digital media in a self-organised, individual, interdisciplinary, cooperative and collaborative manner.

The sustainable and legally sound implementation of contemporary digital teaching and examination formats are at the heart of the Digital Teaching Strategy, which aims to promote students' opportunities to influence teaching and teach them digital competencies that qualify students to take part in an increasingly digitised working and living environment. This influences the subject-specific and interdisciplinary learning objectives in many degree courses. The digitisation of teaching provides new teaching opportunities and expands tried and tested didactic concepts.

The university governance works together closely with the state's other higher education institutions and with the Federal Government to obtain sustainable support and financing for the technical infrastructure.

Areas of Activity and Subgoals

1. Teaching of digital competencies

The training of general and subject-specific digital media competency, which not only requires technical understanding, but also the ability to use digital media to gain, critically select and create information (digital literacy), is part of the curriculum in degree courses that require a competent and reflected use of digital technologies that can be used for imparting knowledge, communication, and solving problems. Lecturers and students learn how digital formats can be used in teaching and gain knowledge of the required methods and work techniques. Teaching at the University of Greifswald benefits from a successful combination of in-person, digital and hybrid teaching

Measures:

The central support facilities, e.g. Digital Education Unit, University Computer Centre, University Didactics Team, GULB, and the Institute of Data Science that is being established at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, provide regular advisory and training sessions on interdisciplinary issues related to teaching with media, technical problems, data protection, and copyright law. Individual departments teach subject-specific digital competencies in a decentralised manner for their own degree courses, e.g. for working with databases, data security, open source software or digital academic work. Examinations correspond with the teaching and a special focus is placed on the competence-oriented approach. During

(re)accreditation of degree courses relevant to digital competency, it is ensured that subject-specific digital skills and interdisciplinary media and information competence are suitably anchored in the curriculums of all degree courses. Where appropriate, digital teaching skills will be considered a positive attribute when appointing professors and recruiting teaching staff.

Digitally equipped physical and virtual teaching and learning classrooms shall be established for the teacher-training degree courses and educational sciences. The digital offers provided by the learning offices and the special needs media library will be expanded and extended and complemented by mobile offers. The study-accompanying e-portfolio will be used for the individual reflection of previous studies and for recording study achievements. Learning platforms, digital diagnostics and subject-specific learning software and apps shall be integrated into training. A compulsory elective module on initial media literacy and information technology will be introduced for all teacher-training degree courses belonging to the Educational Sciences. Digital learning with, about and through media is a joint task of the units involved in teaching subject knowledge, teacher education and the educational sciences and requires teachers to attend regular continuing professional development and further training courses.

2. Technical Infrastructure and Support

The University provides the organisational, staff-related and financial prerequisites for implementing digital and hybrid teaching. Central support facilities (e.g. Digital Education Unit, Computer Centre, University Didactics Team, the future Institute of Data Science that is being established at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences) and the decentral support at various levels (e.g. e-tutors) make digital teaching and learning possible at the University of Greifswald. The foundation for this is provided by didactics and technical support that is based on the needs of lecturers and students and centrally available. Technology for hybrid teaching is available in the lecture halls that can be used without technical assistance.

Measures:

The technical infrastructure shall be adapted to the requirements of digital teaching formats, provided that didactic or practical improvements can be expected for students and teachers. Taking the freedom of research and teaching into consideration, it must be ensured that software products and platforms are available that enable the university to keep up and remain compatible with international research and teaching structures. The lecture halls are to be equipped with technology that allows teaching to be provided in digital, hybrid and in-person formats. The University shall provide more loan devices (laptops, tablets) for classes and digital examinations and shall equip digital teaching/learning rooms or media labs that can be used by students and teachers for creating digital materials.

3. Proportion of digital teaching in overall teaching load

Digital teaching offers and contents¹ complement and strengthen the university's predominant in-person teaching. Within a period of two consecutive semesters, a teacher may provide up to 30 % of their overall teaching offers in synchronous² and asynchronous³ digital formats. This does not apply to teaching provided in blended learning formats⁴ and degree courses that have determined a larger proportion of digital teaching, as well as digital semesters caused by special circumstances such as force majeure that make in-person studies impossible.

Measures:

The University, in collaboration with the federal state's further higher education institutions and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern's Ministry of Education, shall support the revision of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern's *Lehrverpflichtungsverordnung* (Teaching Commitment Ordinance).

4. Examinations and evaluations

Various feedback processes are incorporated into degree studies, e.g. self-study tests, practical exercises, project work, peer feedback etc. These enable students and teachers to control the learning process and the specific further development of teaching. Digital evaluation tools make high participation rates and immediate feedback possible. Furthermore, the course evaluations that are organised centrally by the university take digital teaching formats and their quality criteria into consideration. By introducing digital examination formats to the curriculums, it will be possible to take examinations or extend the scope of examinations that can be taken from any location and during studies.

Measures:

Digital means for testing students' learning progress shall be integrated into the teaching concept if it is sensible for students to receive digital feedback on their learning progress that can be used in turn to adapt the contents of the classes. Advice offers, in particular on digital feedback processes in Moodle are provided by the Digital Education Unit.

The University of Greifswald shall introduce legal stipulations for holding digital examinations that correspond to legal provisions.

Digital examinations enable new forms of competence-oriented examination and the resource-efficient provision of examinations for large numbers of students. The study and examination regulations determine the contents, qualification objectives and examination formats and shall also take into account that more flexibility is required in the specific examination format.

Where appropriate, questions on digital education will be integrated into formats used for student evaluation of classes. Special digital teaching achievements are regularly taken into account in the annual teaching prizes.

¹Digital teaching includes all teaching formats in which digital media form the technical foundation for the teaching and learning environments.

²Synchronous digital teaching formats are teaching formats that take place at a fixed time. Lecturers and students meet online in a virtual video conferencing or chat room.

³Asynchronous digital teaching formats are teaching formats that are not tied to specific times or locations, e.g. teaching videos, digital reading of texts, self-study tests.

⁴Blended learning teaching formats are integrative forms that combine and link (with variable weighting) the contents of (synchronous and asynchronous) digital and analogue, i.e. conventional, forms of teaching and learning.

5. Networking

The University supports the provision of information, the exchange and networking activities of teaching staff regarding the further development of digital teaching concepts. It fosters the joint development of teaching and learning materials and raises awareness for Open Educational Resources (OER) to provide networking opportunities and increase visibility.

Measures:

The University shall promote networking formats such as a regular (digital) lunch talk, peer-to-peer advisory sessions, database with good-practice examples, to enable teachers to improve and increase the effectiveness of subject-specific and interdisciplinary digital teaching scenarios and be in a position to develop them further. OER platforms shall be used for the provision of teaching materials. Digital teaching innovations that enhance the transfer to other subject areas and other universities shall receive appropriate support.

(Passed by the Rectorate of the University of Greifswald following consultation in the Academic Senate on 17 November 2021).