

Recommendation for Diversity-Sensitive Teaching

“Living Diversity – Shape the Future”

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Foreword

Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased that this practical practical guide has sparked your interest. As a lecturer myself, I have repeatedly noted that the practical realisation of an educational model that takes diversity to heart is critically dependent on how we approach our tasks as university teachers. Above all, it requires a willingness on our part to question conventional modes of thought and try something different.

In our everyday lives, we are often unaware of the range of options available to us in a given situation. This also applies to opportunities to modify aspects of study courses or examinations so to accommodate the needs and sensibilities of all of our students, and to select and prepare course materials in such a way that they are free of gratuitously discriminatory elements.

Heinrich Heine University (HHU) regards the diversity of its student body and its staff as a valuable asset that opens up novel perspectives. That is why all members of the University receive the respect that is due to them as persons, and the appreciation that their achievements deserve. This enables our students to develop their intellectual, personal and social potential, while staff members can apply their individual capabilities, talents and experience to the full. Our daily encounters with the range of human diversity underline the fact that discrimination and inequitable treatment have no place at HHU!

The aim of a diversity-sensitive perspective on teaching and studies is to make it possible for every student to participate successfully in the learning process. In this endeavour, our professional and respectful attitude as teachers is a crucial prerequisite for fair-minded, individual and nuanced consideration of the personal circumstances of our students.

The goal of this practical practical guide is to provide you with practical tips that can help you to sharpen your diversity-sensitive perspective further. In this spirit, we look forward to receiving your reactions and input.

This practical practical guide and its extended digital version are part of the Rectorate's overall strategy for the promotion at institutional level of diversity-sensitive perspectives in teaching, research and administration at HHU.



Klaus Pfeffer

Vice-President for Strategic Management
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“PREJUDICE IS THE CHILD OF
IGNORANCE.” (William Hazlitt, English Essayist, 1778 - 1830)

1.0 Introduction and Organisation

More than 40,000 people¹ study and work at Heinrich Heine University (HHU), and they differ from one another in many ways, such as:

**Family Status (some 2000 students have at least one child to look after),
Age (the student population ranges in age from 16 to 84),
Nationality (citizens of at least 133 countries are represented on campus)
Constitution (11% of all students report constitutive health problems) [1].**

In a non-representative survey of students carried out at HHU on Diversity Day 2019, some 20% of the respondents described their familial responsibilities as 'demanding'. A similar percentage reported that religion was a significant factor in their lives.

Some 30% of those interviewed, respectively, stated that they fell into one of the following categories:

Under or over the average age of the student population as a whole
Living with either chronic or recurrent health problems
First members of their families to attend university.

More than one-third of respondents had an international background, and one-quarter of the survey sample reported that they had a migratory background.²

These figures show that diversity is a multifaceted phenomenon – and an integral feature of the University as a whole, not just of its student population. These differences between individuals are reflected in varying approaches to, and styles of learning. They also have significant impact on social interactions, and on communication between students and teaching staff, for the challenges faced by students – over and above their university studies as such – are seldom evident on casual acquaintance.

To tap the benefits of diversity and make the most of its academic potential, teachers need to adopt an approach to tuition that takes the range of variability represented in their classes into account. – And this is not simply an end in itself.

The skills needed to get the best out of diverse talents are becoming ever more important in science and scholarship, e.g., in the context of applications for competitive research funding from the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG) and other grant agencies.

¹ 36,570 students and 4500 staff (Winter Term 2018/19); the latter figures include academics and research staff, as well as technical and administrative personnel.

² Unpublished and non-representative survey based on a sample of 94 individuals carried out by the Coordination Unit for Diversity in May 2019. The fact that the survey took place on Diversity Day could have biased the results obtained.

Although diversity has long since become a normal feature of most universities, its significance is often inadequately taken into account in the planning and realisation of teaching courses. This is unfortunate, because a relaxed and sympathetic attitude to differences conditioned by age, sexual orientation or cultural factors can create a climate in which everyone feels accepted and respected as an individual, and can realise one's potential. We hope that this practical practical guide and the examples it cites will make a positive contribution to this cultural transformation.

This Practical practical guide was put together by the Working Party on Training for Diversity in cooperation with the Coordination Unit for Diversity. Its purpose is to provide practical tips and instructive examples that will help you to develop an approach to teaching that acknowledges and accommodates diversity.

The ultimate aim of such an approach is to create an atmosphere in which every student is assured of being taken seriously and feels respected, so that all can fully realise their individual potential.

The Practical guide is made up of three main parts:

- A checklist for self-assessment
- An outline of basic provisions for diversity-sensitive teaching
- Background to, and suggestions for diversity-sensitive teaching in light of the dimensions of diversity recognized by HHU³

The aim of this Practical practical guide is to encourage you to listen to your students, ask questions and act upon what you learn. If, on the basis of your own experience in learning situations, you believe we have overlooked an important aspect of the issue or failed to discuss a particular problem, you can help us to improve this Practical guide – just send us an e-mail at diversity@hhu.de.

A selection of further practical guides that focus on specific dimensions of diversity, together with a comprehensive list of advisory services available at HHU can be found in the appendices of this practical guide.

³ Age and Generational Status, Family Situation and Lifestyle, Physical and Cognitive Capacities, Educational Background, Inter/Nationality and Culture, Religion and Beliefs, Sex and Gender Role, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

2.0 Checklist

The following Checklist is intended to provide an initial orientation. You may fill it in before or after having read Chapters 3 and 4.

2.1 Awareness and Knowledge of Diversity

- I am conscious of the fact that – like everyone else – I harbor prejudices and/or stereotypical notions (unconscious bias⁴) and I am willing to question them.
- I am acutely aware of the issue of diversity and I actively engage with it in my courses. I know from my own experience where and in what forms I am likely to encounter the topic in my role as university teacher.
- I am cognisant of the fact that specific dimensions of diversity are readily discernible (e.g. skin colour, age), while others are not (e.g. familial obligations, chronic physical or psychological impairments).
- I realise to which extent factors such as my own origins, religion and beliefs, age etc. inform my role as a teacher, and I am aware that they can all have an influence on my attitudes and behavior towards students.
- I know where to find information and expertise relating to questions of diversity.
- I recognise that the challenges faced by my students in the course of their everyday lives can have a disruptive effect on their ability to attend classes. In my courses, I therefore inform students about the availability of digital, analog and other communication channels that enable them to access to the topics and content of classes, which they could not attend in person.
- I am aware of the Equal Treatment Act ([Allgemeine Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG](#))⁵, of [HHU's regulations \(Ordnung\)](#) prohibiting discrimination in accordance with the provisions of the AAG, and HHU's [guidelines](#) on responses to sexualized discrimination and violence, and the definitions of the dimensions of diversity (age, disability, ethnic origin, sex, sexual identity and religion/perspective on life) included therein.

2.2. Conception and Planning of Courses

- I am aware of the range of diversity represented among the students who attend my classes.
- I realise that the choice of material dealt with in my classes can have an impact on whether my students feel excluded or included.
- In designing my courses and selecting teaching materials, I take the issue of accessibility into account by making texts, overheads, lecture notes and elements of e-learning available to my students online.

⁴ This term refers to widespread prejudices of which individuals are not consciously aware.

⁵ Underlined terms and phrases denote links that can be accessed in the online version of this Guide

- I choose the content of my courses in such a way that persons with different cultural backgrounds and lifestyles can relate and positively respond to the material presented.
- I take care to make use of diversity-sensitive examples and case studies, and avoid materials that employ stereotypes.
- In planning my courses, I ensure that the basic arrangements (e.g. scheduling, venue) are compatible with the diversity of circumstances and the varied needs of my students, thus enabling them all to participate.

2.3 Practical Aspects of Teaching Courses

- During the first course unit in each semester, I let my students know when I am available for consultations, and emphasise that they can count on me for advice when they have questions or problems.
- I pay attention using diversity-sensitive language, e.g. avoiding stereotypic characterisations.
- I can deal constructively with varying levels of prior knowledge, and I integrate subject-specific heterogeneity as an instructive and illuminating element into my teaching practice.
- To encourage independence and individual responsibility among my students, I provide them with criteria that enable them to assess their own contributions to the success of the course.
- As part of my approach to teaching, I also inform my students about educational and didactic skills that can improve their capacity to learn on their own.

2.4 Setting Examinations

- I take care to ensure that the structure and organisation of examinations meet the basic criteria of equal opportunities and fairness, so that all students can bring their full potential to bear on the task in hand.
- In relation to examinations, I am aware of the procedures of [Compensation for Disadvantage](#) for students with disabilities or chronic illnesses, and I apply them in practice.

3.0 Basic Provisions for Diversity-Sensitive Teaching

The attitudes of teachers towards their students and the ways in which they impart knowledge to them are vital components of efforts to integrate aspects of gender-specific and other dimensions of diversity into study programmes. Hence, the realisation of diversity-compatible teaching practices requires new approaches to the conception and planning of courses, and the mentoring and supervision of students. This task is primarily the responsibility of those directly concerned with the methodology of university teaching.

In 2008, the German Conference of University Rectors stated that “good teaching consists in the ability to equip students with the capacity for independent study”. [2]

Student-centered teaching can have a positive effect on the recipient’s intrinsic motivation. To ensure that all students have the chance to optimally develop their potential, the following general points should be taken into consideration in the planning of lecture courses and other teaching formats (see Checklist above):

- **transparent regulations and demands**
- **a wide range of varied and stimulating courses, which accommodates diverse approaches to learning**
- **respectful treatment that breaks down barriers, enables anxiety-free learning and creates an atmosphere of trust that motivates learning**
- **equality of participation (in terms of opportunities to make comments, engage in discussions etc.) for all students in the class**
- **avoidance of stereotypes in the assignment of tasks**

For teaching staff, communication is an everyday’s task. This is not always true for students, particularly in the early stages of their studies. They are often reluctant to speak out, particularly on personal matters that concern health-related or familial challenges with which they are confronted. They should therefore be regularly encouraged to overcome such reservations, to talk about their anxieties and difficulties, and to inform and consult their teachers with regard to problems or personal restrictions.

If such restrictions are obvious (e.g. stutter, weak eyesight, blindness) and you are unsure how you can help, ask the person concerned how they wish to be treated and assisted. In this context, it is a good idea to include a note in the summary descriptions of your courses in the online University Information System (Hochschulinformations-System Lehre Studium Forschung, HIS-LSF) indicating your willingness to accommodate students with special needs, and encouraging them to make their wishes known.

Make it clear that you view diversity in a positive light. The power of intrinsic motivation as a stimulus to learning should never be underestimated. – Urge your students to do their very best, to tackle challenging tasks and surmount difficulties. Focusing on the positive does not imply that any concessions need be made with regard to the level or quality of the educational content.

It is demotivating and hence counterproductive to suggest, for instance, that a high percentage of first-year students will fail to complete their courses successfully.

You may not have all the answers to the problems that arise. But you can call upon the expertise of the staff of HHU's Advisory and Counselling Services for Students. These services are listed in the online Appendix to this Practical guide.

In addition, the [Coordination Unit for Diversity](#) is always happy to help. You can make an appointment for an individual consultation at any time. The unit also offers a training course on diversity-related issues for teachers and other staff members, as well as students, which is held every semester.

4.0 Practical Tips and Suggestions

In the following, we discuss a number of examples that illustrate the scope and variety of the issues relating to diversity, and provide orientation and practical suggestions on how to plan and teach your courses in a diversity-sensitive manner.

The Diversity Wheel schematically depicts the eight dimensions of diversity that HHU regards as important in a university context. These dimensions encompass Age and Generation (green segment), Family Situation and Lifestyle (yellow), Physical and Cognitive Capacities (orange), Educational Background (purple), Inter-/Nationality and Cultural Identity (red), Religion and Perspective on Life (grey), Sex and Sexual Role (dark blue) and Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (light blue). The eight dimensions are arranged around the inner circle as components of Personality. Definitions of the various dimensions are given in the following sections.



Diversity Wheel showing Diversity Dimensions of HHU

4.1 Physical and Mental Abilities

This dimension refers to the various physical and mental capabilities of each individual, and to each person's desire to lead an independent and self-determined life – irrespective of physical or mental restrictions or extraordinary gifts. For HHU, this dimension encompasses the physical and cognitive abilities that each person possesses and brings to the university (nurturing of each individual's talents). In other words, this dimension not only incorporates a commitment to compensate for disadvantages, but also includes the cultivation of individual capabilities.

Responsibility for the 'classical components of this dimension rests primarily with the employer's Spokesperson for Severely Disabled Persons, the University's Representative for Students with Disabilities and Chronic Illnesses, the Council of Representatives of Severely Disabled Persons and the Student Union (AStA).

According to the 21st [Social Survey of Students](#) carried out by the Association of German Student Service Organisations in 2016, 11% of the participants reported one or more chronic health problems which had a negative impact on their studies. This figure represented a 4% increase relative to the previous survey in 2012 [1].

4.1.1 How do I ensure that my courses are fully accessible to all of my students?

The task of making courses fully accessible to all students begins with the choice of venue and the scheduling of the class. Students with physical disabilities may find it more difficult to attend classes that take place very early or very late in the day. In addition, not all university premises used for teaching purposes are readily accessible for such students (owing to lack of ramps, narrow lifts, doors that are difficult to open etc.).

It is a good idea to check the accessibility of the prospective classroom and if necessary include a corresponding note in the HIS-LSF – or to choose a different venue. If you plan to include practical classes or excursions, these may present particular difficulties in terms of access for some students. In such cases, they should be given an alternative learning assignment. By the same token, do not forget that your office should itself be readily accessible to all students.

In addition to taking physical barriers into account, teachers should also consciously consider – and actively question – their own prejudices and stereotypes in this regard (see Checklist).

4.1.2 Technical resources can enhance accessibility

Many technical resources are available to teachers, which can help overcome the various barriers faced by students with differing physical and cognitive capabilities and make it easier for them to attend and participate fully in classes.

For example, via the 'Display' toolbar in Adobe Acrobat, you can activate the option 'Voice Output'/Read Out Loud for PDF documents. This enables people with visual impairments to have the text of the document read to them. In PowerPoint presentations and Word documents, it is possible to identify text passages or elements that are hard to read via the option 'Accessibility Checker'.

In the case of images and objects, it is possible to include alternative texts that provide a description of the image. Alternatively, you may wish to make use of the facilities offered by the [Counselling and Support Service \(BBST\)](#) administered by the University Representative for Students with Disabilities or Chronic Illnesses.

In particular when preparing PowerPoint presentations, be sure to print the text in sufficiently large letters so that it stands out clearly against the background. As a rule of thumb, choose lighter backgrounds for brightly lit spaces and darker ones for use in less well illuminated settings.

It is generally a good idea to avoid the use of phrases like “as you can see here” in your lectures. Instead, you should describe what is actually depicted in the image or diagram. Similarly, when you write something on the blackboard, it is helpful to read it out loud.

The incidence of red-green colour blindness is actually higher than generally supposed – it is therefore advisable to use other shades when preparing graphics. Note that [Simulations of Colour Blindness](#) are available, which clarify the nature of the problems⁶.

Even examinations can be designed in ways that provide tactile feedback, e.g. three-dimensional diagrams or texts in Braille. Furthermore, experiments in the natural sciences which, for safety reasons, cannot be carried out in laboratory settings that are appropriately equipped for students with disabilities can be performed in groups or with individual assistance from laboratory personnel. If you wish to record your lectures – to make them available to your students for subsequent review – you can call upon the services provided by the Centre for Information and Media Technology and the Multimedia Centre (ZIM/MMZ) at HHU. Students whose mobility is restricted can dictate their answers to their escorts, tutors or assistants, and those with visual impairments can give verbal instructions for setting up laboratory experiments

Further human and material resources may be available for this context – e.g. funding earmarked for quality enhancement (QVM). Consult with your faculty colleagues to find out more .

4.1.3 Problems with particular types of examination

The precise forms of examination are not always strictly defined in the Examination Regulations. Lecturers often have the option to choose alternative forms of assessment. For example, it may be helpful for students whose native language is not German to take an oral examination instead of a written home assignment or a written test. Similarly, mock examinations may help students who are particularly prone to exam anxiety to cope with the stress of the real thing.

Furthermore, the regulations on Compensation for Disadvantage provide for, e.g., rescheduling of end-of-term examinations and flexible completion times for home assignments and laboratory practicals. Indeed, the provisions for compensation of disadvantage are an important tool in the context of the non-discriminatory treatment of students with disabilities or chronic illnesses, as they enable them to study on an equal footing with their fellow students. They form part of what the [UN Convention on Disability Rights](#) refers to as ‘appropriate measures’, which also apply to the educational sector. Further information on this topic can be found in the online Appendix under Counselling and Support Services at HHU.

4.1.4 How can I help students with psychological problems?

On the basis of the latest Social Survey of Students undertaken by the Association of German Student Service Organisations [1], it is clear that psychological disorders among the student population are by no means a marginal phenomenon. On the contrary, the incidence of such conditions is rising. The problems are heterogeneous, and are generally not restricted to difficulties with studying as such. Nevertheless, they can have significant repercussions for the individual’s ability to pursue study courses.

⁶ An example: color-blindness.com

Psychiatric disorders are generally not apparent to outside observers. But signs such as a rapid decline in academic performance, unexpected outbursts of emotion, frequent blackouts in examinations or a general withdrawal from social contacts may point to crisis situations. If you notice such changes among your students, you can offer to discuss the matter confidentially with the individual concerned, mention the professional advisory services available and encourage the person to consult them. If in the course of such a conversation, the interviewee refers in any way to suicidal thoughts, you have no need to fear that you might have planted the idea in her or his head. On the contrary, the chance to talk about the problem often relieves the pressure, and opens up the possibility that the person concerned will seek professional help. However, any expression of a wish to take one's own life must be taken seriously.

If you require assistance in relation to other types of problem, please contact the Advisory and Counselling Service (BSST) run by the University Representative for Students with Disabilities or Chronic Illnesses.

4.2 Educational Background

This dimension refers in general terms to differences in educational and social backgrounds (e.g. academic or non-academic family background, type of school-leaving certificate and later qualifications, such as training and educational courses, and nature of one's qualification for admission to university, etc.). In this particular context, at HHU this dimension relates to the different types of secondary education that applicants have obtained, the social contexts they come from, the entrance qualifications they have obtained, and what sorts of careers are open to them at HHU. In this area, HHU's Student Service Center (SSC) and the University's Student Union (AStA) are the major providers of information and support.

In this context, students are encouraged to access information on the topic of Voluntary Work at HHU via the Diversity Portal. Here too, they will find details of the Diversity Buddy Programme [1stGeneration@HHU](#), which is specifically targeted to first-generation students and academics. In addition, the network [ArbeiterKind.de](#) offers a range of tried and tested support measures for first-generation students.

First-generation students often face challenges with which students from academic backgrounds are not confronted, owing to lack of familiarity with university practices and because fewer potential sources of advice are available to them in their immediate social background.

Students who enter our university with underrepresented forms of entrance qualification (e.g. those who do not have a general university entrance qualification) and those with an unusual educational trajectory also belong to this group. These students may encounter specific problems in areas such as:

- temporal planning of their study courses,
- applications for internships of courses of study abroad,
- applications for student assistantships positions as tutors [3].

According to the [21st Social Survey of Students](#) carried out by the Association of German Student Service Organisations, 42% of university students in the Summer Term 2016 came from a non-academic household [1].

4.2.1 Breaking down psychological barriers

You can help these students by actively encouraging them to overcome their reluctance to make their views known, and stimulating them to take part in discussions. Set out to create an atmosphere in your courses in which there is no such thing as a 'stupid' question. Promote the formation of study groups, as the psychological barriers to active participation are less intimidating in these settings.

Provide unambiguous and clearly formulated (written) guidance in relation to the structuring of assessments and examinations, and how to prepare for them. Outline your teaching plans in advance (e.g. for the next two terms), and let your students know that they made the right decision in choosing to attend university. [3]

Inform your students about the support offered by [Departmental Student Advisors](#) and the Faculty Advisors appointed by educational foundations, and that provided by the [Student Service Center](#) (SSC).

Alternatively, you may refer your students to the Departmental Students' Councils, which provide introductory tutorials at the beginning of each term and are also produce an annotated university

calendar that lists all lecture courses. Furthermore, [e-learning services](#) and other digital opportunities for networking and exchange of information can also help dismantle psychological obstacles.

4.2.2 Making good use of differences in educational background

If it comes to your attention that some students, owing to the nature of their training (e.g. in a technical line of work) or the unusual range of their experience, can present and discuss course content in a lively and stimulating fashion, ask them whether they would like to exercise these skills in the context of your course.

For example, a person trained as a technician in biology is likely to have useful tips and advice to offer in the context of practicals in the biological sciences, from which all classmates can benefit.

4.2.3 Support for first-generation university students

As a teacher, you can motivate students and provide useful advice but, as a rule, you will not be in a position to act as a mentor to them.

Special mentoring programs are available for first-generation university students, e.g. [talent scouts](#) ease the transition from school to university, and the [Student Service Center](#) (SSC) and [Student Service Organisation](#) (*Studierendenwerk*) at HHU also provide various forms of support.

4.3 Family Circumstance and Lifestyle

This dimension refers to one's familial context and the whole variety of lifestyles adopted by individuals, which change over the course of their lives and may have a direct influence on their student careers and working lives. This dimension therefore has a bearing on one's e.g. family status, and whether one has children or other family members to look after. It does not include the person's own origins or the familial and social circumstances in which one grew up (see Educational Background). Reconciling familial responsibilities with one's studies or career (work-life balance) is a difficult task. As a family-oriented university, HHU takes the issue very seriously, and this commitment is documented by its continuing participation in schemes such as the Audit of Family-Oriented Universities. On campus, all matters relating to familial obligations and work-life balance are handled by HHU's Family Advisory Bureau.

Reconciling their familial obligations with their studies is a challenging task for many students, both financially and in terms of the temporal demands involved. In the Summer Term 2016, 6% of students had at least one child, and the average number within this group was 1.6 children [1]. The numbers of students who have close relatives to care for is also rising.

4.3.1 Bringing children to classes

Even when arrangements have been made for regular child care, students may sometimes be forced to bring children with them to classes, as a last resort.

Assuming that the presence of children in a class can be tolerated and is not ruled out on grounds of safety or other objective factors, parents are advised that they should keep their children occupied (e.g. watching films – and using headphones – on mobile phone/laptop/tablet). Teaching staff can also draw the attention of parents to the facilities provided by the [Family Advisory Bureau](#) (Study & Kids Box etc.).

4.3.2. When students have relatives to look after

Members of the working population are not the only ones who may have to look after relatives who are dependent on regular care. Young adults in vocational training or at university are increasingly being confronted with this task, which generally presents them with considerable challenges.

Unfortunately, many students who find themselves in this situation are reluctant to talk about the responsibilities they have to shoulder. As a result, lecturers are seldom aware of the individuals in their classes who have to cope with a double burden.

Mention the topic at the beginning of your courses, signal your willingness to talk about the issue with the students concerned, and refer them to the services offered by the [Family Advisory Bureau](#).

4.4 Sex and Gender Roles

This dimension refers on the one hand to the biological sex of each individual, which is defined at birth and, as a rule, is indicated by visible characteristics – and on the other to one’s ‘gender’, which is associated with one’s biological sex, but depends on one’s own choice of particular ways of life, and on sociocultural allocations of certain character traits, sexual roles and behaviors

In this context, HHU focuses primarily on measures designed to ensure equality of opportunity for women and men. Its Equal Opportunity Officer and her representatives in the Faculties, the student body as a whole, the University’s administration, the Student Union (AStA) and the Equal Opportunity Commission are all actively engaged in efforts to achieve this goal.

HHU sees itself as an organisation that rejects all forms of positive and negative discrimination on the basis of a person’s sex. This practical guide is intended to contribute to the practical realization of this goal by encouraging teachers to question traditional modes of thinking and concepts of sexual roles.

4.4.1 Non-discriminatory language – how does it work?

Only when teachers use language in a non-discriminatory way will students feel assured that the message is being addressed to all. Naming all sexes specifically expresses equal treatment of women, men and diverse persons as a democratic principle, and can correct unconscious bias.

Use of gender-specific language demonstrates respect for all persons, irrespective of their sex.

Give it a try – you can find further tips in HHU’s brochure [Gender-Specific Language: A Practical guide to the Use of Non-Discriminatory Language](#).

4.4.2 Combating Unconscious Bias

Everyone has a stock of unconscious prejudices and stereotypic concepts of others. This has been demonstrated in many studies, and does not present any problems as long as we are aware of the fact, and are willing to question our own biases. When choosing representative examples of literature and imagery, take care to analyse the impressions these sources transmit, and consider what sorts of stereotypes they may convey to students. Conversely, encourage your students to question their own modes of thinking and their own gender roles.

By selecting the materials used in your classes in a diversity-sensitive manner, you can open up new perspectives for your students and, in so doing, contribute to the dismantling of established prejudices.

4.5 Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

This dimension relates to one's sexual orientation, i.e. the sex(es) to which one feels sexually or emotionally attracted (e.g. hetero-, homo-, bisexuality etc.). Secondly, it refers to one's sexual identity, i.e. the particular sex-specific way of life one adopts, together with the sociocultural attributions (gender) that this entails and which one accepts for oneself.

One's sexual identity may differ from one's biological sex (e.g. trans*) or may not fall within the binary system defined by the terms woman and man (e.g. inter*). At HHU, the Student Union (AStA) arranges a variety of informational events and provides advisory services in relation to this topic.

One's sex and sexual orientation, together with one's origin and cultural identity, age, and religious or philosophical beliefs are all factors that contribute significantly to the development of one's identity. The term 'gender identity' refers to one's basic understanding of one's own sexual nature. In this context, the decisive factor is how one sees oneself and how one wishes to be perceived by others (see Section 4.4).

In a survey done in 2018, more than 7 % of the population of Germany identified as either lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual or transgender [4]. The accepted abbreviation used to refer to this group is LGBT*. The asterisk indicates that everyone who cannot or does not wish to be included in the binary system of the sexes is included in this category.

In North Rhine-Westphalia, at least 1.3 million individuals belong to this group. The survey cited above also indicated that the proportion who identify as LGBT* is higher among adolescents: 11.2% of 14- to 29-year-olds identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual or transgender.⁷

4.5.1 Equality at the level of language

In November 2017, the Rectorate of HHU decided that the designations 'Frau' and 'Herr' would no longer be used in student ID cards and official documents (e.g. examination certificates).

This being the case, and as a gesture of goodwill, teachers should consider omitting these designations when addressing their students. Similarly, persons who are in [transition](#)⁸ and may not yet have officially altered their first names may wish to be addressed by their surnames or by their preferred first names. Ask your students at the beginning of each term how they wish to be addressed, or send an e-mail mentioning this issue to the students in your courses. This creates an atmosphere of mutual trust and helps to avoid potential problems.

The inappropriateness of discriminatory language is an issue that arises not only in relation to sex, but also in the context of other categories of diversity and inequality that play a role in a university context. See Sections 4.4.1 and 4.7.2 of this Practical guide.

⁷ "The study did not include pansexual, intersex, non-binary or queer persons, meaning the number of lgbtiq* persons is even higher." Further information can be found under www.aug.nrw/glossar/

⁸The term "in transition" describes the process of a trans * person that is making physical and/or juridical changes to express their own gender identity. This may include hormone therapy, surgeries, as well as name changes and a different style of clothing, and many more.

4.5.2 All-gender toilets

Toilets designated in accordance with the binary model of the sexes (male/female) discriminate against individuals who identify as trans- or intersexual. This also applies to persons who cannot or do not wish to conform to the binary system of the sexes.

To ensure that trans- and intersexual persons are not forced to use facilities explicitly intended for others, there are now six all-gender toilets (toilets for all) on campus. Parents accompanying children of the 'other' sex who need to use the toilet also benefit.

All-gender toilets can be found at the following locations:

21.02 1st floor, room 22A

23.11 1st floor, room 003

24.21 1st floor, room 07

25.02 1st floor, room 04

25.12 -1st floor (U1), room 04

26.32 1st floor, room 04

Please share the locations with your students.

4.6 Age and Generational Status

This dimension refers to the individual's age and its associated sociocultural attributions with respect to status and hierarchy, and the changing needs and capabilities that accompany the process of biological aging. This process also entails changes in how one experiences one's self and one's life, and alterations in how one is perceived by others. One such alteration relates to the assignment, by others and in one's own mind, to a specific generation.

In the present context, this dimension also includes notions such as 'stages' in life or one's 'life cycle' at (a) university, which motivate the creation of specific 'stage-related' measures, such as mentoring programmes for first-year students, and senior professorships for older faculty members.

HHU's student population ranges from 16 to 84 years of age. The 16- to 19-year-olds comprise nearly 11%, and those over 29 account for 25% of students. Some 52.4% of the academic staff are between 26 and 35 years old. Less than one-third (30%) of this last group are older than 41 [6].

4.6.1 Lifelong Learning – no place for age discrimination at HHU

Older students are frequently perceived as 'long-term' students – unjustly so, given that the reasons for their 'late' attendance at university are many and varied (job training, the need to finance their studies, parenting duties etc.). "Older students are sometimes regarded with curiosity when they come by to pick up home assignments," reports a student at HHU. Conversely, older students may complain that they receive less attention from faculty members than their younger classmates do.

Nevertheless, the numbers of university students in the 35-70 age group continue to rise. They often enroll in further-education courses to gain a professional qualification and/or in Blended Learning formats – which are now available in increasing numbers at HHU, thanks to the continuing rise in the use of digital technologies.

However, it is not just older students who may feel discriminated against on the basis of age. Younger students may also be stereotypically characterised as 'young and inexperienced', which tends to suggest that they are not taken seriously.

Make it clear that you value all of your students equally, and that will not tolerate discriminatory attitudes of any description. Point out that the presence of students of different ages in your classes is beneficial as it serves to widen the terms of discussions.

4.6.2 Age differences within student groups

However, sources of friction between students of different ages cannot always be entirely avoided. To de-escalate such tensions, you can choose teaching formats which emphasise interactions between different student groups. Creating opportunities for the exchange of views enables them to get to know one another better, and learn to respect their diverse positions, thus achieving a broader learning effect.

Forming learning groups that include older and younger students allows all sides to benefit from the diversity of personal and professional experiences and perspectives represented.

Emphasise how enriching sociocultural differences based on the manifold variety of personal experiences and age-related changes in viewpoints can be for the process of learning and for society as a whole.

4.7 Religion and Beliefs

This dimension concerns the influence that one's philosophical perspective on life, or one's religion has on one's self perception and actions (e.g. resting on specific holidays, abstinence from certain foods, wearing distinctive apparel, adoption of traditional sex-specific roles etc.).

HHU is an open-minded and tolerant university, and adopts a neutral position with regard to philosophical and religious views and convictions.

In March 2010 HHU created an interdenominational Silent Space (Building 25.22.U1, Room 26) for reflection, contemplation, meditation, prayer and relaxation, which is open to all members of the University.

The Silent Space is open Mondays to Fridays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The corresponding [Terms of Use](#) were updated in October 2019.

The broad range of nationalities represented on campus and the confessional diversity of Germany itself imply that large numbers of students either belong to one or none of many religious denominations, and have highly diverse beliefs and perspectives on life.

4.7.1 Religious congregations represented at HHU

If you need to seek advice or information relating to the religious beliefs and sensitivities of the various religious communities represented on campus, please contact the appropriate university congregation:

- [Congregation of Evangelical Students](#) (ESG)
- [Congregation of Jewish Students](#) (JHG)
- [Congregation of Catholic Students](#) (KHG)
- [Congregation of Muslim Students](#) (MHG)

Their representatives can clarify questions that may arise or difficulties you may encounter in relation to the religious views or practices of your students.

4.7.2 Religious holidays

For historical reasons, public holidays in Germany correspond mainly to Christian feast days. Apart from these legally recognized (public) holidays, Christians and other religious communities, e.g. Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, observe their own calendar of holidays (see [Feast Days Observed by Non-Christian Communities](#)). For the most part, these do not follow the Gregorian calendar.

Many holidays, e.g. New Year, are celebrated on different days by members of different religious communities and in different cultures. In the Chinese cultural sphere, the date of New Year is determined by the traditional Chinese lunisolar calendar – in 2020 it fell on the 25th of January. Jewish communities celebrate their New Year *Rosh Hashanah* (Hebrew: the Head of the Year) on the first two days of the month of *Tishrei* in the Jewish calendar (19th and 20th of September 2021). New Year in the Muslim world commemorates the journey of the Prophet Mohammed from Mecca to Medina in the year 622 CE. In Islam, however, New Year's Day is not an occasion of celebration but of commemoration, and in 2020 it fell on the 20th of August.

Another example – Ramadan – demonstrates how difficult it can be for students who are believers to integrate their religious duties with their university obligations. As a rule, fasting presents no

problems for students. If you have reason to worry about possible lapses in concentration or other problems (e.g. in the course of an exam) during this period, mention your concerns in class as a signal that you are willing to talk about the issue.

The position taken by the German Islam Conference with regard to learning during Ramadan can be summarized as follows. Given that the Constitution guarantees the freedom of religion, students are entitled to fast without penalty in schools. However, pupils also have a duty, even during Ramadan, to do their best to ensure that assignments are completed and declared learning goals are achieved [8]. This ruling can also be applied in a university context.

4.8 Inter-/Nationality and Culture

As used here, the term 'nationality' refers to one's country of origin (e.g. one's own country of birth or that of one's parents) and the sociocultural backgrounds that this implies. In a broader sense it refers not only to the nationality conferred by one's place of birth, but also the customs, norms and cultural settings in which one grew up, and with one identifies as an individual. One's country or place of birth and/or the nationality of one's parents or guardians need not be the decisive factor in determining the 'inter-/nationality' of a person. The attribute 'inter-/nationality' and its associated cultural imprints can change over the course of one's life. At HHU, this dimension of personality is of particular concern to the Vice-President for International Affairs and Science Communication, the Junior Scientist and International Researcher Center (JUNO), the International Office and the Student Union (AStA).

- We begin on a cautionary note: To avoid the use of discriminatory terminology, please take care to use respectful and inclusive expressions and definitions. This can be an especially challenging task when working with historical sources. Therefore, avoid in particular the use of vocabulary typical of colonial times and the Nazi era.

In this context, you should point out to your students that terms that have racist connotations (e.g. 'Zigeuner', 'Neger') are unacceptable in everyday speech. The colour of a person's skin should only be specified in a text when this attribute is essential for an understanding of that text [5]. To gauge their own reactions, you can encourage your students e.g. to try switching roles and considering the issue from the other person's perspective. This gives them an opportunity to question their own use of language in a role-playing exercise.

As an international university, HHU welcomes people from more than 133 countries, who live, study and work on our campus. Their contributions enrich our teaching and research programmes, and represent a significant element of our success. International students need to be highly adaptable in order to succeed in an unfamiliar environment. They must

- become accustomed to a different society
- learn a new language
- cope with the challenges presented by a different university system,
- build up a new social network etc.

Among their greatest challenges are finding the resources needed to pay for their studies and making contact with their German fellow students [7].

4.8.1 Acknowledging the adaptability of international students

German universities have traditionally emphasised the critical assessment and discussion of texts and other materials, oral presentations, independent research in small groups, individual organisation of their studies etc. This model confronts international students with particular challenges. As a rule, they will be familiar with a very different approach to learning.

Misunderstandings must be reckoned with. Moreover – partly because of their previous educational experiences in a different cultural setting – international students may be reluctant to approach their teachers when they encounter difficulties. As a consequence, they may prefer to remain in the background, rarely participate in discussion and seldom ask specific questions. Teachers can break through this reluctance, e.g. by defining clear rules [3].

4.8.2 Opportunities for intercultural exchanges

It may sometimes be interesting to draw on the diverse cultural backgrounds of your students in your courses, with a view of stimulating an intercultural exchange of views. This is one area in which diversity can enrich a seminar or a lecture.

However, in this context it is important to realise that for some students, the question “Where do you actually come from?” has a negative connotation. When persons with a recognizable or ostensible migrant background are repeatedly asked about their origins, they begin to interpret it in an exclusionary sense. This is because they understand the query as implying a different question: “And when do you intend to go back?” It is therefore essential to treat this topic sympathetically and, in particular, not to insist that students be more forthcoming than they wish to be. Remind yourself that it is not always possible to discern a person’s origin, or those of a person’s parents, on the basis of physiognomy alone. Do not address the origins of putatively non-German students directly; avoid formulations such as “You’re certainly not German by birth, where do you come from originally?”

Indicate to your students that they can contribute their own experiences of migration and travel in the context of the course, if they so wish. No-one should be forced to do, but all serious contributions should be acknowledged with appreciation.

4.8.3 Teaching and Learning in a multicultural context

International students – as pointed out above – must surmount many challenges. They have to familiarize themselves with a new environment, often have quite a different understanding of the respective roles of teacher and student, are confronted with language barriers, cultural differences and contrasts, and may be under constant pressure to excel. This is where the didactic virtues of transparency and openness become particularly relevant.

Encourage your students to help fellow students from abroad, and those with varying levels of competence in German [3]. All students benefit from the use of a variety of methods, which tends to make students more conscious of their own skills. If on the other hand, you feel that this might be causing problems, you can intervene and offer to discuss the matter, if necessary.

Make sure to draw the attention of your international students to the services designed specifically to assist them to adapt to their new environment, e.g. the International Office’s Buddy Programme [Mate-For-You](#) and [UNI2JOB](#), and the facilities and advice provided by the [Junior Scientist and International Researcher Center](#) (JUNO). For further information, see the online Appendix Counselling and Support Services at HHU.

THANK YOU – MERCI – DANKE

for taking the time to read this practical guide.

Now please take another look at the Checklist on pages 8 and 9, to test your state of knowledge.

If you wish to deepen your knowledge of the topics discussed here, further information is available at [Diversity in Teaching](#).

If you have questions, comments or your own (perhaps critical) ideas on the subject of this Practical guide, write to us at diversity@hhu.de

We will be happy to include any further exemplary material based on your own teaching experiences (e.g. on digital, 'open-access' teaching formats), in the online version of this Practical guide.

The Staff of the Coordination Unit for Diversity

5.0 Literature

- [1] Middendorff, E. et al. (2017): The Economic and Social Condition of Students in Germany in 2016. Summary of the [21st Social Survey](#) Carried Out by the Associations of German Student Service Organisations, Analysis of the Data for HHU Düsseldorf.
- [2] Conference of German University Rectors (HRK, Publisher) The Voice of the Universities (2008): Towards a Reform of University Teaching p. 3 (3rd General Meeting of the HRK, 22.04.2008), Bonn. www.hrk.de/positionen/beschluss/detail/fuer-eine-reform-der-lehre-in-den-hochschulen/ (accessed on 20.10.2020).
- [3] Boomers, Dr. S./Nitschke, A.-K. (2013): Diversity and Teaching – Recommendations for the Structuring of University Courses for Heterogeneous Groups of Students, TU Berlin.
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- [5] Federal Centre for Political Education (2007): A Brief Practical guide to Phrasing for Journalists. <https://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/rechtsextremismus/41722/kleiner-formulierungs-ratgeber-fuer-journalisten> (accessed on 20.10.2020).
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- [8] Jäkel, L./Quecke, F.: Ramadan in the Classroom: How Schools Handle Children Who Fast. Article in Spiegel Online, 14.05.2019. www.spiegel.de/lebenundlernen/schule/ramadan-im-klassenzimmer-so-gehen-schulen-mit-fastenden-schuelern-um-a-1267169.html (accessed on 20.10.2020).

6.1 Counselling and Support Services

The following service points offer guidance and assistance. Share this information with students, if possible. You may also make use of the services yourself, for example to get support regarding the challenges of handling a diverse student body.

You can find a complete overview of all service points in alphabetical order in the [Diversity Portal](#).

General Equal Treatment Act (GETA) – Complaints Desk

The complaints desk is responsible for processing all complaints of discriminations throughout the whole university. They take indications for possible cases of discrimination and give out general information and educational materials.

bit.do/agg-beschwerdestelle (GETA Complaints Desk HHU)

Students' Association (AStA)

The association is elected by the student parliament (SP) for one year and is the highest executive organ of the "Constitutional Student Board". This board represents the student body in legal and statutory authority and is additionally responsible for the support of every individual student. The AStA works in the promotion of students, provides social self-help and takes the higher education policy interests of the students.

[AStA HHU Website](#)

AStA Departments

The students' association offers different contact points for diverse needs, questions and interests regarding campus life. The autonomous departments are practically independent of the AStA-board and the student parliament and are directly elected at plenary meetings by the respective group of students they represent.

Next to others, there are:

- the women's department,
- the LesBi department,
- the department for gay and bisexual students,
- the department for trans, inter and non-binary students,
- the department for accessibility.

[All AStA Departments](#)

ArbeiterKind.de

ArbeiterKind.de is a non-profit initiative that supports young people that are the first ones of their family to (want to) study at a university. The mentors of ArbeiterKind.de are First-Generation Academics themselves. They offer support and motivation, give information about the possibility of

studying and accompany mentees on their path from the first semester until their successful completion of their degree and their career entry.

[ArbeiterKind.de Website](#)

Advisory Office of the Commissioner for Students with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases

The Commissioner for students with disabilities or chronic diseases and her team work to improve the conditions of studying and examinations, both on an individual level and on a structural level. Students can discuss their individual needs for support in personal consultations. They can seek advice concerning topics like equal opportunities, disadvantage compensations, assisting aids, applications for financial aid and/or ask general questions in a trustful environment with the team of social education workers and social workers. A well-functioning network helps them to connect students with other service points, such as psychiatric, psychotherapeutic and/or HHU internal. There are group activities (Asperger's'-Group, Mentoring, Barrier Free Campus, Study Group) that help students to reduce anxiety, give support in using resources and exploring their own potential. There are student employees who can act as assistants on campus.

[Website of the Commissioner](#)

Diversity-Buddy-Programme „1stGeneration@HHU“

The Buddy-Programme was established in the summer term 2019. It is meant to facilitate the arrival at university of students that are the first ones of their family to ever attend a university. Hence, higher semester students who have gained experience help first- and second semester students. Additionally, there are group events regarding all kinds of topics around studying at HHU and in general.

[Website Buddy-Programme](#)

Volunteering at HHU

The Heinrich-Heine University (HHU) offers its students a platform that helps identifying a suitable volunteer position to sharpen their personality profile in a quick and easy way. Volunteering employers can publicise their offerings to motivate students to volunteer.

[Website Volunteering at HHU](#)

[Family Support Centre \(FamilienBeratungsBüro FBB\)](#)

The Family Support Centre assists and coordinates regarding family-related questions, informs about various childcare possibilities, helps to find care facilities that fit to the individual situation of a person, can accompany families in exceptional and emergent situations and offers holiday activities for children during school breaks.

[Website Family Support Centre](#)

[Departmental Advice Service](#)

There are study-programme specific advising services, such as Academic Advisors. They give advice and support with topics regarding studying or the university in general. Their services exist next to the services of the [Student Service Centre \(SSC\)](#). Academic Advisors not only provide the students with information about creating their course schedule and the study or examination orders, but they also take care of all questions and problems directly concerning their studies. Additionally, they give advice to pupils that are interested in studying, and give an overview of the contents of a study programme.

[Website Departmental Advice Service](#)

[Financing](#)

HHU offers their students a number of supporting scholarships. There are programmes for the different phases of studying: first-year students, students in advanced semesters, students in a semester abroad and graduate scholarship holders. Loans or grants can also be of interest to students. If you feel like there are students in your course that are interested in the topic, talk to the whole group about it and refer them to the services of the Studierendenwerk or the Student Services.

[Studying and Teaching at HHU](#)

[Studierendenwerk Düsseldorf](#)

[Gender Equal Language](#)

To realise gender equality is of special concern at Heinrich-Heine University. Therefore, it is equally important to transfer that concern into the everyday-use of language that is especially represented in the correct terms for persons. To facilitate the implementation of gender equal language according to North-Rhine Westphalia (NRW) State Law § 4, the Central Equal Opportunities Officer has updated the HHU Practical guideline for “Gender Equal Language”, that was originally published in 2014, in 2017. It enables students and employees to phrase their texts, forms and scientific papers in a gender equal language.

[Website Gender Equal Language](#)

[Equal Opportunities Officer](#)

The Equal Opportunities Office and her representatives in the faculties recognise the interests of women at HHU, according to the NRW Higher Education Act and the NRW State Equality Act, that are

members and associates, or women that applied to HHU. She works towards the inclusion of equal opportunities relevant aspects in the fulfilment of HHU tasks, especially concerning scientific, administrative and technical work, as well as development planning and performance-based allocation of funds. The central, student and administration- and faculty equal opportunities officer of HHU perform their tasks in the form of extensive consultation, assistance, advancement and mentoring offers for female students and employees.

Since 2006, the SelmaMeyerMentoring-programme supports female scientists of Heinrich-Heine University with planning and developing their careers inside or outside of the university context, with the goal of increasing the number of women in leading positions.

[Website SelmaMeyerMentoring-Programme](#)

University Didactics

University didactics at HHU offers advice, exchange and qualification for typical fields of activity of teachers: Student-centred planning and designing teaching, counselling students, using and dealing with feedback and evaluation, carrying out fair and transparent examinations and developing innovations in teaching and studies. Diversity, as a cross-sectional subject, is a part of all fields of topics.

[Website University Didactics](#)

International Office

The International Office fulfils diverse functions concerning the internationalisation and international relations of Heinrich Heine University. Their task is to inform and advise students and researchers of HHU on study stays, research, and internships abroad, inform and advise ERASMUS students and guest students of partner universities on their stay at HHU Düsseldorf and organise their enrolment, offer a variety of welcome events and support services for international students (e.g. FEEL AT HOME, Buddy Programme), maintain and establish international partnerships with universities worldwide, and work on the internationalisation strategy and international marketing strategy of HHU.

[Website International Office](#)

Junior Scientist and International Researcher Center (JUNO)

The Junior Scientist and International Researcher Center of HHU offers interdisciplinary qualification and soft skill trainings for postdocs, young research group leaders and junior professors in order to support the scientific independency of the young academics at HHU. JUNO is also the central contact and service centre for international doctoral researchers, postdocs and visiting scientists who are supported by the Welcome Service for international researchers. JUNO is part of Heine Research Academies.

[Website JUNO](#)

Diversity Coordination Office

The Coordination Office supports and advises the Vice President for Strategic Management and Equal Opportunities as well as the entire Rectorate regarding the topic of Diversity Management. It accompanies and promotes the networking of diversity actors within the HHU and networks with institutions and diversity experts outside the HHU. Two recent central projects were the successful implementation of the diversity audit "Shaping Diversity" of the "Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft" (2016 to 2019) and the establishment of a diversity portal with a focus on studies and teaching at HHU (2016 to 2018).

Once a semester, the Diversity Coordination Office offers an awareness workshop for lecturers, students and employees of the university. The dates will be announced via the website and the newsletter.

[Website Diversity Coordination Office](#)

Mate-For-You

The Buddy Program "Mate-For-You" brings newly arrived students from abroad (World-Mates) together with experienced students of the HHU (Home-Mates). The motto is: learning from each other and creating a lively intercultural exchange together.

[Website Mate-For-You](#)

Disadvantage Compensation

Disadvantage Compensations do not constitute an advantage for the students concerned. It is merely a matter of compensating for disadvantages that arise due to a disability or chronic illness before or during the course of study.

The aim of the compensation of disadvantages is to create conditions that enable students with disabilities or chronic illnesses to be able to complete their studies and examinations without being disadvantaged by their particular life situation. It should be noted that the compensation of disadvantages depends on the individual case, as it is needs oriented and individually tailored to the person and the associated study and examination achievements.

Examples of disadvantage compensation: Extending the time allowed for examinations and homework; changing the form of examinations; substituting examinations in the case of examination formats that cannot be carried out; equalising the study programme (e.g. fewer courses and examinations per semester). The right to compensation for disadvantages for students with disabilities and chronic illnesses is often regulated by law:

- in the Basic Law,
- in the German Higher Education Framework Act,
- in the state higher education laws,
- in examination regulations and
- in the UN Disability Rights Convention.

Further information is available at [Studentenwerk - Nachteilsausgleich](#)

Mental Crises and Illnesses

An overview of the HHU-related advice centres can be found here:

[Website Mental Crises and Illnesses](#)

Psychological Employee Counselling

The focus is on counselling HHU staff in the event of psychological problems or mental distress, regardless of whether the problems are at work or private.

If the consultation results in an indication for a psychological or psychotherapeutic treatment or consultation, employees are supported in the search for suitable treatment or consultation places, also including treatment offers at the HHU. In order to cope with acute crises, up to three psychotherapeutic crisis interventions are carried out in addition to the initial consultation.

A further offer consists of information about mental illness and measures for prevention. To this end, regular events on relevant topics (e.g. addictions, stress at work, bullying, occupational health, etc.) for employees of the HHU.

[Website Psychotherapeutical Outpatient Clinic](#)

Psychological Counselling by the Student Service

The Psychological Counselling Service of the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf offers support for personal and psychological problems during the study period. This takes place in one-on-one interviews and small groups as well as basic courses and seminars to reduce stress and overcome study problems.

What can put a strain on your studies:

- The next exam seems like an insurmountable hurdle.
- It is difficult to concentrate on the learning material.
- Studying is not fun, it is just pressure.
- Fear of exams and presentations determine life.
- It is hard to meet nice people.
- There are problems with the girlfriend/boyfriend.

[Website Psychological Counselling](#)

[Psychosocial Centre \(LVR-PSZ\)](#)

The Psychosocial Centre (LVR-PSZ) offers a comprehensive range of counselling and support services on an outpatient basis (Monday-Friday from 8 am to 5 pm, Himmelgeister Str. 228, building 12.50). Patients can make use of the services of a multi-professional team of doctors, psychologists, creative therapists, music therapists, dance therapists, movement therapists and occupational therapists to discuss all questions, worries and needs and to develop possible perspectives.

[Website LVR Clinic](#)

[Psychotherapeutic Institute Outpatient Clinic \(PIA\)](#)

The Psychotherapeutic Institute Outpatient Clinic (PIA) is a psychological-psychotherapeutic institution at the Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf. PIA offers qualified help with psychosocial problems and psychologically caused illnesses. The psychotherapeutic treatment is based on the latest findings of psychotherapy research and is subject to constant scientific control. The public health insurance companies and most private insurance companies cover the treatment costs.

[Website PIA](#)

[Raum der Stille \(Room of Silence\)](#)

Since March 2010, the HHU has provided a non-denominational room of silence (building 25.22.U1; room 26). It can be used by all members and relatives of the university for quiet reflection, relaxation, meditation and prayer.

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 8 am to 8 pm, Saturday 8 am to 4 pm
The usage regulation was updated in October 2019. (See Recommendation p. 26)

[Website Room of Silence](#)

[Simulations of Colour Blindness](#)

If you do not suffer from colour vision problems, it is very difficult to imagine what it is like to be colour blind. The Colour Blindness Simulator can help you overcome this limitation. Get a feeling for what it is like to have a colour vision impairment. Since all calculations are done on your local computer, no images are uploaded to the server. Therefore, you can use images in any size; there are no restrictions. Select an image using the upload function or simply drag your image to the middle of the simulator.

[Website Colour Blindness Simulator](#)

[Social Service of the Studierendenwerk](#)

The advisory services are offered to all students of the Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf. They support students in solving social, personal and economic issues that arise in connection with their studies. Counselling is treated in strict confidence.

[Website Social Service Studierendenwerk](#)

Student Service Centre

The HHU offers a central service point for general questions from students about their studies. Here, students get advice on specific services, such as study certificates, the submission of final theses or advice on the course of studies/exams.

[Website Student Service Centre](#)

Talent Scouting

"Talents welcome!" - This was the motto of the joint project between Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf and the University of Wuppertal, which started in early 2017. Ten talent scouts support schoolchildren in the region in developing their future plans in an intensive support and tutorial program.

[Website Talent Scouting](#)

Translation Service at HHU

Student employees of the Counselling Office of the Commissioner for Students with Disabilities or Chronic Illnesses (BBST) scan literature from students and lecturers* and convert it into readable language for visually impaired people.

[Website BBSt](#)

UNI2JOB

The program "UNI2JOB - Career in Germany" improves the chances of the 1,500 international students of the HHU to start their career in Germany. It supports all international full-time and exchange students of the HHU on their way into the German job market. From the beginning of their studies, students can receive help to prepare for working life. Individual and comprehensive advice is provided.

[Website UNI2JOB](#)

Central Equal Opportunities Officer (see also GSB)

The Equal Opportunities Officer looks after the interests of women who are members or associates of the university. She works towards the inclusion of equality-related aspects in the fulfilment of the university's tasks, in particular in scientific, administrative and technical work, in development planning and in the performance-related allocation of funds. You can contact the Equal Opportunities Officer or their representatives in the faculties directly.

[Website Central Equal Opportunities Officer](#)

Certificate for Intercultural Competence

The Intercultural Competence Certificate gives students of the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf the opportunity to distinguish themselves for their later career by acquiring intercultural key competences in addition to their studies. The certificate attests to activities in the international field -

this can include stays abroad, participation in language courses and intercultural training as well as the commitment to integrating fellow students from abroad.

Students seeking a degree at the HHU can apply for the certificate at any time during their studies. The certificate is awarded by the Center Studium Universale in cooperation with the International Office.

[Website Intercultural Competence Certificate](#)

6.2.1 Legal Basis

General Equal Treatment Act (GETA)

For the first time in Germany, a law has been created which comprehensively regulates protection against discrimination on the basis of racial or ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual identity by, for example, employers, landlords, providers of goods and services. The law contains rights and obligations for employers and employees alike. The entire application process, starting with the job advertisement, must be non-discriminatory. Employees with existing employment relationships are entitled to protection against discrimination. They can claim compensatory payment or reimbursement and complain to employers about discrimination. To this end, a complaints office must be set up in all companies and all employees must be informed of its existence. The AGG Complaints Desk at the HHU is also a contact point for students.

[Website Federal Antidiscrimination Agency](#)

HHU Order for the Protection against Discrimination (GETA)

The aim of the Heinrich-Heine University Düsseldorf (HHU) is to prevent discrimination within the university on the grounds of race or ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, etc. to prevent or eliminate discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual identity. HHU takes the diversity of its members into account appropriately (diversity management) and works towards the elimination of existing disadvantages.

[Official Announcement GETA \(German\)](#)

Practical guideline of Heinrich Heine University for Dealing with Sexualised Discrimination and Violence

The Heinrich Heine University sees itself as a place where everyone is treated with appreciation and respect. The aim of this directive is therefore to deal with cases of sexual discrimination, to prevent harassment and violence and to set out procedures for intervention. This directive serves to protect all persons affected by sexualised acts.

[Official Announcement - sexualised Discrimination & Violence](#)

UN Disability Rights Convention

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRDP) is an important milestone - not only for people with disabilities, but for society as a whole. The convention concretises the universal human rights of people with disabilities and makes it clear that they have an unrestricted and self-evident right to participate.

[UN CRPD File - accessible](#)

6.2.2 Further Information

Information Regarding all Dimensions

FU Berlin (since 2016): [Toolbox "Gender and Diversity in Teaching"](#)

University of Freiburg (2015-2018): [Toolbox "Diversity in Teaching"](#)

Auferkorte-Michaelis, N./Linde, F. (2017): [„Diversität lernen und lehren – ein Hochschulbuch“-free Download](#) (German)

HHU Düsseldorf (since 2015): [Diversity Portal](#)

HHU Brochure (2nd Edition 2019): ["Diversity at HHU"](#)

HHU (2017): [German-English Glossary of HHU](#)

HHU (2016): ["Methodensammlung für Dozierende"](#) (German)

Internetauftritt des Zentrums für Kompetenzentwicklung für Diversity Management (neu seit 2020):
Lehre an Hochschule; Verbundprojekt der Universität Duisburg-Essen und der Technischen Hochschule Köln [Website KomDim](#) (German)

Zentrum für Kompetenzentwicklung für Diversity Management

Diversity-Kompetenz in der Hochschullehre: Ein E-Learning-Tool für Hochschullehrende
[Hier](#) können Sie sich für das Tool auf der Lernplattform ILIAS registrieren (German)

Universität Wuppertal (seit 2011): [Portal „Intersektionalität“](#) (German)

Removing Barriers in Teaching

Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel (2018): [Barrierearme Lehre: Grundlagen, Umgang und Möglichkeiten. Eine Handreichung für Lehrende](#)

Handreichung Barrierearme Lehre ([PDF-Download](#)) (German)

HHU (2015): [Didaktische Handreichung bezüglich Studierender mit chronischen Erkrankungen & Behinderungen „Didaktikleitfaden“](#) ([PDF-Download](#)) (German)

Sex, Gender and Sexual Orientation

Fraunhofer IAO (since 2017): [Gender Diversity Toolbox](#)

Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien (2019): [trans. inter*. nicht-binär. – Lehr- und Lernräume an Hochschulen geschlechterreflektiert, diskriminierungskritisch und respektvoll gestalten](#) (German)

LAG Lesben in NRW e.V. (10. Auflage, 2019): [die Fibel der vielen kleinen Unterschiede](#) (German)

Non-discriminatory Language

HHU (2016): [Leitfaden „Geschlechtergerechte Sprache“](#) (German)

AntiDiskriminierungsBüro (ADB) Köln/Öffentlichkeit gegen Gewalt e.V. (2013): [Sprache schafft Wirklichkeit. Glossar und Checkliste zum Leitfaden für einen rassismuskritischen Sprachgebrauch](#) (German)

Neue deutsche Medienmacher e.V. (2019): [„Wörterverzeichnis der Neuen deutschen Medienmacher*innen \(NdM\) mit Formulierungshilfen, Erläuterungen und alternativen Begriffen für die Berichterstattung in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft.“](#) (German)

Leadership

Kodex zur HHU (2012): [Broschüre Kodex zur Personalführung](#) (German)

6.2.3 Recommended Literature and Study Materials

Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes/Berliner Institut für empirische Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (BIM) an der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (2017): [Diskriminierungserfahrungen in Deutschland. Ergebnisse einer Repräsentativ- und einer Betroffenenbefragung](#) (German)

Auferkorte-Michaelis, N./Linde, F.: Diversitätsgerecht Lehren und Lernen, in: K. Hansen (2014): CSR und Diversity Management

Bertelsmann Stiftung (2019): Pickel, G.: [Weltanschauliche Vielfalt und Demokratie. Wie sich religiöse Vielfalt auf die politische Kultur auswirkt](#) (German)

Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (2016) „Situation von trans- und intersexuellen Menschen im Fokus“. [Sachstandsinformation](#) (German)

CARITAS Europa (2018): [Study on educational poverty: Education: key to breaking the cycle of poverty](#)

Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung (2017): [Diversität und Studienerfolg – Studienrelevante Heterogenitätsmerkmale an Universitäten und Fachhochschulen und ihr Einfluss auf den Studienerfolg – eine quantitative Untersuchung](#) (German)

Deutsches Studentenwerk (2016): [A Matter of Perspective: Critical Incidents from the point of view of Studentenwerke and higher education institutions](#)

Genkova, P./Ringelisen, T. (2016): Handbuch Diversity Kompetenz. 2 B (German)

IQ Fachstelle Interkulturelle Kompetenzentwicklung und Antidiskriminierung VIA Bayern e.V. (2015): [Mehrwert Vielfalt – Zahlen, Daten, Fakten Wirtschaftliche Vorteile durch Arbeitsmarktintegration, Einwanderung, Vielfalt und Antidiskriminierung](#) (German)

Robert Bosch Stiftung (2019): [Zusammenhalt in Vielfalt: Das Vielfaltsbarometer](#) (German)

Zick, A./Küpper, B./Berghan, W. (2019): Verlorene Mitte – Feindselige Zustände. Rechtsextreme Einstellungen in Deutschland 2018/19 [Kurzzusammenfassung der Studie](#) (German)

Imprint

The HHU Diversity Working Group “Qualification”, which was formed in the process of the Diversity-Audit “Vielfalt Gestalten” by the Stifterverband in 2017, created this Recommendation.

The Working Group is made up of staff members of the Coordination Office Diversity and representatives of various status groups/interested parties of HHU:

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