



Hochschulforum Digitalisierung

Preparing psychosocial inclusivity in courses

Practical template for lecturers, seminar
leaders, anti-discrimination officers,
programme directors, etc.

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Psychosocial inclusivity in courses

Building on the concept of psychological safety—which reflects the perception of being able to freely express oneself as a team member without fear of negative consequences—psychosocial inclusivity extends this framework by incorporating the importance of sociocultural characteristics. This approach enables a deeper understanding of **individual needs within** the context of **sociocultural dynamics**, thus establishing attributes such as **non-discrimination, accessibility, and inclusion as essential features of safe teams**.

Creating additional conditions for psychosocial inclusivity in university events appears necessary, given the precarious mental health situation of students. Extending seminar spaces into students' homes through personal devices also implies specific requirements for designing (virtual) interaction spaces.

Firstly, individuals and their personality traits become visible in new ways through the spatial intertwining of the university and personal environments, thereby creating new boundaries around anonymity and self-representation.

Secondly, access to information is changing and condensing both in terms of the (increasing) volume of subject matter and the purpose-orientated logic of communication in online teaching formats. The production of non-subject-specific content (e.g. support options for coping with individual requirements) thus appears more difficult.

Survey tools within digital campus systems (e.g., Stud.IP or Moodle) **can support students and instructors in establishing a framework for relationship-building and developing new channels of communication**. The attached dialogue template offers a low-threshold option for discussing and defining needs and conditions for psychological safety as part of course preparation.

Safe communication of needs assessment and support referral

Template for teaching practice

Preparation

1. Create a questionnaire with three free text questions in the course folder of your seminar on your campus management system. (Suggested Title: Wishes and Needs for Seminar Interaction)
2. Make sure that the participation setting on the questionnaire is set to 'anonymous'.
3. Copy the question blocks A, B, C, into the questionnaire



A: Addressing

I. What do we want to know about each other?

In our seminar, it is important that all participants are engaged in conversations and debates in a way that makes them feel included and comfortable. A key aspect of this is the way we address each other. Gender attributions based on a person's appearance or name are often expressed in German through the use of feminine or masculine forms. However, a person's self-identification may differ from the assumed gender attribution. The significance of linguistic choices and the social implications tied to them are highly individual. For one person, it might be helpful if, at the beginning of the seminar, participants introduce themselves with their name and pronoun, while for another, this approach may lead to discomfort.

To help us, as seminar leaders, initiate the most suitable approach to forms of address, we would like to understand what needs we should be mindful of. For example, should we include a pronoun round (yes/no), or collaboratively establish a language code of conduct for the seminar, etc.?

Antwortfeld

B: Requirements & content warnings (“Trigger”)

II. What do we want to know about each other (2)?

In any (public) event, situations can suddenly arise that confront individuals with so-called "triggers." In seminars, these often include specific social situations (e.g., group work), particular stimuli (such as seeing one's own face in video meetings), or specific content that may evoke sensitive, personal experiences, potentially leading to discomfort. For some, it may be helpful to proactively mention their triggers, while for others, discussing such matters openly within the seminar setting could pose a significant burden.

The best way for us to create a safe framework here is for you to let us know briefly which triggers (especially at the level of possible health-related seminar content) we can look out for as lecturers and how course discussions can be structured to ensure your comfort.

Antwortfeld

C: Accessibility & compensation for disadvantages

III. Accessibility & compensation for disadvantages

We would like to offer you the opportunity to anonymously indicate any needs regarding (digital) accessibility or the use of accommodations for disadvantages.

General information on digital accessibility can be found here: [Basics of digital accessibility \(hochschulforumdigitalisierung.de\)](https://www.hochschulforumdigitalisierung.de)

Information on compensation for disadvantages at the **INSERT NAME OF YOUR UNIVERSITY** you can find here: **INSERT THE GUIDELINE OF YOUR UNIVERSITY**

Antwortfeld

Safe communication of needs assessment and support referral

Dialogue template for teaching practice

Processing



4. Inform participants before the first seminar session about the option to anonymously indicate any health-related or communication needs for the seminar.
5. Do not discuss or analyze the results in front of the seminar participants.
6. Read the results carefully and integrate them into your course concept. Base decisions about specific behaviors or communication styles on the students' reported levels of comfort and well-being.
7. If you have any questions or uncertainties, contact your colleagues and the counselling centres at your university. Further information on health promotion at universities can be found [here](#).

Safe communication of needs assessment and support referral

Application in the campus management system

Creating surveys is a standard use of campus management systems (e.g., Stud.IP, Moodle, ILIAS, DOCEBO, OPAL). Depending on the system, there are various options for configuring and positioning surveys.

For using the template, the following settings are recommended:

- Enable the survey for each event and semester
- Allow anonymous participation
- Results visible to participants: Never
- Participants may revise their answers
- No mandatory questions



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About HFD

The German **Hochschulforum Digitalisierung** (German Forum for Higher Education in the Digital Age, abbreviated: HFD) not only **monitors, shares and acts as a source of information on important (inter)national developments in Higher Education**. Through a range of programmes and projects, it also builds **key competences of higher education professionals** across the country. Independent yet connected with a **network of stakeholders** from different sectors, including education and IT professionals, EdTech leaders, students, policy-makers and digital learning experts, it is uniquely placed at the **heart of the digital transformation of higher education in Germany**. The HFD was founded in 2014 as a **joint initiative** by the Stifterverband, CHE Centre for Higher Education and the German Rectors' Conference and is **funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research** (BMBF).

Think Tank Well-Being and Mental Health at Universities in the Digital Age



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Interested?

More information, publications and events online:

[www.hochschulforumdigitalisierung.de/
wellbeing-digital/](http://www.hochschulforumdigitalisierung.de/wellbeing-digital/)



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Further information on the topic of ‘Wellbeing and mental health in the digital age at universities’ can be found on the HFD website: <https://hochschulforumdigitalisierung.de/wellbeing-digital/>



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