

## Good Teaching at the University of Mannheim – an institutional mission statement<sup>1</sup> –

in accordance with the senate resolution from 30 October 2019

### English Version

The University of Mannheim offers its student the possibility to develop personally and professionally in a way that will enable them to live up to their social, ecological, economical, and civic responsibility in a modern and democratic society. In a highly intercultural and interdisciplinary learning environment, the students are supported by academic professionals in studying realistic applications and authentic challenges of a complex world. They learn to base their problem-solving approaches on solid scientific arguments.

The curriculum of the University of Mannheim is decisively shaped by the unity of research and teaching. All members of the University of Mannheim collectively rise to the challenge of high-quality and successful teaching and learning – from the university management to the teachers and students to all staff members in the administration, the library, the information infrastructure and technology. In a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect<sup>2</sup>, all members of the university stand up for successful and good university teaching. Encouraging and supporting the learning processes of the students is at the heart of all measures.

#### **The students...**

- are dedicated to their studies, learn and study independently and take advantage of the offered learning opportunities,
- actively work together with the teachers and the other students,
- treat all members of the university with an open and respectful attitude,
- observe the principles of good academic practice<sup>3</sup>,
- make use of advisory and support services on their own initiative,
- provide constructive feedback to teachers, for example in course evaluations,

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<sup>1</sup> The recommendations in the mission statement serve as guidelines for all persons and institutions involved in teaching and aim to point out promising opportunities to contribute to good teaching at our university.

<sup>2</sup> Please also see the Code of Conduct of the University of Mannheim from 26 February 2014, which is available online here (in German):

[https://www.uni-mannheim.de/media/Universitaet/Dokumente/Senatsrichtlinie\\_Partnerschaftliches\\_Verhalten\\_2014.pdf](https://www.uni-mannheim.de/media/Universitaet/Dokumente/Senatsrichtlinie_Partnerschaftliches_Verhalten_2014.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Please also see the Code of Good Research Practice at the University of Mannheim from 8 December 2014, which is available online here (in German):

[https://www.uni-mannheim.de/media/user\\_upload/Richtlinie\\_gute\\_wissenschaftliche\\_Praxis.pdf](https://www.uni-mannheim.de/media/user_upload/Richtlinie_gute_wissenschaftliche_Praxis.pdf)

- contribute to the further development of the general framework by giving constructive feedback to academic advisors and program managers,
- seize their opportunities for social commitment within and outside the university (for example in student initiatives or non-profit organizations) and
- are involved in the respective bodies and committees to actively contribute to the further development of teaching.

### **The teachers...**

- create a supportive learning environment by:
  - defining and communicating learning objectives for all courses,
  - designing learning environments and coursework that suit the learning objectives (in the sense of “constructive alignment”),
  - providing opportunities for cognitive activation,
  - including motivational aspects wherever possible,
  - drawing connections between the contents of different courses and modules - also at interdisciplinary level,
  - teaching practical and practice-oriented contents,
- make students aware of the scientific discourse within the discipline and enable them to reflect critically,
- create a diversity-sensitive teaching environment with equal opportunities,
- systematically and self-critically review the quality of their learning concepts and the achievement of their teaching goals and develop these concepts further,
- treat all members of the university with an open and respectful attitude,
- set an example by observing the principles of good academic practice and guide students to do the same,
- support students by providing feedback for their learning process,
- allow students to participate in current and ongoing research processes,
- seize opportunities for didactic training and for exchange on teaching appropriately and on their own initiative,
- incorporate digital elements into classroom teaching, insofar as this makes sense and helps to support the students' learning process,
- use the freedom of research and teaching for the benefit of the society and the students and
- offer students the possibility to take social responsibility in the academic context (for example in the Service Learning project).

**The schools and departments...**

- design degree programs with a strong profile and develop these programs with a view to the future and as needed,
- use teaching to provide students with the latest expert knowledge of the respective discipline that is relevant for the objective of the program,
- offer students support and advice as needed in every phase of their program - from the initial phase of studies until graduation,
- expand cooperations with partner universities to promote the internationalization of teaching,
- support the international mobility of students and teachers,
- give teachers didactic flexibility,
- offer teachers a supportive infrastructure,
- provide suitable instruments and measures for teachers so that they have the opportunity to systematically evaluate, reflect on, and develop their courses,
- encourage and promote school-wide exchange on teaching, and
- build and foster contacts and partnerships that are relevant for teaching (for example through campus community partnerships).

**The service centers and institutions...**

- support the entire teaching and learning process by providing high-quality services,
- support teachers and students in financial, personal, and organizational matters,
- provide high-quality future-oriented digital services and IT services for teaching and learning,
- support teachers in the implementation of their technology-based teaching formats and teach students how to use modern digital tools,
- provide fast and comprehensive access to literature and information resources which students need for their studies both in print and digital form, and make these accessible via appropriate research tools,
- offer pleasant, well-equipped library and study rooms with long opening hours,
- offer comprehensive support and advice on academic writing and research, literature, and information management,
- support teachers and students in meeting administrative challenges through transparent, user-oriented processes as well as personal advising and
- thus create freedom for joint teaching and learning.

**The university management...**

- develops pioneering strategies for the further development of university teaching in order to meet current and future challenges,

- provides personnel and material resources as stipulated by the Land for successful good teaching,
- designs strategies for interdisciplinary and international teaching and creates a framework for its implementation,
- designs quality development processes and promotes their implementation,
- provides training possibilities for teachers in higher education didactics,
- promotes digitalization to support classroom teaching,
- promotes and supports the strategic development of contacts and partnerships relevant to teaching (for example campus community partnerships),
- promotes lifelong learning by supporting opportunities for all age groups and all career stages,
- supports research on teaching and learning processes,
- encourages and promotes university-wide exchange on teaching and
- engages in dialog with the state government regarding financial and infrastructural framework conditions for good teaching.

In order to include the specific characteristics and requirements of the individual departments and teaching cultures, this mission statement is to be extended and adapted through school-specific teaching profiles. These teaching profiles reflect the individual characteristics of each discipline and their interrelationships as well as the specific objectives of the schools with regard to the continuous improvement of teaching.

Mannheim, 17 December 2019

Prof. Thomas Puhl  
President