



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING AT HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY

FOR RESEARCH-ORIENTED, EQUITABLE, AND FUTURE-ORIENTED TEACHING

Heidelberg University considers itself part of an international teaching and learning community, united by shared values, as defined in the university's mission statement, diversity of perspectives, and dialogue across disciplines and borders. Research-oriented teaching is a central element of our academic identity. We enable students not only to understand complex developments and interrelationships, but also to actively shape them – in academia, civil society, the public sector, and industry. In doing so, they acquire disciplinary and cross-disciplinary competencies that prepare them for professional activities in various fields and for values-based action in a constantly changing world.

Our teaching and learning are guided by five overarching quality objectives that define the qualification profile of our graduates:

- the development of subject-specific competencies with a strong research orientation,
- the promotion of transdisciplinary dialogue skills,
- the cultivation of practice-oriented problem-solving competencies,
- the strengthening of personal and social skills, and
- the capacity to assume social responsibility.

In addition, we offer students a wide range of opportunities for developing individual competencies and thus for building their own academic profile – through targeted qualification programs and certificates, innovative teaching and learning formats that transcend disciplinary boundaries, and a flexible course of study. By integrating early professional orientation into our degree programs, we support students in pursuing self-determined career trajectories.

Our university-wide Guiding Principles for Teaching and Learning provide guidance for the development of diverse and new teaching and learning formats that respond to current scientific and societal challenges, questions, and debates. At the heart of our culture of continuous reflection and renewal is a learning university: committed to equity, inspired by intellectual

curiosity and scientific exploration, and ready to face the great challenges of our time – SEMPER APERTUS.

Our quality management system, heiQUALITY, ensures highest standards in our study programs on the basis of university-wide criteria. The heiSKILLS Center actively reinforces this effort – serving as a platform for developing innovative teaching and learning formats and for supporting individual qualification pathways.

We are an Active, Reflective, and Connected Teaching Community

Our quality goals for teaching and learning – binding yet enabling – provide the foundation for our work. Within the university community, faculty, students, and staff engage in diverse groups and committees to reflect on existing teaching formats. Together, we develop new content, methods, and perspectives, which are subsequently embedded in the respective degree programs.

Teaching Innovation Emerges from Practice

Through targeted initiatives, we promote innovative approaches to teaching and learning: we create space to experiment with new teaching, learning, and assessment formats, recognize the effort involved in innovation, and support its sustainable integration into curricula and certificate programs. We place particular emphasis on accessibility and participation, continuously striving to make our teaching and learning formats accessible and inclusive. This process is advanced through four key areas: building active teaching communities, launching interdisciplinary projects, scaling successful innovations into existing degree programs, and driving continuous improvement through evidence-based evaluation.

Teaching as Empowerment for Responsible Action

Our teaching is designed not only to prepare students for their professional careers, but also to equip them to meet societal challenges – such as advocating for equity, diversity, and sustainability, and acting in accordance with ethical principles. Our mission is to provide students with both disciplinary expertise and transformative competencies, enabling them to actively contribute to solving pressing issues, navigate and balance areas of tension, and assume responsibility for a vibrant and resilient democracy.