

Learning from the results of the SoSe 2020 end-of-semester survey

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION FOR THE STRUCTURING OF TEACHING IN THE HYBRID WINTER SEMESTER

At the end of the 2020 summer semester, the University of Göttingen, at the suggestion of the virtual working group for Student and Academic Services headed by the Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Equal Opportunities, conducted a survey of all students and teachers on their experiences with the digital semester. The survey involved 5,854 students (20.33 %) and 907 teachers (25.25 %). The results of the survey can be viewed online at <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/626972.html>.

The aim of the survey was to develop recommendations for action to optimise digital or hybrid teaching in the coming winter semester from the experiences of the summer semester.

The following is a summary of appropriate recommendations arising from the answers given by students and teachers. In view of the diversity of teaching and learning environments and formats, the recommendations can, of course, only have a general character and thus serve primarily as an impetus; more detailed suggestions can be found, amongst other issues, at the bottom of the web pages listed at the end of the document. From the answers given by the students and teachers, it has become clear above all else, that we will continue to face shared challenges in the coming semester, which can only be overcome by students and teachers working closely together. Even more than in "normal" teaching, mutual thoughtfulness, openness and finding common ground will continue to be required.

Recommendations for communication between students and teachers

The many new and unfamiliar formats, forms of communication and tools have meant a major change for students and teachers, which in turn requires a lot more time. Therefore, please show some understanding about the other participants and their needs.

- Make clear and transparent agreements together on communication times and channels and use them accordingly. Clarify the respective expectations, e.g. response times to enquiries and availability. If possible, use channels that are also used in other events to avoid too many different communication channels.
- At the beginning of the event, discuss a "Charter of Participation", especially for web conferences, and define this together. Discuss the possibilities of active participation via chat, audio and video, which are suitable for your event and take into account the interests of all participants.

Recommendations for students

- Just as in face-to-face events, active participation in live digital formats facilitates and enriches the teaching-learning process for you as well as for the teachers and your fellow students.



- Give your teachers direct feedback on potential challenges that they face. This is the only way to enable your teachers to react to them.
- Help your teachers and fellow students by making sure that you are available in the agreed way. Try to form learning groups with other students from the very beginning. Set up regular meetings via videoconferencing for joint learning. As students, you can also set up your own rooms in BBB and Zoom.
- Set yourself concrete goals for the semester. Plan smaller specific steps for the week. A well-structured week can often be motivating. Factor in times for exchange with your fellow students.

Recommendations for lecturers/deans of studies

- Design your digital teaching formats to encourage active participation. If the impression is one of passive behaviour of the participating students, teachers and other students will find this a burden. Small “activating” elements can be built into digital lectures (voting, short breakout sessions to solve a task, etc). The educational interplay between the method and the medium can be used to stimulate student participation; see also the notes on the relevant support services at the end of this document.
- Since the vast majority of students consider social isolation to be a particular challenge, you should choose digital and face-to-face formats that encourage networking and communication between students.
- Please keep an eye on the student workload for the chosen digital formats, as the students have noticed an additional workload compared to the face-to-face formats previously offered.
- When conducting live digital courses, e.g. via BigBlueButton, you should ensure that the time allocated for face-to-face courses of the respective module does not exceed the time allocated according to the module list.
- Since students have felt that their workload has increased together with examinations being packed into a shorter space of time, you should pay attention to whether the scheduling and possible balancing of examination dates can relieve the burden on students.
- Please take particular care to avoid overlapping with other courses when planning your course schedule. Please try to coordinate this with the coordinators at the programme/subject and semester level.
- Providing at least a reasonable amount of digital teaching in the form of online courses that can be watched at a later date can help because it reduces time overlaps. It also corresponds to the students' statement that, in addition to having independence to organise their location, having independence to organise their time is also seen as an advantage of digital formats. However, the proportion of non-live online courses should be weighed up against the desire for more interaction, which in turn can be achieved more easily in live courses. One possibility is the targeted use of videos, e.g. to explain concepts, in order to free up some space for discussion with students.



- Please check to what extent your courses held in the class can be recorded and then made available in digital form.
- Against the background of the uncertain situation, there is still a residual risk that face-to-face courses will no longer be possible during the winter semester. Please keep an eye on this possibility and consider whether and what alternatives for digital design can be used if this turns out to be the case.
- Please feel encouraged to take advantage of suitable services for the further development of your technical and methodological-teaching skills, as required.
- Looking to the future for face-to-face semesters: it would be desirable to supplement face-to-face teaching with digital teaching formats, since both students and teachers see added value in linking both formats.

General information

- Classroom teaching should be made available as much as possible, while working within the current framework.
- The supervision of large groups of students, for instance in terms of answering organisational or comprehension questions, is a new challenge in digital form compared to teaching in person. This should be taken into account when planning the group sizes for digital courses and/or the possibility of using additional support services, eg from student tutors, should be considered.
- The importance of clear and suitable communication channels has increased considerably, so all those involved, whether at a local or a central level, should attach importance to optimising them accordingly.
- If necessary, students should be made aware of supporting services in the areas of self-motivation, self-organisation and self-regulated learning (such as the options at <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/630423.html>)

A selection of available support services for the design of digital teaching:

- Virtual learning (from the University's Digital Learning and Teaching team): www.uni-goettingen.de/de/virtuelles+lernen/624565.html
- The University's Section for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: www.uni-goettingen.de/en/409598.html
- Dialogue about changing themes in online teaching, from the University's Section for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Section: www.uni-goettingen.de/de/613107.html