



1. Framework for key competencies for the University of Göttingen

Key competencies teaching at the University of Göttingen has the following objectives:

- To improve study skills
- To improve employability

For this purpose, key competencies are embedded in degree programme regulations as follows:

- with a recommended value of 18 credit points for the BA. Depending on the degree programme, up to 18 further credit points from key competency modules are accepted. Students are free to select at least 6 credit points from all key competency modules offered by the university.
- with a value of 12 credit points for the MA.
- with varying credit values for doctoral degree programmes, depending on the degree programme and graduate school.

Key competencies cover non-subject specific competencies, they are oriented towards the professional field and taught in an additive and integrated format.

The University of Göttingen offers a broad range of key competency modules. These are divided into the following areas:

Areas of competency	Examples of competencies taught	
Language	Foreign languages	
Factual knowledge	Orientation in the professional field	Interdisciplinary subject modules
Methodological competencies	Rhetorical skills Data processing / Information technology Informational competencies Presentation skills	Project management Work organisation Methods of scientific and academic work Publishing competencies
Personal competencies	Time and self-management Personality development	Learning strategies
Social competencies	Intercultural competence Ability to work in a team	Moderation techniques / Communication skills Leadership competence

2. Quality criteria

So as to guarantee a university-wide standard of quality for key competencies teaching, key competency modules are measured against a number of quality criteria:¹

a) Content requirements:

- levels of content in accordance with higher education degree standards;
- content in accordance with the degree programme stage (e.g. methods of academic and scientific work in the initial degree stage, acquisition of competencies beyond the subject discipline and oriented towards the professional field at the more advanced degree stage, etc.);

¹ Cf. Recommendations on quality standards and awarding credit points for key competency modules. ZFSK 2008.



- clear distinction and labelling of the key competencies taught (especially for integrated modules).
- The content of the key competency modules offered matches the profile and level of the degree programme and fulfils the requirements for the degree and/or the specific professional field(s) towards which the degree programme is geared. This takes into account that many degree programmes are very clearly tailored towards particular, clearly defined professional fields, whereas others (e.g. in the Humanities) are more flexible.
- Key competency provision aims to be flexible in its response to the variable conditions and requirements of the job market.

b) Requirements for teaching staff

- *academic competence* and suitability in accordance with the standards of a higher education institution, through a relevant degree and/or professional experience;
- *competence in the area of the key competencies to be taught*, through a relevant degree, further training and/or professional experience;
- *methodological and didactic competence* in teaching key competencies, through a relevant degree, further training and/or professional experience;
- These requirements apply to teaching staff both in the faculties and the central institutions as well as to any external providers.

c) Methodological requirements for teaching key competencies

- Suitable and appropriate module formats (seminar and practical exercise formats in which students can directly apply key competencies).
- Depending on the module, different *teaching formats* (lecturer input plus seminar discussion, practical exercises, reading list, team and project work, an impulse-giving presentation, excursion, interview with experts, collaboration in an interdisciplinary group, etc.) and *learning formats* (learning through research, problem-based learning, practical project work, independently organised work, role play, case-study work, etc.) should be used.
- Appropriate focus on practice and application, i.e. tasks and problem structures are closely linked to real-life application in participants' studies and professional career.
- A strong focus on participants' own active contributions within the framework of a clearly defined learning outcome, i.e. no more than half of the required attendance period should take the form of presentations by teaching staff.
- For this purpose, a suitable group size must be ensured (depending on methodology, between 8 and a maximum of 35 students).
- The acquisition of non-subject specific competencies must have clear objectives and, where possible, include reflexion on the nature of these competencies.
- Key competencies require forms of assessment that tend to play a lesser role in the subject disciplines. Competence-based forms of assessment are, for example: Oral exam, presentation, field report, portfolio.

d) Formal requirements

- Key competency modules are subject to the same formal requirements as subject-specific modules, and their content, teaching format and performance requirements are to be specified in module catalogues.

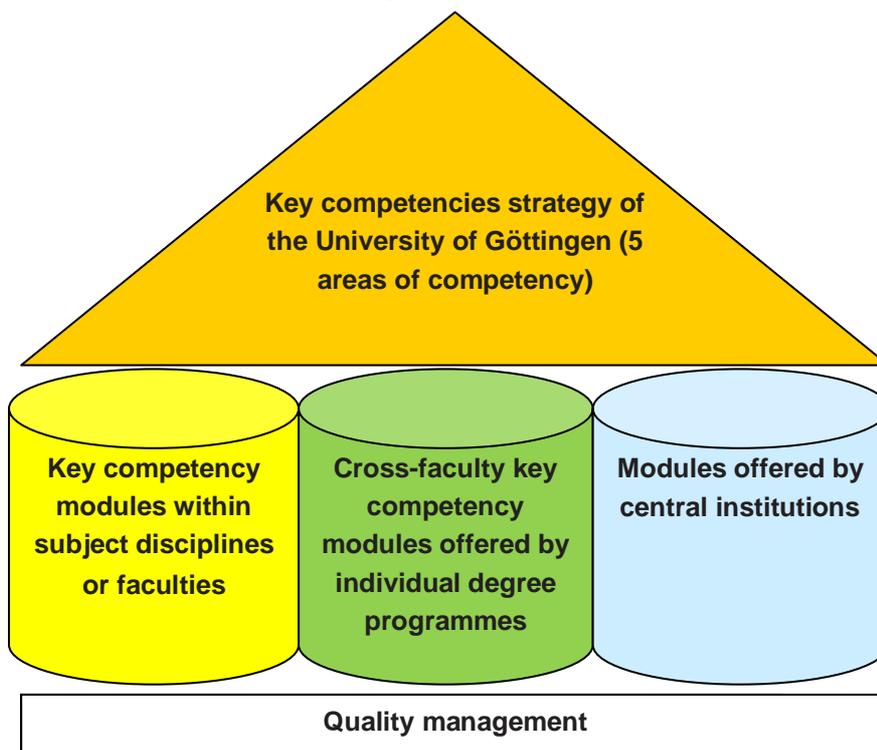


3. Degree programme-specific key competencies strategy for the subject disciplines / degree programmes

- Individual degree programmes or subject disciplines put together a key competencies strategy tailored to their needs, and from which they derive the core programme of key competency modules.
- They define the main professional fields targeted by their degree programmes and develop relevant modules suited to the profile and level of the degree programme.
- This allows for degree programmes with related content and aimed at similar professional fields to jointly develop a key competencies strategy and put together a joint programme of key competency modules.
- The findings of surveys conducted regularly among employers, graduates and students are used in the development of the modules.
- Key competency modules aim to increase the career opportunities of graduates in the professional fields pertinent to their degree.
- Key competencies provision should be flexible in its response to changing conditions and requirements in the job market.
- Different areas of competency should be covered in the core programme.
- Students should be given the greatest possible choice in building their personal profile.
- The introduction of foundation modules at Bachelor level and advanced modules at Master level is recommended.
- The strategy is implemented gradually over a period of four years.

4. Key competencies providers

Key competencies at the University of Göttingen are provided at three levels:





a) Key competency modules within subject disciplines or faculties

Every subject discipline or degree programme provides appropriate core key competency modules for its students (imports are also permitted). Appropriate is here taken to mean compliance with the quality criteria stated above in terms of quantity and quality. The subject disciplines / degree programmes write recommendations for their students as to which key competencies may be useful for particular professional fields and thus assist students in the orientation process.

b) Cross-faculty key competency modules offered by individual degree programmes

Every subject discipline / degree programme may make aspects of their own subject area that are suitable as a key competency according to the above criteria available for students across the university. In this context it is possible when allocating places for modules with a limited number of places to give preference to subject disciplines with related or similar content.

c) Modules offered by central institutions

The central institutions provide non-subject specific key competency modules according to the criteria stated above. As with the faculty modules, modules provided by central institutions are presented to the Central Committee for Teaching and Learning (zKLS) for approval.

5. Central key competencies services

Support is available from the central institutions for the development and maintenance of degree programme-specific and/or subject-specific strategies:

1. The key competencies coordinator of the Student and Academic Services as well as the director of the Centre for Languages and Key Competencies offer advice on the content and structure of integrated and additive modules. The main digital catalogue of university-wide modules is maintained centrally.
2. The coordinators for graduate surveys and course evaluation supply the faculties with the data relevant to this thematic field.
3. The Career Service is available to assist with employer surveys.
4. The Teaching and Learning in Higher Education division can assist with the training of staff teaching in the field of key competencies. Modules are tailored to demand and individual requirements.
5. The central institutions provide the faculties with data on the uptake per academic year by students who are registered with the faculties.

6. Financing

The faculty the degree programme is registered to is responsible for financing the key competencies credit to the level required by the examination regulations. Tuition fees can be used in the following ways:

- For the quantitative improvement of supervision ratios.
- For the qualitative improvement of the module range, e.g. by providing funding for modules which could otherwise not be financed or provided (e.g. fees for outside speakers, funding of modules that cannot be reimbursed adequately through CNW apportionment.²)

² Curricular Norm Value = the staff-student ratio for each degree programme that determines student load. The CNW for a degree programme quantifies the weekly teaching input required per student per semester within his/her regular course of



7. Quality assurance

The degree programme strategies undergo further development and quality assessment with the help of the following tools:

- a) The standard course evaluations also cover the key competency courses. The faculties are responsible for the inclusion of evaluation findings in continued module development. Findings from the evaluation of courses provided by central institutions that play an important role in teaching are made available to the relevant faculties upon request.
- b) The faculties create opportunities for students to make suggestions for improvements to the overall module provision in the faculties and in the central institutions (e.g. by establishing a contact point or carrying out a student survey).
- c) Findings of graduate surveys made available to the faculties are analysed there with regard to conclusions that can be drawn for the conceptual development of key competencies strategies.
- d) The coordinator for key competencies of the Student and Academic Services and the director of the Centre for Languages and Key Competencies provide the faculties with opportunities for feedback and suggestions regarding the university-wide key competencies provision.
- e) There is regular quantitative comparison between module uptake and module provision in the key competencies field by the coordinator for key competencies of the Student and Academic Services.
- f) Findings from employer surveys are used to assess the relevance of key competency modules for the job market.
- g) The central catalogue of key competency modules and the degree-specific key competencies strategies are presented to the Central Committee for Teaching and Learning (zKLS)..