



Friedrich-Alexander-Universität
Erlangen-Nürnberg

Guidelines for Innovative Teaching at FAU



Guidelines for Innovative Teaching at FAU

Excellence in teaching as a driver of innovation

Teaching has an equal status to research at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg. As an institution, FAU creates a foundation for students and teaching staff that provides the space, staff and technology for teaching and studying specialist knowledge, developing skills and encouraging personal growth.

Teaching staff develop the content of their courses in a targeted, modern and varied manner and inspire students by sharing their own enthusiasm for their subject. They use the educational potential of the combination of analog and digital formats to cater to students' needs and support them in developing subject-related, social, personal and digital skills. They tailor learning objectives, examination formats and teaching and learning activities to complement each other.

Within the context of innovative teaching, **students** and **teaching staff** create a space for experimentation where new approaches to and methods for teaching can be tested and continually improved. Skills are acquired through active participation on both sides: Students acquire skills and teaching staff provide their support during this ongoing process. Students' creativity in exploratory discovery leads (later) to innovative research questions, broadens their view of teaching, and, in ideal cases, provides support for research.

Teaching at FAU addresses **content** that builds on the foundations of the fields of application of the subjects and also takes social questions of an interdisciplinary nature into account. The interdisciplinary investigation of this content forms a connection between teaching staff and students and leads to collaboration in the process of teaching and learning.

FAU promotes a **culture of enthusiasm for development and exchanging ideas**. Excellence in teaching is the joint responsibility of teaching staff, students and the institution. The enthusiasm for development in teaching is supported within the institution by means of suitable support structures and the relevant infrastructure. FAU honors skills in teaching through appropriate incentives and methods of recognition, thus emphasizing the role of teaching as a driver of innovation for the University.

Teaching at FAU transfers knowledge, develops skills and inspires.

Research and teaching

As a leading research university that offers the full spectrum of academic disciplines, FAU is committed to **uniting research and teaching**. It ensures that pioneering research is used as a basis for teaching, also at the interfaces to new areas of research.

Foundations of each subject

Teaching at FAU teaches the foundations of each subject and demonstrates the complexity of topics clearly and within the context of the academic discourse of the specialist discipline concerned. The **subject-related skills** that arise from teaching subject knowledge remain an elementary objective of university-level teaching at FAU. Teaching staff and students work together to explore and achieve an understanding of the fundamental questions of a subject.

Skills-oriented approach

At FAU, teaching aims to implement a **skills-oriented approach**, not only to develop knowledge, but also to develop cognitive, social, personal, methodical and practical skills to solve academic questions.

Critical thinking

In line with its understanding of education, FAU promotes **critical thinking as a universal skill** in terms of a mindset that examines issues from many different perspectives. Claims to validity are assessed in terms of their assumptions using various methodological approaches and styles of thought. This encourages the ability to participate in argumentative discourse.

Research-based learning

Teaching staff regularly incorporate current research findings into their teaching and prepare them in a way that is accessible to students. They convey an understanding of science and academia as an ongoing and unfinished process. Wherever possible, they aim to use **research-based learning as a didactic principle**. Ideally, this means that students pass through the individual practical and theoretical phases of the research process and use specialist research methods during their degree programs. They are encouraged by teaching staff to **question instead of accept the content they have been taught, ask questions on their own initiative** and in this way **explore the content in greater depth**. Research-based learning occurs in the context of the conventions of each subject and includes critical analysis of problems and solutions.

Learning skills

To enable students to have the greatest degree of autonomy for their own learning process, teaching staff encourage **skills for (independent) learning** and strategies such as independent planning, evaluation and adjustment of their learning progress. Students learn to organize their studies as an independent process and solve any problems in a goal-oriented manner.

Enthusiasm

Teaching staff motivate students through their **own enthusiasm for the topic**, awaken their interest in the topic and thus encourage them to acquire knowledge independently. Teaching staff participate in the teaching/learning process by means of their ability and willingness to perceive and acknowledge students and their needs and individuality and reflect upon them.

Teaching at FAU incorporates developments in society

Scope

To promote innovative teaching, FAU ensures that there is sufficient **variety in teaching methods and scope for individual degree program structures** on the curricular level when providing a legal basis for them in degree program and examination regulations. FAU offers considerable freedom for choosing specializations and tailoring degree programs.

Theory and practice

Close links between theory and practice allow students to acquire the skills necessary for using their theoretical knowledge to analyze and shape their future careers. Degree programs further in-depth academic knowledge while maintaining close links to practical applications.

Interdisciplinarity

Based on solid foundations in several subjects, innovative teaching forms the connection between various disciplines and exemplifies **networking and thinking on a global scale**. There is scope in the curriculum to cover the conventions of both individual subjects and interdisciplinary dialog in order to tackle the major challenges of our time together.

Internationalization

FAU undertakes to promote the **international exchange of knowledge and the international mobility of students and teaching staff**. Digital technology facilitates joint projects involving universities from all over the world and offers outstanding potential for enhancing teaching by means of international cooperation.

Sustainability

Innovative teaching informs students of **aspects of sustainability** in their subjects and in everyday life and provides examples of **action that can be taken**. It integrates sustainability into the curriculum wherever this may be meaningful on the teaching unit and degree program level.

Future skills

Innovative teaching considers the **relevance of taught content to the challenges of the 21st century**. In addition to skills related to their subject, students acquire **transformative skills** during the course of their degree programs that enable them to address global challenges with creative solutions. During this process, they acquire interdisciplinary and professional skills that are embedded in the conventions of their own subject and that prepare them for occupations in our modern and constantly changing society. Dealing with all aspects of digitalization is one core future skill.

Diversity

Innovative teaching is responsive to the different life situations and needs of learners, thus facilitating equal opportunities without having a negative effect on the quality and aspiration level of teaching. This is where digitally-supported teaching contributes to **individual learning processes, encouraging more flexible time management and providing a wider diversity of methods**. At the same time, teaching thrives on the diversity of teaching staff and their own style of teaching their subject. Innovative teaching is always aware of the diversity of the requirements placed on it, thrives on a culture of diversity and incorporates diversity into its content.

Lifelong learning

FAU encourages **intrinsic motivation for constant learning and for remaining open-minded, interested and curious**. FAU facilitates lifelong learning and academic training for various target groups.

Teaching at FAU uses a wide variety of teaching and examination formats

Innovative and diverse teaching and examination formats

Teaching staff at FAU continue to develop and improve established formats and test new teaching and examination formats in order to achieve the goals of their teaching units in the context of the structure of the curriculum. Various teaching and examination formats are used in the degree program structure to teach and assess different skills. The focus here is on the **expectations and intention of teaching staff to enrich their teaching and support students in acquiring new skills.**

Digital teaching and learning formats

Digital teaching and learning formats and face-to-face formats complement each other in the way in which they are interconnected. The choice of teaching and learning format is guided by the **skills to be acquired by students and the added value offered by the chosen format in terms of teaching methodology.** Asynchronous teaching options add value to face-to-face teaching as long as they encourage the active participation of students. These options support students with independent and flexible learning, and thus increase equal opportunities.

Innovative examinations and (self) assessment

Examinations **pursue the teaching and learning objectives of the course within the overall structure of the curriculum and facilitate feedback about students' individual learning processes.** Keeping a record of students' knowledge and skills involves continuous feedback beyond the scope of formal examinations. The option of using digital assessment methods is constantly taken into consideration.

Feedback, evaluation and error culture

Feedback to students and teaching staff as well as an error culture geared towards development give a considerable impetus to encouraging learning progress and improving the quality of teaching. Teaching staff develop new formats for their courses in conjunction with students and have the courage to "experiment" with new teaching methods, while embracing the possibility that they may prove unsuccessful. Continuous feedback to students promotes professional and personal growth. Teaching staff at FAU are aware of the importance of their role and of systematic bias in assessments and develop transparent assessment criteria.

Regular teaching evaluations enable continuous reflection and improvement of teaching. FAU provides a safe space for dialog and creates a trusting atmosphere for joint further development.

Collaboration and interaction

Teaching staff and students are aware that **teaching and learning is a social process** that both parties can foster through interaction. Teaching staff consciously initiate this interaction, use digital elements where they have a motivating effect and focus on group processes and communicative exchange. Students actively participate and get involved.

Teaching at FAU is open to society and dialog

Education in dialog

At FAU, teaching is practiced as a cooperative process between the University's organizational units (faculties, departments, chairs, centers) as well as between external cooperation partners; **teaching is a team effort** and each individual benefits from the **joint dialog and collaborative process.**

The cooperative mindset and the transfer of knowledge about good practice between its staff, students, faculties and organizational units is actively promoted at FAU and its chairs. We encourage open dialog as a means of reflecting on and improving the practical implementation of teaching and learning.

In its teaching, FAU also supports **dialog and cooperation with citizens, organizations and companies** to generate enthusiasm for its discoveries and research questions and to jointly address specialized topics and social issues.

Open educational services and open educational resources (OER)

In conjunction with its partners, FAU is committed to ensuring **that teaching materials can be exchanged in the academic community and are easily accessible to members of the public.** With these open educational resources and open online courses, society receives a better insight into FAU's activities, university education becomes more tangible and teaching staff can benefit from the good practice of their counterparts.

Teaching at FAU relies on strong support

Promoting teaching methodology skills and professional teaching

FAU promotes advisory services and support structures for good teaching and learning. It offers targeted advice to teaching staff regarding the **further development of their professional teaching skills**, thus promoting professional and personal training. Teaching methodology skills and professionalism in teaching and learning situations play a decisive role in selection processes.

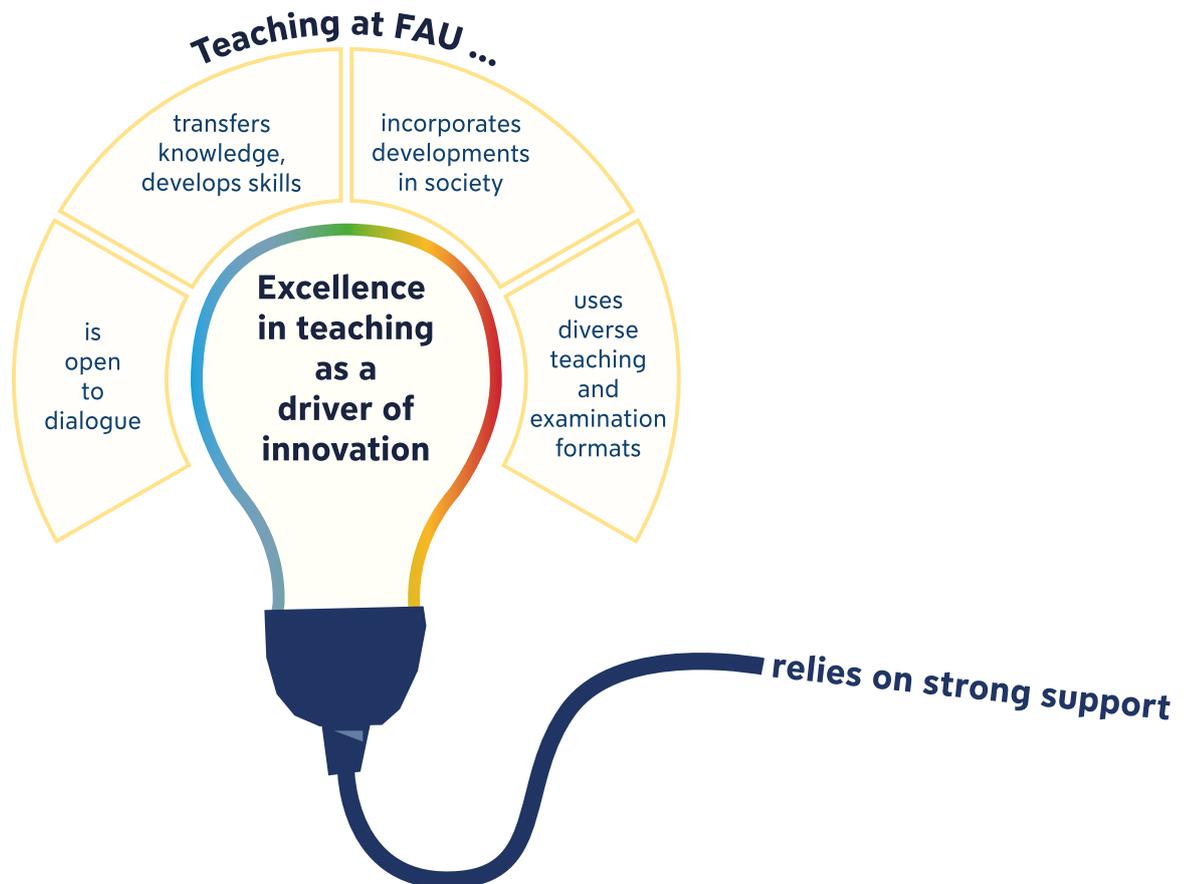
Support and advice for successful studying

FAU is keen to actively support and guide students in their search for the most suitable degree program for them. We provide a range of information that gives a realistic

impression of the opportunities and requirements of the various degree programs. **Students receive continuous support from the time they apply right up to the time they complete their degree.** FAU provides specific support programs for this purpose such as mentoring, tutorials or orientation courses and advisory services through the entire duration of students' degree programs that increase students' motivation and help them make the very most of their studies.

Infrastructure

FAU provides the infrastructure (**technical equipment, rooms and staff**) required for innovative teaching and promotes the maintenance and further development of digital and analog tools.



Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg
Vice President Education
Prof. Dr. Bärbel Kopp
Schloßplatz 4
91054 Erlangen
baerbel.kopp@fau.de

www.fau.eu/education/

