Planning your course for the summer semester 2020

First steps

– Identify which goals are the most important for your course. Which existing content or units can rather easily be offered online? For which content do you need new solutions? (put curricular content and goals before methods and tools)
– Test one or several tools for teaching online (for example, ILIAS, but also other tools – see below).
– Please consider the expectations and potential circumstances of your students, such as a weak or not always available internet connection, no access to a printer or other technical problems, illness, etc.
– Can you support international students in this unusual situation by holding your classes in English as well as in German?
– You can find information, advice and support on the website on digitally-enhanced teaching: www.uni-konstanz.de/elearning (currently in German) including the relevant contact persons.

Pragmatic Approach

– We do not expect perfection or guaranteed functioning.
– Concentrate on the most essential features first and then you can successively expand the options.
– Inform your students directly and establish a fixed channel to communicate your course-related information and news.
– Working and studying irrespective of time and place are superior to synchronous formats, which often experience technical problems or overloads.
– Before you create your own materials, we recommend you check whether suitable resources already exist for your subject. Possibly your department already has used select Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) provided by other institutions. Credits might be recognized for these MOOCs (please ask the Examination Board of your department), or you could suggest individual MOOCs to be recognized.
– Use the existing options in our learning platform ILIAS. Test simple ILIAS tools to provide your teaching online. We will gladly advise you on this topic.
– Avoid small-scale work assignments and instead give rather large ones which the students can work on independently or in groups over a longer period of time.
– If virtual “live” meetings are required, please hold them at a fixed time after coordinating that time with your students.
– Use live meetings with your students for exchange (like in the flipped classroom) and not for teaching course content which could be done in other ways, too.
– Please do not plan to be present at the university or anywhere else, as future developments are hard to predict.

Basic options for digitally-enhanced teaching (feel free to add your own)

– We will publish and regularly update our suggestions, list of data-secure tools and contact persons for digitally-enhanced teaching methods on the website at: www.uni-konstanz.de/elearning (currently in German)
– Currently, we cannot give final recommendations on the tools to be used. To make the leap into the digital semester and avoid overloading the systems, we have to use and support a variety of solutions. Please explicitly inform students at the beginning of a course or oral examination if you use tools or platforms that might not fully correspond to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
– You can start with simple and secure methods such as:
  – providing learning material via ILIAS,
  – providing self-recorded presentations (including sound/video) via ILIAS,
  – posting assignments (e.g. reading, written papers), communicating and having students upload/send their work via ILIAS or email,
  – giving students the task to organize themselves virtually in groups and work together on assignments (e.g. forum in ILIAS, audio-/video conference, project management tools, etc.). You can leave a lot of organization to the students.

Information and support

– Central starting page for digitally-enhanced teaching at the University of Konstanz (will be continuously updated): www.uni-konstanz.de/elearning (currently in German)
– New options in ILIAS and available templates: https://www.uni-konstanz.de/asd/angebote/digitale-lehre/ilias/) (currently in German)
– Lecture recording from the university network on digitalization “Digitalisierung in der Hochschullehre”: https://www.hnd-bw.de/ringvorlesung/ (in German)
Experimental sciences, sport science and language courses

– All practically-based courses and examinations present a particular challenge, especially in the natural sciences, language classes or sport science.
– We recommend you consider the following steps:
  – 1. What is absolutely essential and indispensable?
  – 2. Which of the items in 1) can be carried out online?
  – 3. Could parts that cannot be carried out online be postponed to the second half of the semester, the semester break or the winter semester?
  – 4. If a postponement is not possible or leads to major follow-up problems, can the course be substituted? Can theory or reading-based courses from following semesters/the master’s programme be offered in advance?
– Should this require more flexibility in the academic year or examination regulations, we will gladly support you. General amendments to the examination regulations should be avoided.
– Some departments are already adapting study plans for the summer semester for particularly affected study programme semesters. We very much welcome these efforts.
– Consider the following questions for your course:
  – Can theory or reading-based parts of the course or lab course be moved to the first half of the semester and taught digitally (for example, evaluation methodology, computer experiments, demo experiments)?
  – Can you move internships, lab courses, practical sports classes and face-to-face language classes to the second half of the semester or the semester break? Please consider that it might be a requirement that smaller groups are formed. If that is not possible or not enough, please consider postponement to the winter semester.
  – Can topics of final thesis (voluntarily) be set theoretically or wait until the winter semester?
  – We know that in case of strongly interlinked, cross-disciplinary study programmes the rescheduling of courses leads to follow-up problems. Nevertheless, please consider what is feasible.
– Please contact the Office for Curricular Affairs or our Vice Rector for Teaching and Curricular Affairs if semesters in your study programme cannot be completed, i.e. students would acquire less than 25-30 credits.

Teaching format and workload

– The teaching format does not have to correspond to the one you had originally planned for your course. It may very well change and develop in the course of the semester. The format and contents, however, should suitably support the acquisition of both subject-related as well as transferable skills (such as self-organization, com-
munication abilities, the capacity of reflection, collaboration, presentation etc.). You as teacher are explicitly encouraged to simply give it your best possible effort.

– The scope of assignments for your students should match the workload of the course (1 ECTS credit corresponds to 25-30 hours). However, be generous and do not assign too much at first, as the students will need some time to adjust to the new situation, develop new routines and master the challenges.

**Records of academic achievement and performance assessments**

– Currently we do not know when, and to what extent, on-campus examinations will be possible. If you think your students can work on, complete or submit records of academic achievement online, the university will gladly support you.
– Oral examinations are already being conducted digitally under certain conditions (see the information available under our "FAQs on "Notbetrieb" (standby operations)", item 3.5), which we have also sent you a few days ago.
– If you have questions about leeways for changing examination formats in existing examination regulations, please contact the chairperson of the corresponding Examination Board. We want to make it possible for the individual subjects to decide about such questions themselves. However, it will take a while until the departments and the university have clarified all these questions. Please consider this in your plans.

Please contact us if you have suggestions, questions and feedback about the current regulations, matters that still need to be clarified, the information we have already provided and the “FAQs on “Notbetrieb” (standby operations)” related to study and teaching! The best way to do so is to start by contacting the relevant deans of studies and/or directors of the departmental administration. Please also contact us if you need additional technical equipment.