

Gender, Diversity and Inclusion at Karlshochschule

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General statement

As an institute of higher education, Karlshochschule has a feminist orientation. This means that an integral part of the Karlshochschule mission is to deepen our constituencies' understanding of the various dimensions related to gender, diversity and inclusion *of all*, regardless of one's gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnic background and nationality, faith and religion, age, mental and physical abilities, or any other characteristic making us unique. At Karlshochschule, we want to educate and debate on a range of theoretical and practical concepts that help to bring equality and social justice into our university, community and our constituencies' personal, study and working spheres. At least the following dimensions of feminist topics are on our agenda:

Global sustainability goals

Our feminist teaching directly relates to at least 10 out of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals: poverty reduction, health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, work and economic development, industry and innovation, reduced inequality, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, and peace, justice and strong institutions. In teaching, we make sense of how feminist approaches can help to reach these goals.

Teaching and research

In our teaching, research and classroom interaction, feminism is attended through constructivist, critical and a non-essentialist methodology, while using and further developing the latest theoretical models and concepts, and empirical findings. Whereas we emphasise the most up to date approaches of the field in our teaching and research, we also recognise the historicity and specific contextual character of these topics. This includes their intersectional, postcolonial and non-binary character, among the earlier liberal and radical feminist approaches.

Accordingly, students are invited to conduct research projects on gender, diversity and inclusion in a critical and innovative manner, and discouraged from resorting to ready-made solutions, which typically reproduce and enact destructive and unsustainable power relations. We encourage students to use similar approaches to research projects in other areas, too.

Participation, voice and empowerment

We want to enable and encourage students to participate, discover their own voice, and confidently use it to express themselves, decide on their life and career goals, and to question society's existing power structures, including those at the university and work places, in media, the local culture surrounding them, and in politics.

Moreover, we encourage students to become role models within their community and as they enter their professional lives, in that they integrate inclusivity in all their behaviour, starting from hearing out and respecting the voice of others in classrooms and meetings, and choosing how they speak of and depict other people.

Besides the teaching approaches described above, this is offered by adequate support systems, networks and events at the university. All of them are designed to foster inclusion at the university and the wider community. We want to challenge our constituencies to question and reflect on their views and behaviour on on-going basis, and lead by example.

Finally, to enable participation, we disseminate information on capabilities and tools to combat abuse and violence, discrimination and suppression in study, personal and professional spheres. We aim to provide a safe and inclusive study and working environment to all. This includes having sufficient and confidential mechanisms to attend to any breaches of students' or staff members' personal space and integrity. Further, we teach understanding and combatting destructive behaviour and empowering oneself and others, and train our staff and students in recognising their own microaggressive patterns and practices.

Actions

The future concrete actions are meant to extend the inclusive mindset to different spheres of Karlshochschule activities, including, but not restricted, to the following:

- Feminist modules are included in the design of the study programs
- Throughout the curricula, the existing modules reflect the above-described topics, principles and/or approaches
- Training of the Karls staff and students to have the inclusive mindset in all behaviour in and out of classroom. Such as: hearing out, respecting and including each individual in situations of interaction, ensuring teaching and communication materials are inclusive (language, imagery)
- Zero tolerance to hate speech, increased sensitivity to (what consists of) sexist, racist, homophobic, anti-semitic etc. use of language
- Implementing the gender-neutral use of language in all newly written documents and website pages from here on¹
- Educating staff and students on the gender-neutral use of language
- Events for educating and sharing the Karls' and the local community on different topics related to gender, diversity and inclusion: Karls Pride, Empowerment and #Metoo workshops, Inside Racism, empowerment group
- Going online to show our feminist approach and competencies
- Reaching out to and co-operating with the local, Germany-wide and international community, media and interest groups
- We aim to position ourselves as the experts (even opinion leaders) on the topic
- Guest speakers in classrooms on different diversity topics
- Confidential mentoring to individuals on all topics related to personal and study challenges, gender, diversity and inclusion
- Improving the website and physical accessibility to Karlshochschule to persons with disabilities

¹ In English: In the beginning of a text unit we use all three forms: "*he or she or they*", "*his or her or their*". Later in the text body the three forms alternate, with the masculine form used in less than 1/3 of the cases.

In German: In the beginning of a text unit we use an asterisk and a capital I: "*Student*Innen*". Later in the text body the masculine and feminine forms alternate, with the masculine form used in less than half of the cases. For gendered profession titles in-text, we prefer to use the feminine form *Professorin*.