



## **For more innovative teaching!**

Funding formats for innovative teaching projects  
and teaching development at the University of  
Tübingen

**Information for the funding period 2023/2024:  
Teaching and Learning in the Digital Age**

## **Funding information and funding conditions**

Whether in terms of content or didactics - innovation in teaching is indispensable and essential for the organizational development and profile building of a university. Innovation is relative and should always be seen against the background of a specific local context, e.g., the teaching of a particular department. What is considered innovative in one department may already be common practice in another. Even though teachers usually do not lack creative ideas for further development, there is often a lack of room in everyday teaching for critical reflection or the systematic development, testing and evaluation of innovative concepts for teaching and learning, supervision and new forms of assessment. Since teaching takes place in different phases of study, such as the introductory phase, and at different levels, such as course, module, profile line or degree program, the option of flexible support at all these levels is of central importance.

### **1. Funding goal and thematic orientation**

The funding formats are part of the overall concept "Securing academic success: Future viability in a globalized world", a raft of measures aimed at sustainably improving the framework conditions for teaching and learning at the University of Tübingen. In this context, the University will fund selected projects which address different phases or levels of study, open up spaces for experimentation, come up with teaching innovations in courses, develop module concepts, implement profile or focus lines, or design entire curricula.

In the pilot phase of the funding formats (2023/2024), the University will fund projects linked to the thematic focus "Teaching and Learning in the Digital Age". These may be purely digital formats, blended learning, or digital elements within on-campus classes, such as

- digital teaching-learning concepts combining synchronous and asynchronous phases,
- blended learning, e.g., in the form of "flipped classroom" concepts,
- enriching classroom teaching through the use of digital media/learning platforms, e.g., videos, wikis, audience response systems, interactive learning modules,
- dealing with artificial intelligence in teaching, e.g., ChatGPT and DeepL,
- use of digital study and examination materials,
- internationalization through digitization: virtual mobility formats or
- formats for the acquisition of additional digital competencies or for dealing with big data (digital literacy or data literacy)

### **2. Who is eligible?**

All employees at the University of Tübingen who perform teaching tasks, i.e., lecturers in the faculties, in the Transdisciplinary Course Program or other teaching institutions, are eligible to submit applications. Applications may also be submitted by several lecturers working together (from different institutes, departments or faculties).

### **3. Funding formats**

#### **3.1 Innovation Projects**

The **innovation project** funding will give teaching staff the opportunity to develop new approaches to solving challenges in teaching, taking into account discipline-specific needs, and to test these initially on a small scale.

The **project funding** creates a framework for the new or further development of, e.g., teaching-learning concepts, formats and materials. The funding format opens up spaces for experimenting with innovative (media) didactic methods and tools. The forums for this new or further development may be courses, modules, profile lines as well as single or several study programs.

Successful teaching innovations should, if possible, be **continued** and thus contribute to the further development of teaching in the subject (see 4.1 funding criterion sustainability). Even if the self-imposed goals are not (fully) achieved, the experience gained in experimenting with new teaching-learning methods and materials should be processed and made accessible as lessons learned so that other lecturers can benefit from them (see 4.2 Requirements for recipients).

In order to be able to respond to individual support needs on the part of those receiving funding and at the same time to enable the development of solutions that can be applied across disciplines, suitable innovation projects should therefore be offered the opportunity to implement their development project in cooperation with the sections of Division III | Academic Affairs.

In this cooperative variant, the discipline's representatives benefit from the topic-specific expertise of the various sections of Division III in the areas of writing didactics, digital teaching-learning formats, service-learning, and program development, among others. In close cooperation with the discipline and, for example, the Writing Center, the Center for Teaching and Learning, or the Service-Learning and Civic Engagement sub-section, a new prototype teaching concept is developed, tested and evaluated for an existing course. Personnel resources from Division III (e. g., writing tutors, experts for lectures) are available for the piloting of the prototype - in addition to the funding. In the long term the jointly developed teaching concept must be independently workable for the discipline's lecturers. The focus on methodological-didactical aspects (e.g., didactics, self-regulated learning, service-learning) is aimed at the evidence-based development and initial testing of a teaching concept (at the level of a course, module or department), which serves as a model for other disciplines or for other subjects or study programs.

After completion of the pilot phase, a successfully tested and, if applicable, positively evaluated teaching-learning concept will be continued - ideally with the support of the respective institute/department or faculty. However, the relevant Division III staff are available for consultation even after the end of the funding phase.

The maximum funding amount for an innovation project is € 5,000.

#### **3.2 Transfer projects**

The funding of transfer projects serves to disseminate good practice by adapting successful approaches beyond local use into the context of other disciplines. The funding format creates favorable conditions for the dissemination of proven teaching-learning concepts and contributes to teaching-related networking between various disciplines and teaching cultures at the University of Tübingen.

In this context, "transfer" means the transfer of proven teaching concepts between various disciplines as well as adapting them to suit the respective new context. *Transfer does not refer to discipline-specific teaching content, but to basic didactic concepts, methods and structures* that respond to certain challenges in teaching (e.g., flipped classroom as a reaction to an increasingly heterogeneous student body as well as the desire for a more interactive design of on-campus classes).

For transfer to be successful, the receiving side needs to identify a teaching-related challenge which could be solved by an already proven teaching-learning concept from the providing side. The providing side also benefits from the transfer in that, in addition to the appreciation it receives, the exchange relationship gives it the opportunity to reflect on its own teaching and, if necessary, to develop it further, as well as to expand its cooperation via its new contacts.

In the context of the application process, Division III | Academic Affairs is happy to support lecturers interested in transfer in searching for and finding a possible transfer providing partner. In this way, an interdisciplinary exchange between disciplines and/or lecturers interested in transfer may be initiated in the application phase.

The maximum funding amount for a transfer project is 7,500 €.

### **3.3 Micro Projects**

Micro Projects are one-off projects that can be applied for with little effort. This funding format is primarily intended to enable projects that either help participants gain initial experience in a specific area, or through which a great deal of didactic and high-profile added value can be created at relatively low cost. Within the framework of project learning, for example, student performance and exhibition projects may be realized, external experts or lecturers invited, software licenses purchased, or media production carried out. Even though this funding format is not aimed at further development by anchoring the tested teaching-learning concepts into the curricula, micro projects may nevertheless be continued within the disciplines.

The maximum funding amount for a micro project is 1,000 €.

### **3.4 Scope of funding and eligible expenses**

The maximum funding amount is

- for innovation projects max. 5,000 € per application,
- for transfer projects max. 7,500 € per application and
- for micro projects max. 1,000 € per application.

Eligible for funding are personnel costs (e.g., student assistants, lectureships, job increases, fees) and, to a limited extent, non-personnel costs (e.g., printing costs, (software) licenses, rental fees, public relations work). Accommodation and catering costs are not eligible for funding.

## **4. Application procedure**

### **4.1 Selection process and funding criteria**

A jury of representatives from division III will decide on the projects to be funded. All applications received will be evaluated on the basis of uniform criteria. The funding application should clearly indicate the extent to which the project meets the following funding criteria in particular.

#### *Innovation*

The projects develop and test innovative concepts for teaching, learning or assessment. Established concepts (in the respective discipline) may be further developed or completely new concepts may be experimented with. Innovations may be on the level of learning objectives and content, teaching-learning methods and concepts, or forms of interdisciplinary and cross-university collaboration. The degree of innovation of a development project is always measured against the previous teaching practice of the discipline in which it is to be implemented. Applicants need to explain in two or three sentences what is innovative about their project.

#### *Sustainability*

Projects funded as innovation projects (3.1) and transfer projects (3.2) should always include a long-term implementation strategy. One-off events, such as summer/winter schools, are not eligible for funding under these funding formats. Accordingly, it should be clear from the application how the project can contribute to a permanent further development and improvement of teaching in the discipline, e.g., by making the teaching innovation permanent. This can be ensured, for example, by creating reusable teaching and learning materials (ideally as Open Educational Resources, OER) or the (further) development and curricular anchoring of innovative didactic concepts within the framework of new or existing courses, modules or degree programs.

The funding application must be accompanied by a letter of support from the head of the department, or at least her/his written acknowledgement of the application. Sustainability may also consist of making the experience gained from exploratory projects accessible to a wider circle of lecturers in the subject and beyond.

#### *Traceability & Verifiability*

The application should justify why the planned measures are suitable for achieving the objectives pursued by the project. In addition, it must explain how achieving the project aims can be assessed by establishing impact assumptions and indicators for the achievement of objectives as early as the application stage. The applicant's own considerations and measures for the evaluation and review of the achievement of objectives are welcome.

The inclusion of further topics and aspects relevant to higher education didactics may have a positive effect on the approval of a funding application, e.g.,

- *activation of students/student perspective*, e.g., cooperative teaching-learning concepts; peer learning,
- *integration and interlocking*, e.g., improving the coordination of previously separate sub-areas, such as courses, modules, degree programs,
- *consideration of diversity/heterogeneity*, e.g., development and testing of approaches for dealing with an increasingly heterogeneous student body by making teaching and learning more flexible and diversified,
- *linking studies and social responsibility*, e.g., service-learning,
- *professional orientation and practical relevance*, e.g., project learning,
- *certain forms of competence orientation*, e.g., research-based teaching and learning, problem- or challenge-based learning, case-based learning,
- *interdisciplinarity*

#### **4.2 Dates and deadlines**

From the date of publication of the call for applications (March 1, 2023), interested teaching staff may submit their applications until June 30, 2023 (application phase). The application must be submitted to Division III at least four weeks prior to the targeted funding start date, i.e., for a project to start on June 1, a funding application must be submitted by May 1 at the latest.

The funding period is a maximum of one year, with a project period of one year ideally including one semester for conception and (material) development, and another for implementation, testing and evaluation of the teaching-learning concept. The funding period is explicitly not extended depending on the submission date but ends in all cases on March 31, 2024.

- **Application deadline:** March 1 to June 30, 2023
- **Earliest possible start of funding:** April 1, 2023
- **Project conference:** November 22, 2023
- **End of funding period** (pilot phase): March 31, 2024
- **Project duration:** up to 12 months

#### **4.3 Process support and documentation, networking and visibility**

##### *Project conference and process support*

In order to enable an exchange across projects, all recipients are expected to participate in a project conference to be held on November 22, 2023. The project conference will enable an exchange between recipients regarding teaching-related challenges, didactic approaches to solutions, and lessons learned. In addition, throughout the funding period, there is the option of individual process support in the form of the various consulting and evaluation services (e.g., Teaching Analysis Poll, collegial consultation, qualitative group interview) offered by the sections of Division III.

The collegial exchange seeks to develop a professional as well as self-reflective attitude on the part of the lecturers, the transfer of experience and evidence as well as a university-internal networking. Thus, excellence in teaching becomes a common cause.

### *Securing results and documentation*

Teaching development is usually a cyclical-iterative process. New teaching methods generate new experience, which informs new adjustments to the teaching concept. This is tested again and adapted if necessary. Thus, the teaching concept undergoes continuous improvement through practical application. Even perceived failures offer important clues in terms of generating practical and theoretical outcomes. Experiences made while experimenting with new teaching-learning concepts, methods and materials - whether successes or failures - should be prepared as lessons learned in the form of a reflection report of approximately one to two pages. Division III will publish these reports. Thus ensuring, that other lecturers who have had similar or perhaps even completely different experiences can enter into an exchange with the sponsored teaching innovators.

### **4.4 Application documents and financing plan**

To apply, please use only the application forms provided by Division III. Please send applications in electronic form only as PDF files to [lehrinnovationen@zv.uni-tuebingen.de](mailto:lehrinnovationen@zv.uni-tuebingen.de)