

Digital Code of Conduct for digital teaching at the Hochschule Niederrhein

Digital teaching offers many opportunities but also involves a number of challenges. As part of a cooperation project between the AStA, the Student Parliament and the Vice-President's Department for Studies and Teaching, the following **recommendations** have been drawn up which we would like to pass on to help with digital teaching. The Digital Code of Conduct includes recommendations for different types of digital teaching. These are addressed to **all members of the University**. Information on the legal framework can be found below.

Recommendations

1. **Invitations** to digital meetings must be **treated personally** and should not be passed on unless previously agreed.
2. Digital courses and events are coordinated with the times given in the timetable to ensure that courses run smoothly. Make sure that you **are online in good time** before the event starts. Allow yourself **extra time** to test your equipment and connection.
3. To enable attendees to address one another personally, we recommend **stating your name** at digital meetings. This also means that all participants know who else is attending the meeting.
4. Even if you attend an event from home, the digital event room is a **public space**. Dress and behave accordingly.
5. Respect the **privacy** of the participants and treat any insights you may obtain at the video conference with strict confidentiality.
6. Even if you are not legally obliged to do so, **please switch on your camera during lectures** (if technically possible) in the spirit of mutual respect. Communication in times of distance learning relies on using as many channels as possible. An active camera helps all those involved to get feedback and to understand questions or comprehension problems more quickly. Tip: Use the HN **virtual backgrounds** for zoom conferences during courses. These allow you to hide your private rooms.¹
7. Observe the **agreed rules of conduct** during online events. For example, it can be agreed at the beginning how requests to speak are to be made (e.g. using the chat or a hand-raising icon). It is also advisable to mute the microphone when you are not speaking. Ambient noise can disturb the meeting. To ensure that everything runs smoothly, please observe the agreements made for each event.
8. Please be **patient** and **show understanding** for time delays (e.g. when participants are speaking) and connection problems caused by technical difficulties.²
9. Prioritise the use of **communication channels provided by the University** for digital teaching (e.g. forums in Moodle courses). These have the advantage that all members of the University (students, lecturers and employees) can participate in the exchange.
10. **Check** your wording in chats, forums or emails for errors and **comprehensibility** before you send your messages.
11. In written communication, formulate your messages clearly and **without irony**. On such platforms, non-verbal signals are not visible and misunderstandings can easily arise.

¹ For more information about virtual backgrounds in Zoom, refer to the HN Zoom FAQ at <https://www.hs-niederrhein.de/elearning-moodle/>

² In exceptional cases, if there are connection problems, it may be advisable to do without the video. Alternatively, in such cases you can use a profile picture which you can upload to Zoom, for example.

Treat each other **politely** and **fairly**. Alongside the digital courses, this applies in particular to communication in forums and chat groups. **Constructive criticism** is welcome if it is given objectively, in an appropriate form and if it is clearly addressed.

Legal framework

Legal framework conditions apply for both digital teaching and contact teaching:

Handling digitally available content, its use and publication as well as observance of the personal rights of all parties involved is of fundamental importance.

In all digital teaching formats, please respect

- The rights of authors and rights holders (rights of use),
- The right to one's own image (right to the freedom of personal development). Do not make recordings (audio or video) of digital meetings without obtaining prior consent.
- The protection of personal data (right to informational self-determination).

Please only use your university email address for email communication.

Do you have **ideas** and **suggestions** for improvements and additions to the Digital Code of Conduct? You are welcome to send feedback to the following email address digitalknigge@hs-niederrhein.de.

Sources

- "EASI - Studieren leicht gemacht" (Studying Made Easy), <https://moodle.hsnr.de/course/view.php?id=4599>, status 11.05.2020.
- FernUniversität Hagen (Distance Learning University Hagen) (Publisher): "Netiquette – unsere virtuellen Spielregeln" (Netiquette – Our Digital Game Rules), <https://www.fernuni-hagen.de/universitaet/themen/netiquette.shtml>, published on 11 May 2020.