

30 June 2022**Taking higher education forward together – HFDcon 2022 discusses the future of learning and teaching**

What will change and what will remain the same after almost four semesters of online-based distance learning at German universities? More than 200 students, teachers and employees of higher education support institutions came together today at the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex – a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Essen – for HFDcon 2022, the fourth network day of Hochschulforum Digitalisierung (HFD, the German Forum for Higher Education in the Digital Age), to discuss good higher education teaching post-COVID-19.

"After almost two years of largely digital distance teaching, the question arises as to how achievements in digital exchange can be meaningfully integrated into the newly re-established in-person teaching," explains Martin Rademacher, project manager of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), at HFD. "We are advocating for the vision of a 'blended university' that intelligently combines diversity and a holistic approach in digital and analogue contexts."

The participants at HFDcon 2022 discussed and finalised a thesis paper entitled "The Future of Higher Education Teaching 2025", which was developed in advance in a digital sprint. It calls for a collaborative development of university culture. "In the digital transformation, universities have a special responsibility to help build a society which is ready for the future. This requires holistic thinking, systematic interdisciplinarity and the joint treatment of cross-cutting issues. In addition, there is a culture of participation, communication and cooperation as well as learning with and from each other and teaching," says Rademacher, summarising the focal points of the discussion in Essen. Universities, he added, should become places of multimodal learning and teaching that invite dialogue both on campus and in virtual spaces, including between universities and with other stakeholders. In addition to individual competences, this requires an adequate spatial and technical infrastructure as well as permanently financed specialised staff in the areas of teaching, didactics and support.

The paper will be available to download from the [conference website](#) from 4 pm CET. It is the starting point for a discussion that will continue beyond the conference and will result in a more detailed discussion paper in August.

Further information on the network meeting and the thesis paper:

<http://www.hochschulforumdigitalisierung.de/en>

About Hochschulforum Digitalisierung (HFD)

As a nationwide think-&-do tank, Hochschulforum Digitalisierung (German Forum for Higher Education in the Digital Age, HFD) brings together a broad community around digitisation in studying and teaching, makes developments visible and tests innovative approaches to solutions. It provides networking, advice and support for stakeholders in academia, politics, business and society. Established in 2014, HFD is a joint initiative of Stifterverband, the CHE Centre for Higher Education and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK). HFD is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

Further information: www.hochschulforumdigitalisierung.de/en

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