

Mission Statement of Learning and Teaching

PREAMBLE

With the mission statement of learning and teaching at ASH Berlin¹, we want to stimulate and maintain a lively discourse aiming at the realisation and development of learning and teaching at the university. According to the basic understanding of the ASH Berlin, all university members are addressed: Students of all study programmes and participants in further education programmes, employees in administration, research, development and teaching as well as all lecturers, guest lecturers and university teachers. The mission statement of learning and teaching should therefore serve as a basis for orientation and development. Hence it is a component for further structural and institutional decisions. The "we" set in the mission statement – in awareness of different positions, the associated design options and responsibilities within the university and from a power-critical intersectional perspective – addresses that learning and teaching require joint efforts. The development and negotiation of this "we" in mutual communication is one of the central development tasks to implement good learning and teaching processes, taking equal opportunities into account. Educational processes usually take place with and between real people – their individuality and dignity must be favoured over supposed constraints (and neoliberal logics of action). A discrimination-sensitive perspective that respects differences between people is important. With the "we" studying should also be marked as a space for encounters and communication.

We want to enable ourselves on a scientific, professional and ethical basis to contribute to develop SAGE professions and society in a critical and reflective manner.

At ASH Berlin, we align learning and teaching in such a way that, starting from our learning community, questions are asked about current and future social developments. They are shaped in a practical and future-oriented way. We think of educational processes in terms of lifelong learning. We strive to develop professional skills and attitudes based on scientific, technical and ethical principles and to advocate for sustainable and social justice. In this respect, the reflected intervention in social – also global – developments is a central concern of ASH Berlin. Learning and teaching as well as social participation should be power-critical and participatory.

We want to develop learning and teaching in shared responsibility.

We understand the development of learning and teaching as a community task. The "we" set in the mission statement, in knowledge about different responsibilities and critically reflecting existing power structures as well as different positions within the university, aims to understand the development of learning and teaching as a mutual task of all university members. We strive for cooperative learning and teaching as well as cooperation on the basis of the flattest possible hierarchies between the member groups in all processes of ASH Berlin. The mission statement represents an orientation for the development of learning and teaching processes and structures as a future task, which affects all people and authorities at the university. They are to be developed in a participatory and transparent manner. The development and negotiation of this "we" in mutual communication is one of the central development tasks. With its advisory and support services, the university offers concrete guidance as well as corresponding standards for the design of the processes in learning and teaching through its regulations and statutes. The governing bodies of the university have the competence and responsibility to provide the resources available to the university as needed and to advocate changes in the interest of the university in order to be able to work sustainably with adequate framework conditions.

We want to identify and analyse intersectional injustice in learning and teaching and stand up for equal opportunities.

To achieve this, we target on all levels of learning and teaching development: university admission; study conditions and learning formats; content and forms of knowledge production and competence development as well as the transition from university to profession. These promote permeability, compatibility and mobility with a focus on the intersectional interweaving of various injustices: low-barrier, participation-oriented and democratic. This includes the reduction of social inequalities, the reflection of privileges and a (power) critical approach as well as the development and implementation of anti-discriminatory and diversity-sensitive approaches (such as empowerment and power sharing). We create opportunities to examine current social issues using scientific methods and to combine research, teaching and practice.

We want to create spaces for experimenting, arguing, reflecting and criticising as well as to develop something new.

We need courage to acknowledge what we know and what we don't know and attention to critically reflect and communicate with each other. To do this, we create opportunities to analyse the world around us and to critically reconsider the old, the new and ourselves. We let ourselves be inspired, experiment, discard and learn from mistakes. This is based on process orientation, critical openness, the inclusion of marginalized forms of knowledge and the joint development of ideas as well as perspectives for problem solving. In order to enable these processes, we provide sufficient spaces and time for learning and communication, which can be designed and used by students in a self-organised manner.

We want to think and implement teaching from the point of view of learning.

We understand education in such a way that we can always acquire the prerequisites to be present and active in the world and to critically relate to ourselves. This requires the activation of different senses in their complex interaction. This means that the learning processes of students and their development of skills are the focus of learning and teaching, their evaluation and the creation of (infra)structures at the university. Students should have the opportunity to participate in the design of their own learning processes. Learning takes place in a variety of formats and levels and takes into account the complexity of educational and development processes. Accordingly, teachers align methods and examinations, integrate them into the learning processes and design them in diverse ways.

We want to contribute to an application-oriented, critical and self-critical science and theory-led practice.

Learning and teaching motivates to deal with theories and concepts and structures of professional action in order to contribute to future-proof practice, research, profession and building of theory. The connection of theory and practice as well as their critical analysis are firmly anchored in the study structures and curricula. The focus is not only on transferring and translating theory into practice, but also on developing theory from practice through research. The basis for this is the (self-) critical examination of what is considered scientifically recognised, which also includes the possibilities and limits of science.

We want to work for the social and scientific recognition and influence of the SAGE professions in learning and teaching, based on the emancipatory history of ASH Berlin.

We promote the academisation of the SAGE professions – social work, health, education – and contribute to the sustainable and permeable education of specialists in the professions mentioned at university level. In learning and teaching, we deal critically with our history in the tradition of the so-called former women's professions in order to develop professional self-confidence and to be able to intervene confidently in social developments. In doing so, we repeatedly refer to current discourses that affect our professions, work together with civil society, social movements and actively contribute our expertise from the SAGE areas. In this sense, as members of ASH Berlin, we take our role seriously in influencing educational and professional policy.

STRUCTURAL EMBEDDING

In the mission statement, learning and teaching is understood as a complex structure and all three dimensions of didactics in higher education are taken into account: 1. teaching/learning, 2. curricula, 3. organizational structures and cultures. It includes conditions, resources, structures as well as values and norms that we need and/or create mutually in order to realise good learning and teaching processes. It is based on the general mission statement of ASH Berlin and the values and goals formulated therein. It concretises them with regard to the processes of learning and teaching. It should provide a starting point to all members of the university to review, negotiate and realign goals and concerns in learning and teaching. This applies to the design of participatory work processes in learning and teaching as well as the influence of social and educational policy developments.

¹ Enacted in the Academic Senate of ASH Berlin on February, 15, 2022.