

Call for papers***Teaching competencies for current university teaching***

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To the main topic

Not only society, but also the higher education landscape is undergoing fundamental change. This poses major challenges for the quality of higher education teaching at universities and colleges in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The digitalization of all areas, educational expansion and large universities, demands for higher labour market relevance of degree programs, the promotion of future skills, questions about economically sustainable education funding and socio-political challenges of our time, all call for new competencies in present-day teaching (Salmhofer, 2020; Ehlers, 2020; Elsholz, 2019; Entner et al., 2021). These developments are contributing to a reflection on and readjustment of the goals of academic education and are gradually bringing university teaching more into the focus of politics and society. The increased attention paid to teaching is accompanied by the question of the (further) development of the professionalisation of university teaching (Salmhofer, 2020), which is increasingly moving away from traditional forms of knowledge transfer and further towards project-based and more open teaching and learning environments.

In this context, the teaching competencies of university lecturers are considered to have a significant influence on the implementation of current forms of teaching and learning (Merkt, 2016). Teachers' knowledge of educational psychology and didactics, as well as their practice-oriented teaching competency, have a demonstrable impact on the quality of teaching design and the learning success of students (Hoffmann et al., 2024; Schneider & Mustafic, 2015). In addition to professional knowledge, teachers must continue to develop their didactic competencies throughout their lives, which requires external support and incentives, but also the ability to independently reflect on and further develop their own didactic competencies (Kordts-Freudinger et al., 2021). However, a sustainable effect in the further development of teaching and learning in the sense of "pedagogical university development" (Euler, 2016) can only be achieved by dovetailing the measures for the individual skills development of teachers with the efforts at the curricular level and also at the level of organizational development. It is at this point of a collaborative and holistically conceived pedagogical university development that the present call for the thematic issue comes in.

This ZFHE thematic issue is intended to show how current teaching competency development is used for university teaching and, following on from this, to illustrate which concepts, forms of provision or technologies are, and could be, used to support and implement teaching competency development. In this call, we invite research contributions and (research-led) development contributions to present the findings on the development of teaching competencies for current university teaching and at the same time to demonstrate their significance for university didactics.

Questions from all disciplines can be addressed as long as they are relevant to university teaching. These could be - without being exhaustive - for example

- How does the implementation of competence-oriented learning influence the development of teaching competencies among university lecturers?
- What knowledge, skills and attitudes are part of professional teaching competency and how can these be acquired?
- How do self-assessment and external assessment take place and how are the next steps for acquiring competence determined? What support options are available for individual development?
- How can teachers at universities be supported technologically so that they can develop their teaching competency effectively and efficiently?
- How does the use of digital technologies change academically relevant activities and what impact does this have on teaching?
- How can academic education be shaped in a digitally transforming society so that didactics actively challenges and shapes digitalization instead of being determined by technology?
- To what extent are students' future skills, such as creativity, innovative thinking or collaborative work, already anchored in university teaching? Are new teaching competencies required and how can they be promoted?
- How must the framework conditions be designed so that the development of teaching competencies becomes part of the professional self-image of those involved?

This issue of ZFHE is intended to reflect the current state of practice of teaching competency development at universities and to clarify the requirements for contemporary university teaching.

Preference will be given to contributions that are based on practical experience and relate to theoretical approaches to competency development and university didactics.

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Guidelines regarding the journal

The ZFHE is a peer-reviewed online journal that publishes scientific contributions of practical relevance concerning current higher education development issues. The focus is on didactical, structural, and cultural developments in teaching and learning. Topics that are innovative and still regarded as open in respect of their design options are preferred.

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Submission information

German or English contributions may be submitted in two possible formats:

Research contributions should meet the following criteria. The paper:

- addresses a systemic question in transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary or subject-specific contexts;
- has a research gap as its starting point;
- is extensively embedded in current scholarly discourse;
- has a robust methodological approach;
- includes reflection on the author's own work;
- explains the research methodology;
- employs a method that is suitable for answering the research question;
- presents the scientific discourse in a reflective manner;
- makes a clearly recognizable contribution to answering the research question or to the research discussion;
- consistently follows relevant citation rules (APA style, current edition);
- comprises between 20,000 and 33,000 characters (with spaces, including cover page, bibliography and author information).

Research-driven development contributions should meet the following criteria. The paper:

- features a higher education development perspective with a sound research base;
- discusses and differentiates a systemic problem in teaching development;
- is an academically grounded "institutional research" contribution;
- is supported by a literature review;
- meaningfully addresses the interaction between science and praxis and/or the link between the two poles of "research and development"
- consistently follows pertinent citation rules (APA style, current edition);
- comprises between 20,000 and 33,000 characters (with spaces, including cover page, bibliography and author information).

Development contributions should meet the following criteria. The paper:

- deals with a concrete problem in higher education development in the (author's) higher education institution;
- addresses a practical need;
- is embedded in the scientific discussion and literature (without claiming to provide an overview of the literature);
- offers suggestions for teaching and university development, with recommendations for action (if applicable);
- offers a systematic and transparent discussion (e.g. no incomprehensible references to specifics or details in a field of practice);
- elaborates on generalisable aspects relevant to theoretical development;
- addresses considerations related to the transfer to practice;
- mentions possibilities for further research;
- consistently follows relevant citation rules (APA style, current edition);
- comprises between 20,000 and 33,000 characters (with spaces, including cover page, bibliography and author information).

Submission and review schedule

June 6, 2025 – Submission deadline for complete articles: Please upload your contribution(s) to the ZFHE journal system (<https://www.zfhe.at>) in the corresponding section (research contributions, research-driven development contributions, development contributions) of ZFHE 20/3 issue in anonymous format. To do so, you must first register as an author in the system.

July/August, 2025 – Feedback/Reviews: Scientific contributions and workshop reports are evaluated in a double-blind process (see below).

September 1, 2025 – Revision deadline: Where necessary, contributions may be revised according to feedback and recommendations from the reviews.

October 2025 – Online publication: In October 2025, the finalized contributions are published under <https://www.zfhe.at> and also made available in print.

Review Process

All submitted contributions will be examined in a double-blind peer review process to guarantee scientific quality. The editors of the current issue propose the reviewers for the respective theme and allocate individual contributions to the reviewers; they also determine which contributions will be accepted. The selection of reviewers and the review process for each thematic issue are always supervised by a member of the editorial board.

Formatting and submission

In order to save valuable time with the formatting of the contributions, we kindly ask that all authors work with the template from the beginning. The template can be downloaded from the ZFHE website under the following links:

https://www.zfhe.at/userupload/ZFHE_20-3_TEMPLATE_de.docx

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Since we must be able to edit the texts, they must be submitted unlocked/unprotected in in Microsoft Word (.doc), Office Open XML (.docx), Open Document Text (.odt) or Plain Text (.txt) format. Please do not submit any PDF files! Submissions in the “Scientific Contribution” and “Workshop Report” categories must first be made in anonymous format in order to guarantee the double-blind review process. Please remove all references to the author(s) of the document (including in the document properties!). Upon a positive review result, this information will be re-inserted.

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding the content of the issue, please contact Benno Volk (benno.volk@ethz.ch), Philip Barth (philip.barth@ethz.ch), Marion Lehner (marion.lehner@ethz.ch), Samuel Krattenmacher (samuel.krattenmacher@phsh.ch), Angela Jochum (Angela.Jochum@phsg.ch).

For technical and organizational questions, please contact Elisabeth Stadler (office@zfhe.at).

We look forward to your submissions!

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