

Teaching Award 2016/17

Focus: Responsible Science



Focus 2016/17

Each year the University of Graz confers the teaching award “Teaching: Excellent!” to outstanding and innovative courses. In the academic year 2016/17 the focus of the award lies on *responsible science*, referring to **social relevance and responsibility of science**. What exactly is meant by *responsible science* and how this focus is represented in teaching concepts is elaborated in the following.

Science and society do not exist as two separate systems; in fact science is a social subsystem. Being part of society, higher education institutions are bound to the interests of the social whole and they have to fulfill an important role in civil society. The challenge for universities is to introduce students to a future- and sustainability-oriented attitude towards science. Students should – in accordance with the Universities Act 2002 – be guided in providing contributions to the sustainable development of society and in providing solutions to social, ethical, economic, and environmental challenges. By setting this teaching award focus, the university shows its contribution to current discourses around the future of higher education. On a European as well as on a national level responsible science was postulated as a central science policy in the sense of a deepening and developing of the interactions and relations between science and society.

In a course *social relevance and responsibility of science* can be addressed on a theoretical and on a practical level. It can take many different forms – some of which are listed below.

Key competence: social relevance & responsibility

Socially responsible research and teaching develop in continuous exchanges, reflections, and interactions with other social subsystems. Current processes of social change and their related challenges raise demands on universities to make their contribution to and relevance for society, for local, European, and global spaces visible. In a course students’ awareness of their social responsibility and the social relevance of higher education and empirical findings can be achieved through:

- the analysis of problems related to physical and psychological wellbeing/illness; cosmic space, climate, nature protection, energy (poverty), sustainability; globalization, migration, war, communal life, urban and regional development; economy, (un)employment, poverty and wealth; faith etc.
- initiating a dialogue between university and the public, companies, NGOs, other institutions, communities etc.
- harmonization of research, consultation, and support on one hand and the values, needs, and expectations of social subgroups on the other hand (through possibilities of dialogue and interaction)
- participation of civilians in research (citizen science)
- science-to-public transfer/knowledge transfer
- integration of social challenges and leading values in (research-oriented) teaching concepts
- collaboration between universities and institutions that leads to the empowerment of all people involved and fosters mutual understanding
- membership resp. internship in (non-profit) organizations (civic engagement), collaboration with organizations with the goal of sustainably developing the community/city (community engagement), and combining learning objectives with community service (service learning)
- transdisciplinary teaching concepts

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Award ceremony

The prize is awarded by the Vice-Rector for Studies and Teaching on the “**Teaching Day**” at the beginning of November each year. The goal is to make visible innovative teaching concepts, to inspire other teachers, to kick off a discussion on recent didactical trends, and to honor the efforts of highly engaged teachers who conceptualize and realize their courses with great enthusiasm.

Nomination

All courses that are held in a regular study program at the University of Graz in the academic year of 2016/17 can be nominated (except for any thesis seminars).

The following groups are authorized to nominate:

- ~ groups of at least 3 students nominating an attended course
- ~ lecturers their own course(s)
- ~ heads of curriculum commissions
- ~ (vice) deans of studies

Nomination: through E-Mail (lehrpreis@uni-graz.at) or using the online form at <http://lehr-studienservices.uni-graz.at/de/qualitaetssicherung/lehrpreis-lehre-ausgezeichnet/>

Deadlines:

Make sure to nominate winter term courses until **January 31**, summer term courses until **June 30** (for an explanation see Evaluation)!

Evaluation

Right after receiving a nomination the teacher will be informed by staff of the Educational and Student Services (Lehr- und Studienservices). If she/he accepts the nomination the course will be evaluated though UNIGRAZonline using the standard questionnaire with additional teaching award items. This is the reason for the deadlines January 31 and June 30.

Concept

The nominated teacher is required to hand in a concept describing the course and providing general information. A PDF form with topics and questions has been created to support teachers in this task. This form can be found on the [website](#) of the teaching award.

Jury meeting

Right before the beginning of the academic year a jury headed by the Vice-Rector for Studies and Teaching will meet to determine the winners. The jury’s decision will be influenced by (1) the teaching concept, (2) a convincing course description in UNIGRAZonline and (3) the student evaluation results / student feedback.

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