Digitization of German universities

Even before the pandemic, the topic of digitization was politically relevant at German universities, especially in comparison to northern countries that are pioneers of digitized education.

The pandemic has made this topic both central and urgent, and has shown through multiple studies how the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have brought a first forced response from universities in the area of digitization; this has generally been perceived as positive and has produced a willingness for digital changes at universities.

Although a first fundamental step has been taken with it, the interventions introduced in that state of emergency were primarily surrogates for the teaching in presence that was at that time not possible; in all interventions, a unified vision of the digitized future at universities was lacking, and such a unified vision is fundamentally important for the wished sustainable development. The pandemic has only triggered experiences and impressions to shape such a vision, now the debate is open for more and specifically regarding the possible hybrid teaching formats, the positions are very different.

The pandemic has brought initial development in the following areas:
- Willingness of teachers to engage in change, internal university networking / support for teachers in the topic of digitization;
- Increased amount of online teaching, strategic implementation of first concrete actions towards digitization;
- Enhancement of the debate on the topic of digitization of universities in general and of teaching in particular;
- Gestiegene hochschulübergreifende Zusammenarbeit und sowohl die Kollaboration mit administrativen Institutionen.

The following tasks still await the universities in order to drive forward the successful and sustainable digitization of universities:

- Clear framework conditions in regard to examination and data protection law.
- Further development of teaching formats and teaching skills.
- Further development of the universities' technical infrastructure, as well as students.
- Expansion of staff and resources.
- Including digitization in the long-term guidelines of the universities.
- Increase representation of digitization in target agreements with state ministries.
- Conduct university surveys for digital strategic planning.

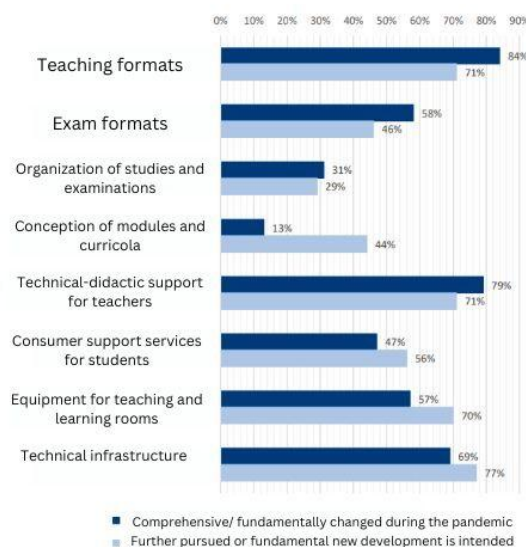**Future concepts for the digitization of universities**

[1]

	Comprehensive/ fundamentally changed during the pandemic	Further pursued or fundamental new development is intended
Teaching formats	84%	71%
Exam formats	58%	46%
Organization of studies and examinations	31%	29%
Conception of modules and curricola	13%	44%
Technical-didactic support for teachers	79%	71%
Consumer support services for students	47%	56%
Equipment for teaching and learning rooms	57%	70%
Technical infrastructure	69%	77%

Figure 11: Comparison between pandemic-related changes and intended digitization

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[1] S.25, Hochschulforum Digitalisierung - Zukunftskonzepte in Sicht? Auswirkungen der Corona-Pandemie auf die strategische Hochschulentwicklung - online verfügbar.

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