

Successful Changeover to Distance Learning at FHWien der WKW

The entire summer semester 2020 will be conducted online. 15 years of experience with e-learning made the transition easier.

Vienna, April 2, 2020 – Within a very short period of time, FHWien der WKW has converted all Bachelor's and Master's study programs and academic continuing education programs to online operation. Until the end of the summer semester 2020, all teaching will be carried out using distance learning. The university of applied sciences, which specializes in management and communication, has 15 years of experience in e-learning and has the necessary technical prerequisites.

Positive feedback from students and lecturers

After the announcement of the Austrian Federal Government on March 10, 2020 that teaching at universities must be carried out in distance learning by March 16, 2020 at the latest, FHWien der WKW immediately implemented this. On March 10, all attendance courses were discontinued. "The conversion to nationwide distance learning was a tour de force for our university of applied sciences, which demanded everything from our employees and our many external lecturers", explains Michael Heritsch, CEO of FHWien der WKW. "The positive feedback from many students and lecturers is all the more gratifying, as they are of course aware of the effort behind it."

15 years of experience with e-learning

FHWien der WKW has been involved in e-learning since 2005. This has enabled the university of applied sciences to build up experience over 15 years, which is now proving to be useful. There is also a set of tools available to support online teaching. "For some years now, our university of applied sciences has also had guidelines for the quota of distance learning in the study programs. This has already been at 15 percent", informs Beate Huber, who as Head of Academic Affairs and Chair of the Academic Board is in charge of teaching at FHWien der WKW. "These conditions have enabled us to convert the entire teaching operation into distance learning very quickly."

Entire summer semester 2020 online, compulsory attendance cancelled

The new framework conditions made it necessary to adapt the study and examination regulations. "The attendance requirement for the summer semester was waived for all students", reports Beate Huber. The needs of students with civilian or militia service duties as well as those working in professions that are critical in terms of infrastructure were taken into account.

The dates of the courses remain unchanged as far as possible, lectures and seminars are only held online. The attendance courses will be replaced by written materials and tasks which are to be carried out online. Video recordings of lectures serve as supplements to written materials. Written examinations are replaced by written tasks or oral online examinations. The implementation of written online exams is in preparation.

"Since the changeover went so well, the study programs have decided to conduct the entire summer semester 2020 online for better planning, regardless of how long the initial restrictions and official regulations will remain in force for the universities", adds Beate Huber.

PRESS RELEASE



Changeover causes unplanned costs

The switch to distance learning involves unplanned costs that have to be covered from the financial reserves of FHWien der WKW. "This can only work in this way in the very short term. In the medium term, we are dependent on support from the Ministry of Education in order to be able to continue to fulfil our educational mandate in the accustomed quality – whether in classroom teaching or in distance learning", says CEO Michael Heritsch, who in this context recalls the long-standing demand of the Austrian Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences to "finally raise the subsidy rates for university places at Austrian universities of applied sciences and to regularly adjust them to inflation in the future".

Photos for press release

Portrait of Ing. Mag. (FH) Michael Heritsch, MSc, CEO of FHWien der WKW

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Portrait of FH-Prof.ⁱⁿ Mag.^a Dr.ⁱⁿ Beate Huber, Head of Academic Affairs and Chair of the Academic Board, FHWien der WKW

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FHWien der WKW

University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication

FHWien der WKW has been Austria's leading university of applied sciences for management & communication for more than 25 years. Working in close contact with Austrian corporations, FHWien der WKW offers comprehensive and practice-oriented academic programs to over 2,800 Bachelor and Master students. Two thirds of our teaching staff have a background in business. Our programs are tailored to the needs of companies, optimally preparing our graduates – around 11,000 to date – for their future careers.

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