

Action Plan "A University for All" - Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the Technical University of Dortmund 2020-2023

- Part I: Background and procedure -

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In 2009, the Bundestag and the Bundesrat ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN Disability Rights Convention or UN CRPD). Thus, the Federal Government and the countries have de facto entered into an obligation to implement this Convention. As a result, policies for and with people with disabilities have been placed on a new, human rights-based footing. The UN CRPD aims to ensure "that persons with disabilities enjoy or can exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others" (UN CRPD 2017, Art. 2). The philosophy of the Convention is expressed, among other things, in the general principles of respect for the diversity of persons with disabilities and acceptance of them as part of human diversity, non-discrimination, accessibility, equality of opportunity, and full and effective participation in all aspects of society. Article 24(5) calls on States Parties to ensure and, where appropriate, provide reasonable accommodation to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to general higher education without discrimination and on an equal basis with others.

In its interim report on the implementation of the UNCRPD, the German Institute for Human Rights, which as a monitoring body monitors the implementation of the UNCRPD for the federal government and individual German states, states that the conditions for studying with an impairment have improved in principle, but that there is still a need for action in the removal of barriers, in the legal regulations on representatives for students with disabilities, and in the granting of compensation for disadvantages. The monitoring body calls on universities to make study and examination conditions more flexible and to take accessibility issues into account in the digitalization of teaching and learning opportunities (cf. Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte 2019, p. 37).

Implementation of the UN CRPD at universities in NRW

With the state action plan "One society for all - NRW inclusive" (running until 2020), the state government made a start on implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012. The action plan, which was adopted by all parliamentary groups, defines the underlying paradigm of inclusion. It includes, "that the social and physical environment is designed so that all people in a society - whether impaired or not - can live together in an "inclusive community" without special adaptations and without discrimination" (p. 31).

In the accompanying dialog process, focal points were identified for the topic area of "Disabled people in higher education, science, and research", which are

- a) on the transition from high school to college,

- b) On the issue of disability and higher education, and
- c) on the situation of students with disabilities as well as
- d) relate to the transition from university to work.

In order to make inclusion a reality at universities in NRW, the state government has initially included five measures in the action plan, which are currently being worked on. For example, the topic of inclusion is included in the target and performance agreement, now the higher education contract, with the universities, which is linked to the requirement "to create complete concepts for the inclusion of severely disabled students in their studies, including the examination system". (S. 220). In addition, the development of the concept is "Disability-friendly university" with the aim of improving the study and working conditions at the universities. In addition to the requirement that the construction and remodeling of university buildings be carried out on the basis of the amended requirements of the state building code, a strengthening of the target group orientation with regard to the special needs of disabled students as well as the expansion of the range of part-time courses of study are also formulated as measures to be implemented in the medium term within the framework of general student counseling services.

In general, action plans are not only used at the federal and state level, but increasingly also at the university level. After the TU Dresden and the University of Leipzig initially pioneered the creation of action plans, a good dozen universities nationwide have now adopted action plans or are currently in the process of doing so. They receive support from the Information and Counseling Center for Disability and Studies of the German Student Union (IBS).

TU Dortmund University Action Plan "A University for All"

Initial situation

For more than 40 years, the TU Dortmund University of Technology has been committed to enabling disabled and chronically ill students to study with equal opportunities. In the context of the lighthouse project funded by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia from 1997 to 2000, the publication "Eine Hochschule für Alle" (A University for All) was produced, which set the trend for the HRK recommendation of the same name. In 2001, with the founding of the Dortmund Center for Disability and Studies (DoBuS), the counseling and support services developed in the project (among others.

counseling service, adaptation of study materials and examinations, work space and aids pool). In addition to the individual support of disabled and chronically ill students, barriers and disadvantaging structures have been and are being continuously identified and dismantled at TU Dortmund University in the spirit of disability mainstreaming. At TU Dortmund University, disability mainstreaming is embedded in a comprehensive diversity strategy supported by the Prorektorate Diversity Management and the Office of Equal Opportunity, Family and Diversity. Systematic consideration of the topic of accessibility in the planning and execution process of construction measures, the consideration of disadvantage compensation in all examination regulations, regulations for admission to courses with restricted participation, sign language interpretation at first semester welcomes as well as academic annual celebrations and participation in the project "Promotion Inklusive" are just a few examples of the previous disability mainstreaming activities of the TU Dortmund.

During the re-audit of the TU Dortmund University in the audit "Shaping Diversity" of the Stifterverband in the

year 2019, an action plan has been designated as a future measure.

Objective

With the action plan "A University for All", the TU Dortmund University of Technology is to establish a strategic

The aim is to establish an instrument with which - in line with the diversity strategy of the TU Dortmund University - proactively identify university structures, cultures or practices that potentially or actually disadvantage or discriminate against university members with disabilities. Thus, the action plan describes specific goals and verifiable measures that should lead to the reduction of identified disadvantages and discrimination. The action plan will be evaluated at the end of its term (2023) and then updated for another four years. In this sense, the action plan is an instrument of process management and quality assurance. In this way, the TU Dortmund not only fulfills its human rights obligation derived from the UN CRPD to enable equal participation in education and work, but also continues to be one of the leading universities in Germany in the subject area of "Inclusive Higher Education.

Process control and monitoring

Under the leadership of the Vice Rector Diversity Management, the Equal Opportunity, Family and Diversity (CFV) staff unit and the Disability and Studies unit in the Center for University Education (DoBuS) assume operational process control and responsibility. This includes, in particular, in discourse with all involved stakeholders at TU Dortmund University

- a) Identify areas of potential or actual disadvantage and discrimination, and
- b) derive activities to reduce them,
- c) Establish working groups in which the stakeholders involved develop and implement the relevant measures, and
- d) coordinate and evaluate the interaction of all processes and measures. Since inclusion is a cross-cutting task for all actors at the university, the responsibility for the content lies with the actors involved in the respective measures.

A steering group will be established to guide the process and will perform the following tasks:

- Advice on identifying structures, cultures and practices that (potentially) disadvantage and discriminate against people with disabilities at TU Dortmund University.
- Advise on developing, supplementing, prioritizing, etc., measures to reduce identified disadvantages and discrimination.
- Suggest stakeholders who should be involved in the implementation of the measures.
- Observe the progress of the implementation of the measures, comment on it and, if necessary, give advice for readjustment.
- Receipt of the evaluation report and reporting to the rectorate and other committees

In coordination with DoBuS and the CFV staff unit, the members of the steering group are appointed by the Prorector Diversity Management, Prof. Dr. Barbara Welzel, for an action plan cycle of four years. The group should consist of approximately 10 people who are substantively involved in the topic of inclusion or are involved in disability mainstreaming processes. The following persons are proposed for the steering group:

Legal representatives:

- Senate Representative for the Interests of Disabled and Chronically Ill Students Andrea Bartkowski
- Inclusion representative of the employer for severely disabled employees, Tatjana von Estorff
- Representative of the Severely Handicapped Thomas Marcinczyk

Actors:

- Autonomous Disability Unit (N.N.).
- Dec. University Development and Organization Strategy and Quality Management:
Bianca Schumacher or Simone Schröder
Organizational Development:
Tobias storm
- Dec. Construction and Facilities Management (N N.)
- University Communications Department Eva Prost
- Dec. Student Services N.N.
- ITMC
Martin Kötterheinrich

Research:

- Faculty of Rehabilitation Science Department of Development and Research of Inclusive Educational Processes
Prof. Dr. Markus Gebhardt

Costs

There are no additional costs for the start of the process. The process control of the action plan is taken over by DoBuS and the CFV staff unit and is part of their regular tasks. The extent to which the planning and implementation of individual measures will result in additional personnel or financial expenses will be examined during the planning process. If additional personnel or financial expenses arise during the implementation of measures, this is included in the budget planning of the institution entrusted with the implementation of the measure and taken into account accordingly in the budget discussions. This 'decentralized' financing corresponds to the understanding that inclusion is a cross-sectional task that is to be performed by all actors at the university.