

Compensation for Disadvantages in Higher and Continuing Education at FHNW School of Life Sciences

1 Context

The aim of compensation for disadvantages is to use suitable means to eliminate or reduce disadvantages resulting from disabilities or chronic illnesses. The term refers to the adaptation of conditions under which learning and/or examinations take place, not a modification of learning objectives or exemption from subjects. Compensation for disadvantages can be applied both in the admissions process and during studies.

2 Legal Foundations

The legal foundations are Article 8, Paragraphs 2 and 4 of the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation of April 18, 1999, as well as the Disability Non-discrimination Act (BehiG), which stipulate the equal participation of people with disabilities in higher and continuing education. The FHNW memorandum on compensation for disadvantages dated August 22, 2023 also applies.

3 Scope

This document applies to compensation for disadvantages in admissions and enrolment procedures, in Bachelor's, Master's and diploma courses, as well as continuing education programs at the FHNW. Temporary limitations due to illness, accident or pregnancy are not covered by compensation for disadvantages. One-off or very limited adjustments to teaching and examination conditions in such cases can be arranged with the module coordinator or the university upon presentation of appropriate certificates.

4 Process for Agreeing on Compensation for Disadvantages

1. Students and participants in continuing education programs must apply for compensation for disadvantages to the HLS Equal Opportunities & Diversity office by the admission application deadline. Applications can also be made during the course of study or during continuing education:
 - Spring semester: **by the end of calendar week 12**
 - Autumn semester: **by the end of calendar week 42**

Submitting the required documents in time enables evaluation of compensation for disadvantages for the next examination session.

2. The HLS Equal Opportunities & Diversity office contacts the person responsible to clarify the feasibility of the measures proposed.

3. The HLS Equal Opportunities & Diversity office prepares a proposal for compensation for disadvantages based on the medical certificate and clarification with those responsible.
4. The proposal is discussed with the student or participant in continuing education programs and, if necessary, adjusted.
5. The HLS Equal Opportunities & Diversity office prepares the final agreement on compensation for disadvantages.

5 Communication

- All processes comply with data protection requirements.
- With the agreement on compensation for disadvantages, the HLS student receives confirmation and those responsible for implementing the measures (e.g., secretariat, continuing education coordination, examiners, supervisory staff) are informed about the agreement.
- The person affected is responsible for presenting the relevant documents specified under point (4.5) to the module coordinators responsible **before the start of the compensation for disadvantages**.
- Significant changes to the agreed compensation for disadvantages made by students or participants in continuing education programs must be reported, as they may no longer be necessary or required.
- With the agreement on compensation for disadvantages, the HLS (including the examination office) is authorized to send bundled organizational information to students and participants in continuing education with compensation for disadvantages or adjusted examination conditions. The people affected must treat this information as confidential.
- Regarding teaching, the principle is that the person affected contacts the lecturers directly when necessary to discuss and decide on appropriate measures within the course framework. Other arrangements are possible.

6 Aids and Assistance

Students and participants in continuing education programs with disabilities may use disability-specific technical aids for their studies and continuing education. They are also allowed to be supported by an assistant. The costs for these are generally not borne by the university. Furthermore, students and participants in continuing education programs can request, in prior agreement with lecturers, that teaching be designed barrier-free. This could mean, for example, that certain tools and services are used, absence due to a disability does not need to be justified or that certain modules are held in locations that are easily accessible for those with disabilities.

It should be clarified with the program management whether these measures are to apply for the entire duration of studies or continuing education or should be renegotiated each semester.

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