Transferable Skills Concept of the University of Göttingen 2025

The following outlines what the University of Göttingen understands by transferable skills, the objectives pursued through them, and how the concept is implemented and the quality of provision ensured.

1. Definition

Key competences are defined as "those competences which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion, a sustainable lifestyle, a successful life in peaceful societies, health-conscious living and active citizenship" (European Council 2018: C 189/7).

In the higher education context, transferable skills refer to combinations of skills and abilities, attitudes and dispositions, as well as bodies of knowledge and understanding which — depending on the discipline — are considered particularly important for successful action in various areas of academic life (study and professional contexts).

Key competences foster critical thinking and enable appropriate, responsible, reflective and empathetic action in order to address diverse academic, professional, personal and societal tasks and challenges in ways suited to the situation and the target audience.

They therefore form an essential component of personal development as well as of successful academic progression and entry into professional life. They provide the foundation for adaptability in a changing world and for ongoing personal and professional development in the spirit of lifelong learning. [1]

2. Objectives

The University of Göttingen's provision of transferable skills is designed to enable learners to better understand and respond to challenges, deriving appropriate actions for their successful resolution.

Through the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills, abilities and attitudes, learners are enabled to develop or further develop the transferable skills required for personal development, social coexistence, academic study, professional activity and scientific work. Particular importance is attached to societal and digital transformation, climate change, democratic development, the effects of globalisation and changes in the labour market.

The University of Göttingen sees it as its mission to educate future researchers and other specialists and leaders who take on an actively shaping, critically informed role in society and professional life, assume responsibility and contribute to further progress.

[1] Cf. Orth, H. (1999): *Schlüsselqualifikationen an deutschen Hochschulen. Konzepte, Standpunkte und Perspektiven*. Neuwied, S. 107.
Cf. Rat der Europäischen Union (2018): *Empfehlung des Rates vom 22. Mai 2018 zu Schlüsselkompetenzen für lebenslanges Lernen* (einschließlich des Anhangs ‚*Schlüsselkompetenzen für Lebenslanges Lernen – Ein europäischer Referenzrahmen*'), Brüssel.
Cf. Gesellschaft für Schlüsselkompetenzen in Lehre, Forschung und Praxis e.V. (2020): *Positionspapier „Schlüsselkompetenzen – ein Muss akademischer Bildung".*

3. Implementation

The development of the University of Göttingen's transferable skills concept is based on the European Union's reference framework "Transferable Skills for Lifelong Learning"[2], the Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education Degrees[3], and the Stifterverband Future Skills Framework[4]. In addition, the concept aligns with the core principles of the University's Mission Statement for Teaching and Learning[5]. It therefore reflects the University's mission statement, national frameworks and European Union recommendations.

As a result, particular emphasis is placed on the following guiding principles described in the University's mission statement, with the aim of enabling students to act independently and critically:

1. Research orientation
2. Diversity orientation
3. Internationalisation
4. Digitalisation
5. Sustainability
6. Responsibility and civic engagement

Based on these principles and in reference to the mentioned competence frameworks and models, the University derives the following competence areas for its transferable skills concept:

a. Career Orientation and Employability Competences
b. Digital Competences (including AI Competences)
c. Diversity Competences; Cultural and Intercultural Competences
d. Competences for Shaping Sustainable Development
e. Learning Competences; Study and Research Competences
f. Mathematical and Scientific Competences
g. Civic and Democratic Competences
h. Self-Management Competences; Social Competences
i. Language Competences; Communication Competences
j. Teaching and Training Competences
k. Entrepreneurial Competences
l. Further Transferable Skills

Definitions of the individual competence areas are provided in the appendix.

The category "further transferable skills" may, in exceptional cases, include modules that meet the definition in Chapter 1 but do not fit optimally within the listed categories.

Modules not included in the approved university-wide transferable skills offer may also be recognised as transferable skill modules upon application; decisions are taken by the examination board.

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[2] Empfehlung des Rates vom 22. Mai 2018 zu Schlüsselkompetenzen für lebenslanges Lernen (Text von Bedeutung für den EWR) (2018/C 189/01), Amtsblatt der Europäischen Union.
[3] Kultusministerkonferenz (2017): *Qualifikationsrahmen für deutsche Hochschulabschlüsse (im Zusammenwirken von Hochschulrektorenkonferenz und Kultusministerkonferenz und in Abstimmung mit Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung erarbeitet und von der Kultusministerkonferenz am 16.02.2017 beschlossen)*.
[4] Stifterverband für die deutsche Wissenschaft e.V. (2018): *Das Future-Skills-Framework*.
[5] Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (2017): *Mission Statement for Teaching and Learning*.

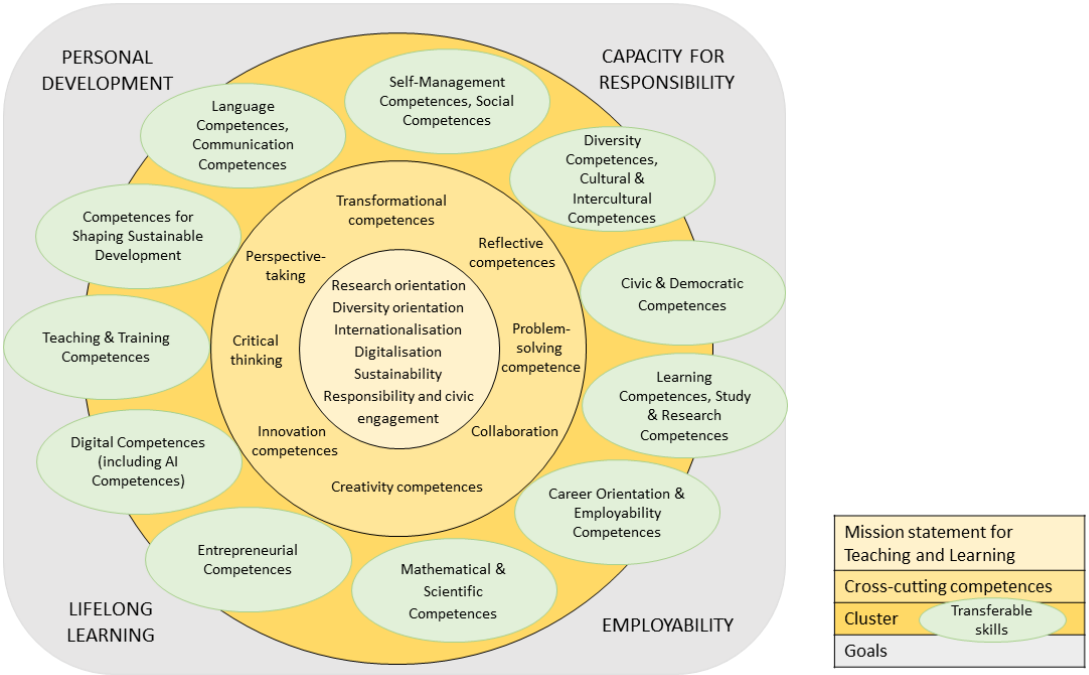

Fig. 1: Transferable Skill Framework of the University of Göttingen

At the centre of the framework are the guiding principles of university teaching. The middle ring describes cross-cutting competences addressing future skills, while the outer ring presents the concrete competence areas. These areas reflect the diversity of demands placed upon students in order to operate successfully in a complex and globalised world.

A university-wide transferable skills provision based on this framework forms the binding foundation for curricular integration within degree programmes.

3.1 Integration into Degree Programmes

Key competences are generally embedded in study and examination regulations as follows:

- Bachelor's programmes: 18 credits
- Master's programmes: 12 credits
- Doctoral programmes: varying proportions depending on programme and graduate school

From the university-wide offer, students should be able to freely choose:

- at least 12 credits in Bachelor's programmes,
- at least 6 credits in Master's programmes.

3.2 Provision by Institutions

Key competences provision is primarily offered by faculties, central institutions (ZESS, ZEWIL, ZESG) and graduate schools. The Göttingen model is therefore based on three pillars:

- discipline- or faculty-specific offers

- interdisciplinary offers across faculties or programmes
- offers by central institutions

This model enables students to take courses both within their discipline and across disciplines.[6] Faculties and central institutions also collaborate with organisations within the Göttingen Campus, with partners in society and industry, and with other national and international universities to develop joint offers.

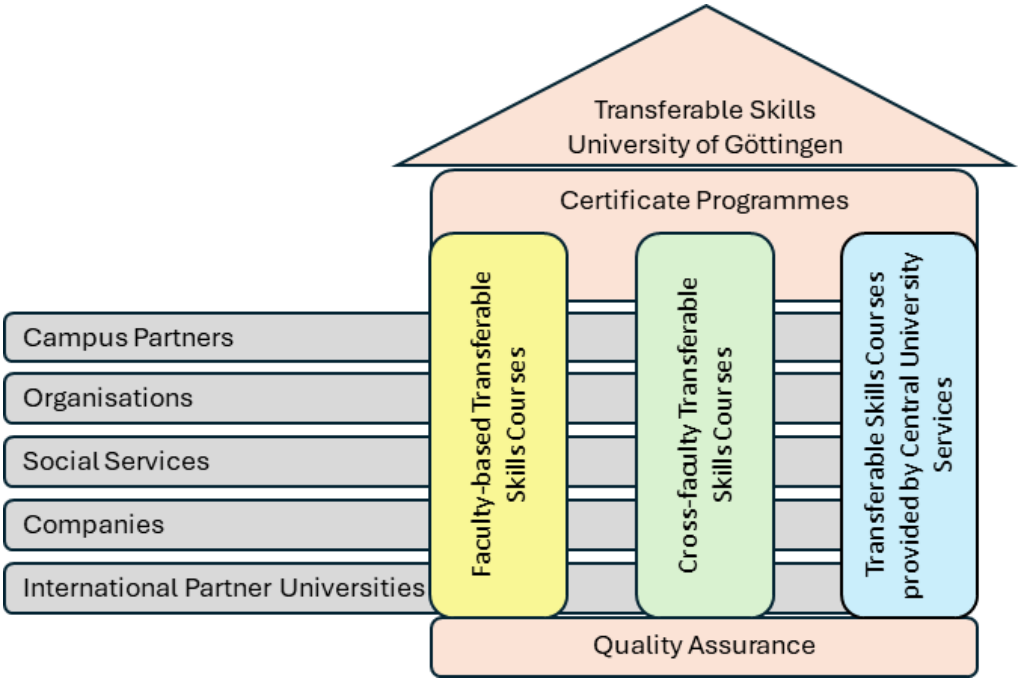

Fig. 2: Three-pillar model including partners

In the medium to long term, each faculty and ZESS should offer at least 20% of their transferable skill modules in English and at least 20% in German per academic year, excluding language competence provision.

3.3 University-wide Transferable Skills Offer

The university-wide provision is presented in the course catalogue according to competence areas, with corresponding definitions attached. Depending on reported offerings, the Department of Academic Affairs may create suitable substructures. Modules may address several competence areas but are assigned to a maximum of three.

Faculties and central institutions report additions and deletions of modules to the Department of Academic Affairs, which defines a binding reporting procedure. In cases of disagreement, the Central Senate Commission for Teaching and Studies decides.

3.4 Additive and Integrative Acquisition

Key competences may be acquired through modules primarily dedicated to their development (additive) or integrated into subject-specific modules (e.g. presentation skills or teamwork within

[6] Furthermore, irrespective of credit allocation, transferable skills should also be further developed within subject-specific courses from the perspective of the respective discipline.

disciplinary seminars). Accordingly, module descriptions may specify workload portions devoted to integrative competence development[7], with learning objectives and assessment aligned accordingly.

3.5 Certificate Programmes

To enable focused competence profiles, modules may be combined into certificate programmes in accordance with university guidelines. These programmes support structured competence development and make acquired competences visible to the labour market, providing qualifications beyond purely disciplinary knowledge.

4. Quality Assurance

Key competence provision is subject to the same quality standards and processes as all teaching provision. Quality circles within teaching and learning also address transferable skills.

Further details are set out in regulations governing quality management and teaching evaluation. Central institutions without study commissions establish advisory boards and conduct regular external evaluations.

At least every six years, the Central Senate Commission for Teaching and Learning conducts a comprehensive review of the provision based on faculty and institutional statements, evaluation data, graduate surveys and usage statistics. A report is submitted to the Senate, and further development measures are proposed where necessary.

5. Outlook

The transferable skills offer is characterised by continuous development to support learners in acquiring future-oriented competences. It contributes decisively to the graduate profile described in the University's teaching and learning mission statement and enhances both the University's profile and Göttingen's attractiveness as a study location, in line with the University's motto: **"for the benefit of all."**

The concept must be implemented in all degree programmes by the next regulatory amendment, or at the latest within two years.

[7] Where transferable skills are delivered in an integrated format, the credits awarded for the subject-specific components are supplemented by additional credits for the transferable skills taught.

Appendix: Definitions of Competence Areas

Career Orientation and Employability Competences

prepare students for entry into professional life both within and outside academia, as well as for self-directed career management. This includes the ability and willingness to analyse one's own competences, characteristics and motivations (potential analysis) and, based on these insights, to define professional and personal goals and to develop and refine one's professional profile. It also includes professional competences such as the purposeful application of scientific methods, network building, the transfer of occupation-specific knowledge, self-presentation, and the acquisition and reflection of relevant practical experience.

Digital Competences (including AI competences)

enable individuals to respond to current and future digital needs and challenges in study, professional contexts, societal participation and research. This includes the competence to reflect upon and evaluate digitally available content, methods, tools and technologies, and to select and apply them safely and appropriately in the reception, processing and production of content as well as in communication, collaboration and the handling of complex problems, while also taking relevant security aspects into account. Digital competences also include AI literacy, enabling individuals to understand fundamental principles of artificial intelligence, to apply AI-based technologies effectively and critically, and to assess their societal, ethical and economic implications.

Diversity, Cultural and Intercultural Competences

Diversity competences enable individuals to engage with personal and societal diversity in an appreciative, non-prejudicial, self-reflective and power-critical manner and to communicate accordingly, addressing mechanisms of exclusion such as sexism, racism and antisemitism. They also enable recognition, reflection and development of the potential of diversity in study contexts, scientific work and communication, professional environments and social interaction. Furthermore, they contribute to developing organisational and corporate cultures that promote diversity and critically reflect on discrimination. Theoretical, empirical, methodological and reflective knowledge of societal diversity is incorporated and applied, with results and insights continuously subjected to critical reflection.

Cultural and intercultural competences enable interaction with discourse partners from different or partly similar cultural groups in such a way that a continuous process of mutual understanding emerges through reflection on one's own cultural patterns and behaviours, while recognising and actively seeking cultural diversity. Intercultural competences comprise a set of cognitive, emotional and practical abilities including self-reflection, empathy, perspective-taking, tolerance of ambiguity, general and culture-specific knowledge, and communication skills, enabling effective action in a wide range of cultural contexts.

Competences for Shaping Sustainable Development

enable an open-minded and responsible attitude aimed at implementing sustainable development in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals[8] and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research's concept of Education for Sustainable Development[9]. This includes, among

[8] Cf. United Nations (2015): *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.
[9] Cf. Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (2017): *Gemeinsam für unsere Zukunft. Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung*.

other things, the ability to integrate and reflect upon new perspectives and to analyse, contextualise and interlink interdisciplinary insights that may involve uncertainty. This allows potentials, risks and dangers to be recognised and assessed, enabling cooperative and participatory development and implementation of action strategies oriented towards future-proof, intergenerational and socially just use of resources, taking goal conflicts into account.

Learning and Study and Research Competences (including competences in the use of scientific methods)

Learning competences enable individuals to independently, effectively and reflectively acquire, apply and further develop new knowledge and skills. They encompass methods, strategies and attitudes that enable active organisation of learning processes and optimisation of individual learning progress. Learning competences are crucial for lifelong learning and adaptability in a constantly changing world.
Study competences enable academic learning, scientific work and responsible use of scientific methods, as well as the organisation, reception and production of scientific knowledge. They also include the development of a scientific, research-oriented attitude grounded in academic values and norms, enabling the handling of complex ethical challenges in research and later professional contexts.

Mathematical and Scientific Competences

"**Mathematical competence** is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking and understanding in order to solve problems in everyday situations. Starting from sound numeracy skills, the emphasis lies both on processes and activity as well as on knowledge. Mathematical competence involves — to varying degrees — the ability and willingness to use mathematical modes of thought and representations (formulae, models, constructions, curves, tables).
Scientific competence is the ability and willingness to explain the natural world by using existing knowledge and established methods — including observation and experimentation — in order to pose questions and draw evidence-based conclusions. Competence in technology and computing involves the application of this knowledge and these methods in order to respond to identified human needs or desires. Competences in science, computing and technology presuppose understanding of changes caused by human activity and a sense of responsibility as a citizen." (European Council 2018: C 189/9)

Civic and Democratic Competences

enable individuals to participate actively in democratic processes and to act responsibly. They include knowledge and critical understanding of the world, helping individuals to understand political decisions, form informed opinions and recognise their own role in society. They also promote critical thinking, the analysis of information and the ability to deal with manipulation. Competences supporting a democratic culture also strengthen the ability to respect other perspectives and assume responsibility for the common good.

Self-Management and Social Competences

Self-Management competences enable individuals to recognise and evaluate their own and others' actions and potentials for action and, based on this, to act independently and responsibly. This includes reflecting upon one's own person and actions as well as those of others and meaningfully relating them to one another. Furthermore, one's own personality and capacity for action, embedded within and capable of shaping social structures, are reflected upon and further developed.
Social competences enable individuals to act appropriately in relationships with other people (and other living beings). This includes orienting one's own actions from an individual towards a collective

orientation and, where appropriate, towards societal needs in order to establish, shape and maintain social relationships, including through mediation and conflict resolution.

Language and Communication Competences

Language competences enable the reception, production, interaction and mediation of subject-related content and personal needs in one or more languages[10], including in multilingual contexts. Foreign-language competences in the context of study, research and professional activity involve the ability to act linguistically, non-verbally and paraverbally in ways appropriate to persons, situations and contexts, and in interculturally and culturally appropriate ways, taking into account one's own expectations, those of diverse target groups and relevant socio-cultural conditions.

Communication competences enable individuals to act linguistically, non-verbally and paraverbally in ways appropriate to situations, target groups and contexts so that mutual understanding, clarification and negotiation among discourse partners become possible. Communication competences include multimodal (oral and written) discourse relating to the production, reception, interaction and mediation of linguistic and visual content.

Training and Teaching Competences

enable the design, implementation and evaluation of goal-oriented and participant-centred training and teaching settings in various contexts. They include, among other things, didactic and methodological foundations, knowledge of learning and teaching theories as well as competence- and action-oriented approaches, the ability to apply these approaches, and the capacity to reflect on one's own teaching stance in relation to target groups and intended objectives.

Entrepreneurial Competences

enable individuals to think and act economically and strategically and to develop, initiate and shape entrepreneurial change. This includes recognising, evaluating and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities, as well as the competence to develop innovations and derive business models from product and service ideas.

[10] This also includes sign languages.