

Factsheet on disadvantage compensation – information for students

The FHNW School of Business offers information and assistance on barrier-free studying for students with disabilities. In doing so, it is guided by legal requirements, the goal of equal opportunities, and the general academic requirements of the course. Students with disabilities can apply to the FHNW School of Business for adaptation measures to compensate for disability-related disadvantages. Disadvantage compensation of this nature does not ease the academic requirements, but it does allow for an equivalent proof of ability to be provided in an adapted form.

The legal foundations are Article 8 of the Federal Constitution, and the Federal Disability Discrimination Act BehiG, which stipulate the equal participation of people with disabilities in initial and continuing education and training. The FHNW's factsheet on disadvantage compensation of 26.2.2019 also applies.

A Disadvantage compensation

Prerequisites and validity

For disadvantage compensation to be considered, a medical certificate is required typically containing a diagnosis, an assessment of how the disability might impact the studies, and a prognosis.

Disadvantage compensation must be applied for in advance. Wherever possible, it is made available for the entire duration of the studies. The student is required to notify the School of any changes regarding his or her disability. The decision can be reviewed if it transpires that the adjustments are insufficient or no longer necessary.

Request for disadvantage compensation

1. Students contact the offices of the programme heads during the application period to find out whether disadvantage compensation is available and what the requirements are. The offices respond to the enquiries, request additional information if necessary and forward them to the relevant programme heads.
2. The programme heads, or persons appointed by them, contact the applicants and arrange an appointment for an initial interview. This interview covers:
 - Information on the study and professional requirements.
 - Clarification of requirements and individual resources.
 - Potential availability of disadvantage compensation.
3. If the need for disadvantage compensation is confirmed during the interview, the applicant is asked to submit the necessary documents.
4. The programme heads' assistants scrutinise the documents and, if necessary and in consultation with the applicant, obtain further information from relevant specialists.
5. A second interview is conducted to discuss possible concrete measures in respect of disadvantage compensation. The applicant is thereafter asked to submit a formal application for disadvantage compensation, listing the desired measures.
6. The programme heads scrutinise the applications for disadvantage compensation and decide on their merit. In the event of a rejection, the applicant may ask the head of education to review the decision. An acceptance, in the form of a learning agreement, sets out the principles of the modalities governing the disadvantage compensation for the person concerned. This is filed in the student's dossier.

B Communication after a positive decision

Information for the lecturers

- a) After obtaining the written consent of the person concerned, the programme heads inform the lecturers of the decision on a semesterly basis and set out the binding measures and nature of the disadvantage compensation.
- b) If no written consent is obtained, it remains the responsibility of the person concerned to inform the lecturers in a timely manner.

Information for the class

Furthermore, the person concerned can decide with the programme head whether the class should be informed about the nature of the disability and the disadvantage compensation. The programme head notifies the lecturers of the decision.

C Implementation

The implementation of the disadvantage compensation is the responsibility of the relevant lecturers in consultation with the module coordinators and programme heads. Changes to the way the course is delivered in response to the disadvantage compensation can be agreed between the person concerned and the lecturers. Approval from the programme head must be sought prior to any disadvantage compensation in relation to assessments, e.g. exams.

D Aids and assistance

Students with disabilities may use disability-specific technical aids for their studies. They may also be helped by personal assistants. Typically, the cost for this is borne by the School. Furthermore, in consultation with the lecturers, students can demand that the teaching be barrier-free, e.g. that certain tools and services be used so that absence due to a disability need not be justified, or that certain modules be held in places that are accessible for students with disabilities. The programme heads are required to consult on whether these measures apply for the entire duration of the course or on a semesterly basis.

All processes are subject to data protection requirements.

Determined by Markus Freiburghaus, Head of Education FHNW School of Business on 04.07.2019

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