



A higher orientation towards the common good

Today, in design it is more urgent than ever to take into view the common good. This is why the iF Design Foundation conducted a study on *Design Education in Germany 2023* to determine the "public value" of courses of design study at German universities. Attached to the study is a list of all design study courses. Read an excerpt:

Executive Summary: Key Statements of the Public Value Study

Following on from its international study on the future of design education published in 2021 ("White Book Designing Design Education"), in 2022 the iF Design Foundation, a nonprofit educational foundation, posed the question, in cooperation with the Leipzig Graduate School of Management, of how the orientation towards the common good in design studies is implemented at German universities and what public value is attributed to it.

While it is obvious to refer to holistic approaches of the 20th century (from the Deutscher Werkbund to the Bauhaus, the Gute Form, and the HfG Ulm) in the study of design, design has not yet formulated a conclusive answer to the manifold social crises and comprehensive challenges of the 21st century.

The nationwide survey in April and May 2022 reached members of 2/3 of all German universities where design can be studied. 438 people (students, faculty, alumni) from 70 universities (out of a total of 108) participated. The survey

included the complete, heterogeneous range of widely varying study programs (design of messages, things, and systems).

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The general opinion is clear: There is a lot of room for improvement. At the same time, the overall picture yields a high rating of the public value of design studies. This is confirmed by a look at the GemeinwohlAtlas Deutschland (www.gemeinwohlatlas.de), which – despite all the methodological difficulties of a direct comparison – can be used as a benchmark.

82 % of the respondents would like to see more attention paid to the social impact (public value) of design in their studies. It can be stated that teachers assess the situation somewhat less dramatically.

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A noteworthy point is that for more than half of the respondents, recommending their course of study to others depends on the question of whether or not social issues in design are made the subject of the course.

Almost half of the respondents believe that their studies place little or no emphasis on resource aspects in design. This includes the sustainable use of resources as well as recycling and upcycling practices. Only 35 out of 100 respondents feel that there is value placed on teaching circular

economy practices in their studies, while 69 out of 100 respondents are of the opinion that no or hardly any value is placed on the topic of climate neutrality in design studies.

55.6 % of the respondents are of the opinion that no or only little value is placed on addressing social conflicts in their studies. Disillusionment also sets in when it comes to questions about the impact of design on democracy and civil society: Only 29 out of 100 respondents believe that the role of design in strengthening or weakening democracy is addressed in their curricula.

In order to capture the public value of an organisation, several dimensions are queried. If we look at these details, significant differences emerge in the present study, for example, in the students' evaluation. From their perspective, task fulfillment receives a high rating (4.66 on a scale of 1 to 6), while the dimension of cohesion is rated significantly lower by them (3.89).

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This study is the first of its kind for design studies in Germany. It cannot yet claim to be representative in terms of its informative value, but some substantial trends are already emerging as a result.

iF Design Foundation



Design Education in Germany 2023 – Contribution to public value

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Today, it seems more urgent than ever to focus more attention in design on the common good. This is because we are faced with the consequences of a design methodology that is geared towards the good of individuals wherever we look. The concept of public value seems ideal as a way of focusing design education more strongly on the common good: "Public value is what the public values." It provides an alternative to one-sided orientations such as the shareholder value paradigm.

The iF Design Foundation 2022 has carried out the present study in order to determine the public value of design study programs at German universities.

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This study provides a basis for encouraging and realising a form of design education in Germany geared towards the common good. The publication also contains a list of all design courses of study at German universities.

The iF Design Foundation is an educational foundation based in Hanover, Germany. It is committed to the common good and focuses on academic research and education in the context of design.