

The Rectorate's Guidelines on the Use of Synchronous Communication Platforms (Microsoft Teams/365, alfaview and Zoom) at Nuertingen-Geislingen University

Passed by the Rectorate on 23 September 2020

Preamble

Microsoft Teams/365, alfaview and Zoom are communication platforms which are used to complement and augment the university's existing infrastructure and which provide new tools to the members of the university for the purpose of communication and teaching. These applications are intended to be used as platforms for synchronous communication during courses and, through virtual rooms, as a means of cooperation. Teaching and communicating through these platforms is meant to complement face-to-face courses and to help the university fulfill its educational mandate as laid down in the statutory provisions.

In our guidelines we would like to outline how to use these communication platforms (Microsoft Teams/365, alfaview and Zoom) in a prudent manner and especially how to avoid directly or indirectly monitoring and controlling students and participants any more than during face-to-face courses. The use of a particular platform must not be determined by the amount of information on students or participants that is gathered or could be gathered.

Our guidelines are intended to protect the users' right to privacy and to ensure data protection compliance when using these communication platforms.

Hereinafter, the term 'participants' is to include members of the university and any external participants who take part in a course at the university.

Audio and Video Recording

The university has deactivated the option to audio or video record online courses and meetings. It is self-evident, therefore, that audio, image or video recordings with a different software or other devices (smartphone, camera etc.) are also prohibited.

Display of Chat Messages and Participants

In Zoom and alfaview, chat messages and participants are not displayed anymore once the online meeting is finished. In MS Teams/365, depending on how you invited participants to a meeting, it is possible to save individual meetings: the invitation text, the length of the meeting, who was invited, who participated and the messages that were sent will remain visible in that case. Chat messages and channel messages (in the case of teams you created yourself) and the list of participants are automatically deleted after 14 days. You are not allowed to analyze this user information in MS Teams/365 after the meeting is finished, for example in order to establish who was present or the frequency and quality of the participants' contributions.

Group Work Spaces

If you use group work spaces or so-called 'break-out rooms', please inform your participants beforehand if you can enter them as well and thus get access to the chat history. Do not give an impression of privacy that doesn't exist.

File Storage

You may not use the platform's file storage functions if the files contain personal or protected data (e.g. participant lists, assignments, course work, PowerPoint presentations including names, base maps, literature excerpts etc.). When uploading data, you must adhere to copyright laws. If you want to upload data that contain personal information or protected data, you will have to continue

to do this on HfWU-neo, which is a password-protected platform. You may also not store any data which require a high degree of protection or which are highly confidential (e.g. confidential research agreements).

Meeting Invite Links

If possible, the meeting invite links you have created should be sent directly to the participants. If you post meeting invite links, you risk so-called “zoombombing” - which means intruders hijack a meeting in order to spread illegal material or opinions. If you want to post a meeting invite link, you have to set up the meeting in such a way that participants cannot activate their camera and cannot share their screens. You should always set up a meeting in this way if participants who are not members of the university take part - even if they have to first register for the event.

The Right to be Informed

Regardless of whether the invite was posted or sent by email, participants have to be informed about how their personal data are processed before they click on the link. If you send or post a link you have generated, you must embed the following information in the link:

“Data Protection Notice - Zoom”, Data Protection Notice - alfaview” or “Data Protection Notice - MS Teams” and link it with the relevant PDF file on our web server.

https://www.hfwu.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Datenschutz/Data_Protection_Notice_Zoom.pdf

https://www.hfwu.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Datenschutz/Data_Protection_Notice_alfaview.pdf

https://www.hfwu.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Datenschutz/Data_Protection_Notice_MSTeams.pdf

If you invite participants directly from MS Teams to join a course, you do not need to embed this link. The legal information is already contained in the system and linked up. If you invite students directly from Zoom to join a lecture (Zoom itself sends out the invite), you cannot and need not send out an additional link. Students are informed at the beginning of the semester by the university administration about how their personal data are processed.

Backup and Archiving

All users are responsible for backing up and archiving the material they have uploaded (i.e. data is not automatically backed up). Please note that the chat history in MS Teams will be automatically deleted in MS Teams once these guidelines have come into effect.

Deleting Teams in MS Teams

If you set up a team in MS Teams yourself for the purpose of teaching a course online during a semester, you will also have to delete this team yourself at the end of the semester.

Private Use and Netiquette

Using the software and services for private purposes is excluded as per the license agreement. We would also like to ask you to please observe netiquette rules.

Commencement

These guidelines will come into effect on 05 October 2020.

Nuertingen, 23 September 2020



Prof. Dr. Andreas Frey, Rector

Please note: The English translation serves informational purposes only. Only the German text published in the Rector’s Office is binding. In the event of any conflict between the English and German text, its structure, meaning or interpretation, the German text, its structure, meaning or interpretation shall prevail.