

HCU Cultural Code

HafenCity University Hamburg (HCU) is dedicated to research, teaching, and knowledge transfer in the fields of architecture, civil engineering, urban planning, and metropolitan development. Through our academic and institutional activities, we contribute to sustainable development and to shaping a socially responsible and equitable future. All members of HCU – including faculty, staff, and students – are committed to maintaining a respectful, inclusive, and socially engaged environment. Through personal initiative and active participation, we promote a positive, dialogue-driven, and interdisciplinary culture at our university.

Principles of Cooperation and Organizational Culture

HCU is guided by the principles of mutual respect, trust, and integrity. We cultivate a working and learning environment grounded in fairness, appreciation, and personal interaction. Communication across all status groups, departments, and faculties is conducted in a clear, responsible, and transparent manner. We ensure that diverse perspectives can be expressed.

Decision-making processes, responsibilities, and institutional procedures are designed to be comprehensible and accessible. We are committed to a culture of openness and trust in which everyone is encouraged to share their ideas and opinions.

Solution-oriented cooperation between research, teaching, administration, and with students forms the foundation of our institutional practice. We encourage and value accountability and excellence, where both personal and collective achievements are recognized. Constructive feedback, critical reflection, and the ability to learn from experience are integral to our organizational culture.

Teaching, Research, and Knowledge Transfer

HCU's academic work is grounded in current, international research. We continuously advance our research and integrate our findings into teaching, institutional practice, and external knowledge transfer. By incorporating new developments, we ensure that our teaching remains research-oriented and fosters independent, critical, and interdisciplinary thinking. Academic integrity, transparency, and the accessibility of research results are fundamental principles of our work.

We view the physical proximity within our university and our shared focus on the built environment as opportunities for collaboration, innovation, and exchange.

Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Communication

HCU recognizes diversity as a fundamental institutional value. We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment in which all members of the university community are treated with dignity and respect. We actively work to remove structural and social barriers and to ensure equal participation in academic and administrative bodies, decision-making processes, and institutional structures.

We strive to ensure accessible and linguistically clear information and communication. This includes making contact points visible and ensuring that key information is available in multiple languages and communicated effectively. Where linguistic or communicative ambiguities arise, we respond with patience, respect, and support.

Problem-Solving and Anti-Discrimination

HCU promotes a respectful, fair, and equitable culture. Discrimination based on origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual identity, language, or any other personal characteristics is not tolerated. We address power imbalances and dependencies with particular care and responsibility.

The university provides transparent contact persons, clearly defined forms of communication, and, where necessary, formal procedures for addressing conflicts, discrimination, and boundary violations. These include clearly defined reporting channels, individual responsibilities, and courses of action in case of transgressions. We promote openness and spaces where sensitive issues are confidentially discussed.

Sustainability

HCU is a public university with an explicit focus on climate, digitalization and social justice. We recognize our responsibility as a role model within the academic community and beyond, particularly towards our district HafenCity, and the City of Hamburg.

We understand sustainability holistically, extending beyond ecological responsibility to encompass harmonious social coexistence and the mindful stewardship of resources – spanning spatial, financial, emotional, and temporal capacities.

Sustainability is integral to our academic disciplines and is reflected in teaching, research, studies, and everyday work. It is a core element of our shared institutional identity. As a university, we are committed to continuously developing resource-efficient responsible practices.