

Agenda for the Welcome Weeks at the German University of Digital Science

OBJECTIVES:

- Familiarize participants with the university's mission, key staff, academic culture, and teaching areas.
 - Facilitate networking and team-building among students in a Design Thinking-inspired format.
 - Provide an introduction to the learning platform and tools.
 - Establish support systems and communication channels for technical and academic topics.
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Day 1: Welcome to German UDS (Tuesday, April 1, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Opening Ceremony**
Introduction by the University Presidents. Overview of the university's mission, vision, and values. Sharing of the agenda and outlook.
Hosts: Prof. Ch. Meinel and Prof. M. Friedrichsen, Dr. J. v. Thienen
 - **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Meet the Faculty I**
Short presentations by professors highlighting their teaching areas and research interests.
Hosts: Prof. M. Friedrichsen, Prof. Ch. Meinel, Dr. T. Staubitz, Dr. J. v. Thienen, Dr. P. Najafi, Prof. L. Valle Garcilazo, Dr. M. Steinhoff
 - **14:00 - 16:00 CET | Platform Walkthrough**
Hands-on demo of the learning platform (e.g., LMS, tools for lectures, and assignments).
Hosts: Dr. T. Staubitz, M. v. Elten, K.-P. Borchart
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Day 2: IT Program and Study Overview (Wednesday, April 2, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Meet the Faculty II**
Short presentations by professors highlighting their teaching areas and research interests.
Hosts: Dr. S. Ney, Dr. G. Loscher, Dr. M. Bade, Dr. F. Weitkämper, Prof. R. Rojas, Prof. G. Schmidt, Dr. H. Traifeh
 - **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Orientation on Policies and Guidelines**
Academic integrity, grading system, and expected workload.
Hosts: Prof. Ch. Meinel and Prof. M. Friedrichsen, Dr. J. v. Thienen, Dr. T. Staubitz
 - **14:00 - 16:00 CET | Getting to Know the Peers**
Virtual networking and team-building activities.
Moderators: Dr. J. v. Thienen, Dr. Steven Ney, K.-P. Borchart
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Day 3: Campus Experiences and Contacts (Thursday, April 3, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Campus Life**
Introduction to the Research Centers, Student Services, and regular events such as conferences.
Hosts:
Prof. M. Friedrichsen – Advanced Virtual Environments
Prof. Ch. Meinel – Cybersecurity
Prof. R. Rojas – Artificial Intelligence
Dr. T. Staubitz – Learning Analytics and Digital Education
Prof. M. Friedrichsen – Digital Science
Dr. S. Ney – College for Design Thinking
Dr. M. Bade – College for Entrepreneurship
Dr. J. v. Thienen – Student Services and Regular Events
 - **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Tech Support & Contacts**
"What if something goes wrong": FAQs, support options, contacts.
Hosts: Dr. T. Staubitz, Dr. J. Renz, M. v. Elten, N. Yahya, R. Hewage
 - **14:00 - 16:00 CET | Community Mentoring Sessions**
Students meet with UDS staff from working students over researchers to ask about cultural and professional experiences at UDS and in the IT sector.
Hosts: Dr. J. v. Thienen, Dr. P. Najafi, Dr. J. Renz, M. van Elten, A. Berg, K.-P. Borchart, T. Strauch, P. Steigerwald, M. Manaswini, P. Das, M. Bevoor, N. Naveen, S. Tockan, L. Mehrling, N. Yahya, R. Hewage
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Day 4: Design Thinking Exploration (Friday, April 4, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Introduction to Design Thinking**
Overview of the approach, research findings, and applications in digital transformation.
Hosts: Dr. J. v. Thienen, Dr. S. Ney
 - **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Gift-Giving Exercise / Design Dash**
Applying design thinking with peers to reimagine the gift-giving experience for your remote team partner.
Moderators: Dr. S. Ney, Dr. J. v. Thienen
 - **14:00 - 16:00 CET | Team Challenge: Empathy Mapping**
Groups create empathy maps to better understand their peers' needs and expectations regarding the study subject, the online learning format, and interaction experiences.
Moderators: Dr. S. Ney, Dr. J. v. Thienen, K.-P. Borchart
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Day 5: Design Thinking "Online Learning Experiences" (Monday, April 7, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Ideation Session**
Groups brainstorm creative solutions for improving online learning experiences.
Moderators: Dr. S. Ney, Dr. J. v. Thienen, K.-P. Borchart
- **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Testing Session**
Groups build rapid prototypes for improved online learning (at least 3 different options per team), test these approaches with other teams and synthesize learnings.
Moderators: Dr. J. v. Thienen, Dr. S. Ney, K.-P. Borchart

- **14:00 - 16:00 CET | Prototype Presentation**
Teams create one or two new prototypes based on the insights gained from testing, and hold a final presentation covering their mission, prototypes, insights, and final solutions.
Moderators: Dr. S. Ney, Dr. J. v. Thienen, K.-P. Borchart
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Day 6: Peer-to-Peer Learning (Tuesday, April 8, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Knowledge Sharing Preparation**
Students prepare pitches or mini-workshops on their favourite tech tools, coding practices, or IT hacks.
Moderators: K.-P. Borchart, Dr. J. v. Thienen, Dr. S. Ney
 - **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Peer-to-Peer Knowledge Sharing Sessions**
Students present their favourite tech tools, coding practices, or IT hacks.
Moderators: Dr. S. Ney, Dr. J. v. Thienen, K.-P. Borchart
 - **14:00 - 16:00 CET | Case Study Discussions**
Analyzing real-world IT challenges in small groups, touching upon technical, ethical and design considerations.
Moderator: Dr. J. v. Thienen
Hosts:
Dr. G. Loscher – Case Study I
Dr. M. Bade – Case Study II
Dr. P. Najafi – Case Study III
Dr. M. Steinhoff – Case Study IV
Dr. F. Weitkämper – Case Study V (Epidemiological modelling)
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Day 7: Social & Fast-Forward Day (Wednesday, April 9, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Mindfulness for Online Learning**
Research on advantages and potential challenges in online learning, workshop on managing screen time, self-monitoring, and workload management.
Host: Dr. J. v. Thienen
- **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Platform Troubleshooting Scenarios**
Practice troubleshooting simulated technical issues.
Hosts: Dr. J. Renz, Dr. T. Staubitz, M. v. Elten, K.-P. Borchart, N. Yahya, R. Hewage, P. Das
- **14:00 - 16:00 CET | Student Clubs Fair**
Explore interest-based groups and extracurricular opportunities.
Hosts: Dr. J. v. Thienen, Dr. S. Ney, M. Manaswini,

Day 8: Career & Development (Thursday, April 10, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Career Services Introduction**
Overview of career planning resources, potential internships, and industry connections.
Hosts: Prof. M. Friedrichsen and Prof. Ch. Meinel



- **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Skill-Building Sessions**
Boost your skills in technical writing, LinkedIn optimization, or other areas of your choice.
Hosts:
Dr. G. Loscher – Skill-Building I
Dr. M. Bade – Skill-Building II
Dr. J. v. Thienen – Writing with Impact: Mastering Academic Style
A. Berg – Smart & Sleek: Pro Tips for Website Design
N. Naveen – Social Media Success: Optimization Hacks that Work
S. Tockan – Picture Perfect: Professional Photography Tips
T. Strauch & P. Steigerwald – Sound Matters: Audio in Remote Interaction
 - **14:00 - 16:00 CET | Guest Lecture**
Industry expert shares insights on innovation in IT.
Moderator: Prof. M. Friedrichsen; Guest Speaker: Dr. Gero Decker(?)
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Day 9: Reflect & Celebrate (Friday, April 11, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Group Reflection, I-wish-I-like**
Reflecting on the orientation experience and gathering ideas for the future.
Hosts: Dr. J. v. Thienen and Dr. S. Ney
- **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Recognition Ceremony**
Festive inauguration session, celebrating your successful application, admission, enrollment, and study commencement. Recap of highlights from the orientation weeks. Awarding of your Digital Education Essentials Badge.
Hosts: Prof. Ch. Meinel and Prof. M. Friedrichsen
- **13:00 CET + | Closing Social**
Informal networking and group activities to build lasting connections.
Hosts: Dr. J. v. Thienen, Dr. S. Ney, Dr. J. Renz and K.-P. Borchart