

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.
-

Day 1: Welcome to German UDS (Tuesday, April 1, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Presidential Welcome – Opening Ceremony**
Introduction by the University Presidents. Overview of the university's mission, vision, and values. Sharing of the agenda and outlook.
Hosts: Mike Friedrichsen, Christoph Meinel
 - **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Meet the Faculty I**
Short presentations by professors highlighting their teaching areas and research interests.
Hosts: Mike Friedrichsen, Thomas Staubitz, Pejman Najafi, Lorenzo Valle Garcilazo, Julia von Thienen
 - **14:00 - 16:00 CET | Platform Walkthrough**
Hands-on demo of the learning platform (e.g., LMS, tools for lectures, and assignments).
Hosts: Thomas Staubitz, Martin van Elten, Kim-Pascal Borchart
-

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: Steven Ney, Marco Bade, Felix Weitkämper, Günter Schmidt, Maurice Steinhoff, Georg Loscher
- **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Orientation on Policies and Guidelines**
Academic integrity, grading system, and expected workload.
Hosts: Mike Friedrichsen, Julia von Thienen, Thomas Staubitz
- **14:00 - 16:00 CET | Getting to Know the Peers**
Virtual networking and team-building activities.
Moderators: Julia von Thienen, Steven Ney, Kim-Pascal Borchart



Day 3: Design Thinking Exploration

(Thursday, April 3, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Introduction to Design Thinking**
Overview of the approach, research findings, and applications in digital transformation.
Hosts: Julia von Thienen, Steven Ney
 - **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Design Thinking Mottos**
Delving into a Design Thinking mindset, based on mottos for creativity, collaboration and innovation.
Moderators: Julia von Thienen, Steven Ney
 - **14:00 - 16:00 CET | Re-invent the Online Learning Experience**
In pairs, you'll navigate the full design thinking process, uncovering insights into your partner's learning experience. Through empathy, ideation, and prototyping, you'll craft innovative solutions tailored to their needs.
Moderators: Julia von Thienen, Steven Ney
-

Day 4: Campus Experiences and Contacts

(Friday, April 4, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Campus Life**
Introduction to the Research Centers, Student Services, and regular events such as conferences.
Hosts:
Mike Friedrichsen – Advanced Virtual Environments
Pejman Najafi – Cybersecurity
Felix Weitkämper – Artificial Intelligence
Thomas Staubitz – Learning Analytics and Digital Education
Mike Friedrichsen – Digital Science
Steven Ney – College for Design Thinking
Marco. Bade – College for Entrepreneurship
Julia von Thienen – Student Services and Regular Events
- **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Tech Support & Contacts**
"What if something goes wrong": FAQs, support options, contacts.
Hosts: Thomas Staubitz, Jan Renz, Narvil Yahya, Rasitha 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: Julia von Thienen, Pejman Najafi, Jan Renz, Anastasiia Berg, Kim-Pascal Borchart, Tim Strauch, Philipp Steigerwald, Manisha Manaswini, Partha Das, Manoj Bevoor, Susanne Tockan, Lisa Mehrling, Narvil Yahya, Rasitha Hewage

Day 5: Design Thinking “Online Learning Experiences”

(Monday, April 7, 2025)

- **11:00 - 13:00 CET | Design Thinking Team Challenge**
Teams conduct research and empathise to understand needs and pain points in online learning, building a unique problem view.
Moderators: Steven Ney, Julia von Thienen, Kim-Pascal Borchart
 - **14:00 - 16:00 CET | Ideation and Prototype Testing**
Teams generate solution ideas, then build and test prototypes to develop innovative online learning solutions.
Moderators: Steven Ney, Julia von Thienen, Kim-Pascal Borchart
-

Day 6: Peer-to-Peer Learning

(Tuesday, April 8, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Student Clubs Fair**
Explore interest-based groups and extracurricular opportunities.
Hosts: Julia von Thienen, Steven Ney, Manisha Manaswini
- **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Peer-to-Peer Knowledge Sharing Sessions**
Students present their favourite tech tools, coding practices, or IT hacks.
Moderators: Steven Ney, Julia von Thienen, Kim-Pascal 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: Julia von Thienen
Hosts:
Georg Loscher – Digital Transformation: Opportunity or Threat
Marco Bade – Reconceptualizing Entrepreneurship: Pathways to Negentropic Innovation
Pejman Najafi – Intelligent Security Operations: AI’s Role in Tomorrow’s Enterprises
Felix Weitkämper – Epidemiological Modelling

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: Julia von Thienen
 - **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Platform Troubleshooting Scenarios**
Practice troubleshooting simulated technical issues.
Hosts: Jan Renz, Thomas Staubitz, Kim-Pascal Borchart, Narvil Yahya, Rasitha Hewage, Partha Das
 - **14:00 - 16:00 CET | UDS Campus of Virtual Education**
Discover how the Campus of Virtual Education is redefining digital learning experiences.
Hosts: Philipp Steigerwald, Tim Strauch
-

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.
Host: Mike Friedrichsen
- **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Skill-Building Sessions**
Level up fast in expert-led workshops: Pick your focus!
Hosts:
Georg Loscher – Working with LLMs: Prompt Writing for Beginners
Marco Bade – Embracing the Venture Mindset
Anastasiia Berg – Smart & Sleek: Pro Tips for Website Design
Susanne Tockan – Picture Perfect: Professional Photography Tips
Tim Strauch & Philipp Steigerwald – Sound Matters: Audio in Remote Interaction
- **14:00 - 16:00 CET | Guest Lecture**
Industry expert shares insights on innovation in IT.
Moderator: Mike Friedrichsen

Day 9: Reflect & Celebrate
(Friday, April 11, 2025)

- **11:00 - 12:00 CET | Recognition Ceremony**
Festive inauguration session, celebrating your successful application, admission, enrollment, and study commencement. Recap of highlights from the Welcome Weeks. Awarding of your Digital Education Essentials Badge.
Hosts: Mike Friedrichsen, Christoph Meinel
- **12:00 - 13:00 CET | Group Reflection, I-wish-I-like**
Reflecting on the onboarding experience and gathering ideas for the future.
Hosts: Julia von Thienen, Steven Ney
- **13:00 CET + | Closing Social**
Informal networking to build lasting connections.
Hosts: Julia von Thienen, Steven Ney, Jan Renz, Kim-Pascal Borchart