

## Moving step-by-step towards an inclusive university

Germany – zhb DoBuS Dortmund Centre for disability and academic studies – Technische Universität Dortmund

### SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Starting in 1977 with a counselling service for students with disabilities and chronic diseases, the Technical University of Dortmund has continued to provide various services through its “DoBuS – disability and study” unit, as well as in other units of the university. One example is the library’s service to provide books for the blind and visually impaired. DoBuS supports students with disabilities to graduate successfully in spite of inadequate and sometimes even excluding conditions. Moreover, it implements structural changes based on the experiences gained in the counselling service with the aim of reducing as far as possible the extra work that students with disabilities have to master.

### QUOTE:

*“Studying with disabilities whatever you want and wherever you like under equal conditions!”*

—Ms. Birgit Rothenberg, Director, DoBuS

### FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2014, more than 300 students and 100 applicants with disability were counselled per semester.
- 21 persons with visual impairment used adapted work places and interpreters for written materials and exams, and computer literacy workshops were also provided
- A new and innovative project, Design for all, was developed for lecturers and tutors.

### PROBLEMS TARGETED

An increasing number of students attend lectures at universities, and at the same time, all students are encouraged to finish their studies in a short period of time. This kind of environment makes it difficult for students with disabilities to keep up with the regular curriculum. Therefore, when it comes to supporting students in Inclusive Education, an individualized approach is needed.

## SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

As a first step, the University's structural barriers had to be removed, and the building adapted in order to be accessible to everyone. Second, an equal study environment was implemented whereby a level of compensation was applied to all exams based on the principles of disability mainstreaming. Individualized services for persons with disabilities include support for applicants, students, and graduates; counselling and awareness-raising; and the training of lecturers on Inclusive Education. TU Dortmund established several new services for students with disabilities, such as adapting didactical materials for blind and partially sighted students and providing computer tools for technical assistance. Removing the various barriers to Inclusive Education at the university level is a process that constantly has to be improved according to technological progress and the content of the studies.

## OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

Today students with disabilities, including psychiatric disorders, are being better served within the university environment. In recent years the number of students attending German universities has increased, as has the number of students with disabilities asking for advice and support at DoBuS – more than 300 in 2015. As result, TU Dortmund has further built up its services for these students in order to meet the increased demand.

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## CONTACT

Ms. Birgit ROTHENBERG

zhb//DoBuS - TU Dortmund

Emil-Figge-Str. 50, 44221 Dortmund

+ 49-231-755-2848

birgit.rothenberg@tu-dortmund.de

<http://www.dobus.tu-dortmund.de/cms/de/home/>

Nominated by: Birgit Rothenberg, zhb//DoBuS - TU Dortmund

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