

# Information on the FAU student survey

## FAU-St 2019

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## **What is FAU-St?**

FAU-St is the general student survey at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU). It was introduced in 2011 and is conducted annually. It was known as 'FAU Panel' up until 2015. Declining participation rates among students led to a fundamental revision and reorientation of the student survey. The survey was conducted under its new name 'FAU-St' for the first time in 2016. It was used to identify fields requiring action, which are currently being handled by the responsible persons at the University. For the FAU student survey 2019, the focus is on questions about experiences at the beginning of studies and during studies.

What's new about FAU-St is that there is an alternating rotation between general and specific questioning. This means that students will be asked to respond to a comprehensive survey on various aspects of studying at FAU in odd years, and in the following even year, a specific survey will be developed which is orientated toward specific needs identified in the previous year's survey.

## **Why is FAU-St important?**

FAU-St is important because it is the only way of finding out the opinions of students of all faculties and subjects. The survey collects information which gives an overall impression of the conditions under which students at FAU study at different points in their studies. As a complement to the evaluations of lectures and seminars, and analyses of how degree programmes are structured which are based on administrative data, the survey provides an opportunity to find out more about FAU students' expectations, motivations, ideas and impressions. This information is used by various levels (Executive Board, faculties or administration) to continue to develop the programmes offered and the general conditions for studying at FAU.

The alternation between general and specific surveys provides an opportunity to keep watch over long-term developments and respond directly to short-term challenges. In combination with other data from the University's statistics, FAU-St is an important source of information for quality assurance at FAU in relation to teaching and studying.

## **Why should I participate in FAU-St?**

It is not possible or useful to analyse the conditions and situations which students experience at FAU without input from the students themselves. FAU-St provides you with the opportunity to share your opinion on current questions related to your studies. It also gives the University an opportunity to learn more about its students and their situations at FAU. Both sides benefit: the more the University knows about its students' plans, wishes,

needs and problems, the better informed it is when working and making decisions for the students.

The time you spend responding to the survey is time well spent because your answers will help to improve your circumstances at FAU, particularly in respect of your specific situation in your degree programme.

## **Is my participation voluntary?**

Of course participation in FAU-St is voluntary. However, for the survey to be successful, it is very important that as many students as possible participate. Each student taking part gives us a more accurate understanding of the student experience at FAU. High participation rates not only improve the results, but also send an internal and external signal that students consider topics related to their studies at FAU important.

## **What are the results used for?**

The results from FAU-St will be published in reports that will be made accessible to everyone on [OPUS FAU](#). The reports will only contain anonymised responses, which means that it will not be possible to identify any individual respondent at any point. The publication of the reports will be announced in the news section of the [FAU website](#).

The results will also be presented and discussed at meetings of the Executive Board, the Central Commission for Teaching and Studying, the Committees for Teaching and Studying at the faculties and the Students' Representatives Governing Board. The deans of studies and the co-ordinators of individual degree programmes will receive the results personally. On many levels the results present an opportunity to reflect on the conditions for teaching and studying at FAU, identifying strengths and weaknesses in these areas and initiating changes.

## **On what basis is FAU-St conducted?**

FAU's Executive Board resolved on 8 December 2010 to regularly conduct a general survey of the University's students. On 9 September 2015 the new survey concept and new name of the FAU student survey 'FAU-St' were approved. The updated concept of the FAU student survey was approved by the Executive Board on 14 December 2016. FAU's data protection officer approved the process on 9 November 2016.

The Executive Board supports the survey and will work with its results. This also applies to the faculties, their deans of studies and the co-ordinators of the individual degree programmes. Article 10 of the Bavarian Higher Education Act requires regular evaluations of the work of higher education institutions. This primarily means that the conditions for

teaching and studying should be evaluated regularly, in particular by the students. FAU-St is an important part of these evaluations. The evaluation procedure at FAU is governed by the Evaluation Ordinance of 16 November 2012 (changed to 28 June 2017).

## **Who is surveyed for FAU-St?**

The FAU student survey is targeted at all students at FAU who are enrolled in Bachelor's, Master's and State Examination degree programmes, and teaching degree programmes based on the new examination regulations. Degree programmes which are no longer actively offered (Diplom, Magister, Bakkalaureus, teaching degrees based on the old examination regulations) are not included. Exchange students and visiting students are also not included.

The students at the School of Business and Economics traditionally have their own surveys, the Bachelor's and Master's Panels. Accordingly, these students are not included in the population of the FAU student survey.

## **When is the survey conducted?**

FAU-St 2019 will be conducted from 06 May to 23 June 2019. Students can participate in the survey at <https://ww2.unipark.de/uc/FAU-St2019/>. The next student survey is scheduled to be conducted in summer term of 2020.

## **How do I get an invitation to FAU-St?**

You will receive an e-mail invitation to participate in the survey on 06 May 2019. It will be sent to the e-mail address which you received from the University during your enrolment and where all official notices from FAU are sent. The e-mail contains an individual link to the survey. It is made up of the above URL and a random access code. You will receive e-mail reminders on 15 May, 23 May and 13 June 2019 if you have not completed the survey. Identification occurs exclusively by means of the access codes used. There is no connection between your survey response data and your e-mail address.

## **How is the survey conducted?**

FAU-St is conducted as an online survey and is also suitable for mobile devices. This means that you can participate in the survey at your leisure, wherever and whenever you have the time.

The professional survey software 'EFS Survey' from the company Questback is used for the survey. FAU and the software provider have concluded an agreement on data protection

and security for the scope of this project in accordance with Section 11 of the Federal Data Protection Act (Bundesdatenschutzgesetz, BDSG). Questback's company servers are located exclusively in Germany. Their computing centre has been certified by the Federal Office for Information Security. Data is transferred only in an encrypted form.

## **Are my answers anonymous?**

Under Section 1 of the Federal Data Protection Act, individuals' personal rights are to be protected against harm caused by the use of their personal data. We guarantee compliance with this principle.

The results of the survey will only be published in an anonymous, aggregated form. This means that no one will be able to recognise who provided which answers on the basis of the results. Survey results cannot be assigned to an e-mail address or real name at any point.

The procedure for the FAU student survey was approved by the University's data protection officer, who will monitor the procedure. A description of the procedure can be viewed in the office of the data protection officer on request.

## **How will my data be used?**

The answers you click on or enter in the online questionnaire will be saved in a database. This database will be evaluated using special statistics programs after the survey is closed. The answers to each individual question will be counted and, for example, the percentage of respondents who provided a given answer will be calculated. The overall result and the results from subgroups (defined by faculty, for example) will be shown in tables and graphics in which individual answers will not be recognisable (see the [Reports on FAU-St 2016 to 2018](#)).

## **How will my open response answers be used?**

Your answers to open-ended questions contain very valuable information for the improvement of circumstances related to teaching and studying. In order to extract the full potential from your answers, they will be provided to the deans of studies. They will then be evaluated by persons as close to the degree programme as possible. The deans of studies are also obligated to comply with data protection provisions; you can be sure that your answers will be treated with the appropriate sensitivity. The open response answers will be transferred without any personal identifying information. In order to make the information from these answers available to other persons at FAU, reports and summaries will be prepared. These do not contain students' original answers, only aggregated information.

## **Who can I contact if I have questions?**

FAU-St is planned and executed by the Office of Teaching Quality Assurance (L 8) in the University Administration. The project is headed by Nicole Froebus and Désirée Bender. If you have any questions related to the student survey, please contact them. You can send your questions, suggestions and comments to the project team directly at the e-mail address [evaluation@fau.de](mailto:evaluation@fau.de).