

Application Form

Innovative Teaching Award 2024¹

APPLICANT
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GENERAL INFORMATION
Course level Bachelor's
Course number: 0589
Semester: Winter term 2023/24
ECTS credits: 4
Course title: E&I Project 3: Digital Strategy Lab
Further information on the course: (e.g. number of students, prior knowledge of students, position in the curriculum/program) 23 students enrolled in the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Specialization Program taking this course as either course 4 or 5 within the SBWL.
If applicable links to the course's online environment: Here you can provide the jury with links to the contents of your course's online environment for review.

¹ Courses held during the 2023 calendar year (summer semester 2023, winter semester 2023/24) are eligible for the 2024 Innovative Teaching Award. Courses held over two semesters (WS 2022/23–SS 2023) can also be nominated.

² Please name all the people involved in the development of the course design. (ATTENTION: only people with teaching activities at WU or the Executive Academy in listed semesters are eligible.) The people named in this field will also receive the award in case of a successful application.

Information on application

Please use the template on the following pages to describe your course. The application should not exceed a maximum of 5 pages (excluding appendix).

In part 1, please insert a short description of your course design (maximum of 180 words). If your course design is selected for the award, the short description as well as the application form will be published on the WU homepage and in the Teaching & Learning Academy.

The detailed description of your course design (part 2) is divided into three parts:

- Section 2a is intended to give the jury an overview of your course.
- In section 2b we would ask you to elaborate on the teaching methods and didactic elements.
- Section 2c is intended to highlight the innovative nature of your course in relation to this year's focus of the award.

The questions mentioned in each section are intended to support you in the description of your course design.

Please complete the template directly in Microsoft Word and send it as a .doc or .pdf file to lehrenundlernen@wu.ac.at by **January 29, 2024**.

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE DESIGN (max. 180 words)

If your course is selected for an award, this text will be published on the WU website along with the submitted application form.

The Digital Strategy Lab course is conducted in a close partnership with a key leader in automation technology (FESTO SE & Co. KG) and provides students the opportunity to work on business modeling and strategy development, in response to the increasing use of digital systems in the technology sector.

Students work in teams of 4-6 students on 4 projects in total, which are previously determined by FESTO and tailored to the company's current needs.

Since all students work with the same project partner, it is imperative to learn from and with each other to understand the complex business environment FESTO is operating in, rather than focusing on individual parts.

Throughout the semester, students are supported by two lecturers with complementary backgrounds (business and engineering), as well as external experts ranging from international executives, technology consultants, and presentation coaches.

The outcomes of the student projects directly support the company and its management team in formulating strategies to adapt to new challenges. Regarding didactics, we put special emphasis on fostering interdisciplinary exchange, creativity, peer feedback, as well as hands-on learning by doing.

2. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE DESIGN

2a.) Overview

- What are the learning outcomes to be achieved by the students?
- What are the content elements of the course and how is the course structured?
- What are the elements on which the final grade is based?
- What kinds of peer learning and student collaborations are integrated in your course design?

The Digital Strategy Lab is a project course that integrates theoretical knowledge and practical application.

It enables students to:

- get insights into trends that shape company strategy such as digitalization, emerging markets, and the increasing importance of technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR)
- understand how a company's strategic decisions are based on a thorough understanding of its own competencies, the overall market, and the clients, and
- work on topics in close cooperation and coordination with the management team of the corporate client.

Through the work on their projects, students will also improve their communication and team working skills through:

- teamwork, interactive discussions, and workshops
- continuous exchange and engagement with the project partner
- learn to provide and receive constructive feedback from peers, and
- exchange and network with industry experts and external coaches.

The course structure is as follows:

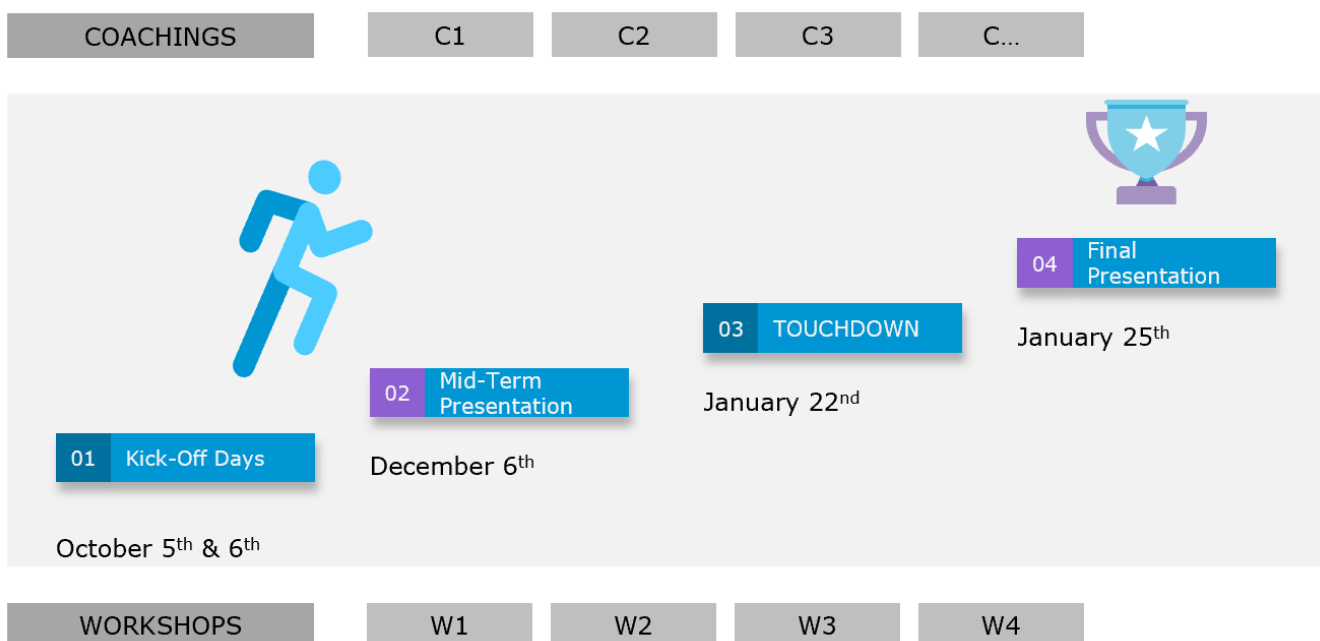


Figure 1: Course structure

1. Kick-off. The semester starts with two intense kick-off days, where students not only meet each other and the course instructors, but also the project partner FESTO. Representatives from FESTO fly in from Germany to spend one day with the students, pitching their current business challenges and showcasing their products at the FESTO Experience Center. This field trip helps the students in understanding the business operations and fosters networking between them.

2. Project selection & team formation. Students have the opportunity to self-select into their preferred project and team. This approach allows for the formation of interdisciplinary teams and nudges the students into meeting and working with new people. At the end of the kick-off, students take a short quiz to show they have 1) understood the most important theoretical foundations relevant to their project and 2) have a clear understanding of how professional teamwork is carried out. (*This short quiz accounts for 10% of the final grade.*)

3. Project work. After the kick-off, students dive into their projects and start working in their teams. Throughout the semester, we organize 4 workshops with internal and external partners to stimulate outside-of-the-box thinking and ensure regular exchange for the whole cohort. Moreover, the student teams are supported by the course instructors by means of regular coaching sessions.

4. Grading. Overall, we assign the most weight (25%) to the individual grading criteria of active participation, preparation for coachings, and project management to encourage students to (pro-)actively work together with their peers and gain a sense of independence, confidence in their skills, and professionalism.

The main deliverables of this course are a mid-term presentation and report, as well as a final presentation and report, which are eventually handed to the project partner and graded on a group level. This way, students are again incited to work and learn together, find out what works best for them as a team, make use of each other's strengths, and celebrate their project progress together.

At the end of the semester, students individually reflect on their experience by producing a 60-seconds video, accounting for 10% of their final grade. With this final deliverable we aim to 1) give students the opportunity to reflect on what they have learned about the project, themselves, and their teamwork experience, 2) provide them with a creative outlet, and 3) indirectly gain feedback from our students as their course instructors.

The grading structure is as follows:

Parts of your grade	Evaluation	%
Kick-Off Comprehension Test	Individual	10
Active participation, coachings, preparation, project management	Individual	25
Mid-Term Presentation	Group	10
Mid-Term Report	Group	10
Final Presentation	Group	20
Final Report	Group	20
Reflection Task	Individual	5
Total		100
Peer-Rating	Individual	+ / 0 / -

Figure 2: Grading structure

2b.) Teaching methods

- Which teaching methods do you use to help your students achieve the intended learning outcomes?
- What methods do you use to support student collaboration and enable peer learning?
- Why did you choose this/these particular method(s)? What specific advantages does it/do they offer in your teaching? What do your students learn through the use of this/these method(s)?
- In which way do the students benefit from the teaching methods used in the course?

In the E&I Project Course Digital Strategy Lab we employ a set of teaching methods to make sure that the students meet the intended learning outcomes.

1. GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Instead of traditional lecture formats, we employ an interactive course format where students become part of the class. We achieve this by primarily fostering group discussions, where we encourage students to share their thoughts, opinions, and understanding of the topic. Especially in our workshops, students are asked to proactively contribute not only to the input of the external lecturer, but co-create knowledge with their peers. To exemplify this approach, we regularly assign discussion topics or questions related to the lecture and ask the sub-groups to present their conclusions to the class, stimulating discussions with the group and fostering a constructive feedback culture.

2. JIGSAW TECHNIQUE

Since the 4 student teams are working on different projects for the same project partner, we hereby employ the jigsaw technique where we break down a larger topic into smaller, feasible projects. This way, each student team becomes an expert in their project and topic, and members of different groups regularly come together to share their expertise and learn from each other. Essentially, students work together on collaborative projects that require them to work together to achieve a common goal. These problem-solving scenarios encourage collaboration, creative thinking, and the application of knowledge to practical situations.

3. PEER TEACHING AND REVIEW

Students are asked to provide constructive feedback to their peers as well as exchange as much as possible with other groups to identify and use synergies in the project assignments. With this approach, we aim to 1) create a positive and inclusive learning environment, 2) encourage open communication, respect, and active participation, and 3) promote critical thinking and communication skills.

4. INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY

We try to use the available IT infrastructure at WU (e.g. MS Teams, FLEX Center) in order to create virtual spaces for communication and exchange among students, but also for us as course instructors to regularly check-in and inform students about upcoming workshops and assignments, as well as provide quick feedback whenever requested. Our main goal is to break down the hurdle for students to contact their peers and us and have them know that we are always available for them.

5. AGILE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Consulting projects are characterized by fuzzy frontends and their dynamic nature. The project partner's focus changes frequently and students have to learn to adapt to these changes quickly. For this reason, we introduce the students to agile project management tools (e.g. Trello) to facilitate their tracking of the workflow as well as to encourage transparent teamwork.

6. CROSS-COACHINGS

Throughout the semester, the student teams receive constructive feedback on their working papers by not only their main supervisor, but we also employ a "cross-coaching" approach. The two course instructors "swap" groups for one coaching session in order to foster cross-fertilizations of expertise, ideas and input, ultimately stimulating out-of-the-box thinking and using all available in-house knowledge.

2c.) Innovative character of the course

- Which didactic elements of your course design do you consider particularly innovative with regard to the focus of this year's award "Peer-Learning: Innovative ways of promoting student collaboration"?
- In which ways can your course design be adapted for other courses? Which didactic elements of your course can also be used in other courses?
- Which elements could be improved/reconsidered in further editions of the course?

There are a couple of didactic elements in our course design that we consider particularly innovative and effective when it comes to promoting student collaboration.

I. LEARNING TOGETHER AND FROM EACH OTHER

Didactic element 1: Creative research exercise prior our course kick-off

Two weeks before our course kick-off, we randomly assign the students registered in the course to a group of 4-5 students and give them a question related to one of the four projects we are going to work on in the course.

- ➔ Their main task is to discuss the question as a group and record a creative video (no longer than 3min) which gives a preliminary answer (be creative and informative).
- ➔ To communicate and organize their group work, we set up a dedicated MS Teams group.

E.g., Describe what a subscription-based business model(s) is with the example of Microsoft Office365. We attach the exercise output as [Appendix 1 Creative Research Exercise](#).

The key objectives behind this didactic element:

- a) Connect the students with each other and let them meet & greet their classmates and future project buddies prior to the more formal first encounter at the course kick-off.
- b) Allow them to "crack" the fundamentals of the four core concepts we are going to address in the course while applying their creative skills to conceptualize and record a video.
- c) Allow them to make an easier decision which project to join and have fun while doing so.

Didactic element 2: Interdisciplinary team formation based on the self-selection principle.

During the course kick-off, we have a big introduction round based on the clustering method: We show several guiding questions and students ought to cluster themselves based on common patterns, e.g., place of origin, study specialization(s), hobbies, or hidden talents.

After the introduction round and the introduction of the four projects on behalf of the course instruction, we share an excel file on the big screen in the classroom and allow students to self-select themselves into the four projects based on several criteria:

- ➔ Each project team should consist of veterans (students who have completed such a project-based course in the E&I specialization), and rookies (students who for the first-time work on a real project provided by a project partner (a firm)).
- ➔ Each student should think of the skills he/she IS MISSING and would like to acquire when selecting him/herself into a project.

The key objectives behind this didactic element:

- a) Keep the students' motivation high by allowing them to choose the project they prefer.
- b) Form interdisciplinary groups that consists of more and less experienced students who specialize in different disciplines (e.g., business informatics, marketing, international business). The average number of different specialization per semester is 7.
- c) Encourage students to not just self-select themselves into a project that will be comfortable for them i.e., it will require work they are familiar with, but to select a project where they can grow by learning new things on their own and from their teammates.

II. PEER FEEDBACK AND ASSESSMENT

Didactic element 3: Peer feedback prior the official mid-term & final presentations

The core advantage of our course is that the four groups, while working on different projects, essentially work for the same project partner and share an overarching objective.

For example, our project partner introduced a new product to the market 2 years ago: An online learning platform. The four projects addressed different aspect of this product management: Content creation, marketing of the platform, user experience, and course pricing. This implied a common direction, inevitable exchange among the four groups, and regular checkpoints. Hence:

- ➔ Prior to the official presentation dates with the project firm, each group presents their mid-term and final preliminary work in front of the class, and the remaining groups act as decision-makers in the project partners' firm, in charge of scrutinizing the student work and challenging their approach.
- ➔ We invite prior Digital Strategy Lab students who are now full-time employees and usually work as consultants, to deliver skills workshops in the course and provide feedback based on their experience with the project partner.

To exemplify this group cohesion, we attach [Appendix 2 DSL Cohort Group Picture SS23](#).

The key objectives behind this didactic element:

- a) Ensure project quality by allowing students to mutually evaluate their work.
- b) Allow students to develop assessment skills.

III. COLLABORATION IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

Didactic element 4: Hands-on in the Future Learning Experience Center (FLEX) @WU Wien

As our course is all about the use of state-of-the-art-educational technologies for digital learning and training, we have established a close relationship with our colleagues in the Future Learning Experience Center (FLEX) on campus, as it is the central innovation hub for digital learning.

- ➔ Every semester, we take the students to the center, allowing them to try out all the audiovisual media devices, apps, and digital tools the center offers.
- ➔ Students get to interview the employees at the FLEX center to gain additional insights for their projects.
- ➔ Our students have an exclusive access to all additions to the center and are at disposal to the colleagues for trying out and testing new digital solutions before they are announced to the public.

The key objectives behind this didactic element:

- a) They gain better understanding of digital learning products, which is important for their projects. E.g., one of the teams working on VR pricing, understood the pain points that trainees may experience when using a VR headset, and integrated this into their value proposition. See [Appendix 3 Exploring a VR headset and the smart lightboard](#).
- b) They network and learn from experts in the field, enriching their insights on the EdTech topic. E.g., One of the teams advised our project partner on the "optimal" video design, and for this, they got help from the video expert in the center, who helped them understand the key elements important for this objective.
- c) They gain new soft skills. E.g., students practiced their presentation and teamwork skills with the support of a VR scenario which simulates a full Audimax at WU Wien.
- d) As this motivates many students to continue working with these topics, some decided to continue working on similar topics for their Bachelor thesis, which they presented digitally to the project partner located in Germany. See [Appendix 4 AR Bachelor Thesis Defensio](#).

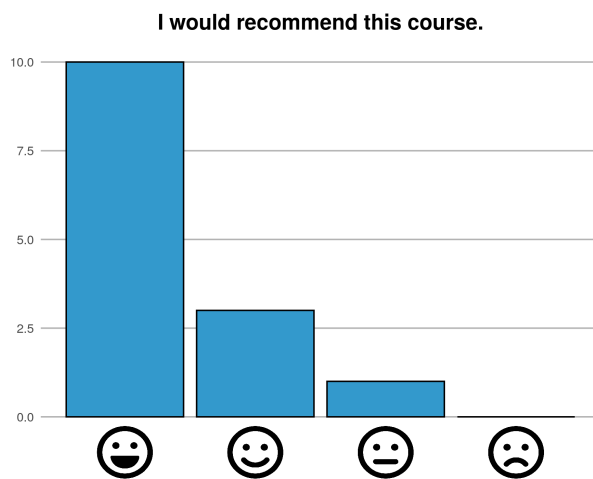
Note: By sending the application form and documents, the applicant confirms that the course design has not received any other awards or grants.

Attachment: Please attach evaluation results, if available.

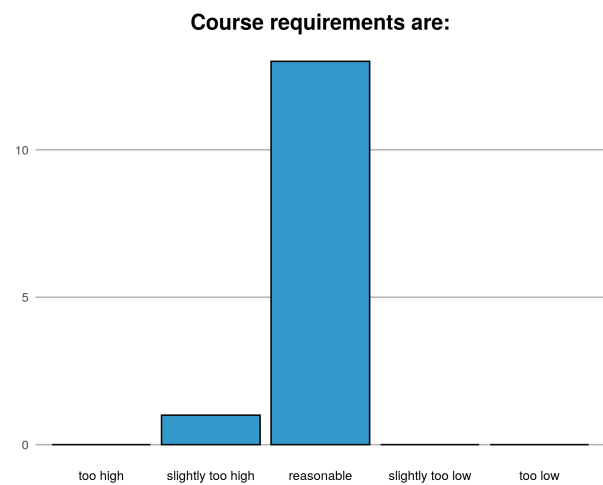
Evaluierungsergebnisse der LV 4416 E&I Project 3: Digital Strategy Lab im SS 2023 unter der Leitung von Caroline Fabian, Shtefi Mladenovska

Ausgefüllte Evaluierungsbögen: 14

Weiterempfehlung

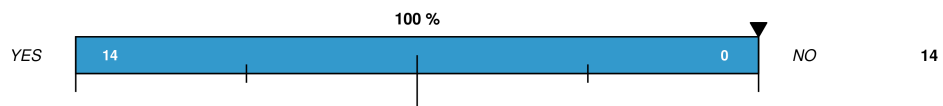


Anforderung



The course

The course is well and clearly structured.



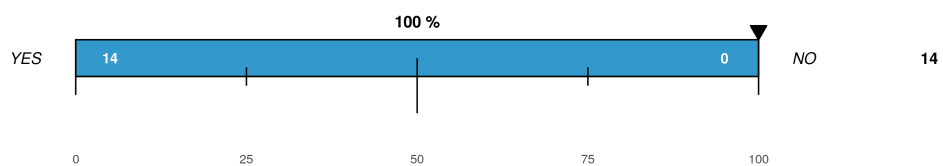
The course relates to my other courses.



The objectives of this course were clear to me from the beginning.

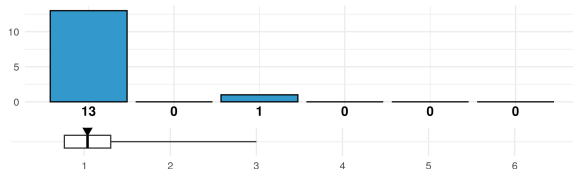


The form of this course is appropriate for the content.

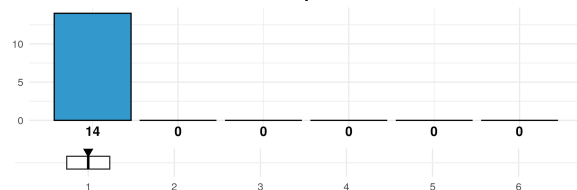


The instructors

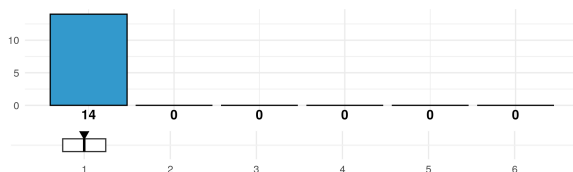
The instructors have, according to my impression, strong expertise in their field.



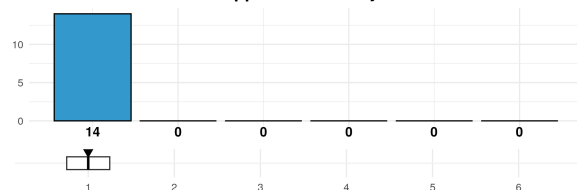
The instructors treat me with respect.



The instructors explain the subject in an accessible manner.

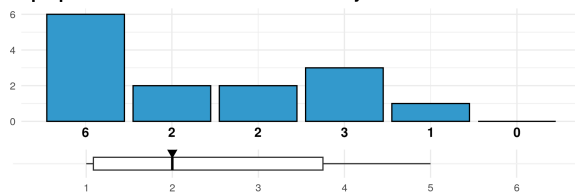


The instructors can be approached easily.

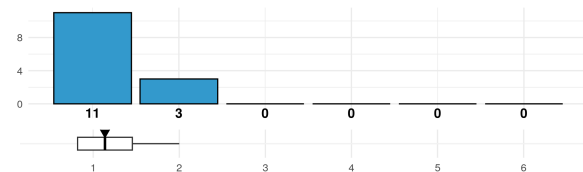


The students

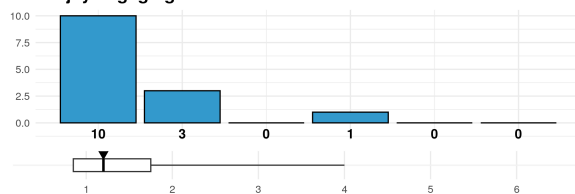
I prepared before class and reviewed my notes afterwards.



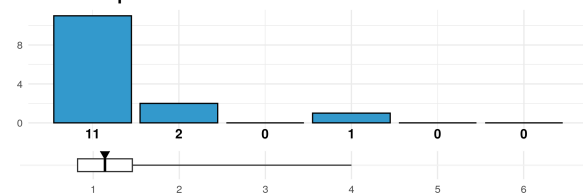
I can give an overview of the content covered in the course.



I enjoy engaging with the course content.

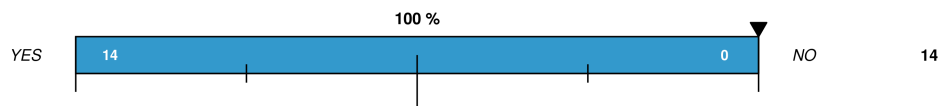


I feel like I profit from what I learned in this course.

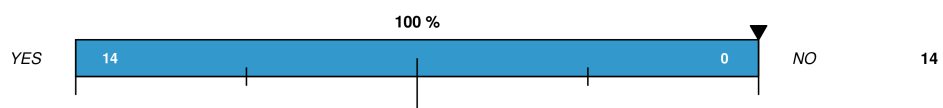


Assessment and feedback

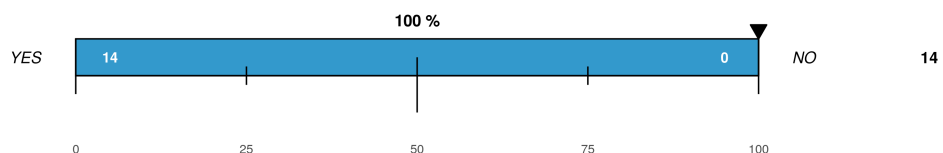
I am familiar with the assessment criteria applied in this course.



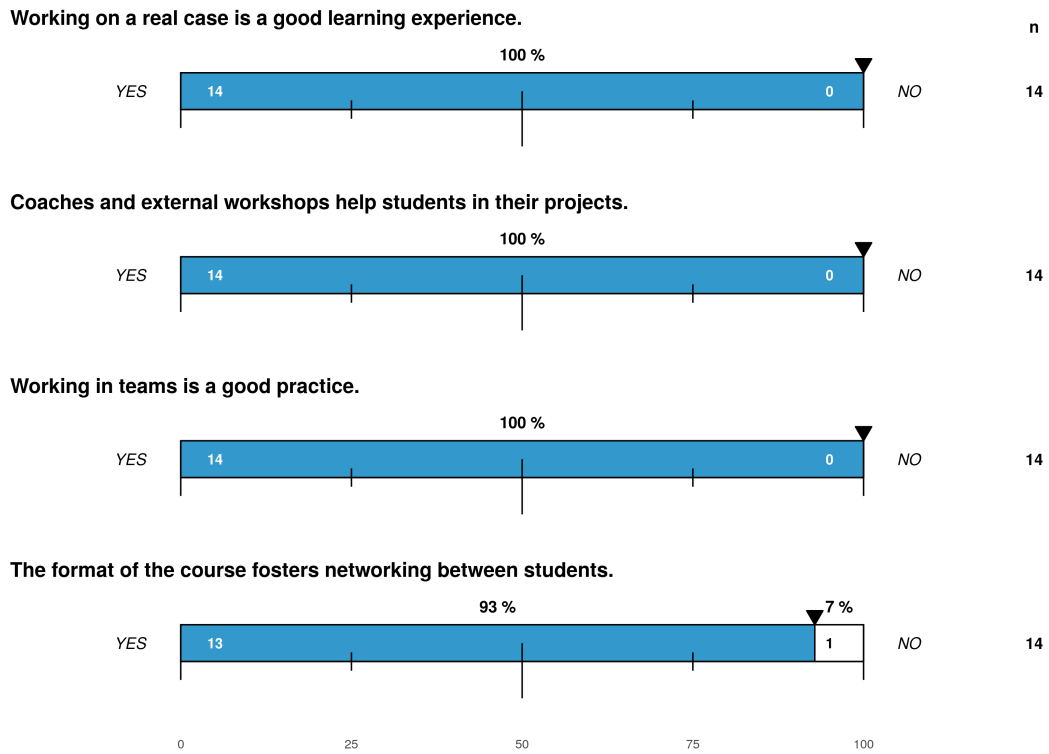
Performance requirements seem appropriate for the course's learning objectives.



I receive helpful feedback on my performance.



Course concept

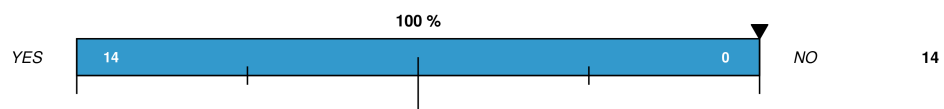


Course contents

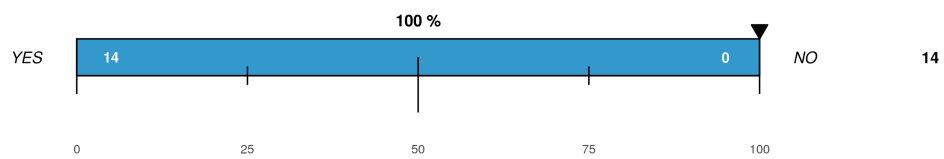
The contents of the course are interesting.



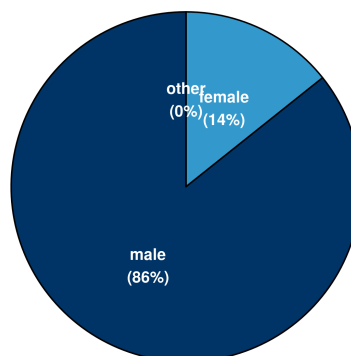
Soft skills (presentation, discussion etc.) are fostered.



Skills acquired in the course are useful also outside the course (e.g. internships).



Gender:



Offene Frage - "What I especially liked about the course:"

I liked the structure: Comprised of sessions on 1 1/2 days and the various coaching session with interesting external partners. The courses were also always accompanied by a big smile from both professors. The attitude throughout the WP coaching sessions was always friendly, professional, and forthcoming. I also really would like to point out the flexibility of Stehfi, being practically reachable all the time and responding quickly.

The guidance of the instructors on all manners and that the project partners were really involved with the project.

Caro and Shtefi were very nice and supportive

- Right balance between help and independent problem solving - Very helpful feedback - Working with a project partner - Lecturers set demanding schedule but let us choose our pace flexibly

I really enjoyed the friendliness and open heart of both lecturers. It made the course feel very familiar but also professional at the same time. The general insights and kick off were very insightful. It was great to know what we would have to look out for during our papers and the feedback was always very exact and helped us improve our work. I must say that it is within my top 2 E&I courses of the specialization. Big thanks to Caro and Shtefi!

The pitch training

The possibility to work with a multinational company and a great cohort of students. Additionally the workshop at the FLEX was great!

Caro and Stefi are really the best duo! They are so supportive and with them is so easy to understand every problem and being productive. Further, I enjoyed really too much to apply all methods we learned in theory

Input sessions were well structured and valuable

The tutors and the interesting projects

Both professors showed great effort in delivering an interesting and interactive experience during the whole semester. The theoretical input given was extremely valuable and the organised workshops wer not only insightful but also had a practical merit. Furthermore, it is great having the option to work on a project with a company and having the ability to apply the theory learned in the course of E&I.

Many different things: the workshops, the lecturers, etc.

I liked the topics we were given. Working on tech projects is a breath of fresh air in comparison to the classic "business" bs we do in the majority of WU courses. It felt like we were actually dealing with something meaningful. I liked the lecturers and I especially liked how Caro and Shtefi brought our attention to things like how we speak and how we move during presentations, or how we act with the project partners. At the end of the day, these are the key elements of the E&I Education as those details will separate the good from the best, as Shtefi says. Way too many courses at the WU support and even insist on mediocrity. Thank you for not being one of them. Caro and Shtefi are a great teaching duo. You balance each other out and provide a wide range of skills and insights. If I could take another project course, I would once again do it with you. I appreciate all the meaningful, case specific and authentic feedback my team and I received. Thank you for all your effort - if you ever wonder in the future "should I actually put in this much effort in the course" the answer is yes - yes you should! We notice, we are grateful and we talk great stuff about you even behind your back. :)

SPRACHE WECHSELN
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