

Brochure

"Barrier – free studying at the Montanuni"



Department for Equality and Diversity of ÖH Leoben

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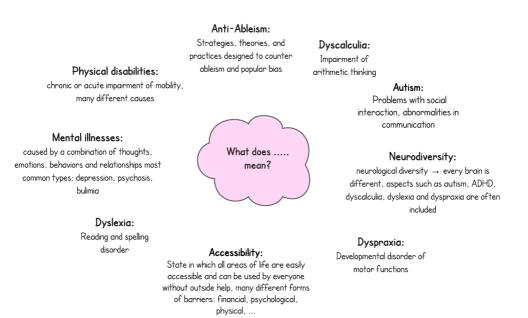
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1 Introduction

"Disability", or "Accessibility" are words that are often thrown around without understanding their exact meaning or background. Although some steps have been taken in recent years to eliminate the stigma and misinformation about disabled people and to improve their daily lives, there is still a long way to go. With this brochure, we want to inform students and staff of the University of Leoben about the most important parts of inclusion. Most important for us, however, is to prepare the affected persons for university life in Leoben.

Whether you are affected by physical or mental disabilities, suffer from neurodiverse problems, or would like to learn more about these topics in general... We hope that this brochure will provide you with answers.

1.1 Definitions

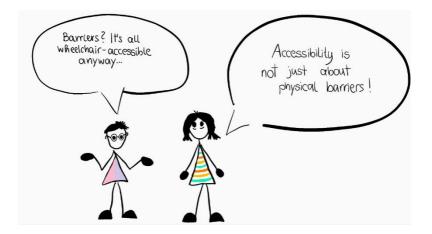


When talking about Ableism and existing barriers, this cannot be done without talking about those affected. People without disabilities are often afraid or have difficulties to talk about disabilities. This often has to do with the fact that many words that have to do with disabilities have negative connotations.

Leoben

Basically, this should be noted: A disability is a part of a person and thus often belongs to their identity. It is not a bad word.

When disabled persons talk about themselves, they use different terms. This is also to be respected because each affected person is clearly entitled to define themselves. Therefore, there are no universal rules to follow. In this brochure, the so-called "identity first" language has been chosen. This means that affected persons are not referred to as "persons with disabilities" ("person first" language) but as "disabled persons" ("identity first" language).





2 Access to studies

2.1 Barrier-free student dormitories in Leoben

The following is a list of student dormitories from which feedback was received following the accessibility request.

MILESTONE Leoben Montan

Address: Schießstattstraße 9, 8700 Leoben

Contact: +43 1 90 614

connect.montan@milestone.net

- Degree of accessibility is about 75%
- Barrier-free rooms in the dormitory?

Yes (4 on the ground floor)

- Housing and building amenities: door (no heavy trap door), elevator, grab bars, larger rooms, etc? Yes
- Are there disabled parking places at or near their dormitory? Yes, 2



- Is there sensitized staff/residence management? Yes
- Are there measurements for neurodiverse individuals? (This includes, for example, individuals with dyslexia, autism or ADHD.) No
- Is there a possibility for hiring a student/assisted living caregiver? No

Mineroom OeAD-WVGmbH:

Address: Josef-Heißl-Straße 26, 8700 Leitendorf Contact: +43 676 898330390 / mineroom@oead.at

- Basically, all rooms in the entire house are accessible barrier-free.
- Barrier-free rooms in dormitory? Yes, 6
- Housing and building amenities: door (no heavy trap door), elevator, grab bars, larger rooms, etc? Yes
- Are there disabled parking places ar or near the dormitory? Yes, 1



- Are there measurements for neurodiverse individuals? (This includes, for example, individuals with dyslexia, autism, or ADHD.) No
 - Is there a possibility of hiring a student/assisted living caregiver? No

Students City Lodge:

Address: Fischergasse 10-14, 8700 Leoben Contact: +43 3842 2424415 / <u>info@students-</u> <u>citylodge.at</u>

According to the staff, the dormitory is not barrierfree or not well suited for people with physical disabilities. However, there are 4 apartments with 2 partially (not uniformly) barrier-free rooms each. For exact information, the dormitory should be contacted.

Collegium Josefinum

Address: Erzherzog Johann-Straße 4, 8700 Leoben

Contact: + 43 676 87 42 69 63 / collegium@josefinum.com

• What level of accessibility does the dormitory have?

16 of 18 apartments are accessible without barriers (approx. 90 %)

 Apartment and building amenities: door (no heavy trap door), elevator, grab bars, larger rooms etc.? Yes

 \rightarrow 4 large apartments with disabled sanitary rooms

- \rightarrow elevator
- \rightarrow 1 room with bed in extra length (2,3 m)
- Are there disabled parking places at or near the dormitory? Yes
- Is there sensitizes staff/residence

management?

No specialy trained staff, but special

concerns are met when possible.



- Are there measurements for neurodiverse individuals? (This includes, for example, individuals with dyslexia, autism or ADHD.) No
 - Is there a possibility for hiring a student/assisted living caregiver? No

Collegium Jacobinum

Address: Maßenbergerstrasse 9, 8700 Leoben Contact: + 43 676 87 42 69 63 / collegium@josefinum.com

• What level of accessibility does the dormitory have?

All 5 apartments are accessible barrier-free.

- Housing and building amenities: door (no heavy trap door), elevator, grab bars, larger rooms, etc? Yes
 →1 large apartment with disabled accessible sanitary room
 - \rightarrow elevator





- Are there disabled parking places at or near the dormitory? Yes
- Is there sensitizes staff/ residence management?

There is no special trained staff, but special concerns are met when possible.

- Are there measurements for neurodiverse individuals? (This includes, for example, individuals with dyslexia, autism or ADHD.) No
 - Is there a possibility for hiring a student/assisted living caregiver? No

2.2 Barrier-free Montanuni

Disability Advocacy

The Disability Ombudsperson is responsible for advising and supporting persons who experience discrimination within the meaning of the Federal Disability Equality Act or the prohibition of discrimination in the Disability Employment Act. The Disability Advocate is independent and not bound by any instructions. You can turn to this person if you need mediation or (legal) support.

Consultation days are held in all federal states; **registration** is required.

Contact: 0800 80 80 16 (free of charge), <u>office@behindertenanwalt.gv.at</u>

If you need a sign language interpreter, you have to expect a two-week waiting period. You can find out more here: <u>behindertenanwalt.qv.at</u>.

You can find the legal anchoring here: BGBI I No. 82/2005.

Working Group for Equal Treatment Issues (AKG)

The AKG is an independent organization of the university. If you have a concern or need support, for example, in informing the teaching staff about adapted examination modalities, etc., you can contact the AKG. You can find the contact details here:

Dipl.-Ing. Dr. Eva Wegerer, MBA, Chairwoman

+43 3842 402-6303, eva.wegerer@unileoben.ac.at

https://akg.unileoben.ac.at/

Department for Diversity and Equality

You are also welcome to use the department as a first point of contact and we will discuss the exact procedure with you in advance.

Contact: equal@oeh.unileoben.ac.at

<u>Audio - mobile system</u>

If for some reason you do not have your own mobile system available, you can request and borrow one from the university's building services department.



https://gtb.unileoben.ac.at/

Communication needs

In the future, it should be possible to communicate needs via MU Online, so that lecturers can act on them directly. Implementation of this tool is currently underway.

2.3 Advising Services

Before studying comes the choice of study. Making such a decision is not easy. There are several information events where you can get an idea about the universities.

Education fair- BeSt

The BeSt takes place every year at the beginning of March in the Wiener Stadthalle and is the largest education fair in Austria. The BeSt also offers a collection of exhibitors with offers for disabled people. You can find them here: <u>oeh.at/140</u>. This fair is also held annually in Graz and Salzburg.



<u>Studieren probieren</u>

With "Studieren Probieren" (trying out studying) you have the opportunity to take part in taster events in the degree programs of your choice. You attend a course accompanied by a student and can ask questions afterwards. In the summer semester you can find the offered dates online from March 20 and in the winter semester from October 20. You can participate in as many of the offered dates as you like!

Info days of the University of Leoben

Get to know our fields of study, discover the campus, exchange ideas with students and researchers, plus a wide range of advice on topics related to studying and an insight into our laboratory facilities: All this and much more is available at the Info Day! No registration is required!

3 During the studies

3.1 Legal situation

Tution fees

Austria currently has general tuition fees at all universities, which can be a major obstacle for some. Currently, there are some exceptions, which are presented here.

At universities, there are some regulations as to when tuition fees are collected:

- They have to be paid from the time you exceed the standard period of study by more than 2 tolerance semesters. So, if you study a course with the standard period of study of seven semesters, you must pay tuition fees from the tenth semester on.

- Students from third countries must pay tuition fees.

- **Non-degree-programme students** must pay tuition fees.

For many students it is not possible to complete their studies in the standard period of study + 2 tolerance semesters due to various circumstances. If you exceed this time limit, there are several other exceptions that can justify a fee exemption:

- if you are prevented from completing your studies due to an **illness** that lasts **longer than 2 months**

- if you have a disability of at least 50%.

- if you are on leave of absence* from your studies

- if you are receiving or have received **student aid** in the previous or current semester.

*Leave of absence

In case of temporary impairment in connection with a disability, you can pause your studies by taking a leave of absence without losing your admission. This applies, for example, if you are unable to participate in your studies for a certain period of time due to an accident or serious illness. In the case of illness that demonstrably prevents you from progressing in your studies:

Proof: medical specialist's confirmation of at least four weeks of being prevented from pursuing studies because of illness/injury (diagnosis not required!).

 Temporary impairment in connection with a disability

Proof: disability passport, expert opinion

Leave of absence is possible both in advance and in retrospect. It is advisable to seek detailed advice if you are considering taking a leave of absence. Contact the department for social affairs and your health insurance fund. The following points should also be considered when taking a leave of absence:

- You will not be able to take exams, attend classes, or submit academic work after your leave of absence. All exams taken before the leave of absence remain valid.
- It may not be possible to receive **family or study allowances**.

• Co-insurance with relatives or student selfinsurance may not be possible (inquire directly with your health insurance company).

<u>Exams</u>

If it is impossible for you to take an examination in the prescribed manner, you have the right to request alternative examination modes. There are several ways to claim your right to take exams on an equal basis.

1. Directly to the course director

- a) First consider for yourself which method of examination makes the most sense for you.
 If you have any questions, please contact the Disability Officer (currently AKG) of the University of Leoben and/or the ÖH.
- b) Contact the lecturer or examiner as soon as possible.
- Put everything in writing, so that it is clear to everyone involved what has been agreed upon.

2. With the head of your study program

- a) Think about how exams in general can be completed for you.
- b) If a medical certificate is required, submit it either to the Disability Officer or directly to your program director. In principle, no findings have to be handed over to teachers, for this you can also contact the Disability Officer or the ÖH.

3.2 Financial support

Increased family allowances

The increased family allowance amounts to €164.90 (since January 1, 2023) per month. It is paid in addition to the family allowance. Prerequisites are a degree of disability of at least 50% and a permanent inability to provide for oneself. The responsible office for this is your local tax office.

Increased student aid

Increased student aid is available to those students who can prove a **disability of at least 50%**. The proof can either consist of the increased family allowance or be provided by a medical certificate.



The application is submitted to the student aid office, which can be found online at: stipendium.at/stipendienstellen.

Study Support

If a problem arises, a one-time payment or a regular scholarship can be requested. The study support authority is also responsible for this (see above).

ERASMUS+ Special Grant

To compensate for additional expenses during a stay abroad, you can request the so-called "special needs support". This way, the Erasmus+ grant can be higher. This grant is available to all students, interns and staff. It is important to note that actual costs are to be partially compensated here. This means that you will often have to submit medical certificates, cost estimates and other documents.

The **application** for special needs support is submitted with the **regular Erasmus** + **application**. All **essential documents** must be enclosed (cost estimates are especially important here, as they are used to determine the amount of funding). The university and **the OeAD** (Austrian Exchange Service, National Agency Erasmus+ Education) **will decide** on the amount of additional funding after reviewing the documents.

Ask the Erasmus+ Coordination Office of your higher education institution about the application procedure (application deadline, source and addressee of the application form, etc.).

It is also important to note that this is **not a full scholarship**, this funding represents a **grant** for increased mobility costs.

Further links: ExchangeAbility from ESN (Erasmus Student Network): <u>exchangeability.eu</u>.

ÖBB-Discount

Beneficiaries with disabilities who are able to use public transportation and are gainfully employed may receive a **one-time annual grant from the federal government**. Normally, the Ministry of Social Affairs keeps records and the procedure is automatically initiated as part of an action. If this is not the case,



an application can be submitted to the Ministry of Social Affairs.

<u>Care allowance</u>

Persons who can prove a **need for care** of **more than 65 hours per month** are entitled to a care allowance. The amount of the allowance may vary per month depending on the need for care. From the age of 15, **a flat-rate aggravation allowance of 25 hours** per month can be applied. The **responsible authority** is the **paying agency for pension recipients** or the **pension insurance institution**. The application can be submitted informally; medical reports must be attached.

Support funds for disabled persons

The target group for this is people with disabilities (degree of disability at least 50%) who are in a social emergency. The prerequisite is that disabilityrelated necessary expenses exceed the economic capacity of the person concerned or the person obliged to pay maintenance. The payment is made taking into account the emergency situation and can vary in amount.

An income test is carried out for this purpose. Grants are not included, but the income of the applicant, of all dependants living in the same household and of the cohabitant is. The monthly income limit of the applicant is €1680. This limit can be increased by €380 or €570 if other dependants or the partner live in the same household.

It is important to ensure that the grant is used for the intended purpose, otherwise the grant may have to be repaid.

The application form "Application for a grant from the Support Fund for Persons with Disabilities (Section 22 of the Federal Disabilities Act.)" must be submitted in writing to the relevant regional office of the Social Ministry Service.

(sozialministeriumservice.at)

Personal Assistance (PA)

The support and promotion of personal assistance is regulated differently throughout Austria. With regard to PA, there are two possibilities. On the one hand, the employer model can be applied, in which the assistance is employed by the assistance recipient themselves and all administrative steps must be carried out by the employing person themselves. On the other hand, services can be purchased from service institutions.

Depending on the main place of residence, the application for financial assistance must be submitted to a different office. Before submitting the application, it is advisable to ask an advisory organization; they also often provide assistance with the application process.

In Styria, the application must be submitted to the competent district authority and support is offered by the association "Selbstbestimmt Leben Steiermark". A deductible applies if 1,600 hours per year are exceeded at an hourly rate of €24.20.



<u>Support for compensation of additional expenses</u> and for auxiliary means

If there are additional expenses due to disability, an education allowance of maximum €771 can be paid. The application is submitted to the Ministry of Social Affairs and its regional offices.

Subsidy for technical and orthopedic-prosthetic aids

- Blind persons can receive grants for e.g. reading devices, blind-specific computer hardware and software, color recognition devices.

- Deaf persons can receive grants for e.g. writing telephones, light and vibrating alarm clocks.

- Wheelchair users and persons with severe walking disabilities can receive grants for e.g. stair lifts, bathtub lifts.

The application for this type of subsidy must be submitted to the relevant pension insurance company and the respective provincial government.



Subsidy for home modifications for the disabled

In order to design or furnish the apartment as just necessary, there are some forms of support. Due to the federal building system in Austria, there are different support measures depending on which province you are building/residing in. It is important to start building or moving in only when the application is considered accepted. Getting retroactive subsidies is very difficult.

Funding opportunities:

- Housing subsidies for new construction
- Renovation for adaptation and restoration
- support for rent payments
- subsidized loans

The application is submitted to the respective office of the provincial government and to the provincial offices of the Social Ministry Service. The necessary



forms are also provided by the relevant provincial office.

Grant for the acquisition of assistance dogs

Assistance dogs are guide dogs for the blind, service dogs and signal dogs (according to § 39a Federal Disability Act). Unfortunately, there **is no legal entitlement** to the grant for the acquisition of an assistance dog. Dog training is considered a free trade. Therefore, there are many different providers. However, the Ministry of Health provides the seal of approval "Animal welfare qualified* dog trainer", which can be looked out for.

Maximum grant amount:

- Guide dog for the blind: €30,000
- Service and signal dog: €10.000.

For **non-working persons**, the purchase of an assistance dog can be subsidized from the Support Fund for People with Disabilities **with a maximum of** €6,000. The application is to be submitted to the respective regional office of the Social Ministry Service. For the promotion of the acquisition of the first guide dog **mobility clarification** is necessary. For this purpose, you can contact the Austrian Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired on the one hand, and the training center for assistance dogs on the other.

<u>Tax benefit</u>

A person whose degree of disability is at least 25% is entitled to income tax concessions and taxation of lump sums.

In case of low income, it is possible to apply to the competent health insurance company for exemption from the prescription fee and the service fee for the e-card. Exemption from the GIS (Gebühren Info Service) is also possible, and can be requested directly there.

Exemption from fees and benefits

In case of low income, it is possible to apply to the competent health insurance company for exemption

from the prescription fee and the service fee for the e-card. Exemption from the GIS (Gebühren Info Service) is also possible and can be requested directly there.



4 Visibility & Stigma

4.1 Points of contact

- 4.1.1 In general
 - \rightarrow <u>Uniability</u> (uniability.org/de)

Uniability is an association of representatives for people with disabilities, those affected, and simply others who have set themselves the goal of improving study and working conditions at all Austrian universities. They inform, advise, and accompany students through their studies. Moreover, their track record includes researches about the situation of disabled and chronically ill people.

→ <u>BIZEPS</u> (bizeps.or.at)

BIZEPS - National Centre for Independent Living is a central contact point for disabled people and their families. Here, political related work is done and information is provided in a very accessible way.

→ <u>Documentation</u> for <u>disability</u> inclusion (bidok.uibk.ac.at)

bidok is a project of the Institute of Educational Science at the University of Innsbruck. Here, subject-specific articles from integrative/inclusive pedagogy and disability studies are carefully crafted and integrated into a virtual library.

→ <u>Ninlil - Empowerment and counselling for</u> <u>disabled women</u> (ninlil.at)

Ninlil has two workspaces: Kraftwerk (power plant) and Zeitlupe (slow motion). Kraftwerk offers counselling and networking against sexualised violence that women with learning difficulties may experience.

\rightarrow **BALANCE-** Life without barriers (balance.at)

BALANCE offers **assisted living accommodation**, daycare facilities, and mobility support.

→ <u>Austrian Disability Council</u> (behindertenrat.at)

Austrian Disability Council is a parent organisation of more than 80 affiliated institutions. As a representation of interests, it campaigns for the extensive **rights of disabled people**.

→ <u>ÖZIV - Federal Association</u> (oeziv.org)

ÖZIV offers advisory services and coaching for people with and/or without disabilities. Furthermore, the association is not only committed to spatial and creative accessibility but also works to reduce social barriers and obstacles in the world of work.

→ <u>Partnerhunde</u> (partner-hunde.org)

The Partnerhunde association provides specially trained dogs to people with a wide range of impairments. Partnerhunde trains the following assistance dogs: service dogs for physical disabilities; signal dogs for the deaf, people with diabetes or epilepsy; therapy assistance dogs for people with autism and developmental delays.



4.1.2 Deafness

→ <u>Advisory Centre VOX Technical Assistance</u> <u>Vienna</u> (schwerhoerigen-service.at)

Here you can find **assistance**, advice and support regarding **hearing loss** and technical aids intended to support everyday life.

→ VÖGS - Austrian Deaf Students Association (voegs.at)

The VÖGS is an **association** and an organization representing the interests of **hearing-impaired students**.

→ Austrian Association of the Deaf (oeglb.at)

Austrian Association of the Deaf is the **representative body of the deaf community** in Austria.

4.1.3 Blindness

→ <u>BSVÖ</u> - Austrian Federation of the Blind and <u>Visually Impaired</u> (blindenverband.at)



The BSVÖ is a **self-help organisation** and interest representation for **blind** and **visually impaired** persons.

→ Association of the Blind and Weak-Sighted in <u>Austria</u> (hilfsgemeinschaft.at)

Association of the **Blind** and **Weak-Sighted** in Austria is a **self-help** organisation and information platform for new technologies and assistive devices.

Mental Disorders

\rightarrow <u>ÖH Helpline</u> (oeh.ac.at/helpline)

In order to minimise the psychological barrier, seek help, and address problems, students are offered the possibility of **anonymous phone support**. You can call this number during consulting hours: +43/1/585 33 33.

→ <u>Psychological Counselling Service</u> (studierendenberatung.at)

The Psychological Student Counselling Service offers helpful orientation and decision-making support and helps students to cope with everyday life at university.



\rightarrow <u>Psychotherapy subsidy</u> (oeh.at/154)

Here you will find all the documents you need to (partially) **deduct** your **psychotherapy expenses** from your health insurance.

pro mente Austria (promenteaustria.at)

promente Austria is the parent organisation of 24 nonprofit institutions that care for the needs of people with **mental illness** in Austria.

LIBT Leoben & Lebenshilfe Leoben

The association LIBIT stands for Leoben Initiative for Counselling, Information, and Therapy. It offers numerous services for students in Leoben. On the website <u>http://www.rettet-das-kind-</u> <u>stmk.at/joomla/index.php/beratungszentrum-libit-</u> <u>leoben#</u> you will find a detailed overview and more information about the numerous services (e.g. **psychological** or **specialist advice**). In addition, a **contact list with the most important people of the LIBIT** is provided so that you have a direct contact person for your questions and concerns. The Lebenshilfe Leoben (Life Assistance), or its website <u>https://www.lebenshilfe-leoben.at</u>, is also a good place to obtain information about various **services** for people with disabilities. Above all, this website should make it easier for you to find a barrier-free, disabled-friendly accommodation and a suitable job.

4.2 Overview of trainers and psychologists

This chapter provides you with an overview of psychologists who work together with the ÖH Leoben and have an accessible practices in Leoben. If you would like to find out more about the listed psychologists or get information about other psychological counsellors, you can visit the website https://www.öh-

<u>leoben.at/de/soziales/psychologische-beratung</u>. Here you will also find additional information on possible refund or grant applications, which you can submit to the ÖH for additional financial support.

DI (FH) Sandra Burgstaller:

Her clinic is located above the pharmacy at Franz-Josef-Straße 7 and is easily accessible. Online meetings are certainly possible in case of emergency, but you are strongly encouraged to come to the consultation in person. There are also public disabled parking spaces directly in front of the building. The practice is particularly sensitive to mental impairments and psychosomatics, but it is not authorised to issue certificates.

Mag. Silvia Dobrovnik:

Silvia's practice at Glacisgasse 3 also has a barrierfree access and is located near disabled parking spaces in the public parking area of the city of Leoben. She is trained in various topics such as neurodiversity, both physical and mental disabilities. Furthermore, she is permitted to diagnose (ICD 10/11). However, it is not possible to issue certificates. Moreover, as of November 2022, she has a long waiting list and currently no free places available.

David Kalcher:

David Kalcher's medical practice is located in Franz-Josef-Straße, has accessible, barrier-free parking, and is located close to handicapped parking spaces in

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the public parking area in Leoben. He can diagnose, provide expert opinions, and is trained in the topics of neurodiversity, and mental/physical disabilities. Online consultations are also possible by arrangement.

<u>Mag. Melanie Bargiel:</u>

Melanie Bargiel's clinic is located next to the Stadtapotheke (pharmacy) in Krottendorfergasse. It is fully accessible and well-adapted for patients that use mobility aids. To get there, you can take the elevator up to the pharmacy itself and use the accessible passage to the clinic. The disabled parking spaces are also public, but just around the corner. As she worked with Lebenshilfe Leoben (Life Assistance) for several years, she is exceptionally trained on the topics of accessibility and disabilities.





