

Code of Conduct on the topic of closeness and boundaries in practice-oriented courses at the Institute for Theater Studies

In all practice-oriented courses at the Institute for Theater Studies that involve forms of physical work, the topic of close proximity and personal space, especially with regard to touching, should be addressed in the first session. Students should be given the opportunity to express their ideas, boundaries and, if necessary, concerns – both in the group and individually with the teacher – so that physical work can take place on the basis of mutual trust and safety.

In practice-oriented seminars and workshops at the Institute for Theater Studies, the body is the students' tool and the focus of their training.

This includes the possibility of physical contact or body-related instructions in order to improve, for example, breathing or execution. This can be initiated by both the teacher and the students. This creates a specific form of intimacy that is perceived very individually by the participants. Closeness to a person who is not part of one's social circle can be perceived as uncomfortable.

The responsibility for ensuring that physical contact does not become a problem in practical seminars and that appropriate professional boundaries are always maintained lies with teachers.

What can you do as a teacher to ensure that the situation is clear?

- Explain **each time** why physical contact is necessary.
- Specify in advance which part of the body will be touched.
- Make clear the objective of the physical contact.
- Physical contact can also be refused and replaced with verbal communication.

What can you do as a student to avoid misunderstandings?

- Address any discomfort immediately in the situation or at the beginning of a course.
- You have the right to say NO in advance or in the situation itself.
- Ask in advance or at the moment for the specific meaning and purpose of the touch.

Even though touch and physical contact can be fundamental elements of practical seminars, they should be handled with care to avoid misunderstandings. A high level of sensitivity to personal space and a mindful approach to every teaching and learning situation are part of everyday university life, especially, but not only, when the body is the focus of the course.