

## Universities Continuing Education Mission Statement

Besides research and teaching, scientific continuing education is the third main task of Austrian universities. Persons with academic and/or adequate qualifications can participate in universities learning processes and particular academic studies can be continued. Thereby experiences and approaches from outside the universities can be integrated into scientific knowledge. In the same way universities influence various professions and spheres of life. Besides individual qualifications, universities continuing education also contributes to the formation of professional cooperation, lobbies and networks. This also raises society's ability to act.

Special characteristics of universities continuing education are:

### **1. *Relation to Research on an International Standard***

Universities continuing education offers the advantage of participating in the actual, international standards of knowledge and competencies. Universities continuing education providers know about the particular, professional state of the art. The trainers and instructors take part in international research and therefore are able to offer insights into the development of knowledge. But they can also impart research competencies when required in practice.

### **2. *Reflexivity in Social Contexts***

Scientific knowledge is critical and reflexive as it questions the conditions of its formation and effects. This reflexivity asks where the knowledge comes from and what it is for. It also asks questions about subjective implications and social situations. Reflexivity is also the most consequent form to mediate between theory and practice: the differences between theory and practice are not denied but rather they are useful for both learners and instructors when taken into account in the learning processes. Reflexivity requires openness and liberty in situations of learning and teaching.

### **3. *Common Principle***

Learners and teachers see each other as partners in a common process of learning and teaching: the experiences and the knowledge of both are part of the process right from the start. The outcome of this is a system that is permanently improved by the interaction of all persons involved.