

Individual Learning Scenarios (ILS): An Example for German as a Foreign Language

1. You will meet your **Learning Counsellor** for the first advising session. Together with your Counsellor, you will plan and design your customized Language Learning Project.

In order to ensure best fit, you will

- define your learning intentions (What exactly do you want to achieve?),
- identify your available resources (How much time can you realistically invest? What is your overall approach to learning? What expectations do you have for individual support? Which of the options already on offer at the RUB might suit your needs? What materials have you found useful for your learning?) and
- develop your learning syllabus for a length of time of your choice (Which of the learning steps can be reasonably completed within what time frames?).

Your Learning Counsellor will accompany and support you throughout your whole Learning Project – always in step with your needs.

A possible design:

You have decided to improve your German discourse competence, and in a first session you have planned the following project with your Counsellor: Over a period of four months, you will work with an individual German Trainer. Together with this Trainer, you will identify discourse strategies and methods of verbal expression associated with your specific field. You will then practice the newly acquired skills in well-designed simulation scenarios until you have reached the level of proficiency and confidence that you desire. The meetings with your Trainer will take place once a week for 45 minutes each. Schedule design will be flexible so that the meetings can be smoothly integrated into your scientific daily routine. Additionally, you will participate in a German course entitled “Argumentation und Darstellung im Wissenschaftsdiskurs“ (“Argumentation and Presentation in Scientific Discourse”) that is designed to help you refresh and enhance your skills in this domain. You have agreed to contact your Learning Counsellor whenever you need additional resources and would like to schedule another counselling session.

2. Once all the pertinent project details have been finalised as described above, you will start working with your personal **German Trainer**. In order to effectively support you in achieving your foreign language learning goals in a structured and well-paced way, the Trainer will
 - identify your starting proficiency level;
 - agree with you the methodical approach to be followed whilst taking into account your personal learning style – this will enable your Trainer to “meet you where you stand”, as it were, by adapting his / her error correction and feedback practices as well as his / her manner of explaining linguistic phenomena to your preferences;
 - agree with you specific communicative situations that you would like to practise in order to achieve the desired level of proficiency – this also means that the Trainer will provide you with pertinent communicative topics and content as well as with grammatical structures and forms that you may wish to learn or become more familiar with;
 - monitor your progress on an ongoing basis so that he / she can accurately align each learning step with your current skills level.

A possible scenario:

Initially, you will meet your German Trainer once a week for 45 minutes each. You will spend the first 10 minutes talking about the past week. This will help you to obtain a certain degree of routine in this type of situation. As you are benefitting from direct correction, you can discuss errors and their causes immediately and work out alternatives with your Trainer. As a conference is approaching during your ILS period, you can focus on this specific learning context, practising your skills right from the beginning with a concrete situational orientation. Then, due to a longer official trip, you decide to replace two face-to-face meetings with your German Trainer with a session via Skype. Soon you become aware that you are not only in need of effective discourse strategies, but that you also require systematic knowledge about certain linguistic rules. In response, your Trainer will offer small input units that can be dovetailed with subsequent home study exercises. You may discover after a while that you would also like to record short contributions in German in order to send the audio document to your German Trainer for feedback and discussion at your next meeting.

3. You will also use **other resources** agreed upon in your first counselling session. These may include language courses, a Tandem Language Learning Partnership or offerings of external language proficiency testing providers.

A possible scenario:

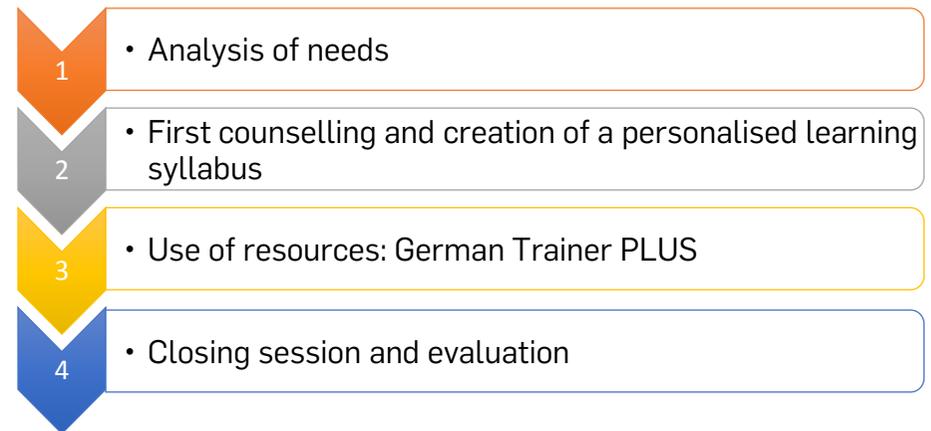
You attend the German course “Argumentation und Darstellung im Wissenschaftsdiskurs“ (“Argumentation and Presentation in Scientific Discourse”). In this course, your instructor recommends further material that you also want to use in the meetings with your German Trainer.

4. At the end of your personalised Language Learning Project, you will meet with your Learning Counsellor for a **closing session** where you will review your achievements, assessing and evaluating whether you have accomplished your learning goals. In this context, you will also identify whether and in what way you wish to avail yourself of further support in moving on with your project.

A possible scenario:

Your personal end-of-project conclusion may look like this: The conference has shown that you are capable of delivering scientific presentations in German in a linguistically appropriate manner and that you can manage expert discussions with linguistic proficiency. Therefore, you do not need any further language-focused support. “Generally speaking”, however, you find that you are still lacking overall situational confidence and thus wish to apply your language skills in a broader variety of communicative scenarios. Your Learning Counsellor suggests teaming up in a Tandem Language Learning Partnership with a colleague who is a native German speaker and, conversely, seeks to improve his or her English skills. Your Counsellor also offers to arrange such a Tandem Partnership for you.

The ILS service at a glance:



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