

Fischer, Veit, Buspavanich, & Stadler. Toward safer learning environments in creative higher education: A capabilities-informed multimethod study of misconduct prevention.

Table S1. Standards for Reporting Qualitative Research (SRQR).

Table based on: O'Brien, B. C., Harris, I. B., Beckman, T. J., Reed, D. A., & Cook, D. A. (2014). Standards for reporting qualitative research: A synthesis of recommendations. *Academic Medicine: Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges*, 89(9), 1245–1251. <https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0000000000000388>

No.	Topic		Item	Content	page
	Title and abstract				
S1		Title	Concise description of the nature and topic of the study Identifying the study as qualitative or indicating the approach (e.g., ethnography, grounded theory) or data collection methods (e.g., interview, focus group) is recommended	Toward safer learning environments in creative higher education: A capabilities-informed multimethod study of misconduct prevention	p. 1
S2		Abstract	Summary of key elements of the study using the abstract format of the intended publication; typically includes background, purpose, methods, results, and conclusions	Students at creative higher education (CHE) institutions frequently report boundary violations and other forms of misconduct, while prevention efforts have been described as insufficient. Drawing on a capabilities-informed perspective attentive to the environmental and institutional conditions of flourishing, we examine what structural and cultural conditions stakeholders consider necessary for misconduct prevention in CHE. Using a complementary multimethod qualitative design, we report two studies: 16 interviews with stakeholder groups	p. 1-2

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				analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis, and 228 open-ended responses from a national student survey analyzed through structured tabular thematic analysis. Interview participants identified three interconnected areas of transformation: 1) Community, 2) Institutions and 3) Knowledge and Norms. Ten themes generated from the survey responses mean resonate with these areas and expand them, foregrounding students' aspirations for cultural and institutional reform as well as material stability as foundations for sustainable artistic development, a dimension addressed only implicitly in the interviews. Across both studies, participants described prevention efforts as often reactive and insufficient, and called for systemic approaches in which institutions recognize their societal role and and prioritize students' flourishing. Our findings identify participant-informed starting points for developing and evaluating prevention strategies.	
	Introduction				
S3		Problem formulation	Description and significance of the problem/phenomenon studied; review of relevant theory and empirical work; problem statement	See manuscript	pp. 2-5

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S4		Purpose or research question	Purpose of the study and specific objectives or questions	The two studies presented here examine critical preventative measures introduced to support aspiring artists at CHE institutions, and further needs. Institutions are responsible for providing the material, institutional, and educational conditions necessary for human development and well-being [45], including the creation of safer learning environments. As structural change needs to address systemic issues holistically, this study looks at needs as formulated by those directly affected and brings them into dialogue with stakeholder interviews on misconduct prevention in CHE. Following the reading outlined above, this research targets the social and environmental conditions that shape young artists' capabilities rather than capabilities themselves. Our multiperspectival research is thus guided by the following questions: -What preventative measures against misconduct do various stakeholder groups within CHE institutions consider necessary? -What do CHE students envision as characteristics of safe learning environments? -How can these two perspectives be integrated to identify missing elements and advance current preventative approaches?	p.4
	Methods				

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S5		Qualitative approach and research paradigm	Qualitative approach (e.g., ethnography, grounded theory, case study, phenomenology, narrative research) and guiding theory if appropriate; identifying the research paradigm (e.g., postpositivist, constructivist/interpretivist) is also recommended	In the first study, we conducted semi-structured interviews with students, lecturers, equality officers, and senior professionals affiliated with CHE institutions in Germany and Austria. In the second study, we collected qualitative open-ended responses within a predominantly quantitative online survey among students at German CHE institutions. Each analytic approach was selected according to the nature of the resulting data sets and the epistemological assumptions appropriate to each. The interviews were analyzed following the reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) methodology [46], while the online survey responses were analyzed using the structured tabular thematic analysis (ST-TA) approach [47]. RTA focuses on in-depth, active, and reflexive analyses and emphasizes interpretation and meaning making over quantification or inter-coder reliability [46]. In contrast, ST-TA is guided by an integrated understanding of qualitative methodologies and allows for quantification, the use of agreement finding processes between different coders, and the thorough qualitative analysis of large data sets containing brief texts [47]. Integrating both approaches enabled us to gain both broad insights from a large student sample and rich, in-depth understandings from extensive stakeholder interviews, while carefully acknowledging the differing analytical requirements of each body of data.	p.4
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S6		Researcher characteristics and reflexivity	Researchers' characteristics that may influence the research, including personal attributes, qualifications/experience, relationship with participants, assumptions, and/or presuppositions; potential or actual interaction between researchers' characteristics and the research questions, approach, methods, results, and/or transferability	Our multidisciplinary team, which included both qualitatively and quantitatively oriented psychologists and a researcher from the medical-psychiatric field, brought diverse methodological and epistemological perspectives to the project. We addressed these diverse perspectives by pursuing ongoing reflexivity, making deliberate methodological choices and engaging in critical reflection on our disciplinary positions. This process took place within the author team and through collaboration with external interpretive research groups and at academic workshops. Exchanges involved researcher colleagues from fields including public health, sociology, musicology, economics, medicine, and psychology. They led to iterative refinements of the interview themes and supported consensus-building for inter-analyst agreement on survey responses. While occasionally challenging, these additional reflexive steps enriched the analysis and enhanced both methodological rigor and critical engagement with our own positionalities as researchers. The first author took field notes during the interviews followed up using a research diary to reflect upon their own reactions and interview dynamics as they pertained to the research process.	p.6 p.7
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S7		Context	Setting/site and salient contextual factors; rationale	Both bodies of data were collected in 2022 as part of a broader mixed-methods project on misconduct and prevention at CHE institutions in German-speaking countries. In March 2022, four stakeholder groups were invited to participate using tailored invitation texts that were distributed via industry networks, equality, anti-discrimination bodies, and CHE student union bodies in Germany and Austria. This led to a blend of purposive and snowballing sampling of a broad range of perspectives from various career stages and disciplines. The data in Study 2 represent brief responses to open-ended survey questions from a mixed-method, mostly quantitatively oriented online survey addressing hostile and violent behavior towards students, students' demographic variables, and related mental health outcomes. The survey was conducted among students enrolled at state-accredited CHE institutions in Germany between July and September 2022.	p. 6 p.6 p.7
S8		Sampling strategy	How and why research participants, documents, or events were selected; criteria for deciding when no further sampling was necessary (e.g., sampling saturation); rationale	In March 2022, four stakeholder groups were invited to participate using tailored invitation texts that were distributed via industry networks, equality, anti-discrimination bodies, and CHE student union bodies in Germany and Austria. This led to a blend of purposive and snowballing sampling of a broad range of perspectives from various career stages and disciplines. We considered	p.6

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				a sample of 16 interviews analytically sufficient for the study aims based on the concept of information power [52]: the study pursued a focused aim (understanding of stakeholders' sensemaking around structural conditions and preventive needs against misconduct in CHE), participants held specificity for this aim through direct professional or lived experience with the phenomenon across four complementary stakeholder positions, and the in-depth interviews yielded rich dialogues. In line with the reflexive thematic analysis methodology, we treated sample adequacy as a matter of information richness rather than saturation [46]. The survey was conducted among students enrolled at state-accredited CHE institutions in Germany between July and September 2022.	
S9		Ethical issues pertaining to human subjects	Documentation of approval by an appropriate ethics review board and participant consent, or explanation for lack thereof; other confidentiality and data security issues	Both bodies of data were collected in 2022 as part of a broader mixed-methods project on misconduct and prevention at CHE institutions in German-speaking countries. Findings from this project have been published sequentially [17, 48]; the present study, integrating the stakeholder interviews with the open-text survey data, represents the third component, which accounts for the interval between data collection and publication. The project received ethical approval from the Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin Ethics Committee (approval no. EA2/295/21). Participants provided	p.6

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				written informed consent for both survey and interview participation.	
S10		Data collection methods	Types of data collected; details of data collection procedures including (as appropriate) start and stop dates of data collection and analysis, iterative process, triangulation of sources/methods, and modification of procedures in response to evolving study findings; rationale	We understood the two studies as forming a complementary multimethod design [54]: both instruments shared a deliberately parallel vision prompt and an industry-encompassing framing (see Section 2.2.1), yet the studies differ in their populations, analytic foci (articulated prevention needs vs. envisioned safe environments), and epistemological approaches. Points of overlap between the findings therefore indicate consistency across perspectives, while divergences and extensions are treated as substantive findings in their own right. Data collection was planned and implemented as part of an overarching research project on learning conditions in German-speaking CHE contexts. Although the interviews and online survey were conducted in two parallel but methodologically independent phases, the analysis was carried out sequentially: The interviews were analyzed in spring and summer 2024 and the online survey data in early 2025. To address our research questions comprehensively, we integrated the findings from both studies using the joint display method [56]. Although this technique and the integration principles we draw on originate in mixed-methods health research [56, 57], their underlying logic (the systematic juxtaposition of findings from independently analyzed datasets and the assessment of their fit) is not tied to	p.9

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				the qualitative–quantitative divide. Multimethod designs combining exclusively qualitative approaches have increasingly been conceptualized as a research strategy in their own right [55], and we adapted the joint display technique accordingly to enable a systematic comparison and synthesis of our two qualitative datasets. We distinguished three types of integration, extending the categories proposed by [56].	
S11		Data collection instruments and technologies	Description of instruments (e.g., interview guides, questionnaires) and devices (e.g., audio recorders) used for data collection; if/how the instrument(s) changed over the course of the study	The interview guidelines (see Supplementary Materials File S1) were designed based on existing research on issues of power and violence prevention in the creative industries and CHE [3, 20]. The first author piloted and discussed the guideline with two persons formerly affiliated with the creative industries. Core questions were designed with a broad focus to allow for intuitive expression of opinions, each underpinned by potential follow-up questions. The interview guide covered a broader thematic space than the analysis presented here: it opened with a vision question on safe working cultures in the cultural sector, framed analogously to the survey's 'miracle question' prompt (see Section 2.3.1), and further addressed participants' understandings and experiences of abuse of power and (digital) sexualized violence, structural risk factors and existing protective structures in the cultural sector, prevention needs specific to CHE, and wishes for future generations of cultural	p.7-8

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				workers (full guide: Supplementary Materials File S1). For the present article, we analyzed interview responses addressing examples of good practice and unresolved challenges regarding misconduct prevention; the industry-wide framing of several guide questions means, however, that prevention-related accounts frequently touched on professional life beyond the institutional context. Our analysis is guided by a sociological and environmental psychological reading of the capabilities approach. It assumes that a safe learning environment in the arts is a fundamental condition enabling individuals to access opportunities for personal development and to lead a self-determined (professional) life [31, 44]. The interviews with the four stakeholder groups associated with CHE institutions were conducted between spring and autumn 2022 via video conferencing (15 interviews) or phone call (one interview on the participant's request). The mean interview duration was 67 minutes. All interviews were conducted in German, audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim by the first author with the support of research assistants, and anonymized (all names, institutions and any content that could identify them were removed). Selected illustrative quotations were translated into English using DeepL and subsequently reviewed for accuracy by a professional translator fluent in both	
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				German and English. Editing of quotations was limited to the removal of fillers (e.g., "ehm") and the insertion of contextual information in square brackets; no content-bearing wording was altered. Selected illustrative quotations were translated into English and lightly edited for clarity and readability. The first author took field notes during the interviews followed up using a research diary to reflect upon their own reactions and interview dynamics as they pertained to the research process. The data in Study 2 represent brief responses to open-ended survey questions from a mixed-method, mostly quantitatively oriented online survey addressing hostile and violent behavior towards students, students' demographic variables, and related mental health outcomes. The survey was conducted among students enrolled at state-accredited CHE institutions in Germany between July and September 2022. The complete study is described in detail in another publication related to the overarching research project [17]. The data presented in this article are taken from the final open-ended survey question. Participants were invited to respond to the following prompt: "Finally, we would like to invite you to describe what a safer training and working culture in your industry would look like from your point of view. How would you notice in your everyday life as an artist that	
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				everyone can develop freely and safely in their artistic training and profession?”. The framing was developed and piloted following the “miracle question” technique borrowed from systemic counselling and solution-focused brief therapy.	
S12		Units of study	Number and relevant characteristics of participants, documents, or events included in the study; level of participation (could be reported in results)	The final sample consisted of overall 16 interviews with students, lecturers, equality officers and senior professionals (see Table 1) affiliated with 11 different CHE institutions in Germany and Austria (senior professionals additionally drew on experience across multiple institutions) Participants' gender was inferred indirectly from self-descriptions and the use of pronouns. Participant characteristics: See Table 1 in manuscript. Of the 611 persons representing the overall sample of the online survey, 233 students (38%) with a mean age of 27 years provided written accounts in the open text field following the miracle question. Responses lasted between 17 and 3253 characters (ø366 characters). The provided accounts resulted in a demographically diverse sample in terms of social background, gender, sexualities and degree programs (see Table 4). Participant characteristics: See Table 4 in manuscript.	p.9 p.10 p.16 p.16

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S13		Data processing	Methods for processing data prior to and during analysis, including transcription, data entry, data management and security, verification of data integrity, data coding, and anonymization/deidentification of excerpts	All interviews were conducted in German, audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim by the first author with the support of research assistants, and anonymized (all names, institutions and any content that could identify them were removed). Selected illustrative quotations were translated into English using DeepL and subsequently reviewed for accuracy by a professional translator fluent in both German and English. Editing of quotations was limited to the removal of fillers (e.g., "ehm") and the insertion of contextual information in square brackets; no content-bearing wording was altered. The first author took field notes during the interviews followed up using a research diary to reflect upon their own reactions and interview dynamics as they pertained to the research process. The interviews have been organized and analyzed using the software MAXQDA 24 following the Reflexive Thematic Analysis methodology. The open-ended survey response data was organized and analyzed using MAXQDA 24, applying Structured Tabular Thematic Analysis. This qualitative method is specifically suitable for the analysis of large volumes of brief texts.	p.7-8
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S14		Data analysis	Process by which inferences, themes, etc., were identified and developed, including the researchers involved in data analysis; usually references a specific paradigm or approach; rationale	The interviews were organized and analyzed using the software MAXQDA 24 following the Reflexive Thematic Analysis methodology [46]. The first author conducted inductive, iterative coding of the original untranslated material, progressively grouping the codes into higher-order themes and refining the resulting theme structure into core themes and sub-themes. The analysis was guided by a critical realist perspective, which acknowledges the subjective meaning-making of participants while also critically considering the structural contexts in which these meanings are produced. The data collection setting and the socio-structural positions of interviewer and stakeholders were carefully reflected, as they were considered crucial for interpreting the data and drawing conclusions [49]. The aim was to capture and make visible both patterns of common meaning across the data set, and divergent meanings within and between stakeholder groups. The evolving theme structures were iteratively presented to and discussed with fellow authors and in interpretive researcher groups to allow for critical examination and interpretive coherence. After familiarization with the dataset, the first author drafted initial codes and themes inductively for 30% of the (original, untranslated) data and discussed them within analysis	p.7 p.8
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				sessions with external researchers. In the next step, the themes were tabulated against the remaining data set, meaning the thematic structure in themes and subthemes could be iteratively refined. In a further step, we applied inter-analyst agreement checking (following ST-TA phase E [47]) to foster transparency and coding coherence. Two colleagues from unrelated projects served as independent external coders. They received the theme structure with extensive theme descriptions and applied the themes and subthemes to a randomly drawn 10% sample (n = 23 responses, drawn using MAXQDA's random sampling function) working in Excel. The coding unit was the complete open-text response, and multiple codes could be assigned per response. The coding patterns were merged, revealing shared and divergent coding decisions for the same data cells. Percentage agreement was calculated as the number of matching decisions relative to the total of matching and diverging decisions [47]. The initial agreement level prior to discussion was not retained in the study records; we therefore report the consensus-based procedure and acknowledge this as a limitation (see Section 4.3). Divergent decisions were discussed in two rounds to reach an agreement of at least 80% [47]. We note that the post-discussion figure reflects consensus and theme development rather than a reliability	
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				estimate [47]. Subsequently, the research team refined the thematic structure and theme names affected by these discussions and revised the affected sections of the coded dataset accordingly. As with the interview data, this reflexive engagement with the analytic process was crucial for an in-depth engagement with the data. Following coding agreement, the team explored theme frequencies and selected illustrative excerpts representing the respective themes and subthemes. These were translated following the same procedure as the interview quotations described above (DeepL translation, subsequently reviewed for accuracy by a professional translator fluent in both German and English).	
S15		Techniques to enhance trustworthiness	Techniques to enhance trustworthiness and credibility of data analysis (e.g., member checking, audit trail, triangulation); rationale	The evolving theme structures were iteratively presented to and discussed with fellow authors and in interpretive researcher groups to allow for critical examination and interpretive coherence. In a further step, we applied inter-analyst agreement checking (following ST-TA phase E [47]) to foster transparency and coding coherence. Two colleagues from unrelated projects served as independent external coders. They received the theme structure with extensive theme descriptions and applied the themes and subthemes to a randomly drawn 10% sample (n = 23 responses, drawn using MAXQDA's random sampling function) working in	p.7 p.8

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				Excel. The coding unit was the complete open-text response, and multiple codes could be assigned per response. The coding patterns were merged, revealing shared and divergent coding decisions for the same data cells. Percentage agreement was calculated as the number of matching decisions relative to the total of matching and diverging decisions [47]. The initial agreement level prior to discussion was not retained in the study records; we therefore report the consensus-based procedure and acknowledge this as a limitation (see Section 4.3). Divergent decisions were discussed in two rounds to reach an agreement of at least 80% [47]. We note that the post-discussion figure reflects consensus and theme development rather than a reliability estimate [47]. Subsequently, the research team refined the thematic structure and theme names affected by these discussions and revised the affected sections of the coded dataset accordingly.	
	Results/Findings				
S16		Synthesis and interpretation	Main findings (e.g., interpretations, inferences, and themes); might include development of a theory or model, or integration with prior research or theory	Based on stakeholder assessments gathered through the semi-structured inter-views, we generated three main themes concerning necessary preventive measures that participants deemed necessary to tackle misconduct tackling misconduct (see Table 2). The themes focused on transformations regarding the CHE community dynamics, specific	p.10

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				academic institutional structures, and stakeholders' norms and knowledge. Using structured tabular thematic analysis [46], we generated ten main themes with up to five subthemes. A thematic map of the resulting theme structure is presented in Figure 1. The extensive theme structure alongside occurrence rates in the data is displayed in Table 5. We report these percentages to characterize the coded material, not to quantify how common such views are among CHE students or to weigh themes against each other. Because the themes differ substantially in scope (some bundling several broad ideas, others capturing a single specific point) we treat frequency differences as descriptive information rather than as a ranking. The four main themes most frequently mentioned in connection with visionary considerations on learning and working environments focused on topics of communication quality ('Open, empathetic communication'), material conditions ('Solid foundations for work and learning'), DEI-informed institutional design ('Inclusive and equitable institutions'), and reliable institutional structures ('Institutional accountability and integrity'). Note that main-theme frequencies count unique respondents, while responses could be coded under multiple subthemes. See Results section in manuscript	p. 17 pp.9-23
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S17		Links to empirical data	Evidence (e.g., quotes, field notes, text excerpts, photographs) to substantiate analytic findings	See Results section in manuscript See Supplementary Materials	pp. 9-23
	Discussion				
S18		Integration with prior work, implications, transferability, and contribution(s) to the field	Short summary of main findings; explanation of how findings and conclusions connect to, support, elaborate on, or challenge conclusions of earlier scholarship; discussion of scope of application/ generalizability; identification of unique contribution(s) to scholarship in a discipline or field	See Discussion section in manuscript	p. 23 ff
S19		Limitations	Trustworthiness and limitations of findings	See limitation section 4.3	pp.27ff
S20		Conflicts of interest	Potential sources of influence or perceived influence on study conduct and conclusions; how these were managed	The authors declare no conflicts of interest	p.30
S21		Funding	Sources of funding and other support; role of funders in data collection, interpretation, and reporting	This research was funded by the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung, grant number 411926	p.30