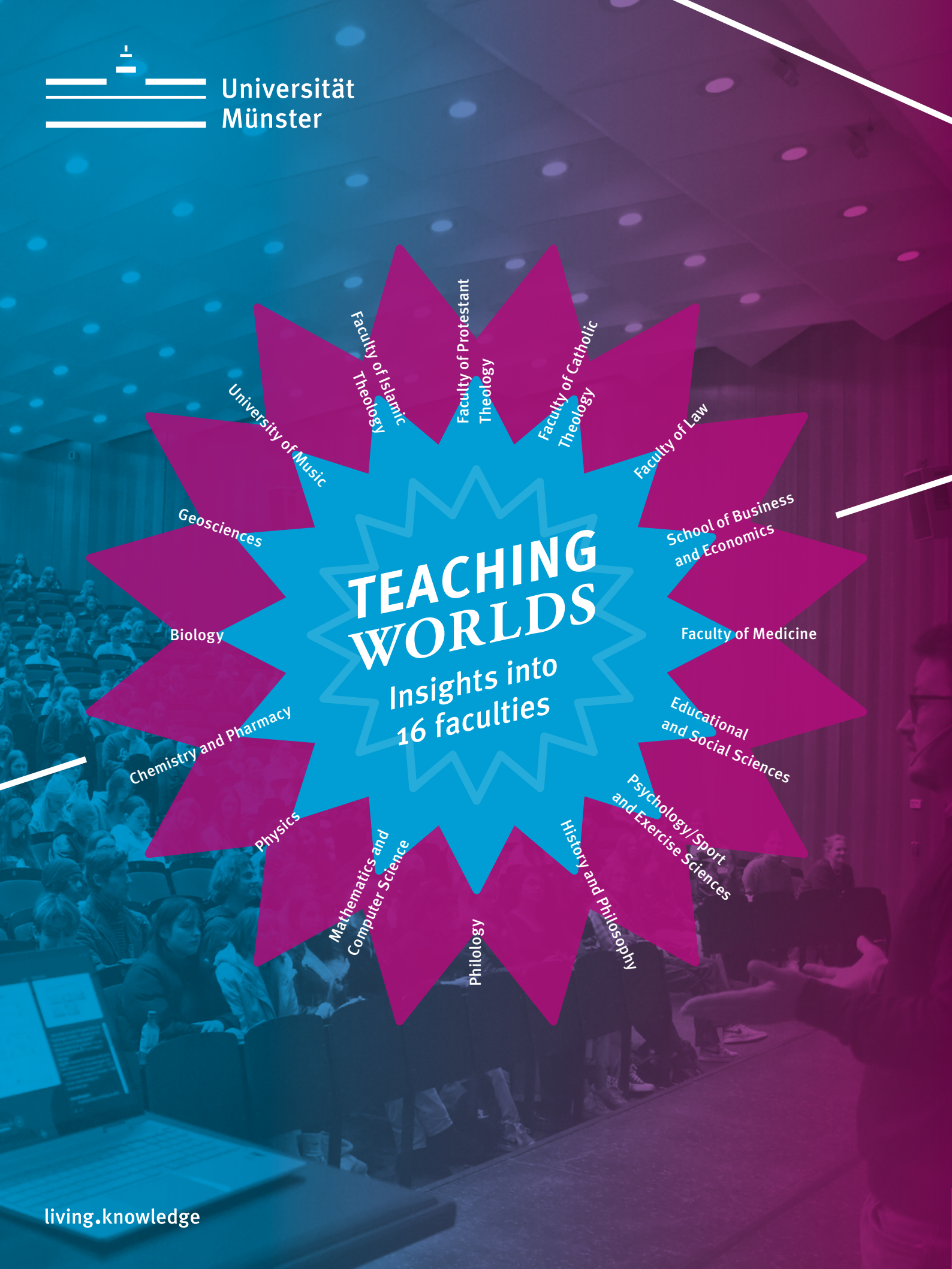
Universität Münster



living.knowledge

Foreword

Dear Reader,

Our university is known for its diversity and deep commitment to teaching and study. Its 16 faculties, around 160 subjects of study and some 300 degree programmes offer students a broad range of perspectives. Modern lecture halls, seminar rooms, teaching-learning labs, libraries, national and international partnerships and a vibrant campus life all contribute to this rich academic experience. In a dynamic world undergoing constant change, teaching plays a vital role. It is the motor for innovation and creates a shared space for dialogue, critical thinking and collaborative development. Our Mission Statement on Study and Teaching provides orientation that allows us to define fields of action, venture in innovative directions and adopt new impulses.

I visited all the faculties and invited them to present their own guiding principles. I encountered inspiring concepts for various degree programmes, committed instructors, curious students and projects that demonstrate what we are capable of today and what might be possible tomorrow. This “tour through our teaching activities” has promoted cross-disciplinary dialogue and the joint search for answers to central questions, e.g. how do we shape instruction that can inspire and excite students? How do we create learning spaces that encourage students to think for themselves and develop their own ideas?

In the following, I would like to take you along on an impressive tour of our faculties. You will become acquainted with new approaches and exemplary teaching concepts and gain insights into a broad range of degree programmes. You will be amazed at the creativity, passion and innovative strength of our university. And you will discover that the future of teaching arises wherever people dare to experiment, learn from one another, and assume shared responsibility.

I wish you a stimulating read and hope it motivates you to experience and help shape the excellent instruction our university offers.

Sincerely yours,

Prof Dr Ulrike Weyland
Vice-Rector for Teaching and Studies

Meeting the future together

Teaching is a demanding and lifelong developmental task. Instructors should inspire and guide their students. They should encourage and advise them, evaluate them fairly, take advantage of digital technologies and drive innovation. At the same time, we are witnessing how societal changes and the arrival of generative AI are directly impacting the higher education sector. Strategic study behaviour, individual burdens, limited resources and new technical possibilities are influencing instruction and the teaching community. What type of qualification programmes do instructors require in the face of these transformative forces? What does the “future of instruction” look like?

The Centre for Teaching in Higher Education (ZHL) has been addressing these issues since 2012. It was established through the federal- and state-funded “Quality Pact for Teaching” programme as a didactic institute of higher education at the University of Münster. The ZHL introduced services for digitally aided teaching (Learnweb, eLectures and Examweb) in its first five years. With its wide-ranging course programme, personalised counselling services and various networking initiatives, the ZHL provides university instructors with continuing education opportunities, and so doing, promotes modern and student-centric instruction at the University of Münster.

Its activities are defined by so-called “competence areas” that were established at all universities in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia: “Teaching and Learning”, “Testing and Assessment”, “Student Counselling”, “Feedback and Evaluation”, “Advancing Innovation”, and, in the future, “Teaching and Social Responsibility”. The ZHL formats in these areas, which include interdisciplinary workshops for small groups, not only help instructors acquire key competence but also subject-related confidence, didactic reflection, communicative sensitivity and the willingness to continually review and assess one’s actions. And this is where the true challenge lies.

The ZHL is the central contact point for all who wish to improve their teaching skills and would rather face the challenges of the future together than alone. The combination of personal and mutual effort plays an especially important role in this. The ZHL offers individual counselling to help instructors improve their own (digitally aided) teaching and strengthen their personal skills. The centre also serves as a place where instructors can engage in dialogue – after all, good instruction often comes with conversing, brainstorming and sharing one’s experiences with others.

The future of instruction at the University of Münster not only depends on committed instructors but also reliable support. The ZHL ensures that the demands do not lead to burnout but rather learning opportunities for developing professional teaching competence. It provides assistance to all lecturers and instructors with developing effective, high-quality instruction – now and in the future.

Your team at the Centre for Teaching
in Higher Education (ZHL)

uni.ms/m2tpj

↑ The practice course “Liturgical Recitation and Singing” in the University Church is one of many offered by the Faculty of Protestant Theology.

Encouraging critical thinking and assuming responsibility

Our teaching activities focus on working with the “Book of Books” – the Bible. In addition to studying classical disciplines, there are many possibilities to specialise and engage in international collaboration. Upon completion, graduates can look forward to exceptional career opportunities.

← In the Bible Museum of the University of Münster, visitors learn about the history of the Bible from its handwritten beginnings to the present day.

It has been more than 500 years since Martin Luther refused to recant his treatises and theses at the Diet of Worms. Addressing Emperor Charles V, he insisted it would be ‘difficult, unredemptive and dangerous’ were he to act against his conscience, especially against the Holy Scriptures. Centuries later, the pioneering reformer’s position has lost none of its relevance. On the contrary, Luther’s view remains an essential component of Protestant doctrine and an integral part of the Protestant DNA. For Martin Luther, the Bible – as the word of God – was a road that led to life. He believed that God spoke to us in the Bible as a ‘fellow man to his friends’. He concluded that ‘the Bible is not ancient, nor is it modern – it is eternal.’

Therefore, it is no surprise that the “Book of Books” remains the core focus of every Protestant theology degree programme – as it is in Münster, home to one of the largest training facilities for Protestant theology in Europe. While the Catholic Church regards both the Holy Scriptures and papal and episcopal doctrine as equally important source material, Protestant theologians regard the Bible as the sole foundation of all action and thought: “sola scriptura” (by Scripture alone). As Dr Sarah Riegert, the faculty’s managing director, explains, ‘we work intensively with the texts, that is our distinctive basis.’

The course offerings span the five main traditional disciplines: Old Testament including Biblical archaeology, New Testament, church history, systematic theology (dogmatics and ethics), and practical theology including religious education. For the 19 degree programmes, students must substantiate a certain level of proficiency in various languages. For example, those who pursue a *“Magister Theologiae”* or an ecclesiastical final examination are required to pass the Advanced Latin language certificate *(großes Latinum),* the Ancient Greek language

”

We work intensively with the texts, that is our distinctive basis.

Dr Sarah Riegert, the faculty’s managing director

“

certificate *(Graecum)* and the Hebrew language certificate *(Hebraicum)* before the intermediate examination. For those studying to become a teacher, one must pass either the *Graecum*, the *Hebraicum* or the Basic Latin language certificate *(kleines Latinum)*.

In addition to this indispensable “foundation”, there are multiple ways for students in Münster to gain expertise in an area of specialisation. With the Institute for New Testament Textual Research, the Bible Museum, the Institute for Ethics and Associated Social Sciences, the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum, the Institute of Ecumenical Theology, the Department of Reformed Theology and the

Department of Religious Studies and Intercultural Theology, ‘one can choose numerous focal areas of specialisation within one’s degree programme,’ says Dean of Studies Professor Christophe Nihan. Another interesting course of study in past years has been the master’s programme in “Spiritual Care” which introduces graduates to ‘new approaches in holistic guidance and counselling for people coping with illness, crisis and suffering.’

There are three “key aspects” that are integral for all teaching and non-teaching degree programmes at the Faculty of Protestant Theology. First: critical skills in pluralistic thinking. Students should be able to form their own, informed judgement while also remaining open to varying perspectives. ‘For us, the individual lies front and centre,’ says Christophe Nihan. ‘We want to encourage critical thinking while also closely intertwine theory and practice with respect to our social responsibility.’

Second: collaboration with other disciplines, knowledge transfer in society and the promotion of “soft skills”.

866 students*

14 degree programmes
5 bachelor’s, 7 master’s, 2 ecclesiastical

12 institutes and departments

14 professorships

Special feature:
Bible Museum

studienbuerofb1@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/1e3pj

As of the 2025/26 winter semester | * For further details, see the legal notice on p. 52

Theological training covers a broad historical and systematic range – from antiquity to the present day. Consequently, it encourages exchange with other disciplines and subjects and helps students develop basic but important skills, such as academic writing, public speaking and substantiated argumentation.

The third key aspect: “the methodology of materiality of religions”. To this end, students acquire skills that enable them to interact with the material forms of religious expression, such as manuscripts and rituals. The important thing is a willingness to “learn from outsiders”. As Sarah Riegert points out, ‘in a globalised working world and in culturally mixed teams, this is absolutely essential.’

The degree programme in theology offers a ‘very sound basis’ for entering a variety of occupational fields – even outside the rectory. Students benefit from various possibilities that allow them to spend part of their programme studying abroad. The Faculty of Protestant Theology has concluded numerous cooperation agreements with international universities and Erasmus programme partners, e.g. in Zimbabwe, Jerusalem, Rome, Vienna and Hong Kong. In close coordination with the Careers Service of the University of Münster, the faculty also offers a broad range of advisory services and seminars on personal career orientation and profile-building. Other seminars teach participants self-management, building professional networks, professional communication and application training. Based on the faculty’s observations, students have close to a 100% chance of practising a profession after graduation.

The University of Münster has a long tradition – indeed since its founding – of strongly focusing on theological study. In the coming years, this tradition stands to greatly benefit from the new “Campus of Theology and Religious Studies”. The Faculties of Catholic and Protestant Theology will be situated at a single location together with the Faculty of Islamic Theology. Centralising the faculties will result in the creation of the largest theological library in Europe. According to the Rectorate, ‘by bringing together old and new institutional structures, the University of Münster will not only strengthen interdisciplinary partnerships but also send a signal for navigating religious diversity and equal treatment.’ This could well be of great interest and value to all future theology students.

Text: NORBERT ROBERS

↑ Students of Catholic Theology, like these in the religious education course with Professor Clauß Peter Sajak, develop their own methodological approaches and design new teaching materials.

New answers to old questions

Empty churches, sinking membership, dwindling church tax revenues – the era of mainstream churches appears to be over. But occupying oneself with matters of faith remains a rewarding endeavour– especially in view of our cultural heritage and the future of Europe.

Why study theology nowadays? Because it offers us the opportunity to sit together with young people in religion class and discuss the Christian faith and its significance for leading a good life. To this end, students majoring in Religious Education at the Faculty of Catholic Theology develop their own methodological approaches and create new teaching materials. Some of these are printed in book form by

educational publishers, including unconventional, interreligious learning products. For example, there's the cookery book "Ich glaube, das schmeckt" (I Believe It Tastes Good), containing recipes from different religious cultures that highlight their respective traditions and eating rituals.

Empirical studies substantiate the public's waning acceptance and the resulting declining legitimation of Christian theology. With regard to Catholic theology and in view of the most recent church crises (loss of members, reports of abuse), many are increasingly asking what theology as an academic discipline can contribute to our society. The potential is obvious – students of theology enhance their language skills, learn how to parse and discuss texts, and more fully comprehend how people and organisations interact.

The courses offered by the Faculty of Catholic Theology offer corresponding opportunities for co-determination and debate. In addition to the regular courses, e.g. language courses, the exegesis of Biblical texts and seminars on church history, there are also participative formats such as the award-winning "Brown Bag Lectures" where members of the faculty and University sit down to discuss structural problems and their potential solutions.

Responding to and tolerating different opinions is one of the standards of instruction at the Faculty of Catholic Theology. This might appear to contradict the concept of papal infallibility. Researchers have long pointed out, however, that infallibility – historically speaking – is a more recent development in church history. Indeed, the church fathers of early Christianity often wrestled with tenets of the faith. Rules were put in place and later discarded. How this played out in everyday life is a different story altogether.

Today the ability to think critically and independently is a key skill in a discipline that aims to teach students how to competently defend their own viewpoints. These skills are also the building blocks for democracy. The module "Basics of Theology", for example, is a kind of *"tour d'horizon"* through the entire subject, offered to all students by twelve professors in the faculty. In this module as well, 'viewing society as a whole is important,' emphasises Head of Faculty Professor Oliver Dyma.

In terms of didactic methods, the faculty employs a variety of approaches. One special format is the revision course organised *by* students *for* students, during which the content of the introductory lectures is reviewed. In the "Peer-learning module", bachelor's students develop their own teaching materials, e.g. picture books and textbooks on topics like friendship, creation and human interaction – supplemented with didactic notes.

The material from this "didactic double-decker" that allows participants to both teach and learn is particularly well received by teaching degree students. The reason is that such materials can later be used during the practical semester or directly in class, e.g. the self-designed, topical and child-friendly book about saints.

The knowledge gained from instruction not only finds its way into schools around the region but also institutions beyond the University of Münster. For example, together with the heads of the Centres for Practical Teacher Training at Schools in North Rhine-Westphalia, Professor Clauß Peter Sajak coedited a practical handbook on lesson preparation.

Speaking of reaching out beyond Münster, the faculty encourages students to study at partner universities abroad, e.g. in Finland, Switzerland, Poland and Ireland. Excursions in Germany and abroad take students to key venues of religious history, for example, in the advanced seminar "Interreligious Learning in Sarajevo", organised in cooperation with the Faculty of Islamic Theology. The chance to visit in person allows students to gain practical knowledge of religious life and learn how religions are instrumentalised in conflicts.

In many courses, instructors discuss current events, such as "ecumenism and war" in the module course "Systematic Theology" by Professor Regina Elsner. The course explores the history of the ecumenical ethics of peace, analyses the relationship between ecumenical dialogue on matters of doctrine and socio-ethical positions, and investigates the possibilities of church interventions in wars. In the introductory bachelor's seminar "Historical Theology", students focus particularly on Ukraine and the 1,000-year history of Christianity in that country. To this day, Ukraine is home to one of the largest Christian Orthodox communities in eastern Europe.

Those who complete a full-time degree programme in theology are qualified to work as pastoral assistants and can assume responsibility for one or more congregations. This career path has become increasingly relevant in recent years in light of the dwindling number of candidates for the priesthood. Graduates acquire a sense for people's needs and hardships during their studies and are trained to integrate themselves in organisations. 'These are skills that are valued in the business world as well,' points out Oliver Dyma. That explains why some graduates pursue careers at coaching or consulting firms.

Text: BRIGITTE HEEKE

← Faith is immeasurable, but for academics and researchers, church artworks illustrate how people have imagined biblical content.

1,473 students

15 degree programmes:
6 bachelor's, 6 master's, 3 ecclesiastical

14 institutes and departments

20 professorships

Special features
Study Office, the central contact point for current and prospective students

fb2wma.dekanat@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/2px4i

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

Law for the common good

There is possibly no other course of study as steeped in history as the law programme. The Faculty of Law draws strength from its more than 100 years of teaching experience, while proving that innovation in jurisprudence is possible.

The mandatory requirements

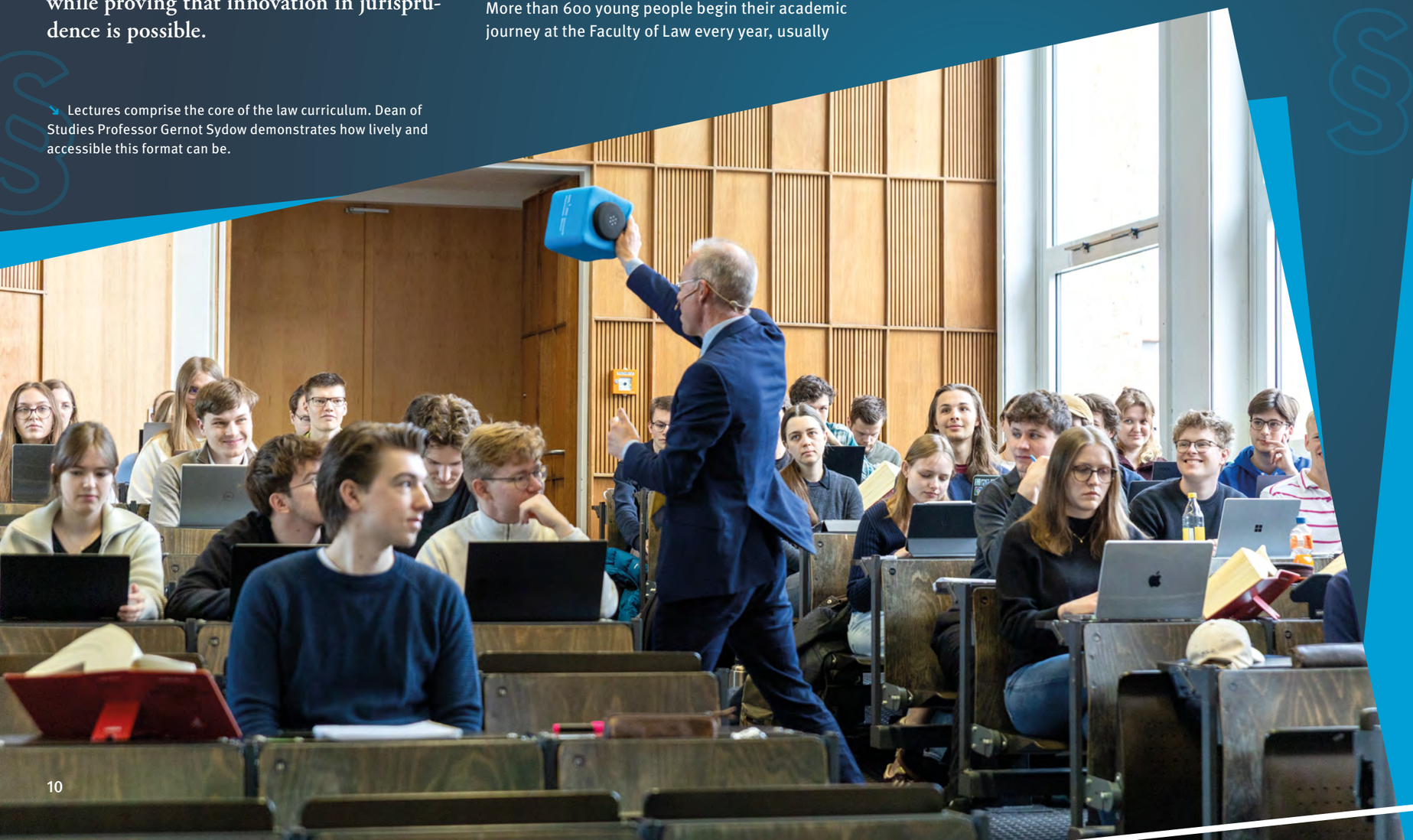
The state examination degree programme comprises at the core of the law curriculum. It is based on the "Act on Legal Examinations and Legal Preparatory Service (Legal Education Act of North Rhine-Westphalia – JAG NRW)". Those who successfully complete the examination programme and legal preparatory service (practice-oriented legal clerkship (*Referendariat*)) may call themselves a fully trained attorney (*Volljurist*) and, depending on their aptitude, can work as a judge, state attorney or lawyer.

More than 600 young people begin their academic journey at the Faculty of Law every year, usually starting in the winter semester, but also quite a few in the summer semester. The students' high success rate is due in no small part to the faculty's expertise in teaching. The professors and dozens of other instructors begin by conveying the fundamentals of their discipline in lectures, e.g. in the areas of civil, criminal and public law. At the same time, students are introduced to the history and philosophy of law, as well as various process and procedural regulations. 'The large lectures are an important tool; they allow us, together with the students, to efficiently lay the necessary foundation for the further course of their studies. This frees up capacities to provide more intensive supervision to students working in small groups in later semesters, which is so valuable,' explains Dean of Studies Professor Gernot Sydow.

Lectures and study groups are central to the first two semesters in the two-year foundational study phase. Gernot Sydow offers the course "German and European Constitutional Law". Some 350 first-semester students sit together in tightly packed rows in auditorium F 1. Law is one of the few disciplines at the University of Münster that boasts such a high attendance rate – and that without a mandatory attendance rule and with students far beyond their first semester.

When he addresses the topic "Republic and Secularity" in his lecture, Gernot Sydow demonstrates that – contrary to what many assume – the Faculty of Law does not focus on teaching students to memorise legal statutes by heart. It's more about transnational comparative law, historical bases and processes and, above all, mindsets and working methods. Students learn the processes and principles of legal work. This provides them with the argumentative

↘ Lectures comprise the core of the law curriculum. Dean of Studies Professor Gernot Sydow demonstrates how lively and accessible this format can be.



Balancing achievement and care

'Studying at university can and should be the most wonderful time of your life,' says Dean of Studies Gernot Sydow to the first-semester students in auditorium F 1. However, high expectations, psychological illnesses and loneliness can make studying difficult. 'Most of you will have no problems, but for those who do, let me assure you: you are not alone.' Gernot Sydow hopes this important digression about what really matters can offer students some clarity and relief. 'You can't put yourself under pressure to perform during your whole programme and entire life.' He knows that the study of law requires hard work, discipline and perseverance, and that the curriculum is demanding. Therefore, he is committed to establishing a disciplinary culture that also celebrates average performance, i.e. a "satisfactory" grade. 'Take care of yourself and others,' he urges his listeners, proving that the Faculty of Law is there to support its students. They show their instructor their gratitude with a rousing round of applause.

and methodical skills to solve practice-oriented test cases – the ideal prerequisites for a future career in law.

On their way there, they are required to pass an interim examination in the fourth semester. The fifth and sixth semesters are devoted to areas of specialisation. This is when students specialise in one of ten focal areas of law, e.g. “Business and Corporations”, “Criminology” and “Labour and Social Matters”. The style of instruction also changes at this point. The lectures are usually much smaller and specialised and can be selected by students based on their personal interests.

For an impression of the intensity and student-centred focus of teaching at the Faculty of Law (FB 03), one need only visit the faculty’s own final examination review course “unirep”. During the seventh and eighth semester, students review the content and especially the methods taught in the prior semesters in preparation for the first state examination. The review course “unirep” is widely known throughout Germany and attracts a number of transfer students. The faculty invests a great deal of time, money and staffing in this structured and free review course in lectures, working groups and courses, supplemented by extensive services online. This is where students can download practice examinations and their solutions, handouts, recorded lectures and podcasts. In this way, the faculty lives up to its mission to provide students with optimal preparation for these important final examinations. ‘There are regulations in place that precisely define the structure of the state examination degree programme. ‘But at the same time, we want to be flexible and show initiative so that we can cater to the needs of our students as best we can,’ says Gernot Sydow.

A plenitude of options

Even if the state examination programme is often equated with the study of law, the teaching activities at the faculty are heterogenous, international and interdisciplinary thanks to several bachelor’s and master’s programmes. ‘There are very few faculties of law in Germany that offer students such a broad selection of programmes,’ asserts Gernot Sydow. These include the dual degree programmes “Economics and Law” and “Political Science and Law” and such internationally oriented programmes as “German and French Law” and “International and Comparative Law.”

To underscore how much it values the diversity of legal instruction, the faculty has meanwhile established three internationally oriented chairs. One of them is held by Professor Elsemieke Daalder, who discusses property rights in comparison with other European countries in one of her lectures. Like Gernot Sydow, she too avoids teaching at students from the front. Instead, she gets students to review older materials while taking new content into consideration. She speaks freely, offers numerous anecdotes and is approachable. In this respect, she and Gernot Sydow exemplify the dynamic and collaborative teaching methods employed at the Faculty of Law. ‘High standards are important to us, as is offering students degree programmes and career prospects that are as individualised as possible,’ explains Gernot Sydow.

Text: ANDRÉ BEDNARZ

5,658 students

5 degree programmes:
1 state examination,
2 bachelor’s und 2 master’s

12 institutes

36 professorships

Special features:
- **“unirep”, the free and in-depth final exam review course**
- **extensive in-service continuing education master’s programmes**

siz@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/b9em3

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

FB 4 School of Business and Economics

Thinking about economics as relationships

↑ Course instructors and the REACH – Euregio Start-up Center provide support and advice to those thinking about starting their own company.

Studying the development of economic systems and the factors that influence them is the focus of one of the largest faculties at the University of Münster. At the School of Business and Economics, around 6,500 students learn the ins and outs of economic relationships and acquire a deep understanding of complex decision-making processes.

Memorising and plugging in formulas? That was yesterday. In order to get the several hundred first-semester students quickly up to speed and on the same page, the lecturers at the School of Business and Economics (FB 04) have developed the so-called “Onboarding module”. The students are motivated to “actively listen”, get involved

and participate. This helps loosen up the “front-forward” teaching format so typical in lectures. In one such morning lecture, a wireless cube microphone weaves its away around the room, encouraging students to take part in the discussion. The professors regularly leave their post at the podium in lecture hall H 1 and speak directly to students seated in the upper gallery. The lesson plan is often augmented with guest lectures by top managers from international corporations like Henkel and Amazon, or successful German start-ups like Flaschenpost.

From day one, students are taught to regard business administration (BWL) as a science and participate in virtual-reality experiments. ‘We try to present the diversity of Münster’s BWL programme while conveying a bit of the emotional side, as well,’ explains Professor Thorsten Hennig-Thurau, who teaches and conducts research on the topic of marketing and media at the Marketing Center of the University of Münster. He and Professor Manfred Krafft have meanwhile established a tradition of asking two students “from the crowd” to come up on stage on the first day of class, greeting them with a handshake and welcoming them on board the “HMS BWL”.

It pays to keep the lectures lively and varied. Without inspiration, expertise has little value, explains Thorsten Hennig-Thurau. For him, the prospect that graduates might spend decades in a job they don’t like is a “horrible” thought. That’s why the faculty supports collaboration and student initiative – despite the high degree of preparation that goes into them. A mix of different course formats also helps in this regard. In addition to large lectures, numerous courses are offered in smaller formats.

↑ The “Forum Oeconomicum” offers 3,000 m² of library space and 400 workstations and “Learn Labs” – sound-proofed glass cubicles equipped with group worktables and touchscreens.

Business administration is a subject distinguished by a diverse range of topics and didactic methods. By no means is it monolithic; students are also taught about finances, marketing, entrepreneurship and digital transformation. In addition to the BWL bachelor’s degree, the faculty offers master’s, doctoral and continuing education programmes that cover the economic spectrum – from business administration and macroeconomics to interdisciplinary programmes and information systems. By learning the respective theories through economic fundamentals, students are prepared to enter a highly diversified labour market. Starting on day one, the curriculum emphasises that economics comprises more than merely dealing with stock prices, markets and indicators. ‘People’s wishes and needs – whether they’re customers or employees – are what drive corporate success stories,’ says Thorsten Hennig-Thurau.

Even in the introductory phase of their programmes, students examine realistic problems that go beyond the classical “target-actual analyses”. For example, a group of information systems majors in the “Crisis Management” project seminar developed a simulation for a civil protection response that could be used by municipal governments to organise humanitarian aid in the event of a disaster. The students then presented their results and the material they developed to a regional company that supports them as a project partner.

For those thinking about starting their own company one day, the faculty’s instructors offer initial tools to do just that. These efforts are backed by the REACH – Euregio Start-up Center whose stakeholders work closely with the faculty. From brainstorming an idea in class to building a prototype to testing its marketability, the start-up teams develop their projects in modularly designed offices on Geiststrasse. Coaches and mentors are on hand to accompany the process. REACH also encourages prospective entrepreneurs to pitch their ideas at start-up fairs and competitions with the aim of attracting investors.

Embracing new ideas and developments, e.g. the rapid rise of artificial intelligence (AI), and putting them to use for the benefit of society is baked into the DNA of the faculty’s teaching activities. In the area of information systems on the Leonardo Campus, students and doctoral candidates are developing solutions for hospitals to improve medical treatment or for research projects from the humanities and cultural studies disciplines. They collaborate with external project partners, such as the professional football club Preussen Münster, the tool manufacturer HILTI and several transportation companies. Students can help come up with answers to current research questions and independently take steps to academically explore economic relationships.

There are several reasons for why talented young people choose to study business and economics in Münster. The quality of the faculty’s teaching and research activities and the inspiration they generate are reflected in national and international rankings. In fact, the faculty is ranked the second-best study location in Germany by DAX board members, its auditing department ranks fourth place by *Manager Magazine,* and Shanghai Ranking lists the faculty at sixth place. For students seeking international careers, the faculty offers numerous study abroad opportunities as well as four English-language master’s programmes: Business Administration, Economics, Information Systems and Business Development.

‘Our degree programmes open a variety of paths to understanding and shaping economic conditions,’ says Dr Stefan Schellhammer, Vice-Dean for Teaching and Student Affairs. ‘They create a basis for exciting career perspectives and development opportunities.’

Aside from the academic programmes, student groups offer various extracurricular activities or organise in social, community and entrepreneurial projects. These serve to strengthen self-initiative, creativity and a sense of responsibility, and help students build long-lasting networks.

Text: BRIGITTE HEEKE

6,565 students

24 degree programmes
7 bachelor’s, 5 master’s, 12 continuing education

39 professorships

9 centres
with 41 institutes, chairs and groups

Special features:

- **accreditation from the “Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business” since 2011**
- **over 124 partner universities**
- **24 guest professorships**
- **5 double degree programmes**

info@wiwi.uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/igjal

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

Specialist training with a human touch

In the Faculty of Medicine, students quickly learn to take responsibility – in a practice-oriented, scientifically informed and human-centric way.

This morning when Sophia enters the treatment room in the “Study Hospital Münster”, a certain “Rafael Mendes” is already waiting for her. Fingers tapping restlessly on the armrests, he looks nervous and is seeking eye contact. She’s here to discuss an upcoming operation he’ll be having. Gently, clearly, professionally. Rafael Mendes is the name of today’s patient, who is being played by a trained amateur actor. Nonetheless, the situation seems real – and that’s exactly the point. The students are taught to embrace closeness, while also keeping a certain professional distance. The roleplay is meant to build up students’ confidence, not only in terms of their medical knowledge but also their future role as a doctor.

↙ The Study Hospital Münster opened in 2007 as a realistic learning lab. Here, medical students work with actors to hone their newly acquired practical skills, which in turn builds their confidence in patient-oriented interaction. During the training, they are observed and assessed by their instructors and fellow students.

This experience is typical for degree programmes in human medicine, dentistry and midwifery studies at the University of Münster. The objective is to train scientifically informed and practically competent doctors and midwives who are capable of acting independently, gaining advanced qualification and conducting research on their own. In addition to learning about bodily functions and illnesses, they acquire competence in diagnostic, therapeutic and preventive methods, ethical orientation, communication skills and a cross-disciplinary understanding of medicine. The Faculty of Medicine regards its medical training as central in developing one’s identity, otherwise known as “professional identity formation”. ‘The goal isn’t to make our graduates think, feel and act *like* doctors, but rather to *be* doctors,’ says Dean of Studies Professor Bernhard Marschall.

The faculty has implemented a clearly structured and practice-oriented path to achieving just that. The full medical degree programme takes at least six and a half years to complete and is divided into a four-semester preclinical and an eight-semester clinical period of study. The latter includes the “practical year”. The curriculum is supplemented by a first-aid training course, a stint of nursing service, mandatory work placements – called “*Famulaturen*” (clinical traineeships) – and a three-part medical examination. This nationally standardised framework offers students orientation and allows them to specialise in areas of personal interest. The medical programme in Münster is unique in that courses are not held independently of one another, but are rather embedded in thematically related modules, such as the “Cardio-vascular system” or “Musculoskeletal system”. This allows students to better apply any prior knowledge they have and integrate newly learned information, which in turn facilitates lifelong learning.

For students like Sophia, this structure is filled with life at the Study Hospital. Under simulated traffic noise, they learn how to carry out onsite emergency examinations, conduct patient consultations and stitch up wounds on synthetic skin in the “SkillsLab”. They begin practising their skills with healthy people, and later with actual patients. Making mistakes is expressly allowed, for learning is all about trying, failing and improving. The various teaching formats – such as class instruction at a patient’s sickbed, seminars in small groups, problem-oriented learning in tutorials and practical courses and block internships – are all interconnected.

↓ The “Learning center for individual medical skills training” (LIME) consists of twelve small treatment rooms with mirrored windows, which facilitate practice-oriented clinical training.

The combination of practice and theory continues in the scientific component of the programme. In addition to realistic training environments, such as the Study Hospital and the “LIMETTE” learning centre, a new, cutting-edge Study Lab will be added to the faculty in 2026. This new facility, unlike any other in Germany, will offer far greater scientific depth to the medical programme where academic life will be influenced by numerous research projects, research schools and doctoral programmes. In this way, up-and-coming medical professionals will be introduced to current research topics at an early stage – from molecular mechanisms to innovative imaging techniques to the latest clinical studies. This goes to show that research is not regarded as an afterthought, but rather as an integral part of medical practice. Especially accomplished students have the opportunity to augment their studies by participating in parallel doctoral courses in the “MedK” medical college, dedicated to systemically connecting experimental research with a clinical context.

4,416 students

4 degree programmes
2 state examination degree programmes, 1 bachelor’s, 1 master’s

131 professorships

43 institutes

Special feature:
Institute of Medical Education (IfAS)

curriculum@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/r6neq

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

This clinical context is supported by a broad medical infrastructure. The University Hospital Münster (UKM) with its numerous specialised clinics and centres represents almost the entire spectrum of modern medicine. The clinical range is directly reflected in the training programme, which is further strengthened by close partnerships with other disciplines, e.g. biology, chemistry, pharmacy, physics, mathematics, computer science and psychology. In other words, medical training at the University of Münster takes place in a scientific environment that combines basic research, clinical application and technological innovation.

The use of digital tools is part and parcel of this strategy. They complement patient-oriented training by facilitating in-depth learning and promoting considered action. The lectures are offered in hybrid form, i.e. in-person classroom instruction can be viewed simultaneously online. Students can access their documents, e.g. timetables and course certificates, via an app specifically developed for this purpose by the faculty. Artificial intelligence helps students practise consultations and simulations, while virtual-reality applications allow them to respond to scenarios that are difficult to train for in advance, for instance, diagnosing brain death.

Another factor that distinguishes Münster’s medical programme is its personal character. The University of Münster is one of the few higher education institutions in Germany that allows students to enrol in both summer and winter semesters. The result is relatively small cohorts which is conducive to more personalised supervision, greater professor-student interaction in class, and room for scientific curiosity – also with respect to one’s future career path.

At the end of the practical day, Sophia reports on her conversation with “Rafael Mendes” in her seminar. She describes several situations which she would have liked to have resolved differently. Her instructor listens carefully, asks questions and encourages her. Knowledge is the basis, but only by consciously applying it can students learn to assume responsibility. And what applies to patient treatment also applies to science in general. Which is exactly what students learn in Münster – step by step, conversation by conversation, experience by experience.

Text: DR KATHRIN KOTTKE

↑ Not “R2-D2”, but two Bee and Blue bots. The teaching degree students Mia Kösters, Katharina Runge and Kristina Dreiskemper (l-r) are shown how to program learning robots for classroom instruction by Dr Raphael Fehrmann (far left).

Leading debates, shaping the future

Our world undoubtedly faces countless challenges. To surmount the problems of today and tomorrow, we need people who can think critically, act responsibly and find solutions. These three aspects distinguish the teaching activities of the Faculty of Educational and Social Sciences (FB 06). Equipped with subject-relevant and personal competence from these fields, students acquire the tools to shape the socio-political debates of the future.

Wars, humanitarian emergencies, an overheated planet, pandemics, economic insecurity – almost every day we hear reports on natural catastrophes and political conflicts from crisis-ridden regions. This makes it all the more important to constantly reevaluate social, political, environmental and economic strategies and objectives. Social and educational sciences provide helpful expertise in this regard.

Consequently, it is no wonder that the Faculty of Educational and Social Sciences aims to provide its students with the personal and subject-relevant skills necessary to help shape current and future debates. ‘We believe it is important to incorporate the social challenges of today and tomorrow into our curriculum,’ says Head of Faculty Professor Thorsten Quandt. The institutes of Education (IfE), Communication (IfK) and Political Science (IfPol) and Sociology (IfS) are among the oldest and largest in Germany. ‘Problem-solving, critical evaluation and responsible action are the three central aspects of our teaching activities,’ adds Professor Matthias Freise, Vice-Dean for Student Affairs and Digitalisation. The faculty’s four research facilities integrate “research-oriented learning” in both teaching and non-teaching degree programmes, during which students independently carry out their own research projects.

↑ In the project seminar “Münster Barometer”, sociology students learn how to use the tools of the trade for conducting surveys.

11,784 students

40 degree programmes
19 bachelor’s, 21 master’s

4 institutes | 51 professorships

dek.fbo6@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/rhuix

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

Institute of Education (IfE) – A diverse thematic and methodological spectrum in 400 courses per semester

Whether in the family, preschool, school, on the job or in one’s free time, education plays a significant role for people of all ages and in all areas of life. Students majoring in educational science learn how to supervise and support children, adolescents and adults on their educational journey. The Institute of Education (IfE) offers some 400 courses each semester, comprising a diverse range of themes and didactic methodology. Thanks to its size, the instructors not only teach students the fundamentals of educational science. They also offer lectures and seminars that address democratisation, digitalisation and inclusive education. The IfE focuses on providing pedagogical qualification to future teachers for all types of schools in Germany. There are also non-teaching degree programmes in educational science, as well as a teacher training programme in the subject Educational Theory.

Department of Communication (IfK) – Applying theory and practice to shape responsible-minded communication of tomorrow

The degree programmes in “Communication science” teach students the methods, knowledge and media-practical skills necessary for working in media- and communication-related fields independently and in a responsible manner, as well as conducting applied and university-based research. The Department of Communication (IfK) is characterised by small learning groups, intensive student supervision and the combination of academic training and the acquisition of initial job experience in journalism, strategic communication and the media industry. In research seminars, the students independently explore such topics as social media activism, the politicisation of sport journalism, and accessible and discrimination-free communication. Along with lectures held by expert professionals, the curriculum is supplemented by excursions to editorial offices, agencies and companies. In addition to the bachelor’s and master’s programme in “Communication Science” and “Strategic Communications”, the IfK began offering a new master’s programme in “Knowledge and Communication” in the winter semester 2025/26.

Institute of Political Science (IfPol) – Leading the way with an international curriculum for the past 25 years

Gerhard Lehmbruch, one of the founding fathers of German political science, defined politics as follows: ‘Politics is that human undertaking which aims to forge general binding rules and decisions in and between groups of people.’ The curriculum at the Institute of Political Science (IfPol) is characterised by a diverse array of subject combinations and many opportunities to specialise and gain professional orientation. Internationalisation plays a special role in this mix. For the past 25 years, IfPol has been working together with the French university of political science, Sciences Po Lille, and the Dutch University of Twente in Enschede. In cooperation with these partners, IfPol offers four joint degree programmes in English, French and German. In fact, it has played a pioneering role in engaging in this type of university partnership. The teaching unit in social sciences, in which IfPol participates along with the Institute of Sociology and the Institute of Economic Education, is the largest teacher training facility in North Rhine-Westphalia for all types of schools in the subject of Social Sciences.

Institute of Sociology (IfS) – Explaining societal developments with social-scientific methods

Introducing students to a broad spectrum of social-scientific methods is one of the distinguishing features of instruction at the Institute of Sociology (IfS). These include standardised questionnaires, qualitative interviews and modern video analyses. For example, the IfS has been in charge of conducting “Münster Barometer” together with the newspaper *Westfälische Nachrichten* since 1993. This makes the student-conducted survey of local residents the longest running research project at the University of Münster. While the bachelor’s programmes focus on building a theoretical, empirical and methodical basis of knowledge, the master’s programmes offer a research-oriented learning environment. The students learn together in small groups, jointly develop empirical studies in research seminars and participate in excursions. Not only does this provide students with more individual academic supervision, but also an opportunity to study current societal trends in depth. Another highlight is the new master’s programme in “Diversity and Social Inequality” which commenced in the winter semester 2025/26.

Text: KATHRIN NOLTE

„Both subjects are highly relevant in today's society“

In 1998 the University management merged the departments of Psychology and Sport and Exercise Sciences into a single faculty. It was not a love match, as subject advisor for psychology Dr Christel Dirksmeier and Dean of Studies and motion scientist Professor Heiko Wagner recall. Despite slight differences in teaching styles, both point out in the following interview how much their self-image has in common.

You both coordinate the teaching activities in your respective subjects independently from one another. But what do you share in common?

Heiko Wagner: Of course, there is. Both subjects are research-oriented with projects that have a practical application and social relevance. We train young people so they can later help others in various areas and phases of their lives.

Christel Dirksmeier: But we do take different approaches. Most degree programmes in psychology adhere to a stringently structured curriculum in order to comply with professional legal requirements. For the bachelor's and master's degree programme in psychology with specialisation in clinical psychology and psychotherapy, the course content is prescribed by the Approbation Regulations for Psychotherapists. Due to their varying structures, one cannot take the same approach to study and teaching in both subjects.

Heiko Wagner: We have more freedom – at least with regard to our non-teaching degree programmes. In the bachelor's and especially our master's programme, we strongly emphasise teaching relevant methods and sport science expertise. It's about exploring the subject matter in depth. Because we aren't subject to approbation regulations, we have more leeway when it comes to teaching. Generally speaking, the main difference between psychology and sport/exercise sciences lies in their "core business".

What do you mean by that?

Heiko Wagner: Teaching degree programmes comprise the majority of study courses in the field of sport and exercise sciences. In other words, we train the teachers of tomorrow. The BSc and MSc programmes are also popular, but space is limited to 30 and 20 students per programme, respectively.

Christel Dirksmeier: Most of our courses are offered as part of the bachelor's programme and master's programmes. The psychology department also participates in teaching degree programmes as part of Educational Studies. Since the winter semester 2023/24, our colleagues from the Institute for Psychology in Education and Instruction (IPBE) and the Institute of Education have been jointly responsible for two focal areas of special and inclusive education. In terms of content, there is really a big difference when preparing students to teach at schools, pursue research, take up a therapeutic occupation or work in another psychology-related area of application.

Where do you see the most significant differences, and who exactly do your programmes appeal to?

Heiko Wagner: Young people who want to study to become sport teachers have to be generalists. They have to learn a wide range of subject matter in the areas of didactics, history and sport sociology. They immerse themselves in biomechanics, physics, statistics, training science, and they acquire expertise in biology and sport medicine. In short, it's about obtaining in-depth, specialist knowledge in many different areas.

Christel Dirksmeier: In the bachelor's programme, in particular, students often come with wrong expectations about the kind of academic training that awaits them. Many students arrive hoping to apply psychological methods in their studies at an early stage. But before

↑ Psychology students learn how to carry out tests and analyse measurements, e.g. using an MRI machine in the laboratory.

↑ Dr Christel Dirksmeier

↑ Prof Dr Heiko Wagner

↑ What appears to be a combination of astronaut training and funfair ride is a device used in the OpenLab to calculate physical strength and muscle activation. Sports scientist Dr Barbara Halberschmidt (left) explains how the machine works to students in her seminar.

you can do that, you first need a broad basis of knowledge. The focus of the first four semesters is on training students in methodology – with respect to both statistics and diagnostics. Then comes the basics of psychology – general and biological psychology, as well as developmental, social and personality psychology. This broad scope is quite challenging.

What kind of qualities and interests should psychology students bring with them to university?

Cristel Dirksmeier: We are looking for young people who are interested in academically exploring human experience and behaviour, and the psychological methods, content and questions that always involve human beings. For example: how does human thinking, learning and language acquisition work? And they should want to critically examine and discuss the literature, theories and methods. An excellent school-leaving certificate is no guarantee that one will meet these prerequisites.

But it's almost impossible to gain admission to a psychology programme without a perfect GPA in one's school-leaving examination …

Christel Dirksmeier: That's true for the University of Münster. Almost every single student in our bachelor's degree programme got a 1.0 in the Abitur – the grade point average required to gain admission to the programme. We are noticing, however, that students are increasingly feeling overwhelmed and mentally exhausted. This is due to the fact that there is a lot of pressure to succeed in the bachelor's programme, because one must have an excellent final grade to gain admission to the master's programme.

Are you seeing something similar in sports?

Heiko Wagner: The situation is indeed similar in our Bachelor and Master of Science programmes. For those enrolled in teaching degree programmes, a different skill set is required. To work as a sports teacher, it's important to cover a variety of aspects – a high degree of professional competence in different areas, and, of course, special athletic abilities. It's also challenging to maintain an overview of all the interests and needs of 30 energetic children in gym class at one time.

Christel Dirksmeier: Diversity is another topic I often think about. Over 80 percent of the students enrolled in almost all degree programmes in the winter semester 2025/26 were women. It's a bit concerning when almost every psychologist and therapist is female. For professional practice, it would be important to have a greater number of male graduates.

Do you know where your graduates end up working?

Christel Dirksmeier: The majority of them do something related to therapeutics. But there are many other options, for example, working at large companies in the area of personnel selection and HR development, or in counselling positions. Others go on to earn a doctorate or find employment in organisations involved with data science, for example. One graduate is the sports manager of our hometown football club Preussen Münster, Ole Kittner.

Heiko Wagner: Most of our graduates end up teaching at schools. Others stay at the University and get their doctorate. I know of graduates who find jobs at companies that analyse movement profiles on the football pitch. The data helps the clubs improve player performance.

Christel Dirksmeier: Many organisations in Münster and the surrounding areas benefit from our graduates' skills – be it at schools, clubs or businesses.

3,636 students

18 degree programmes
8 bachelor's, 10 master's

27 professorships

3 institutes
with 26 working groups and areas

Special features:
Several psychology and sports/exercise science labs are available for observing behaviour and analysing movement.

fb7dekan@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/tcyaq

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

Text: HANNA DIECKMANN

FB 8 History and Philosophy

↑ A team of students and researchers investigate the ancient city of Doliche in southeastern Turkey during an excavation campaign.

Safeguarding access to our cultural heritage

Were it not for the subjects of history and philosophy, we could lose access to our cultural heritage. This is why the range of programmes at the Faculty of History and Philosophy is especially broad. Its teaching activities are supported by four pillars: interdisciplinary networking, research- and practice-oriented diversity, digital course offerings and internationalisation.

Do we really need to look back to the past? Or is history yesterday's news? The American historian and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner David McCullough had a strong opinion on this. 'History is a guide to navigation in perilous times,' he wrote to his students at Wesleyan University in their graduate yearbook in 1984. 'History is who we are and why we are the way we are.' By raising central questions about the human existence, history has always been, and continues to be, relevant to society.

The same spirit is alive and well in research and teaching at the Faculty of History and Philosophy. Its teaching activities are comprised much like a mosaic – especially in terms of interdisciplinary networking, research- and practice-oriented diversity, digital course offerings and internationalisation. 'We are devoted to studying and preserving history and culture,' says Dr Susanne Pinkernell-Kreidt, Vice-Dean for Finances and Academic Organisation in the faculty.

‘Without subjects like history and philosophy, we would lose access to our cultural heritage. That’s why these subjects and their content are so important.’

Whether as a teacher at school, an employee in the cultural sector or a researcher at a university, knowledge transfer into society is a fundamental principle embedded in humanities courses. ‘We believe that students should not retreat inside an ivory tower,’ says Head of Faculty Professor Eva-Bettina Krems. Just the opposite. For instance, the faculty is one of the largest teacher training facilities for all types of schools in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia in the subjects of History, Greek, Latin and Philosophy.

The degree programmes cover a broad spectrum, ranging from classical studies and history to ancient languages, art history and musicology to cultural and social anthropology and philosophy. During the introductory phase, students learn the fundamentals of their subject of study, such as applying scientific methods and discussing current political and social issues. The lectures, seminars, practical courses and excursions also teach students how to work with humanities-related texts, objects, sources, historical documents and material estates. The goal is to allow them to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, assess the relevance of information, recognise contexts and relationships and express these appropriately in written form. Regardless of their desired field of specialisation, students have the possibility to attend courses in related subjects and combine, for instance, modules in Greek philosophy and ancient history. ‘Such a diverse range of options – even outside of one’s faculty – is quite extraordinary and something very few universities in Germany offer,’ explains Susanne Pinkernell-Kreidt.

Those who love critically weighing the persuasive power of complex arguments and theses by Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx, among others, should feel right at home with the philosophers. Through the study of philosophy, students acquire the skills to analyse complex relationships, think logically and reflect on human behaviour. In seminars they learn how to systematically present their lines of argumentation.

For more than 20 years, the faculty has defined its role as that of providing research- and practice-oriented academic instruction. The principle of “research-based learning” is integrated in numerous practical modules where students independently carry out their own research projects. This offers them insights into professional practice. To ensure that theory finds its way into practical application, one needs suitable locations. That’s why courses are not only held at the Fürstenberghaus or the Philosophikum. The Archaeological Museum and the Institute for Comparative Urban History, with their extensive collections also serve as alternative learning venues within the University. Archives, commemorative sites and municipal museums form a bridge to society and career-oriented learning. To familiarise graduates with other occupational fields besides teaching at schools, the faculty offers the format “History & Career”. In this practical course, guest speakers employed at museums, archives, publishing houses or in municipal politics discuss where their career paths led them after completing their degrees in history. The Department of Philosophy also has a career consultant speak with students and answer any questions they have about their career choices. These examples underscore how much the faculty values interaction in teaching. ‘The students can count on their instructors to engage in intensive and personal dialogue with them,’ says Eva-Bettina Krems.

← The discipline of critical thinking: Philosophy students learn the art of systematic argumentation.

Digital instruction and digital competence have long become an established component in the humanities. The Faculty of History and Philosophy emphasises the growing importance of digitality through various webinars and digital examinations. Students also benefit from collaboration with the Center for Digital Humanities. Its experts use computer-based processes to solve research questions in the humanities and social sciences. They turn to digital sources and digitalised research materials in order to employ them in the digital sphere. Students carry out digital analyses of images, texts and audio-visual material. For example, they analyse clay fragments with scratched inscriptions or annotate the correspondence left behind by a Jewish couple that managed to escape to the United States during the Nazi regime. With the corresponding IT competence, students can obtain the “Digital Humanities” certificate which can give them a step up in an academic career or help them find a job in the non-academic labour market.

Teaching activities at the Faculty of History and Philosophy are not limited to Münster and the surrounding region. Aside from the European Erasmus programme, there are numerous cooperation agreements with international partner universities, for example in Chile, India, Japan, Mexico, South Africa and Thailand. And those who yearn for more internationality are free to attend practical courses and seminars taught in English each semester at the faculty’s departments and institutes.

Returning to what David McCullough so aptly expressed, history and philosophy are not just a dusty collection of facts. At the Faculty of History and Philosophy, students learn to orientate themselves in our world by sharing the knowledge they gain for the benefit of society.

Text: KATHRIN NOLTE

5,264 students

30 degree programmes
12 bachelor’s, 18 master’s

18 departments, research units and institutes

43 professorships

fb8dk@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/fbelr

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

Moving with the times

The Faculty of Philology is both large and complex. With twelve institutes and departments, students receive instruction that covers a vast range of epochs, regions and cultures and responds flexibly to changes and challenges.

Philologie, Filologia, Philology, Filologie, Філологія, فقه اللغة, 语文学, Φιλολογία: No matter how you spell it, the "love for language" is the measure of all things at the Faculty of Philology. Not only is the study of linguistics of fundamental relevance, but also the literary and cultural contexts that are influenced by linguistic phenomena. Indeed, academic training in philology rests on three pillars: language, literature and culture. The faculty's institutes and departments are dispersed across downtown Münster and, thanks to their excellently curated departmental libraries, are ideal places of learning and encounter.

↙ The "Book Studio" is a special teaching and learning venue where students in the English Department explore the materiality and production of books.

Language

Although the Faculty of Philology is 'more than language', as Dean of Studies Professor Tobias Leuker points out, language training in the teaching subjects of German, English, French, Spanish, Italian and Dutch is especially important. Teaching degree students not only receive a solid foundation of linguistics and literary studies, but also training in language instruction, which can be applied in all types of schools including special and inclusive education. It enables them to meet current and future challenges in school education, e.g. with respect to New Media and artificial intelligence.

In addition to its three main language departments – German, English and Romance Studies – other disciplines enrich the faculty's philological diversity, e.g. Slavic Studies which include Russian, Czech and Polish, Scandinavian Studies which include Swedish and Norwegian, Sinology with Chinese, Dutch Studies, Arabic Studies and Jewish Studies with Hebrew. These are accompanied by philological disciplines which have a strong cultural-studies orientation, such as Assyriology, Egyptology and Coptology. When it comes to pure language training, students are also taught to examine the linguistics of older language forms, dialects and grammatical phenomena.

Philology at the University of Münster is not only exceptionally multilingual – it's also distinguished by specific thematic focuses. For instance, Slavic Studies has broadened its language course offerings in response to the war in Ukraine, and Sinology is promoting better relations with China by participating in the "Bildungsnetzwerk China", managed by the Goethe-Institut and the Mercator Stiftung. In the area of linguistics, courses are regularly offered on current topics like youth language, migration linguistics and second language acquisition.

Literature

Not only do instructors and students share a deep appreciation for language – they also share a love for literature, ranging from classics like *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Jane Eyre* and *Buddenbrooks* to contemporary works like *Submission*, *Harry Potter* and *Why We Took the Car*. Students majoring in literary studies are offered an abundance of reading material – and not only from Europe and North America, but also the Far East, North Africa, Latin America and Eastern Asia.

↗ Dr Gao Yue teaches Chinese to a class of Sinology students.

Teaching core skills in literary studies, e.g. interpretation and classification of texts, is just as important as continuously developing methodical tools, not least of all catering to students' interests and wishes. For example, a recent seminar entitled "Bookstagram, BookTok & More" addressed the role of social media in contemporary reading culture. The master's programme "Cultural Poetics of Literature and Media" is extremely popular as it applies textual interpretation to a broad range of genres. Here, students can analyse films in seminars like "Queer Cinema" and "David Lynch" or delve into the 100-year history of radio plays. Like German Studies, which also awards a lectureship in poetics to a notable writer every

two years, all the other institutes and departments in the faculty regularly employ guest lecturers and, in so doing, continuously align their academic profile to the pulse of the times.

Culture

It goes without saying: without language, there's no philology. Yet a country or region is not soley defined by how people communicate verbally or in writing. That's why culture comprises the third pillar of instruction in the faculty. 'Economy, culture and history play a role in those subjects which are less oriented to teaching degree students,' explains Tobias Leuker. This applies, for example, to Sinology, which not only teaches students a writing system that is inscrutable to most Europeans, but also enables them to gain a more comprehensive understanding of China based on the study of historical events and developments in language, society and art.

Material artefacts play a special role in teaching activities in several institutes. Students are introduced to "research-oriented learning" in Arabic and Islamic Studies using the institute's own collection, which includes 1,000-year-old Koran fragments, rare theological and philosophical manuscripts and 9th-century Egyptian tombstones. But collection and archival work is not the only practice-based course in the curriculum at the Faculty of Philology. Students can also participate in excursions, e.g. to the Louvre in Paris (Institute for Ancient Near Eastern Studies), the book fair in Göteborg, Sweden (Institute of Nordic Philology) or a theatre festival in Spain (Department of Romance Studies).

Teaching and practical application

Knowledge transfer is a central component of philological teaching – from the world to the lecture hall and from the classroom into society. Partnerships with schools augment the subject-related didactic qualification. Various certificates, e.g. "North American Studies", "Study India", "Greater China", "Islamic Cultures", and "Islamic Law", offer continuing education opportunities to students from other faculties. The "German as a Foreign Language/Second Language" certificate provides additional perspectives in the area of adult education and German language training abroad. Visits to foreign partner universities and institutes, as well as work placements, allow students to supplement their theoretical knowledge about numerous cultural spheres, obtain real-world experience and intercultural skills. The frequent contact that instructors and students maintain with the rest of the world is one of the faculty's biggest strengths and makes its instruction flexible and adaptable. The programme coordinators not only react to the constantly changing school curricula and dynamic developments in their own disciplines, but also to new social and technical phenomena and geopolitical upheavals. All out of love for language – and for cultures.

Text: ANDRÉ BEDNARZ

9,172 students

54 degree programmes
24 bachelor's, 30 master's

12 institutes and seminars

54 professorships

Special features:
Studiobühne (Studio Stage, the University-operated theatre and unique teaching-learning venue since 1961)

dekanat.fb.philologie@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/30xiw

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

FB 10 Mathematics and Computer Science

Teaching practical, real-world knowledge

A top-notch infrastructure and excellent instructors: At the faculty's seven institutes, students learn to systematically analyse complex problems and solve them in international teams. In this way, they acquire the core skills for a career in the modern working world.

It won't be a particularly "round" anniversary when the city of Münster celebrates its 1,235th birthday in 2028. Nonetheless, the city's leaders are already considering marking the occasion by illuminating all the trees along the promenade with strings of lights at Christmastime. Of course, they are counting on numerous volunteers to help with decorating. The only obstacle to this plan might be the financial expense.

Before we go any further, we should mention that this scenario is entirely made up. But it is helpful. Especially for the teaching degree students in mathematics who, with their pupils, are drafting a (fictitious) cost estimate to implement the city's idea to illuminate downtown Münster. This key competence is described as mathematical modelling, for which mathematical methods are used to solve real-world tasks.

↓ Instructors and students in mathematics lectures engage in intensive discussions.

← Students in computer science participate in tutorship training so that they can later work as a teaching assistant.

This is a typical challenge for the didactic approach in the Teaching-Learning Lab at the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science. Several times a year, talented maths students from various schools grapple with such assignments. The teaching students observe how the pupils go about finding solutions and offer tips – if necessary. ‘First of all, we want to get students excited about the subject by presenting them with especially practical problems,’ explains doctoral student Leander Koll who is interested in how best to train future teaching staff to use artificial intelligence in mathematical modelling. ‘Secondly, the students in these seminars can combine their theoretical knowledge with their pedagogical training.’ This is entirely in character for “FB 10” – the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science. In addition to somewhat complex theoretical fundamentals, the department heads in all seven faculty institutes are committed to conveying knowledge that is as practical and relevant to everyday life as possible.

> ”
> **Our degree programmes are distinguished by the close interconnection of theory and practice, in other words, their strong application-based orientation.**
> Prof Dr Gilbert Greefrath, Dean of Studies
> “

It was exactly 30 years ago that the University of Münster merged mathematics and computer science into one faculty. Its present structure has on one hand enabled both disciplines to fully establish themselves, and on the other, allows a large group of students to enrol in teaching degree programmes, and others to pursue alternative career goals.

In the field of mathematics, the faculty’s six institutes focus e.g. on stochastics, analysis and numerics, logic and foundations, and “fundamental and inclusive mathematics education”. The working groups at the Institute of Computer Science cover all the central areas of their discipline, such as “software development and verification”, “embedded systems” and “data science”. ‘Our degree programmes are distinguished by the close interconnection of theory and practice, in other words, their strong application-based orientation,’ explains Dean of Studies and mathematics didactics scholar Professor Gilbert Greefrath.

Besides the “Teaching-Learning Labs” at the Institute of Fundamental and Inclusive Mathematics Education, the faculty employs three other central teaching concepts. For instance, “inverted classrooms” primarily aim to increase student activity in the introductory lectures. ‘We give the students four challenging homework exercises each week, for which they can find the solutions online in the “Learnweb”. In this way, we gain valuable time for discussions and collaboration in the lectures,’ points out senior lecturer Dr Christian Serpé, whose didactic specialisation includes the development and use of (teaching) videos.

The project “MiRA” is also devoted to exploring “mathematics in real-world applications”. Mathematics, as faculty experts contend, is not only an integral part in many areas of everyday life, it is also ‘of elementary importance to the natural sciences and technology.’ Alternating with the traditional Teaching-Learning Labs, “MiRA digital” presents students with a digital variant which intensively examines how artificial intelligence can be effectively used, for example with “GeoGebra” software that combines geometry and algebra skills.

The tutorial training in computer science aims to convince students to adopt tutorials that are as interactive as possible. How and when do I give hints, and in what detail? The training is not only about helping tutors continually learn but also encouraging them to teach. All these ideas and projects are well received. The number of students in the faculty has steadily increased in recent years and currently tops 5,100, many of whom are just 17 years old.

The reason for its popularity may well lie in the fact that the faculty and especially the mathematics department have established a reputation that far exceeds Münster’s outstanding position in academia. Indeed, four Leibniz Prize laureates teach and conduct research at the faculty, and the collaborative research centre “Geometry” is supported by the German Research Foundation (DFG) with millions in funding. The achievements of the Cluster of Excellence “Mathematics Münster” have proven lucrative as well. For example, since 2018 six researchers in the Cluster succeeded in securing one of the highly sought-after European grants, and with the establishment of the “Centre for Mathematics Münster”, a new research facility will be completed by 2027. Students are certain to benefit from the faculty’s top-notch infrastructure and first-class instructors.

The same applies to the Institute of Computer Science, which also intensively engages in collaboration with other facilities. For instance, it works closely with the Department of Information Systems and the Faculty of Geosciences. And students in almost all mathematics programmes and many other courses of study can minor in computer science.

Last but not least, the faculty has a very international character. Students have access to an extensive support network, ranging from full scholarships for talented international scholars to short-term grants for research stays, as well as specific study abroad programmes and Erasmus+ partnerships. ‘It is this diversity that makes studying in Münster so future-oriented,’ says Gilbert Greefrath. ‘Aside from gaining subject-specific expertise, students learn to systematically analyse complex problems and solve them in international teams – a core skill for the modern working world.’

Text: NORBERT ROBERS

5,140 students

16 degree programmes
8 bachelor’s, 8 master’s

7 institutes

57 professorships

Special features:
- **research building “Centre of Mathematics Münster”**
- **Cluster of Excellence “Mathematics Münster”**

mathdek@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/wh3jt

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

Experts with all-round competence

Without physics there would be no technological progress. The Faculty of Physics teaches students these advanced technologies and how to use them responsibly. Students also acquire fundamental skills that are in high demand in many jobs.

→ Working groups in the Faculty of Physics use lasers and optical measurement technology to investigate the quantum properties of various materials.

Students majoring in physics or geophysics at the University of Münster can expect a programme of superlatives. Whether you're interested in the endless expanses of the universe, want to delve into the innermost depths of the Earth, or wish to work with the thinnest materials in the world, it's all possible in the Faculty of Physics. And that's just the start.

'We have distinguished experts on all topics of study listed in the curriculum,' says Professor Hubert Krenner, Vice-Dean for Teaching and Student Affairs. 'That's a strength that extends beyond textbook knowledge.' Consequently, the curriculum has a strong research-oriented focus. While writing their bachelor's theses, students can participate in current non-teaching and didactic research projects on a trial basis. To this end, they can join one of around 45 active working groups in the faculty. These groups conduct research in nano- and particle physics, the physics of complex systems, geophysics and subject-related didactics that ties in aspects of the natural sciences, technology and education. Some of these groups are part of interdisciplinary institutes with which the faculty collaborates, including the Center for Nanotechnology and the Center for Soft Nanoscience.

Such collaboration offers students numerous opportunities, e.g. to work in the laser laboratory or in the nanofabrication cleanroom, help develop high-precision equipment or technologies at infinitesimal scales or conduct theoretical physics on a supercomputer. Teaching degree students can develop programming series for learning robots for use in the classroom or devise inexpensive experiments that can be carried out on 3D printers. Regardless of what topic fascinates them, the students all work by the same rules of the descriptive discipline of physics whose researchers conduct experiments and develop models and theories based on their results. These help inform new predictions which can be tested anew in further trials.

> "We have distinguished experts on all topics of study listed in the curriculum."
>
> Prof Dr Hubert Krenner, Vice-Dean for Teaching and Student Affairs

In addition to theoretical training, practical courses are equally important as they form the foundation of experimental training. 'We've developed a new introductory practical course,' reports Hubert Krenner. 'Students can carry out initial experiments without any prior knowledge, followed by further experiments that become increasingly complex.' This enables students to optimally prepare for their final projects.

Aside from the skills that are required for certain occupations, e.g. working at a school as a teacher or for a career in research or industry, "all-round competence" is of particular importance. What distinguishes the professional profile of physicists is the ability to quickly familiarise oneself with complex, technical topics and develop structured strategies and solutions, explains Hubert Krenner. 'From the very start, we train students to acquire these skills by offering them insights into all areas of physics – from theory to experimentation – and enabling them to solve a wide variety of problems.'

Social responsibility also plays an important role. In the area of artificial intelligence, for example, students are confronted with such issues as transparency, fairness, data protection and potential misuses. Not only are they expected to gain technical skills but also learn how to apply these in a responsible manner. Socially relevant topics are also a recurring theme in the degree programmes, e.g. developing environmentally sustainable materials or resource-friendly technologies.

Speaking of technologies, many areas of physics are seeing rapid advances. Photonic quantum networks, for instance, promise fast and secure next-generation communication, while computer hardware is becoming ever smaller, and measuring techniques ever more precise. Physicists are significantly involved in these developments. Physics teachers, on the other hand, have to respond to these dynamics in class. As a result, the faculty is currently redesigning its course of study for prospective teachers. For example, a new theoretical physics lecture is expected to begin in

← Several working groups in the Faculty of Physics conduct research at the interface of particle physics and cosmology. They hope to gain insight into the evolution of the universe.

the winter semester 2027/28. It is specifically targeted at students in two-subject bachelor's teaching programmes and will focus more strongly on the needs of school-based instruction.

In the non-teaching degree programmes, the areas of computational physics and artificial intelligence will be afforded greater attention. After all, modern physics wouldn't exist without model- and data-based methods. They allow us to understand and simulate complex systems and make corresponding predictions, e.g. on the movement of magma oceans in the Earth's mantle, climate events, the characteristics of biological systems and the phenomena of particle physics. Numerical simulations and data analyses serve as a bridge between theory, experiments and applications.

That is why students acquire competence in mathematical modelling, numerical simulation, programming, statistical data analysis and machine learning – skills that are required in numerous occupations, e.g. in industry and research, the finance sector, energy management and technology companies. The Faculty of Physics is also heavily involved in developing the new cross-faculty master's degree programme "Interdisciplinary Data Science". The programme offers physics students the opportunity to combine their analytical and mathematical strengths with modern data science methods.

And finally, one for the record books: At the Faculty of Physics, one can also conduct research at the South Pole – though this privilege is reserved for only a select handful of students. The measurement data of the large-scale experiment "IceCube", situated below the surface of the ice near the geographic South Pole thanks to researchers from Münster, is delivering insights into the secrets of cosmic neutrinos. Researchers here in Münster are responsible for analysing data produced by these "ghost particles" – 15,785 km away from the southernmost point of the Earth.

Text: DR CHRISTINA HOPPENBROCK

2,260 students

14 degree programmes
7 bachelor's, 7 master's

10 institutes

36 professorships

Special features:

- **Non-teaching bachelor's programmes in physics and geophysics**
- **Faculty participation in cross-disciplinary centres: Center for Data Science and Complexity, Center for Soft Nanoscience, Center for Nanotechnology and others**
- **Cooperation with external partner institutions, e.g. Fraunhofer Institutes, Forschungszentrum Jülich and international research organisations**
- **Dual degree MSc in Physics with the University of Sevilla in Spain**

schulbuero.physik@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/4zu3r

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

FB 12 Chemistry and Pharmacy

↑ Instructors and students use cutting-edge technology in the analytics practical course like this infrared microscope. A strong theoretical foundation and a cooperative spirit are just as important for successful instruction.

Perfect balance of theory and practice

To understand what makes chemical-pharmaceutical instruction at the University of Münster so exceptional, you need only visit the PharmaCampus and put on a lab coat. The analytics practical course in the master's programme "Chemistry" is a perfect example of the cutting-edge, practice-relevant training that students receive at the Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacy.

Theory and practical application in harmony

In the basement of the PharmaCampus, an infrared microscope scans the cross-section of a mouse aorta at 10,000 pixels per second. This powerful device produces high-resolution images at a scale so small that a human hair appears the size of a bridge pier. The sharpness in detail is important to doctoral candidate David and the group of four master's students that he

← General medicine and pharmacy students team up to solve typical, real-world case studies. The aim of the “SPHERE” teaching format is to improve the patient treatment.

supervises. In the practical course “Analytical chemistry”, the group is investigating aortic aneurysms, i.e. abnormal dilation of the main artery, by analysing the molecular composition of the tissue.

The analytical work conducted by this group is typical of the practical approach offered at the faculty. ‘Whether it’s chemistry, food chemistry or pharmacy – we offer students a broad selection of degree programmes where theoretical training is closely tied to practice-related elements,’ explains Dean of Studies Professor Klaus Langer. Concretely, this means that about half of all the modules contain practical components, for which students are required to conduct experiments in the laboratory.

This is what 64 students are busy doing for six weeks in the analytics practical course, each seeking answers to research questions of their own. The topics are largely relevant to everyday life, for example, analysing tattoo dyes, examining the properties of batteries or investigating water samples after treatment with contrast agents used in medicine. To this end, students require a theoretical foundation which they mainly acquire in the early phase of their programmes, e.g. in the “Introduction to inorganic chemistry” (chemistry), in the “Fundamentals of medical and pharmaceutical chemistry” (pharmacy) or in “The microbiology of food” (food chemistry). During the analytics practical course, students attend one of four rotating lectures every day which provide a theoretical foundation for their activities in the lab.

Thanks to this combination of theoretical study and practical application, the faculty teaches students fundamental knowledge while allowing them to assume greater personal responsibility and closer proximity to research. This strategy is not only evident in the analytics practical course, but also at the “PharMSchool”. During their four-semester main study phase, pharmacy students intensively devote themselves to research matters. In group projects, they creatively and independently explore the pharmaceutical aspects of various illnesses and disorders, such as depression, respiratory infections and obesity. This strong connection between research and teaching culminates in the eighth semester with a public symposium, at which the students present their projects. The quality of the concluding presentation is reflected by the fact that it is recognised as a continuing education course for certified pharmacists and is targeted at the academic community of pharmaceutical professionals.

Research and practice play a central role in the area of food chemistry instruction, as well. For example, in a beer brewing module, bachelor students are introduced to food-chemical theory and practice as it relates to brewing beer. After receiving extensive theoretical instruction, the groups craft four to five different types of beer per year. In addition to teaching students the relevant chemical-analytical skills, the offered courses facilitate a greater identification with their subject of study and promote a strong sense of belonging among the students.

Cross-disciplinary teamwork

This sense of belonging is not an accidental side effect of instruction, but rather an essential component. ‘Research always happens in teams – and that’s what we teach students every day,’ explains Klaus Langer. Cooperation plays an especially important role in the later stages of one’s studies. For while the introductory practical courses take place during one’s degree programme, students increasingly collaborate with other disciplines in research projects later on.

And the same goes for the analytics practical course. The group investigating the mouse aortas received their tissue samples through the mail from a nuclear medical researcher who works at the Berlin Charité. In consultation with the researcher, the students hope to find out how the metal ion concentration in the sample influences the formation of aneurysms. This experiment alone results in more cross-disciplinary contacts than appear in the faculty’s name: biology, materials sciences, physics, computer science and medicine. The latter is particularly relevant to pharmaceutical instruction, as the collaborative project “SPHERE” demonstrates. In this project, medical and pharmaceutical students work together in a year-long practical course to plan therapies and practise treating patients. Economics is another discipline that maintains close ties to the faculty, for example, in the English-language master’s programme “Business Chemistry” which offers a combination of management, technology and chemistry modules. While the analytics practical course maintains contact with Berlin, other teaching formats have a far more extensive scope when it comes to joint partnerships. ‘Interdisciplinary collaboration extends even beyond national borders,’ says pharmacy professor Klaus Langer. This is due to the high degree of internationalisation in research. ‘Our instructors cultivate an outstanding network of global contacts – and our student researchers benefit from this. One example: around half of all our master’s students in chemistry gain experience abroad by way of research internships in industry or at universities – in Japan, China, Italy, Sweden and many other countries.’

Career training and perspectives

Whether one decides to work in Germany or abroad, the experience and contacts gained in the programme serve as an excellent basis for pursuing a doctorate or entering the job market – in the pharmaceutical or chemical industry, in pharmacy or research institutes, in schools or government agencies. ‘The opportunities are wide-ranging and the prospects of finding a job are very good,’ points out Klaus Langer. The faculty is committed to ensuring that students receive an outstanding education. At the same time, it strives to enable them to work independently in a responsible and cooperative manner, to continue honing their skills and meet their social responsibilities. ‘Chemistry and pharmacy are often criticised – and unjustly so. We train students so that they can inform the public about their work and contribute to solving the challenges facing society – for example, as teachers in schools, in battery research or in fighting diseases,’ explains Klaus Langer. The analytics practical course at the PharmaCampus perfectly embodies this aim. The students analyse the infrared images of the aorta, determine the molecular distribution and thereby contribute important data for group leader David’s doctoral project. In this way, they may be bringing us one step closer to curing cardio-vascular diseases someday.

Text: ANDRÉ BEDNARZ

2,492 students

15 degree programmes
6 bachelor’s, 8 master’s, 1 state examination

10 institutes and departments

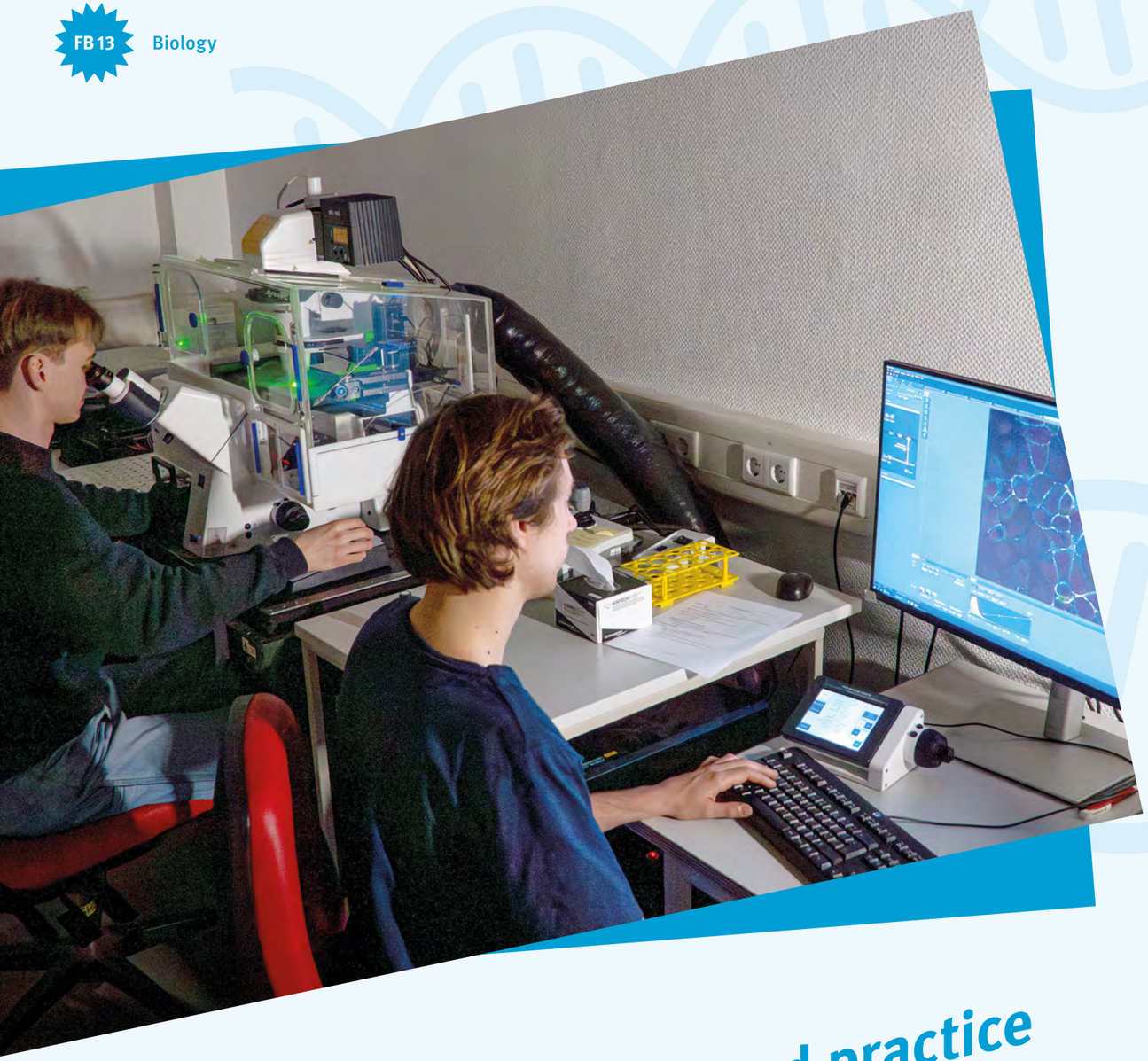
41 professorships

Special features:
- **MExLab Chemistry (extracurricular learning venue for pupils)**
- **Medicinal plant garden: for use by students enrolled in the pharmacy degree programme, open to the public, free tours**

prfb12@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/rp2um

As of the 2025/26 winter semester



↗ Biologists use fluorescence microscopy to visualise structures within cells and tissues.

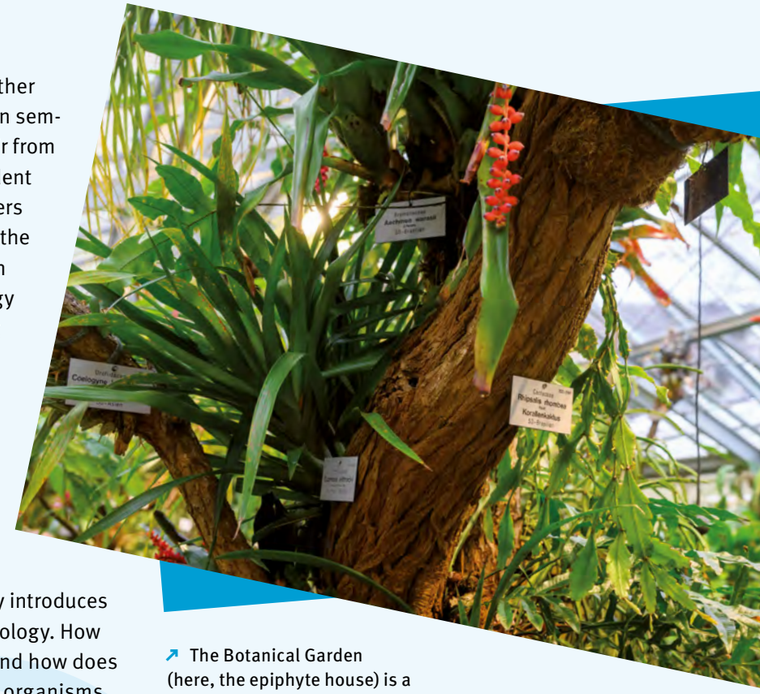
Where theory and practice go hand in hand

From individual molecules to entire organisms, from lab work to field studies – students in the Faculty of Biology learn how evolution shapes life on earth.

Justus sits at a group of tables with three other teaching degree students in a bright, modern seminar room. He wears a nose clip to prevent air from passing through his nose. The master's student breathes in and out through a tube. The others observe a laptop, which graphically depicts the curve of Justus's breaths. In today's class in the tandem module "Teaching human biology with digital tools", the students are learning about breathing – an important topic in biology, the study of living organisms.

What can school-leavers expect if they choose to study life sciences? They become acquainted with the broad range of the discipline, from biochemistry to cellular, neuro- and behavioural biology to biotechnology. The course material primarily introduces students to the fundamental questions of biology. How has evolution spawned today's life forms, and how does it work? How do animals, plants and other organisms react to changing environmental conditions? Biology explores these questions from the macro- to the micro-level, from populations in their ecosystems to individual organisms and cells, all the way to single molecules. The methodological spectrum ranges from field studies to computer-aided simulations to molecular-biological lab work. Students investigate genes, proteins and other biomolecules as single entities and in their entirety in the form of massive datasets. The faculty provides equipment that is essential for many working groups, such as mass spectrometers used for analysing molecules, and high-resolution microscopes which can peer into the depths of cells.

Around 50 percent of students in the Faculty of Biology are enrolled in teaching degree programmes, while the other half study biosciences/life sciences. Following their bachelor's degree, they can choose to specialise in one of four master's degree programmes – Biosciences/Life Sciences, Biotechnology, Molecular Biomedicine or Water Sciences – which prepares them for potential careers in science, industry or public agencies. Didactics and technical disciplines are closely interwoven. 'What specialist knowledge do teaching degree students need, and what should they later teach their students? And with regard to didactics – how should they go about it? Both aspects go hand in hand,' explains Professor Bettina Zeis,



↗ The Botanical Garden (here, the epiphyte house) is a learning venue for biology students.

Vice-Dean for Teaching and Student Affairs. In tandem modules, for example, a digitally rendered three-dimensional model of cardiac contraction helps students understand the biological processes and shows how they might integrate them into classroom instruction. This is augmented by observing under a microscope the heartbeat of a water flea – a real, living specimen. 'This is how the faculty implements its teaching strategy of closely interweaving theoretical knowledge with practical elements. Alongside lectures and seminars, laboratory experiments convey knowledge of modern methods.' The students also use learning venues, such as the Botanical Garden and the faculty-operated Marine Biology Tidal Flat Station in Carolinensiel, and they benefit from the faculty's international partnerships which offer opportunities for studying abroad.

Back to Justus and the tandem module. The methodological focus of today's class is spirometry, a procedure for measuring lung volume. Students are initially introduced to the fundamentals of human anatomy and physiology. Later in the semester, they will develop a school lesson plan. 'I'm glad we'll be holding the lesson with a class in the Teaching-Learning Lab,' Justus says. 'I feel that having contact

with pupils during our studies is extremely important.' Fellow student Hanna adds, 'Throughout the course, we're constantly considering what skills we want to teach and are given free rein to try out what can be feasibly carried out in school. This didactic orientation is a big help to me.' The practical day in the Teaching-Learning Lab is filmed with omnidirectional cameras and later analysed to provide the students with detailed feedback. Throughout the module, the instruction strongly focuses on the subject-specific didactical use of digital media and tools. These enable prospective teachers, for example, to let their pupils observe respiratory movement with a 3D simulation of the lung via virtual-reality glasses.

Another student, Tim, is pursuing his master's degree in Biosciences/Life Sciences. He is working in the microscopy room. He fixes a cell sample on the stage and warms up the fluorescence microscope's argon laser.

2,493 students

10 degree programmes
4 bachelor's, 6 master's

6 institutes

32 professorships

Special features:
Thematic focuses are biochemistry and biotechnology, bioenergetics and metabolism, evolution and biodiversity, cellular systems, neuroscience and behaviour, plants

biostudium@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/sx9ln

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

He has just come from the sterile laboratory to check whether the cells are actually building the proteins he hopes to investigate. With the microscope, he wants to see how cells form specialised contacts between themselves, and so doing, create stable and organised cellular structures. He is working with an epithelial cell line derived from kidney tissue. Epithelial cell structures cover the exterior surfaces of the body and line internal cavities and organs. Consequently, they play an important function as a protective layer and barrier. 'When the cell-cell contacts are disrupted, it can result in illness,' Tim explains. He uses genetically engineered cells. The proteins that are so important for his research become visible in the living cells through fluorescence. They can also be temporarily and individually influenced with brief light impulses. In this way, Tim can observe in real time how their dynamics change and how it directly affects the stability of cell-cell contacts. This allows him to draw conclusions about the function of the proteins.

Tim is busy working on his master's thesis and is fully involved in researching with "his" working group. 'During my bachelor's programme, I completed an advanced module on cell biology with the same group,' he recalls. After that initial contact, he was thrilled. He subsequently wrote his bachelor's thesis, completed a research module and eventually started his master's thesis in the same group. 'I had already become familiar with and applied a number of molecular biological techniques during my bachelor's programme. I also learned how to operate the fluorescence microscope. Over time, I was given more and more responsibility to do my work on my own.'

That is exactly the intention, explains Bettina Zeis. Every science major must complete two eight-week research modules. 'Usually, students use them to determine which research groups and themes would be suitable for their final theses, and they learn how to conduct research independently. This has enabled us to establish "learning through research" as a standard teaching method in our faculty.'

In the meantime, Tim envisions what his experiments should look like, he plans his trials on his own and carries them out by himself. 'I'm the one responsible and free to research the way I want. That's what I like best,' he says.

Text: DR CHRISTINA HOPPENBROCK

FB 14 Geosciences

Understanding the Earth, shaping the future

↑ An instructor deploys a drone during a field practical course with landscape ecology and geoinformatics students. They also learn how to collect, analyse and model geodata.

Whether it's attending lectures, doing field work or experimenting in a lab – students in the Faculty of Geosciences learn about the complex interactions between Earth, society and the environment.

One early summer morning, students investigate the birds that inhabit the former wastewater fields north of Münster. Others cartograph the rock strata in the Alps, analyse environmental patterns in Argentina between the Patagonian steppe and the foothills of the Andes, and experiment with ice particles in the lab for insights into the creation of our solar system. Others are doing research on kiosks in metropolitan cities, investigate compost as social and ecological nodes, or collect environmental data in cooperation with citizen science groups, using self-developed sensor stations. Whether it's just outside the front door or on a different continent – study and teaching at the Faculty of Geosciences are closely connected to the world outside the lecture hall.

Observing, measuring, questioning and analysing – practical field work plays a key role in all geoscience subjects and promotes curiosity, perseverance and, to a certain degree, enthusiasm for adventure.

↑ Students discuss issues related to sustainability and spatial planning from a geographical perspective.

The degree programmes explore the Earth system, for it is imperative to gain a deep understanding of the basics of geological, planetary, environmental and human-geographical sciences so that we can rise to the challenges facing us today and shape the future. Students investigate, for example, geological processes and human-environment relationships, and then develop sustainable scenarios in actual laboratories. They examine everything from primordial epochs of geological history up to the present day, from the microscopic level to large-scale biotopes, cities, landscapes, continents, the Earth's atmosphere and onward to outer space. Digital media plays a central role; satellite images, drone and sensor data are used to calculate the risk of flooding or propose climate scenarios. This broad thematic scope distinguishes the degree programmes and allows students to pursue their own interests at an early stage – in the lab, field, seminar room or at the computer.

The faculty's seven institutes connect planetary, geo- and environmental sciences with ecology, human geography, planning sciences and geoinformatics. Natural and social scientific perspectives, as well as analogue and digital methods are intertwined throughout. 'This combination is relatively unusual for Germany and is one of the distinguishing characteristics of our profile in Münster,' explains Vice-Dean for Teaching and Student Affairs, senior lecturer Dr Patricia Göbel. This strength is evident in everyday academic life. For example, the fundamentals are taught in a lecture, data is collected in a field practical course and statistically analysed, then later combined with socio-economic information. This enables students to better understand usage conflicts or environmental repercussions.

The Faculty of Geosciences offers non-teaching bachelor's and master's degree programmes, as well as teaching degree programmes. As a rule, all students begin their studies with an introduction to the common fundamentals of their discipline, which is gradually supplemented by specialised modules. Field work placements, lab practical courses, excursions and project-oriented teaching formats are established components of the curricula and are increasingly augmented by data- and model-based working methods. For example, the students analyse urban structures on location as part of a one-week excursion. 'In Genoa we examined how the historic port city transformed from an industrial harbour to a cruise ship port of call,' explains geography student Maj-Britt Wilbrand. 'We spoke with local groups, examined social differences between the city districts and noticed how important it was to take various perspectives into consideration.' Such experiences are typical of everyday academic life and demonstrate how theoretical concepts of urban and social geography can be applied on site. For those interested in studying abroad, students have the opportunity to participate in the Erasmus Mundus Masters Course "Geospatial Technologies" or study at one of the many partner universities via the Erasmus+ programme.

The faculty is strongly committed to qualifying the teachers of tomorrow. The core disciplines and subject-specific didactics are closely interwoven and address current social issues. 'In my school internship, I realised that topics like globalisation and climate change were good stepping stones for rousing student interest,' remembers teaching degree student Oskar Ehmann. 'It's because these are issues that directly affect the world they live in and offer many jumping-off points.' The goal is to prepare future teachers to give practice-oriented instruction by conveying socially relevant geoscientific content.

The professional perspective plays an important role early on in one's studies. Practical phases, work placements and research-oriented courses help students gain professional orientation. In addition to subject-specific qualifications, they acquire competence in teamwork, communication and employing digital tools. In professional work placements, e.g. at environmental agencies, students are involved in drafting reports on construction projects, through which they learn how important precise analysis, clearly prepared content and coordination with various stakeholders can be. The degree programmes offer a path to a variety of career opportunities, e.g. at environmental and spatial planning agencies, administrative authorities, R&D, consulting and education providers.

Sustainability is a central and cross-sectional topic in all degree programmes. Patricia Göbel points out that the faculty's programmes are characterised throughout by "education for sustainable development" (ESD) and that the subjects are regarded as future-oriented sciences. Thanks to multifaceted partnerships with organisations, e.g. the Center of Interdisciplinary Sustainability Research (ZIN), intensive exchange exists between research and teaching, which allows sustainability-related topics to be directly incorporated into seminars and projects.

The students also benefit from this proximity to research, a high-performance infrastructure with state-of-the-art laboratories and facilities with cutting-edge equipment, and insights into current national and international research projects. This is supplemented by partnerships with external organisations, such as agricultural and forestry management agencies, NGOs and aerospace companies, e.g. in cooperation with the European Space Agency (ESA).

Study and teaching at the Faculty of Geosciences are characterised by their "down-to-earth" focus – in both the figurative and literal sense of the word. They react to the changing circumstances on Earth and address issues that are of central importance to the future of our environment and society. Those who study here will find themselves moving freely between the lecture hall, the field and the lab, as well as between the natural and social sciences. And their horizons will expand accordingly – from local observations to a fully global perspective.

Text: DR KATHRIN KOTTKE

2,237 students

14 degree programmes
6 bachelor's, 8 master's

7 institutes

30 professorships

Special features:
• Geomuseum
• Stadtlabor Münster interdisciplinary research alliance
• Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research and Applied Ecology (CIBRA)

studienkoordination.geo@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/mei4z

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

More than musical scales and dulcet tones

↖ Students at the University of Music have numerous opportunities to demonstrate their musical talent on stage, e.g. at festivals.

Dynamic, international and rich with music – the Münster University of Music (MHS) was originally part of the Detmold University of Music. In 2004 it became an independent faculty of the University of Münster and has since developed its own distinctive profile. For those who dream of making music their profession, MHS offers numerous opportunities ranging from the Youth Academy for talented young musicians to concert examinations and teaching degrees for general schools to artistic doctoral programmes.

Near the traffic circle at Ludgeriplatz, architects have installed a glass pyramid in front of an old three-storey building that once housed a bank branch. To reach the stairs that lead to the building's main foyer, visitors must first pass between two oversized, white ears that frame the main entrance. The artwork outside the building hints at what visitors can expect inside. The corridors of the University hum and buzz like a beehive – musical scales and etudes float from the fully booked practice rooms, in the upstairs auditorium there are rehearsals and concerts, and in the seminar rooms, one can hear chamber music ensembles and bands practising. Young people toting instrument cases on their backs or sheet music pockets under their arms hurry down corridors, talk with one another or wait in the foyer for the concert hall to be free for the next rehearsal.

Despite all the rehearsing, classroom instruction comprises the core of artistic training. What makes the instruction so unique is the optimal supervision that students receive. In what other subject of study can one expect one-on-one instruction between a professor and their student? No wonder talented young musicians review the credentials of the teaching staff before applying for admission to MHS. Master courses taught by renowned, professional musicians of classical music enrich the artistic curriculum. All of this has proven extremely popular, as the number of applicants from around the world far exceeds the number of available study places. 'Unfortunately, we have to turn down many good people due to a lack of capacity,' admits Professor Peter von Wienhardt, who teaches piano.

↗ The musical curriculum focuses largely on artistic instruction in one's major subject, as shown here with master's student Jorge Faundez Cabrera in a lesson with Professor Elisabeth Fürniss.

But before that happens, applicants must first pass an aptitude test. Everyone who gets invited has already achieved a high level of mastery in an instrument that they plan to major in, e.g. violin, piano or singing. Many of them have taken instrumental lessons since they were young children and have won top prizes in competitions like "Jugend musiziert". In the competition for admission to MHS, they are required to submit a video clip, demonstrating their musical proficiency. Most applicants are aware that other qualities also play a role in determining whether a successful career in music is in their future. For example, knowing how to deal with stage fright and the pressure to succeed, and understanding that self-discipline and persistence are vital for achieving one's goals. 'Our students are further along in this respect than other students their age,' says Dean of Studies Barbara Plenge.

Whether in the classroom, in formats like the Opera Studio or in orchestral and chamber music projects, the MHS curriculum not only promotes and enhances the students' artistic abilities, but also their personal skills. 'Our students are trained to listen intently and learn teamworking, language skills, creativity and communication,' explains Barbara Plenge. Taken together, these qualities lend themselves to "employability" in the labour market, which – in the area of music – has improved over the past two decades. According to a recent study by the German Music Information Centre, there will only be enough qualified teachers in ten years to fill just one-quarter of all vacant positions at music schools nationwide.

Professor Alex Grube confirms that the prospects are highly promising in the field of pop music. He immensely enjoys working with students to hone their strengths. Classical and pop music graduates have often diversified to pursue a combination of career options. 'Some work in advertising, in film music or as influencers. In the end, almost all of them went freelance,' he says. They give concerts as soloists or perform in ensembles, they teach privately or at music schools, or are hired for their extraordinary abilities that they acquire during their studies. They work as coaches, teaching students about resilience techniques and musician health. In the area of cultural management, they organise concert series and festivals. 'We take such varied occupational backgrounds into account in our teaching activities,' says Barbara Plenge. Seminars and workshops on career-building, concert formats and mental health prepare students for the many possible career paths ahead of them.

One of these career goals is to teach music at a school of general education. All the teacher training activities for the subject Music are bundled at the Institute of Music Education in Philippistrasse, which joined the faculty in 2017. Like the artistic programmes, the teaching degree programmes also focus on practical instrumental and vocal training. Students learn how to conduct ensembles based on modern management standards and gain initial practical experience teaching at schools. In addition to choirs, big bands and a large symphony orchestra, there are also many musically oriented cultural groups at the University that are open to students of all disciplines.

Near the end of the semester, students and the public can experience the broad spectrum of musical performance in concerts of classical music, band performances in clubs around town, and open-stage events on summer evenings on a mobile stage, organised by the departmental student body. The pop music department of the University of Music regularly invites the public to "aasee sessions" at the "Baracke", a student cultural centre. In the main building, public recitals and concerts take place almost every day. Students rack up stage experience in well over 100 courses per semester. As Barbara Plenge confirms, 'the audience benefits from the richly varied programmes and enjoys the lively, artistic atmosphere of our institution.'

Text: BRIGITTE HEEKE

816 students

14 degree programmes:
7 bachelor's, 7 master's

2 institutes

17 professorships

Special features:
- **Youth and Orchestra Academy, Opera Studio, Master Classes**
- **"Study Plus" (additional offerings for students): competitions and special support programmes**

info.mhs@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/mhs

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

FB 16 Faculty of Islamic Theology

↑ Instructors and students in the "Koran Lab" discuss the holy scriptures of Islam.

'Our graduates should represent a cosmopolitan Islam'

The Faculty of Islamic Theology (FB 16) is the latest addition to the University of Münster. It is part of the new "Campus of Theology and Religious Studies", to which the Faculties of Protestant and Catholic Theology also belong. With respect to its teaching activities, the first faculty of Islamic studies in western Europe wishes to make a lasting impact, as the founding Dean Professor Mouhanad Khorchide and research associate Faris Mansouri explain in the following interview.

Is the move to the new campus simply a change of scenery?

Mouhanad Khorchide: Definitely not, it's much more than that. Coming together like this is both a powerful symbol and an expression of concrete common practice. The geographic proximity will engender thematic and spiritual proximity, from which the students will also benefit. We're planning interdisciplinary lecture series and are working with the Faculties of Protestant and Catholic Theology to develop a shared profile.

But what we already agree on is that we all want to assume responsibility for society – and that through our teaching activities.

Is there a typical teaching format in Islamic theology?

Mouhanad Khorchide: In our faculty, we focus on lectures and seminars. Of course, lectures are the format of choice at the beginning of a degree programme when we teach the fundamentals, such as defining the concept of Islamic religious education …

Faris Mansouri: … though we often combine our lectures and seminars. For example, we supplement the lecture on religious education with a seminar on the same topic, but at a far more interactive level.

Mouhanad Khorchide: It's very important to us that we don't only give "front-of-class" lectures but also encourage the young people to think about and discuss the topics themselves.

But many faculties and institutes have the same objective …

Mouhanad Khorchide: That's true. But there's a special aspect to consider in Islamic theology. Our students are often socialised in a very staunchly religious environment,

↑ Prof Dr Mouhanad Khorchide

↑ Faris Mansouri

such as in mosque communities and families. As a result, many of them come to us with a very clear position on Islam. Even social media channels, where you'll find many positions that don't align with our basic democratic principles, exert a strong influence as well.

So you deliberately question the students' firmly held opinions?

Mouhanad Khorchide: That's usually the case. Because many of them are convinced that there's only one version of Islam. We present counter arguments, for example, showing them how their position on gender roles or their relationship to Judaism is by no means as clear-cut as they'd like to believe. Initially this provokes and confuses them, but it helps them.

In what way exactly?

Mouhanad Khorchide: Many Muslims have to get used to being asked critical questions about Islam every day. What is Islam's position on democracy? What does the Koran say about violence? Nowadays even first-semester students have to expect to be confronted with these and other questions. We prepare them for this.

Faris Mansouri: It's also because 70% of our students are enrolled in the teaching degree programme. As teachers they're going to be asked such questions by Muslim students and their fellow colleagues. We teach our students that their answers should not only be informed by the subject but should also consider the social environment. In our instruction, we simulate this reality of life.

Mouhanad Khorchide: And for young people, that includes their most important source of information – social media. That's where Muslim students at schools and universities are confronted with extreme positions by so-called "authorities", which they have to critically grapple with. They have to learn to debunk radical theories and build their own positions. Media competence means developing self-confidence and self-empowerment.

← The Koran plays a central role in the faculty's curriculum.

Is there a guiding principle in place regarding teaching at the faculty?

Mouhanad Khorchide: Our motto is "Islamic theology taking responsibility for Europe". We represent an Islam that enriches our continent and supports the basic, free and democratic order. With respect to teaching, we divide this fundamental principle in multiple thematic fields, such as compassion, human rights, the human-God relationship and the diversity of religions and worldviews. Our graduates should represent a cosmopolitan and peace-loving Islam.

And in all this, the Koran is the focal point?

Faris Mansouri: Yes, because Arabic, as the language of the Koran, forms the basis of our work. We are now bringing these years of expertise to the new Arabic Language Centre (ZAS), through which we coordinate our four-semester Arabic language training programme for our teaching degree students, among other things.

Mouhanad Khorchide: But this is not about teaching everyday Arabic for daily life. We call the course "Islamic Arabic" or "Koran Arabic". There are numerous terms and special expressions whose meaning one has to know to understand the primary Islamic texts.

To what extent does your faculty cooperate with other faculties?

Faris Mansouri: Since the Centre for Islamic Theology (CIT) was founded in 2012 as the predecessor institution of the faculty, we've cooperated with the Christian theologies by way of joint teaching formats, and with Religious Studies by reciprocally opening our modules. In addition, our module "Islam in Germany" is now firmly anchored in the Educational Sciences curriculum.

Is there a possibility for students to gain a fuller immersion abroad?

Mouhanad Khorchide: We maintain study abroad partnerships with universities in Morocco, Egypt and Turkey. Starting in September 2026, we're planning to organise an annual excursion to the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo. The university there is the only one in Europe – aside from Münster – with a faculty of Islamic studies. Sarajevo is also a city where the religions cooperate with one another in almost ideal fashion and where people show each other tolerance. Many students don't realise that a European Islam exists just one and a half hours away by plane which differs significantly from the Islam in Turkey or in the Arabic countries. When they talk with Muslim students on location, many of them come away positively surprised. In the medium and long term, we want to intensify our contacts with Indonesia, the most populous Islamic state in the world.

You mentioned that 70% of the students in your faculty want to become teachers. What kind of plans are the other students pursuing?

Mouhanad Khorchide: Many of them want to stay in academia, work for foundations or in politics, or become involved in their communities. There are also jobs in the welfare sector and in social organisations.

Faris Mansouri: Teachers of Islamic religious studies have very good career prospects. We need around 6,000 of them in Germany, and 3,500 alone are needed to teach the 600,000 or so Muslim students in schools in North Rhine-Westphalia. As you see, there are worthwhile perspectives in many respects for those who study at our faculty.

Text: NORBERT ROBERS

453 students

13 degree programmes:
7 bachelor's,
6 master's

9 working areas
(e.g. "Fiqh" and "Koran and exegesis")

8 professorships

hanane.elboussadani@uni-muenster.de

uni.ms/rgoem

As of the 2025/26 winter semester

Imprint

Published by:
Prof Dr Johannes Wessels, Rector,
and Prof Dr Ulrike Weyland, Vice-Rector
for Teaching and Studies, University of Münster,
Schlossplatz 2, 48149 Münster, Germany

Project manager:
André Bednarz

Texts and editing:
André Bednarz, Hanna Dieckmann, Brigitte Heeke,
Dr Christina Hoppenbrock, Dr Kathrin Kottke,
Kathrin Nolte, Norbert Robers

Design:
goldmarie design

Translation:
Robert Brambeer (Supportstelle Englisch,
University of Münster)

Photo credits:
Linus Peikenkamp; other photos and illustrations by:
Christoph Steinweg (portrait photo of Ulrike Weyland,
p. 1), Heiner Witte (Bible Museum, p. 4), Meike Reiners
(p. 9), REACH (p. 13), Michael Möller (pp. 14, 41),
Peter Wattendorff (p. 16), IfAS (p. 17), Eveline Hülsheger
(portrait photo of Christel Dirksmeier, p. 22),
Peter Leßmann (portrait photo of Heiko Wagner, p. 22;
p. 31), Peter Jülich (p. 25), Julian Thamm (p. 29), NASA
and The Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA) (p. 36),
Hedda Wollbold (p. 38), Samuel Moessner
(p. 44), Marcelo Albuja (p. 46), Norbert Robers
(portrait photo of Faris Mansouri, p. 50),
Shutterstock – Koran (p. 50)

Printing:
Druckhaus Tecklenborg GmbH & Co. KG

Print run:
2,000

This brochure was printed on FSC®-certified,
EU Ecolabel paper (Soporset Premium Offset)
using environmentally friendly ink.

Münster, Germany, May 2026

* Note on the enrolment figures listed in the info boxes:
The number of students specified in the info boxes represents so-called “cases of enrolment”. For example, students enrolled in multiple subjects or degree programmes (e.g. a two-subject bachelor’s programme in German Studies (FB 09) and Mathematics (FB 10)) are counted twice. Consequently, the enrolment figures do not correspond to the total headcount of students at the University of Münster where each student is counted once (total student headcount in the winter semester 2025/26 = 41,217).