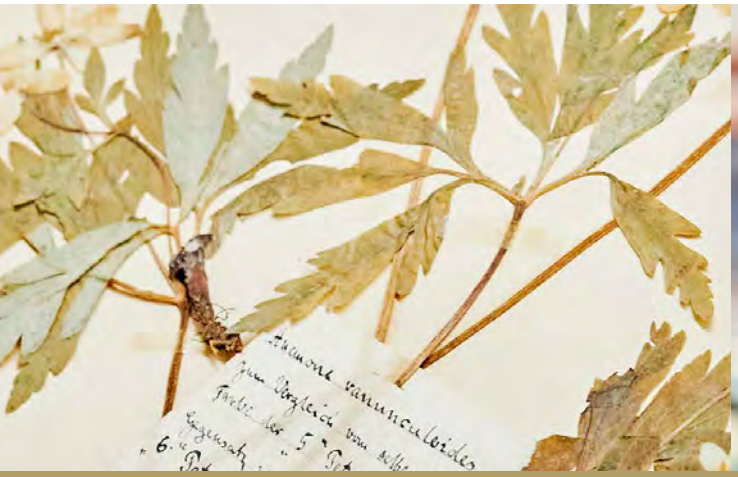
EBERHARD KARLS
UNIVERSITÄT
TÜBINGEN





2025

ANNUAL REPORT

University of Tübingen





Dear Readers,

The University of Tübingen was highly successful in the German government's Excellence Strategy in 2025. With three new clusters of excellence joining our three existing ones, the University of Tübingen has further consolidated its position as a leader in many areas of research. The sponsorship of six clusters furthermore enabled us to retain our place among Germany's Universities of Excellence. These outcomes in the Excellence Strategy competition raise the University's profile and promote interdisciplinary collaboration, adding to our national and international reputation.

With success comes responsibility. Since its founding in 1477, the University has been committed to showing the way forward. We look ahead to marking our 550th anniversary in 2027 with a year of celebrations beginning in late 2026. Our jubilee motto is "the value of knowledge." Academic knowledge has value: it helps us to understand and to change the world; it encourages us to take a critical look at the world around us and our own place in it. The cost of knowledge gained from research can be measured in concrete terms: it requires time, money, energy, and space. Independent, state-backed academic research must always prove its value, and justify it, especially in times of economic uncertainty.

As an internationally recognized hub for artificial intelligence in Europe, we at the University bear some responsibility for future technologies that hold enormous potential for society, yet which also use ever greater amounts of energy. Our research fosters innovation and growth, but it also consumes resources. We are therefore making every effort to strike a balance between the demands of our work and the University's goal of climate neutrality.

Universities and their funding are constantly being called into question. This makes it all the more important to convey the value of academic research, not in abstract terms, but in concrete ones: as an investment in a robust society with the capacity for innovation, which engages in democratic discourse, and which wants the best possible education for future leaders in society.

2025 was a good year for the University of Tübingen. It was a year of academic breakthroughs, institutional advancements, and intense discussions about our path forward. It was a year that, despite all the uncertainties, gives us reason for courage and confidence. I invite you to see this annual report as a window onto a University community that is aware of its responsibilities, that seeks to continually reflect on and demonstrate its value, and that is determined to provide guidance even in turbulent times. I wish you an interesting and rewarding read!

Sincerely yours,

Professor Dr. Karla Pollmann, Meiyo Bunka Hakushi
(Honorary Doctor of Dōshisha University)

President of the University of Tübingen

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2025 IN FIGURES



28,046
students enrolled

including

4,495
international students

5,865
degrees completed

including

62%
degrees completed by women

3
Clusters of Excellence

8,512
employees

839.1
million euros overall budget

including

267.3 (31.9%)
million euros third-party funding

51
ERC Grants


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Research

Research with relevance

Researchers at the University of Tübingen are building bridges, both between disciplines and from the past to the future. No less than six clusters of excellence now demonstrate the variety and the highest quality of our research. From the very origins of humanity, to the complexities of the biosphere and the geosphere, via new applications for artificial intelligence, to innovative research into tackling cancer – Tübingen is leading the way in areas of critical importance. Our expertise is also manifest in the humanities and social sciences, where our researchers are finding fresh ways of looking at our lives and identities through the lenses of the past and of present behavior.

Success in the Excellence Strategy

Six excellence clusters reflect outstanding research in many fields

The approval of three new clusters of excellence in May 2025 reinforced the University's position as one of Germany's leading research institutions. The new clusters GreenRobust, HUMAN ORIGINS and TERRA join the established clusters iFIT, CMFI and Machine Learning, all three of which were extended for a second funding period at the same time. The new round of funding begins in 2026 and runs for seven years.

GreenRobust: Understanding robustness in plants, from molecules to ecosystems

Human activity is taking an ever-greater toll on our planet and climate. Against this background, understanding the mechanisms and limitations of plant robustness becomes crucial for developing effective and knowledge-based strategies to help preserve plant ecosystems and to ensure food security. The GreenRobust cluster of excellence, conducted in cooperation with the Universities of Heidelberg and Hohenheim, has three main fields of research: climatic and biotic disturbances; the influence of disturbances on levels of biological organization, from molecules to populations; and the diversity within a group of species selected from plant families of environmental and agricultural importance.

HUMAN ORIGINS: A paradigm shift in the study of human evolution

The new research methods of the 21st century have revolutionized the study of human origins and have overturned conventional thinking in the field. A new approach is therefore needed that can keep pace with rapid developments, seek new evidence, and fill gaps in the hitherto fragmentary investigation of fossil and archaeological finds. Integrating biological, cultural, and ecological factors into the analysis of the finds reveals previously unseen connections and enables researchers to develop new theories. The HUMAN ORIGINS cluster is built on three interrelated topics: systematics and evolutionary relationships, the evolution of human cognition, and the evolution of the human ecological niche. Working on those foundations, the cluster will map human development over the past five million years.



TERRA: Interactions between geosphere and biosphere in a changing world

Vital resources such as drinking water and the air that we breathe depend on interactions between the Earth's geosphere and its biosphere. Understanding these interactions in detail is therefore essential for the wellbeing of humans. The TERRA cluster of excellence investigates how the geosphere and the biosphere interact, and how these geo-biosphere interactions affect and are affected by environmental change. TERRA pursues an integrative approach, combining fieldwork, experiments and data studies analyzing different periods of the Earth's history.

Individualized treatments using Image-Guided and Functionally Instructed Tumor Therapies (iFIT)

The iFIT cluster of excellence integrates cancer research and the development of treatments. It combines three main areas of research at the Faculty of Medicine: the functional identification of therapeutic structures and the development of pharmaceutical and molecular tumor treatments; immunological methods and immunotherapies; and molecular and functional multiparametric imaging. In the second funding period, iFIT researchers are expanding drug development to design highly innovative cancer diagnostics and treatments to the point where they may be used to treat patients.

Control of Microorganisms to Fight Infection (CMFI)

Even as antibiotic resistance increases, there are few commercial programs aimed at developing new and effective antibiotics. The Controlling Microbes to Fight Infections cluster of excellence investigates microbiome mechanisms, using them to develop strategies for the prevention and treatment of bacterial infections. In its second funding phase, the cluster is pursuing an integrative approach. Biological, medical, chemical and computer-aided research will record complex interactions in the microbiome and the host and seek ways of harnessing them for new forms of treatment.

Machine Learning: New Perspectives for Science

In the first funding period, the researchers in this cluster of excellence used machine learning techniques to gain new insights into widely different fields. In this second funding period, the cluster is focusing on developing the methods used and on integrating automated learning into research processes generally. The researchers will demonstrate the potential of this approach in a wide range of disciplines – for example, identifying the causes of disease progression and analyzing the dynamics of quantum systems.

University of Excellence status renewed

The University of Tübingen has held its University of Excellence title since 2012. In 2025, with six clusters of excellence, and following both further structural reform and stringent inspections, the University was able to apply for University of Excellence renewal under that particular Excellence Strategy funding line. In March 2026, the German Research Foundation approved the University's application. The funding phase from 2027 to 2033 will be guided by the motto and slogan Research – Relevance – Responsibility: Contributing to Solutions for Global Challenges and to Societal Advancement.



Center for Castle Research opens its gates

Germany is dotted with castles and ruins of castles. Whether solid and forbidding or overgrown and barely recognizable, castles are enchanting, and they still hold many secrets. What was the relationship between the lords and ladies of the castles and the surrounding villages and monasteries? How did the building of castles reflect territorial politics? What information can we draw from archaeology, written records, and historical images? Just how many castles were there? The Center for Castle Research at the University of Tübingen investigates these and many other questions. Opened in October 2025, the center consolidates research and teaching across eleven professorial chairs at the University. The Professor of Medieval Archaeology, Dr. Natascha Mehler, is the center's coordinator, and Dr. Michael Kienzle serves as its academic director.

Although castles are common in the German-speaking world, there is still much we do not know about them. Researchers in Tübingen regularly receive information about castles not previously documented, for example, when hikers discover ruins in remote locations. Modern prospecting methods such as 3D laser scanning and ground-penetrating radar are also uncovering castle sites where now only forests and meadows are visible to the naked eye. Researchers say there may be hundreds, possibly thousands, of unexplored castles in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

Castles were symbols of power. They were used for defense, and often had governmental functions, for instance as customs houses; they had a cultural role, as a place



where songs were performed and games and dances held. The center will integrate disciplines such as history and regional studies, economic and art history, archaeology, cultural studies, archaeometry, geoarchaeology, and medieval studies to draw a more complete and accurate picture of what castles were. The center's research will include input from citizens and external partners such as municipalities, heritage preservation offices, museums, and associations in German-speaking countries. The researchers will be excavating together and organizing exhibitions and lecture series to inform both students and the public about this fascinating work.

Top: The first recorded mention of Hohenurach Castle was in 1235. Tübingen researchers are finding key historical details even in ruins like this.

Institute for Research on Right-Wing Extremism launched

In July 2025, the University of Tübingen marked the founding of the Institute for Research on Right-Wing Extremism (IRex) at a ceremony attended by representatives from academia, politics, and civil society. Guests included Muhterem Aras, President of the Baden-Württemberg State Parliament, and Petra Olschowski, State Minister of Science, Research, and the Arts. IRex is tasked with strengthening democratic structures with empirical, knowledge-based contributions on the state of right-wing extremist ideologies. The creation of a permanent documentation and research center was recommended by a parliamentary inquiry committee in 2019 following the investigation of a series of racially-motivated murders across Germany in the years 2000-2007.



Baden-Württemberg Minister of Science, Research and the Arts Petra Olschowski speaks at the opening of IRex



Britta Stolterfoht

DFG-funded research

New collaborative research center seeks common ground

The German Research Foundation (DFG) supports large, interdisciplinary research programs in the form of collaborative research centers. They are approved for four-year funding periods and are generally designed to run for up to twelve years.

In 2025, a new University of Tübingen collaborative research center was approved in the field of Linguistics. It is called Common Ground – Cognition, Grammar, Communication. Tübingen researchers from theoretical and computational linguistics, psycholinguistics, psychology, rhetoric, literary studies, and biological anthropology are collaborating in the center. German Linguistics Professor Britta Stolterfoht is the spokesperson; her deputies are Professor James Griffiths from the Institute of English Languages and Literatures and General Linguistics Professor Michael Franke from the Institute of Linguistics.

'Common ground' as a concept takes a central role in linguistics, philosophy, and psychology. It refers to shared knowledge in a situation where all those communicating know that the others also possess this knowledge; this is necessary for successful collaboration. The new collaborative research center seeks to establish what constitutes common ground and to develop a theoretical and empirically viable model. Eighteen projects will investigate aspects of common ground, ranging from one-on-one conversations to broader social phenomena.

Researchers in the areas of linguistics, psychology, and anthropology will collaborate on the investigation of cognition. This includes exploring the role of common ground in children's first language acquisition and whether there are signs of common ground development in the behavior of primates. The researchers are looking at both language and the processing of non-verbal information, such as the function of gestures accompanying language.

Researchers will also investigate grammar, reflecting the many ways in which speakers find common ground. These projects, based in the disciplines of German, English, and Romance Languages, cover a range of languages. ''Communication'' encompasses projects combining linguistics and computational linguistics, rhetoric, and literary studies. Here, the focus is on the role of different communication partners and situations, such as face-to-face conversations versus social media. Two projects analyze political discourse and the strategies used by right-wing populist parties to establish specific narratives.

Collaborative research centers at the University of Tübingen

Title	Speaker	Duration
Common Ground: Cognition – Grammar – Communication (SFB 1718)	Professor Dr. Britta Stolterfoht German Language and Literature	1 Oct. 2025 – 30 June 2029
Different Aesthetics (SFB 1391)	Professor Dr. Annette Gerok-Reiter German Language and Literature	1 July 2019 – 30 June 2027
Robust Vision – Inference Principles and Neural Mechanisms (SFB 1233)	Professor Dr. Matthias Bethge, Werner Reichardt Center for Integrative Neuroscience/ Institute of Theoretical Physics	1 Jan. 2017 – 31 Dec. 2028
Molecular Coding of Specificity in Plant Processes (SFB 1101)	Professor Dr. Klaus Harter Center for Plant Molecular Biology	1 April 2014 – 31 Dec. 2025
ResourceCultures: Socio-cultural Dynamics in the Treatment of Resources (SFB 1070)	Professor Dr. Martin Bartelheim Institute of Prehistory and Medieval Archaeology	1 Oct. 2013 – 30 June 2025

Tübingen transregional collaborative research centers

Title	Tübingen speaker	Duration
PlantMicrobe: Genetic diversity shaping biotic interactions of plants (TRR 356)	Professor Dr. Rosa Lozano-Durán Center for Plant Molecular Biology (ZMBP)	1 Jan. 2023 – 31 Dec. 2026
Mathematics of Many-Body Quantum Systems and Their Collective Phenomena (TRR 352)	Professor Dr. Stefan Teufel Department of Mathematics	1 Jan. 2023 – 31 Dec. 2026
The Skin as a Sensor and Effector Organ Orchestrating Local and Systemic Immune Responses (TRR 156)	Professor Dr. Birgit Schittek University Hospitals, Dermatology	1 July 2015 – 30 June 2027

Priority program: interdisciplinary basics for using language models

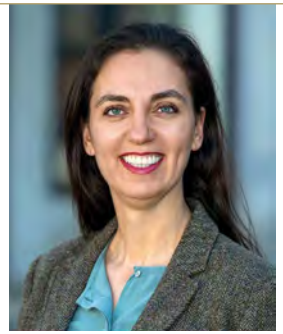
Linguistics Professor Michael Franke received a grant from the DFG for a priority program on neural language models. In its initial three-year funding period, Robust Assessment & Safe Applicability of Language Modeling: Foundations for a New Field of Language Science & Technology (LaSTing) will receive seven million euros. The goal is to better understand how neural language models such as ChatGPT work and to make new language technologies usable for research in linguistics. With researchers from Tübingen and many other universities in Germany, around twenty individual projects are planned.

Linguistic research faces the challenge of keeping pace with the rapid development of neural language models. This affects various fields: from theoretical and experimental linguistics to computational linguistics, psycholinguistics, and natural language processing, as well as the cognitive sciences in general. The LaSTing researchers aim to bring together approaches from these individual disciplines and lay the groundwork for a new field of research centered on language modeling.

Through its priority programs, the DFG supports interdisciplinary research projects that are expected to have a transformative impact on established academic fields by opening up new areas of research or developing new approaches in them. Priority Programs typically involve researchers from several institutions.







From left:
Michael Franke
Steffen Hage
Monika Gehde-Trapp

New research units

The DFG supports academics who join forces to work on a joint research project as a unit. Funding is provided in two phases over a period of eight years. Research units often provide impetus for the development of new research areas within existing fields.

Squeaks, chirps, and roars – how do animals communicate?

Social interactions among animals often rely on the exchange of sounds. This is essential for the survival and reproductive success of many species. However, we are still far from fully understanding which neural networks control these calls. Neural Circuits for Vocal Communication, a new transregional research group, is investigating these neural mechanisms in vertebrates. The group is led by Professor Steffen Hage at the University Hospitals' Department of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery and the Center for Integrative Neuroscience (CIN).

Using a comparative approach, the researchers will investigate how fish, birds, and mammals produce, coordinate, and adapt the sounds they make to various social and environmental contexts. The goal is to identify common principles of vocal communication across species, while also explaining specific adaptations. In this way, the researchers seek to gain new insights into the development of human language and its highly complex neural foundations.

Research unit with Tübingen participation: consequences of regulatory uncertainty

How does regulatory uncertainty affect asset valuation and investment decisions? This is the focus of a new research unit – Asset Allocation and Asset Pricing in Regulated Markets and Institutions – at the University of Ulm, in which Professor Monika Gehde-Trapp from the University of Tübingen School of Economics is participating.

The team of seven researchers will receive some 3.2 million euros in DFG funding over four years. Gehde-Trapp is involved in two of the research unit projects; she will develop new methods for measuring and analyzing the effects of regulatory uncertainty.

Tübingen research units

Institute	Title	Tübingen speaker
Department of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery; and Center for Integrative Neuroscience	Neural Circuits for Vocal Communication (FOR 5768)	Professor Dr. Steffen Hage
Institute of Physics	Precision Neutrino Physics with JUNO (FOR 5519)	Professor Dr. Tobias Lachenmaier
Institute of Medical Psychology and Behavioral Neurobiology	Information Abstraction During Sleep (FOR 5434)	Professor Dr. Jan Born
Institute for Theoretical Physics	Long-range interacting Quantum Spin systems out of equilibrium: Experiment, Theory and Mathematics (FOR 5413)	Professor Dr. Igor Lesanovsky
Protestant Theology, Practical Theology	De/Sacralisation of Texts (FOR 2828)	Professor Dr. Birgit Weyel
School of Business and Economics	Understanding the Behavior of Multinational Corporations in the Context of International Tax Institutions (FOR 2738)	Professor Dr. Georg Wamser
Department of Psychology	Modal and Amodal Cognition: Functions and Interactions (FOR 2718)	Professor Dr. Barbara Kaup
Center for Neurology and Hertie Institute for Clinical Brain Research	Epileptogenesis of genetic epilepsies (FOR 2715)	Professor Dr. Holger Lerche
Institute of Ancient History	Migration and Mobility in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages (FOR 2496)	Professor Dr. Steffen Patzold
Senckenberg Center for Human Evolution and Palaeoenvironment; and Institute of Linguistics	Words, Bones, Genes, Tools: Tracking Linguistic, Cultural and Biological Trajectories of the Human Past (FOR 2237)	Professor Dr. Katerina Harvati-Papatheodorou, Professor Dr. Gerhard Jäger

European Research Council funding



Joel Frohlich



Jan Böttcher

European Research Council (ERC) grants are one of the European Union's most important funding initiatives for research. They support excellent, innovative, and high-risk research and help keep the European research community internationally competitive. ERC grants offer generous funding for academics of all disciplines to give them the opportunity to realize outstanding projects.

The grants are made for a period of five years. Early-career researchers may obtain Starting Grants of up to 1.5 million euros; top independent researchers are eligible for Consolidator Grants of a maximum of two million, or Advanced Grants of up to 2.5 million over five years. Synergy Grants go to consortia of two to four working groups which can receive up to 14 million over six years for a major joint project.

New Starting Grant

Investigating social responses in the unborn

What is an unborn human capable of perceiving? Dr. Joel Frohlich addresses this question in his project *Do fetuses perceive social stimuli? A magnetoencephalography investigation of the prenatal mind (FETAL-MIND),* funded by a Starting Grant of 1.5 million euros over five years. Frohlich is investigating whether fetuses in the final weeks before birth respond more strongly to social stimuli, such as human voices or face-like shapes, than to neutral sounds or images. To do this, Frohlich plays recorded voices and, using special technology, projects red light points in the shape of a face into the womb.

To investigate this prenatal sensory processing, Frohlich employs a unique method: fetal magnetoencephalography (fMEG). There are only two machines in the world which can carry this out. The researchers are also testing a newer, more flexible technology: OPMs or optically pumped magnetometers, for broader application. If scientists can better understand when and how the brain begins to perceive social cues, they may be better placed to identify early indicators of neurodevelopmental disorders.

Five additional Consolidator Grants

Understanding how chemical signals drive the immune system

Our immune system protects us against infections and fights cancer cells. CD8+ T cells play a crucial role, recognizing and destroying viruses and tumor cells. Many modern immunotherapies aim to strengthen these CD8+ T cells. However, they are regulated by signals originating in various tissues, and these processes are not fully understood.

Professor Jan Böttcher from Experimental Immunology and the iFIT cluster of excellence aims to discover in his project *EICO-CODE (Unlocking the tissue code: understanding organ-specific regulation of CD8+ T cell immunity by eicosanoids)* how certain molecules – eicosanoids – influence the behavior and preventive capacity of CD8+ T cells. By combining organ biology and immune defense, EICO-CODE will provide important new insights into what tailored immunotherapies might look like in the future.



Ana Rita Brochado



Andreas Geiger



Tobias Hauser

Beating bacteria at their own game

Growing resistance to antibiotics demands new strategies to combat bacterial infections. In her project *BacImmune Decode – Decoding bacterial immunity to enhance antimicrobial action,* assistant professor Ana Rita Brochado investigates how bacteria defend themselves. By discovering the mechanisms they use to regulate themselves, she seeks to develop novel approaches to fighting bacterial infections.

Brochado's team recently discovered that antifolate antibiotics activate the bacterial defense system CBASS in the cholera pathogen Vibrio cholerae. So, when treated with antifolate antibiotics, the bacterium is damaged by its own immune response. This mechanism was previously unknown. Brochado and her team will investigate hundreds of bioactive molecules that have the potential to regulate the activity of various phage defense systems. In the long term, these could be combined with phages to develop new treatments.

AI assistant to channel the information flood

With the boom in scientific publications, researchers would theoretically have to do the impossible and sift through thousands of new papers every day. The information overload can mean that interesting connections in texts or patterns in datasets get overlooked, opportunities are missed, and as a result, scientific innovation may stall.

This is where Professor Andreas Geiger's project, *Computational Assistants for Scientific Discovery (CASIDO),* comes in. It is a human-centered AI assistant designed to support researchers in their daily work. For example, it can review and compare research papers, identify crucial research gaps, and develop new and creative research approaches. The goal is to develop a new generation of intelligent tools to help researchers better organize the growing amount of available information.

Personalizing treatment of mental illness

Millions of people worldwide are affected by mental illness; this makes it one of the greatest challenges facing our society today. Yet many treatments have changed little in recent years and rarely take into account the variability of individual brains and symptoms. This is typical, for example, of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Professor Tobias Hauser from Computational Psychiatry at the Faculty of Medicine and a member of the German Center for Mental Health (DZPG) in Tübingen, aims to change this with his new project, *CoNbI-OCD (Computational Neuroscience-based Interventions for OCD)*.

Hauser intends to rethink the treatment of OCD, using the latest findings from neuroscience and artificial intelligence. The goal is to develop new, personalized treatments that combine traditional psychotherapy with innovative technologies such as brain scans, computer models, and generative AI.



Madhuri Salker

Thorsten Stafforst



Investigating how life begins

For pregnancy to occur, an embryo must implant itself in the lining of the uterus, deep within the body and within a small time window. Dr. Madhuri Salker of the University Women's Hospital will focus on this hidden process in her research project *babyRADAR (The use of reconstructed assembloids, multimodal single-cell sequencing, and nanosensor development to study human implantation and pregnancy loss)*.

Salker and her team are investigating how the uterus recognizes, selects, and supports embryos in the very first days of pregnancy. Salker's team has developed three-dimensional sensing organoids that mimic how the human uterus communicates with embryos, thereby making it possible to directly observe implantation. Using state-of-the-art technologies such as multi-ome sequencing, CRISPR-based gene editing, and a tiny micro-cradle nanosensor that measures embryo health, the team aims to uncover why implantation sometimes fails and miscarriages occur.

Synergy Grant for new liver treatments

Professor Thorsten Stafforst from Tübingen's Institute of Biochemistry and Professor Mathias Heikenwälder of the Image-guided and Functionally Instructed Tumor Therapies cluster of excellence have joined forces with Professor Erez Levanon from Bar-Ilan University in Israel to tackle a range of liver diseases in a project called *HepaModulatoR***.** Conditions such as fatty liver disease, hepatitis, and liver cancer are becoming more frequent all over the world. Using RNA editing, the researchers are seeking precise, safe, and personalized treatments. The scientists are working toward the shared goal of developing new RNA drugs that reprogram liver cells in various stages of disease – from metabolic disorders to tumor growth. The ERC has provided a Synergy Grant of ten million euros in project funding over six years.

Synergy Grants sponsor collaborative projects that, due to their complexity, require input from several researchers and their teams in order to achieve breakthroughs that could not be achieved in individual projects.

Current European Research Council Grants

Advanced Grants

Name	Project	Duration
Professor Dr. Harald Baayen, Institute of Linguistics	Subliminal Learning in the Mandarin Lexicon (SUBLIMINAL)	2022 – 2027
Professor Dr. Klaus Corcilius, Institute of Philosophy	Text and Idea of Aristotle's Science of Living Things (TIDA)	2022 – 2027
Professor Dr. Katerina Harvati-Papatheodorou, Institute of Scientific Archaeology	Our First Steps to Europe: Pleistocene Homo sapiens Dispersals, Adaptations and Interactions in South-East Europe (FIRSTSTEPS)	2022 – 2027
Professor Dr. Jan Born, Institute of Medical Psychology and Behavioral Neurobiology	Sleep Balancing Abstraction and Forgetting of Memory (SleepBalance)	2020 – 2025
Professor Dr. Gerhard Jäger, Institute of Linguistics	Cross-Linguistic Statistical Inference Using Hierarchical Bayesian Models (CrossLingference)	2019 – 2025
Professor Dr. Klaus Scheffler, Max Planck Institute for Biological Cybernetics/ Radiology	Ultra-Fast, Spread-Spectrum Magnetic Resonance Imaging (SpreadMRI)	2019 – 2026

Consolidator Grants

Name	Project	Duration
Professor Dr. Jan Böttcher, Institute of Immunology	Unlocking the tissue code: Understanding organ-specific regulation of CD8+ T cell immunity by eicosanoids (EICO-CODE)	2026 – 2031
Assistant Professor Dr. Ana Rita Brochado, Interfaculty Institute for Microbiology and Infection Medicine	Decoding bacterial immunity to enhance antimicrobial action (BacImmuneDecode)	2026 – 2031
Professor Dr. Andreas Geiger, Department of Computer Science	Computational Assistants for Scientific Discovery (CASIDO)	2026 – 2031
Professor Dr. Tobias Hauser, General Psychiatry and Psychotherapy	Computational Neuroscience-based Interventions for OCD (CoNbI-OCD)	2026 – 2031
Dr. Madhuri Salker, Obstetrics and Gynecology	The use of reconstructed assembloids, multimodal single cell sequencing and nanosensor development to study human implantation and pregnancy loss (babyRADAR)	2026 – 2031
Professor Dr. Philipp Hennig, Department of Computer Science	Advanced Numerics for Uncertainty and Bayesian Inference in Science (ANUBIS)	2024 – 2029
Professor Dr. Christoph Stein-Thoeringer, Internal Medicine I	Leveraging the Impact of Gut Microbes to Advance the Efficacy of CAR-T Cell Immunotherapy (PowerMiT)	2024 – 2029
Professor Dr. Tobias Kaufmann, Psychiatry and Psychotherapy Hospital	Modelling and Maintaining Maternal Mental Health (HealthyMom)	2024 – 2028

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Consolidator Grants (continued)

Name	Project	Duration
Professor Dr. Georg Martius, Department of Computer Science	Model-based Reinforcement Learning for Versatile Robots in the Real World (REAL-RL)	2023 – 2027
Professor Dr. Jakob Macke, Department of Computer Science	Using Deep Learning to Understand Computations in Neural Circuits with Connectome-constrained Mechanistic Models (DeepCoMechTome)	2023 – 2028
Professor Dr. Rosa Lozano-Durán, Center for Plant Molecular Biology	Emerging Multifactorial Complexity at the Geminivirus-host Interface (GemOmics)	2022 – 2027
Dr. Sireen El Zaatari, Institute of Scientific Archaeology	Tracing Hominin Occupations of and Migrations through the Levant: Reviving Paleolithic Research in Lebanon (REVIVE)	2021 – 2026
Professor Dr. Claudia Lengerke, Haematology, Oncology, clinical Immunology and Rheumatology	Targeting Leukaemia by Modulating Hematopoietic Stem Cell Competitiveness (Hemstem)	2021 – 2025
Professor Dr. Michael Butter, Institute of English Languages and Literatures	Populism and Conspiracy Theory (PACT)	2020 – 2025
Professor Dr. Markus Siegel, Werner Reichardt Center for Integrative Neuroscience/ Hertie Institute for Clinical Brain Research	Neuronal Information through Neuronal Interactions (NINI)	2020 – 2025
Professor Dr. Holger Zellentin, Institute for the Study of Religion and Jewish Studies	The Qur'an as a Source for Late Antiquity (QaSLA)	2020 – 2025
Professor Dr. Eric Kemen, Center for Plant Molecular Biology/ Interfaculty Institute of Microbiology and Infection Medicine	Knowledge Based Design of Complex Synthetic Microbial Communities for Plant Protection (DeCoCt)	2019 – 2025

Starting Grants

Name	Project	Duration
Dr. Joel Frohlich, Institute of Neuromodulation and Neurotechnology	Do Fetuses perceive Social Stimuli? A Magnetoencephalography Investigation of the Prenatal Mind (FETAL-MIND)	2026 – 2031
Assistant Professor Dr. Isabel Monte, Center for Plant Molecular Biology	When your enemy becomes your friend: Evolution of the interaction between fungi and land plants (FRIENEMIES)	2024 – 2029
Assistant Professor Dr. Josef Leibold, Internal Medicine Department VIII	Harnessing senescence to improve cell-based therapies against cancer (EXPLOITsen)	2025 – 2029
Professor Dr. Marius Lemm, Department of Mathematics	The Mathematics of Quantum Propagation (MathQuantProp)	2025 – 2029
Dr. Katrin Franke, Research Center for Ophthalmology	Tracing Visual Computations from the Retina to Behavior (Eye to Action)	2025 – 2029
Dr. Florian Wimmers, Interfaculty Institute for Biochemistry	Organoid- and AI-based Identification of Oncology Drug-Vaccine Interactions (OrAIOn)	2025 – 2030
Professor Dr. Ralph Lütticke, Macroeconomics	Aggregate and Idiosyncratic Risk in Macroeconomics (AIRMAC)	2024 – 2028
Dr. Lukas Mager, Internal Medicine I	Systematic Triangulation of Pathobiont-Host-Interactions (SOAR)	2024 – 2028
Professor Dr. Lisa Maier, Institute of Medical Microbiology and Hygiene	Gut Microbiome-mediated Activities of Psychotropic Drugs (gutMAP)	2024 – 2028
Professor Dr. Christian Schürch, General and Molecular Pathology and Pathological Anatomy	Drivers and Brakes of CAR T Cell Efficacy Determined by the Tumor Immune Microenvironment (CAR-TIME)	2024 – 2028
Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Spyrou, Institute of Scientific Archaeology	Infectious Disease Outbreaks as Contributors to Socio-cultural Transformations in the 2nd Millenium BCE (PROTOPEST)	2024 – 2028

Starting Grants (continued)

Name	Project	Duration
Professor Dr. Anna Gumpert, International Economics and European Integration	Firm Organization and the Adoption of Information and Communication Technologies (ORGANDICT)	2023 – 2028
Professor Dr. Philipp Berens, Research Center for Ophthalmology	Next Generation Mechanistic Models of Retinal Interneurons (NextMechMod)	2023 – 2027
Professor Dr. Michael Filarsky, Interfaculty Institute of Biochemistry	Uncovering the Mechanisms Behind Adaptive Gene Expression Switching in Malaria Parasites (MALSWITCH)	2022 – 2026
Professor Dr. Tobias Hauser, General Psychiatry and Psychotherapy	Understanding the Impact of Brain Fluctuations on Decision Making (NeuroFlux)	2022 – 2027
Professor Dr. Judith Feucht, University Hospitals	Senolytic CAR T Cells as Novel Therapeutic Concept for Solid Tumors and Senescence-associated Diseases (CARsen)	2022 – 2026
Dr. Christoph Ratzke, Interfaculty Institute of Microbiology and Infection Medicine	Bugs as Drugs: Understanding Microbial Interaction Networks to Prevent and Treat Infections (BugDrug)	2021 – 2025
Professor Dr. Esther Kühn, Hertie Institute for Clinical Brain Research	How Does our Brain Store Bodily Experiences? (BodyMemory)	2021 – 2026
Professor Dr. Jan Christian Jansen, Institute of Modern History	Refugees and Revolution in the Atlantic World, 1770s – 1820s (AtlanticExiles)	2020 – 2026
Professor Dr. Andreas Geiger, Department of Informatics	Learning Generative 3D Scene Models for Training and Validating Intelligent Systems (LEGO-3D)	2020 – 2025
Dr. Christina Schwarz, Research Center for Ophthalmology	Exploring Visual Processes with Two-Photon Ophthalmoscopy (TrackCycle.2P)	2020 – 2026
Professor Dr. Hildegard Kühne, Department of Computer Science	Graphics without Labels: Multimodal Structure Learning without Human Supervision (GraViLa)	2024 – 2029

Synergy Grants

Tübingen Research Unit	Project	Duration
Professor Dr. Thorsten Stafforst, Interfaculty Institute for Biochemistry	Modulation of Liver Metabolism/Inflammation at Different Disease Stages by Leveraging ADAR-based RNA Editing (HepaModulatoR), Bar Ilan University, Israel	2026 – 2032
Professor Dr. Igor Lesanovsky, Institute for Theoretical Physics	Open 2D Quantum Simulator (OPEN-2QS), University of Stockholm, University of Mainz	2025 – 2031
Professor Dr. Carola Lorea, Institute of Religious Studies	Mantras in Religion, Media and Society in Global Southern Asia (MANTRAMS), University of Vienna, Brown University, USA	2024 – 2030
Professor Dr. Holger Bettinger, Institute of Organic Chemistry	Tackling the Cyclacene Challenge (TACY), University of Heidelberg	2023 – 2029
Professor Dr. Martin Giese, Werner Reichardt Center for Integrative Neuroscience/ Hertie Institute for Clinical Brain Research	How Body Relevance Drives Brain Organization (RELEVANCE); KU Leuven, Belgium and Maastricht University, the Netherlands	2020 – 2025
Professor Dr. Ulf Ziemann, Hertie Institute for Clinical Brain Research/ Neurology	Connecting to the Networks of the Human Brain (ConnectToBrain), Aalto University, Finland	2019 – 2026

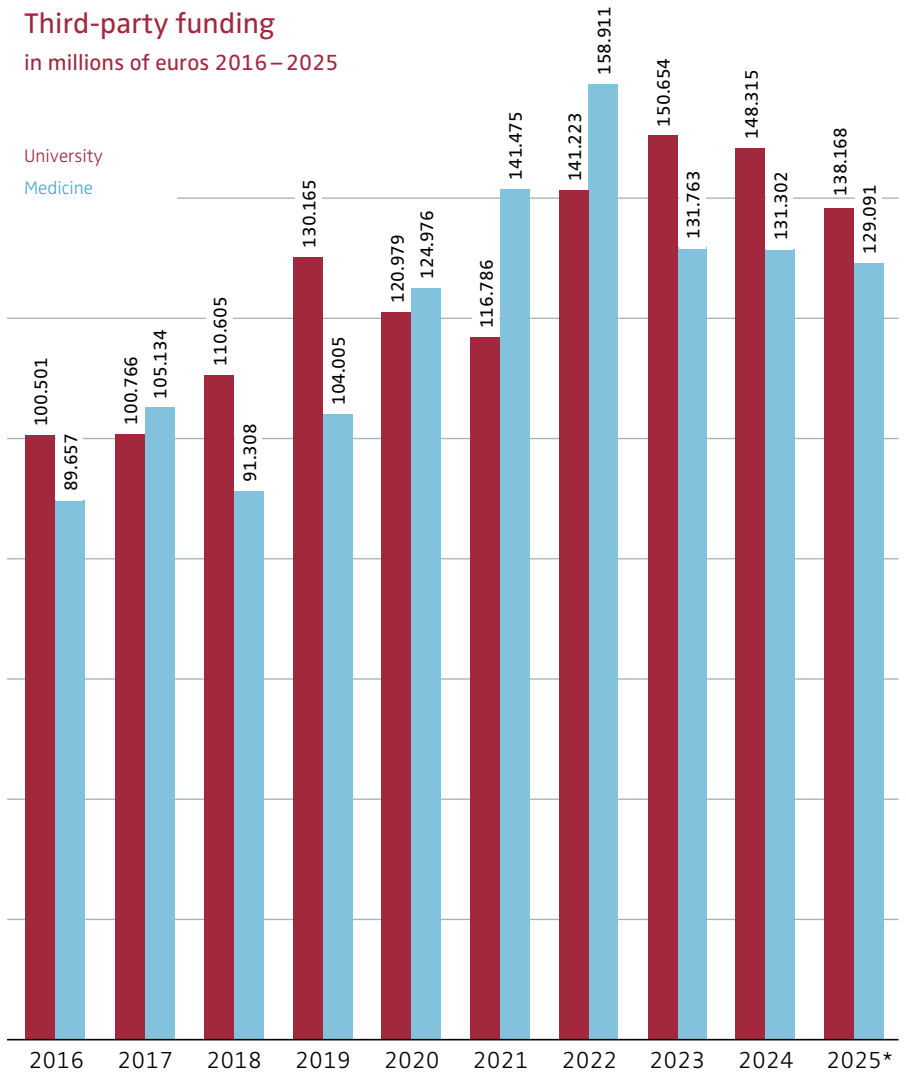
University finances

The University of Tübingen has made sustainable development a priority as it creates structures that link up academia, society, and the environment. In 2025, the University consolidated its position both academically and financially. With funding for six clusters of excellence and for general development, Tübingen will continue to benefit from the German government's Excellence Strategy from 2027 to 2033.

Even as tighter budgets led to lower direct federal and DFG funding in 2025, business and private sponsorship was up, reflecting support for Tübingen's synergy of research, teaching, and administration. Targeted structural developments in recent years include schemes to support early-career researchers, ongoing internationalization, and the expansion of digital infrastructure. All these elements have made Tübingen a desirable home for outstanding researchers attractive to third-party sponsors.

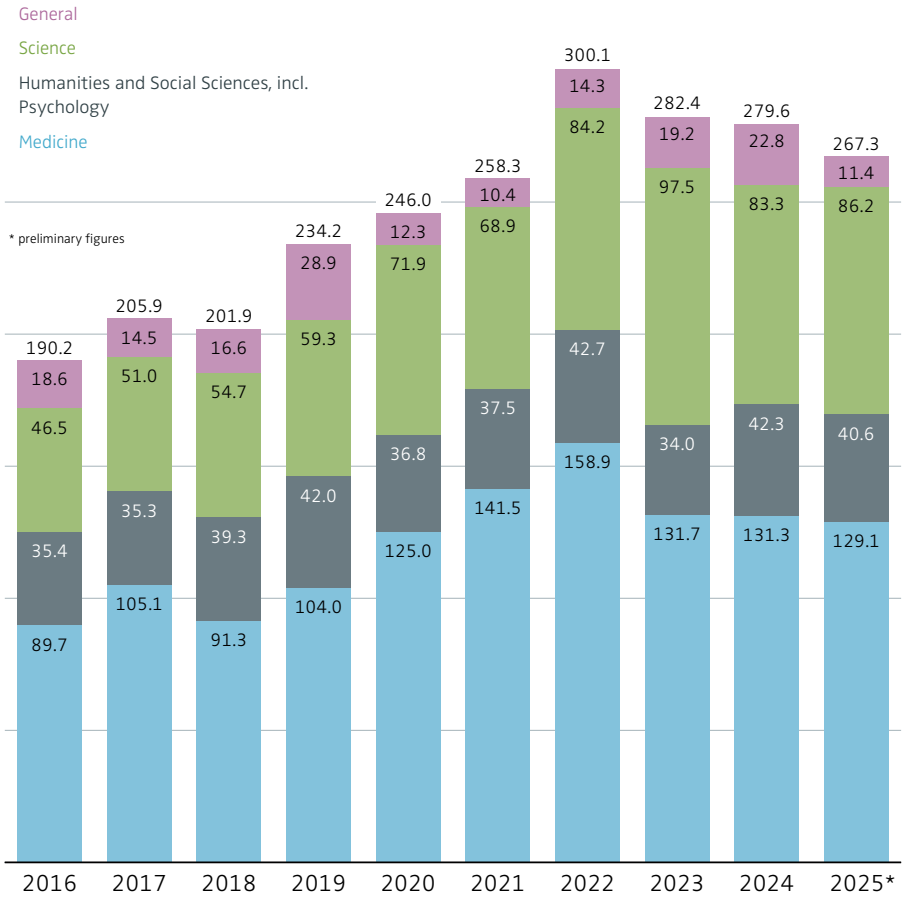
Financial security for research and teaching

In April 2025, the Baden-Württemberg state government committed to a financial framework (HoVF III) for higher education in the state from 2026 to 2030. The agreement includes an increase in base funding, providing a degree of planning security at a time of sharply rising operating and energy costs. Tübingen is facing growing infrastructure requirements, while having to maintain and upgrade its existing buildings, many of which are of historical significance.



Third-party funding in the Sciences, Humanities and Medicine, and general income

in millions of euros 2016 – 2025

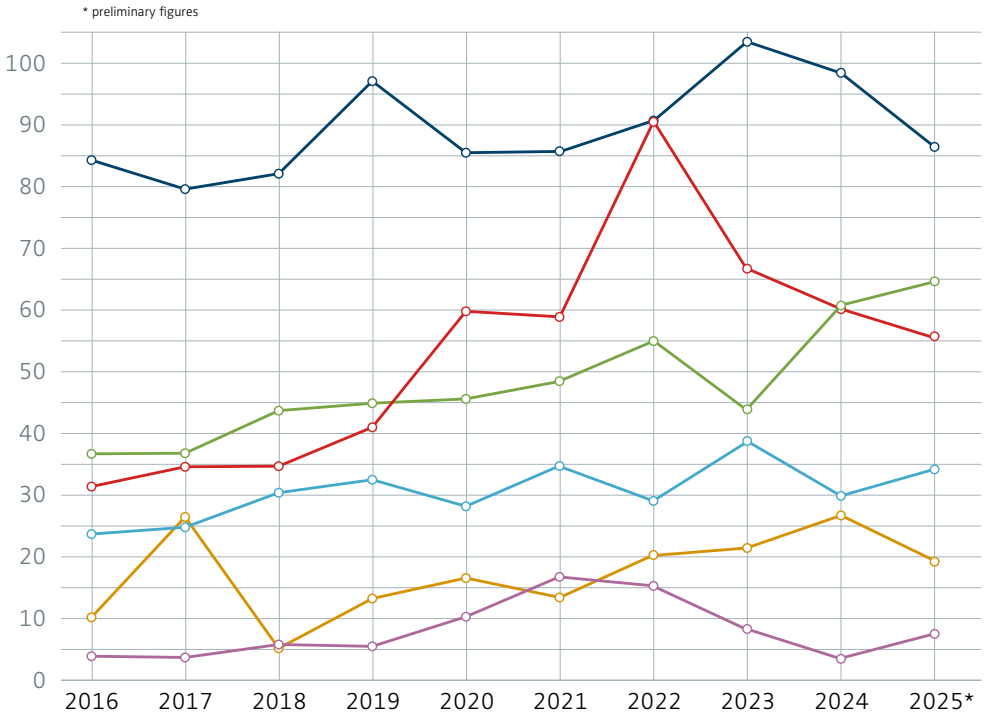


Sources of third-party funding

in millions of euros 2016 – 2025

2025:

DFG: 86.3
Foundations, endowments etc.: 64.4
German govt.: 55.7
Private sector: 34.2
EU: 19.2
State govt.: 7.5



Research news



Left: A Depas cup excavated by Heinrich Schliemannn

Right: Caffeine may reduce the effectiveness of some antibiotics



+++ Trojan wine was not just for heroes +++ A research team from the Universities of Tübingen, Bonn, and Jena has, for the first time, chemically proven that wine was indeed consumed in Troy around 4,000 years ago, and that it was not reserved for the upper classes. Ordinary people also drank wine. The study was based on Depas cups, slender clay vessels with two handles, of the type Heinrich Schliemann excavated in the 19th century and which are also mentioned in Homer's Iliad. Over a hundred of these cups are known to date from the period 2500–2000 B.C.E. Produced in the Aegean, they have been found as far away as Mesopotamia.

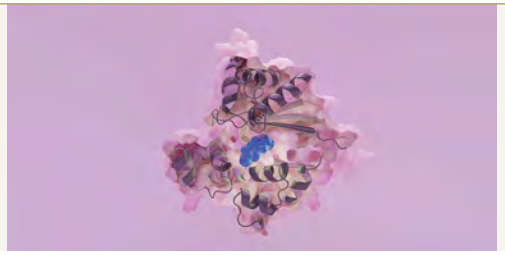
The researchers examined two fragments of a Depas cup in the Tübingen collection. They took samples, heated and analyzed them using gas chromatography and mass spectrometry. The analysis revealed the presence of succinic and pyruvic acids, which are produced only during the fermentation of grape juice. This proves that the vessels once contained wine and not merely grape juice. In the Bronze Age, wine was considered the most prestigious drink, and Depas cups were regarded as particularly fine vessels; they are often found in palaces and temples. The researchers subsequently analyzed the remains of ordinary cups found in the outer parts of Troy, and these vessels were also shown to have contained wine, indicating that wine was drunk even by the common people.

+++ Coffee may affect antibiotic potency +++ A study conducted by the Universities of Tübingen and of Würzburg showed that certain antibiotics become less effective when exposed to caffeine. The researchers examined 94 substances, including medications, antibiotics, and food components, for their effects on the common bacterium *Escherichia coli*. The study revealed that even everyday substances without antimicrobial effects – such as caffeinated beverages – can influence bacterial gene regulation.

Caffeine activates a regulatory cascade in *E. coli* that leads to changes in several transport proteins. These proteins control which substances enter or leave the bacterial cell. The altered transport mechanisms reduce the uptake of the antibiotic ciprofloxacin, thereby decreasing its effectiveness, in what researchers call an antagonistic interaction. This did not occur in the closely related bacterium *Salmonella enterica,* suggesting that similar bacterial species may respond differently to environmental stimuli. The findings could have important implications for future treatments, particularly when it comes to interactions between food and antibiotics.



The Colombian Altiplano, the high plateau around Bogotá. Researchers from the University of Tübingen found evidence here of a previously unknown early population.



A glimpse inside a protein

+++ Colombia's early hunter-gatherers disappeared completely +++ A research team from the University of Tübingen, the Senckenberg Centre for Human Evolution and Palaeoenvironment, and the Universidad Nacional de Colombia has analyzed human genome data from Colombia for the first time. They examined samples from 21 individuals from five archaeological sites on the high plateau around Bogotá, spanning a period of almost 6,000 years. The oldest individuals come from the Checua site at an altitude of approximately 3,000 meters. The genetic data show that these early hunter-gatherers formed a previously unknown population that spread across South America early on and diversified independently.

The study revealed that the genetic material of this population later disappeared completely from the region: no genetic link could be found in individuals from as recently as 2,000 years ago, and no descendants were identified. The researchers conclude that a complete population shift occurred in the region around Bogotá. According to the genetic findings, the earlier population was replaced by a second wave of migration from Central America. These later groups shaped the culture of the Altiplano and brought new technologies and the Chibchan languages to the region. The results provide new insights into the early settlement dynamics of North and South America.

+++ New pathoblocker to stop key Salmonella infection process +++ A research team from the University of Tübingen and the German Center for Infection Research identified a substance that inhibits the infection process of Salmonella bacteria at an early stage. These bacteria normally inject effector proteins into gastrointestinal tract cells, where they invade and multiply. This can lead to severe inflammation and systemic infections, especially in children and the elderly. The newly discovered synthetic substance C26 specifically blocks this injection process and could be further developed into a drug for use in humans and animals.

As Salmonella develops resistance to common antibiotics, alternative strategies are needed. Pathoblockers like C26 do not aim to kill the bacteria, but rather to specifically disrupt their infection mechanisms before the bacteria can penetrate tissue. Researchers believe salmonella is less likely to develop resistance to such agents. The research focuses on the regulator HilD, which plays a crucial role in the entry of bacteria into host cells. A suitable target structure has been identified for this regulator, through which C26 can interrupt the signaling pathways for protein injection.

Promoting early-career researchers

The Baden-Württemberg Foundation elite postdoc program

The Baden-Württemberg Foundation's elite program for postdoctoral researchers supports outstanding early-career researchers on paths to an academic career by giving them the opportunity to independently design and carry out their own research projects.



Sabine Hanke



Saskia Quené

Sabine Hanke: Feathers of Empire

Birds can tell us a lot about history. Historian Dr. Sabine Hanke is investigating the role of birds in the history of knowledge in Europe and the interplay of nature, culture, and society during the imperial era between the 1860s and the 1920s, in her research project Feathers of Empire. Hanke combines two case studies: the first looks at the trade in birds of paradise from New Guinea; the second analyzes the ostrich farms of the Cape Colony and their connection to the European market. This comparative approach shows how imperial expansion was driven by more than a desire to dominate nature; for instance, it was also shaped by environmental conditions and animal behavior.

Sabine Hanke covers extensive source material, including travelogues, natural history archives, museum documents, and indigenous knowledge. The aim is to reassess the scientific and economic mechanisms of resource use in colonialism and to highlight the role of animals in history.

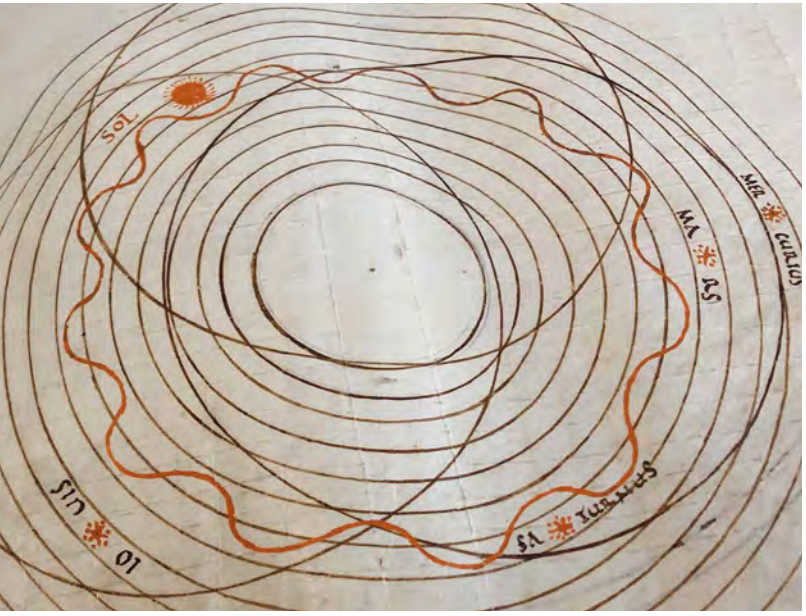
Saskia Quené: How the perception of time has changed since the Middle Ages

In the Forms of Time project, art historian Dr. Saskia Quené investigates how, in the 9th and 10th centuries, time was represented on a two-dimensional surface to make it comprehensible. She works with medieval diagrams that represent an attempt to grasp time not merely as a sequence of events, but as a distinct entity. These diagrams are found in manuscripts where cosmological and musical knowledge are closely intertwined. Quené seeks to reinterpret these sources by digitizing these historical time structures as 3D models. This combination of medieval research with innovative digital visualization and analysis tools brings into focus the relationship between our current notation and representation systems of temporal processes and pre-modern knowledge cultures.

Research training groups

Training for upcoming academics

A diagram in a 9th century excerpt from Pliny's Naturalis Historia. Such diagrams in medieval manuscripts seek to show time in two dimensions.



Research training groups support researchers in the early stages of their careers. The focus is on doctoral studies within a clearly defined research topic, embedded in a structured, interdisciplinary qualification program. The aim is to prepare doctoral candidates specifically for academic life and to enable them to conduct independent research. Research training groups are funded by the DFG for a period of up to nine years.

Figurations of the Precarious in the Global South

We often hear we are living in precarious times – an age of rapid globalization, bringing social, economic, and ecological crises. The new research training group Figurations of the Precarious in the Global South explores the usefulness of this concept as an analytical category for examining the societies and cultures of the Global South. Key questions include: to what extent do individuals and communities perceive everyday life situations, social circumstances, and/or interactions as precarious? what frameworks are employed to understand and evaluate precarity? and what tactics and strategies are developed for coping with it? The group benefits from the work of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Global South Studies (ICGSS) at the University of Tübingen, where African, Asian, and Latin American studies are integrated.

International research training group on the function of the retina

The retina, with its complex network of more than 100 cell types, plays a crucial role in early visual signal processing and the transmission of behaviorally relevant information to the brain. Since these initial, vital elements of vision require a great deal of energy, the retina is the largest relative energy consumer in the human body. The international research training group Energy vs. Information: Identifying the Limits Determining the Function of the Retina and the Visual System (Limits2Vision) investigates the delicate balance between the mechanisms that enable the retina to manage its energy demands and the task of processing visual information efficiently. The group is headed by Professor Thomas Euler from the Research Center for Ophthalmology, in partnership with the Institut de la Vision in Paris.

Tübingen's research training groups

Title	Spokesperson	Duration
Limits 2 Vision (IGRK 3130)	Professor Dr. Thomas Euler Faculty of Medicine, Werner Reichardt Centre for Integrative Neuroscience (CIN)	1 Jan. 2026 – 31 Dec. 2030
Figurations of the Precarious in the Global South (GRK 3105)	Professor Dr. Sebastian Thies Romance Languages and Literatures	1 April 2026 – 31 March 2031
Non-canonical G Protein Signaling Pathways: Mechanisms, Functions, Consequences (GRK 2816)	Professor Dr. Dr. Bernd Nürnberg Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology	1 Oct. 2022 – 30 Sept. 2027
Women's Mental Health Across the Reproductive Years (GRK 2804)	Professor Dr. Birgit Derntl Psychiatry and Psychotherapy	1 Jan. 2023 – 31 Dec. 2027
Research training group Stuttgart – Tübingen, Intraoperative multi-sensor tissue identification in oncology (GRK 2543)	Professor Dr. Oliver Sawodny University of Stuttgart	1 Jan. 2020 – 31 March 2029
	Professor Dr. Arnulf Stenzl University of Tübingen Faculty of Medicine	
cGMP: From the bedside to the laboratory bench (GRK 2381)	Professor Dr. Robert Feil Interfaculty Institute of Biochemistry	1 July 2019 – 30 June 2028
MOMbrane: The multifaceted functions and dynamics of the mitochondrial outer membrane (GRK 2364)	Professor Dr. Doron Rapaport Interfaculty Institute of Biochemistry	1 April 2018 – 30 March 2027
Research training group Mannheim – Freiburg – Heidelberg – Koblenz – Landau – Tübingen, Statistical Modeling in Psychology (SMiP) (GRK 2277)	Professor Dr. Thorsten Meiser University of Mannheim	1 Oct 2017 – 30 Sept. 2026
	Professor Dr. Mandy Hütter Professor Dr. Rolf Ulrich University of Tübingen, Faculty of Science	
Research training group Frankfurt – Tübingen, Doing Transitions – The Formation of Transitions over the Life Course (GRK 2105)	Professor Dr. Andreas Walther University of Frankfurt am Main	1 Jan. 2017 – 31 Dec. 2025
	Professor Dr. Barbara Stauber University of Tübingen, Economics and Social Sciences	

2025 Doctorates

	Doctorates completed in winter semester 2024/25 and summer semester 2025	
Faculty	female	male
Protestant Theology	2	4
Catholic Theology	3	3
Law	9	15
Medicine	136	80
Humanities	22	18
Economics and Social Sciences	17	12
Science	103	173
Center for Islamic Theology	1	3
Total	293	308
	601	

As of: 28 Jan. 2026

Habilitations completed in 2025

	2025 habilitations	
Faculty	female	male
Protestant Theology	1	
Medicine	7	20
Humanities	2	5
Economics and Social Sciences	2	2
Science	1	5
Total	13	32
	45	

As of: 4 February 2026

Jubilees

150th anniversary of the Tübingen Eye Hospital

In 2025, the University Eye Hospital celebrated its 150th anniversary – a milestone for both the long tradition of ophthalmology in Tübingen and the institution's pioneering scientific and clinical advancements. The hospital was founded in the autumn of 1875, initially with 28 beds. Its first medical director, Professor Albrecht Nagel, headed the Eye Hospital for more than two decades, overseeing its expansion from 1884 to 1885.

When the hospital was founded, ophthalmological science was in a period of intensive development. Independent eye clinics had only existed for a few decades at German universities; ophthalmology was just beginning to establish itself as an independent discipline. This was partly due to the invention of the ophthalmoscope, which revolutionized diagnostics by allowing doctors to see inside the eye. Specialization became inevitable and led to the establishment of ophthalmology as an independent subject in Tübingen.

Today, the University Eye Hospital Tübingen is one of the leading institutions of its kind in Europe. The anniversary provided an opportunity to celebrate its evolution from its beginnings under Albrecht Nagel to the modern Center of Ophthalmology that combines excellent clinical care, internationally oriented research, and innovative teaching.

Tübingen School of Education celebrates first decade

The Tübingen School of Education (TüSE) marked its tenth anniversary in 2025. TüSE consolidates the University's teacher training degrees, bringing together subject knowledge, subject didactics, and education sciences for the University's 25 teaching subjects in one central institution. The School of Education enables cross-faculty research into teacher training to develop ever better methods and best practices. The aim is to give trainee teachers the best possible training for their profession.



The first Tübingen Eye Clinic, around 1889

TüSE was founded in 2015 in response to the growing demands on university-based teacher training. Since then, the University has established 19 professorships in the field of teacher education, 14 in subject-specific didactics and five in education sciences. The School of Education has so far attracted some 23 million euros in external funding for research and teaching projects. Early-career researchers and student teachers alike benefit from targeted support programs. TüSE works with schools in the region to strengthen the exchange between academic theory and everyday practice.


GIPS-SCHÜLE-STIFTUNG

Sponsorship

Strong partnerships



Sebastian Deindl

The generosity of many foundations creates opportunities for innovation – in research, teaching, and in academic support services. The University of Tübingen builds on cooperation with both established and new partners who share our goal of making the future better than today.

Foundations sponsoring professorships

New Humboldt professor investigates dynamic protein complexes

In 2025, Sebastian Deindl became the University's latest Humboldt Professor. Deindl, a biophysicist, is the new Professor of Structural Biology at the Interfaculty Institute of Biochemistry. His work will receive a total of five million euros in funding from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation over a period of five years.

Structural biology looks at the molecular structure of large biological molecules, particularly proteins and protein complexes. Thousands of these substances drive vital metabolic processes in the cells of the human body. These molecular machines are only one millionth of a millimeter in size. Yet they are dynamic and constantly in motion. Past research often focused on examining their structure when static. However, this does not fully explain how they work.

Sebastian Deindl examines the changes in protein structures as they perform their functions. He uses a combination of single-molecule fluorescence imaging methods, structural biology techniques, biochemistry, and computer simulations. His goal is to combine real-time information from single-molecule experiments with biochemical and structural data to create moving images of these tiny engines that will show how they work. Deindl's investigation of enzymes that interact with nucleic acids, for example, is relevant for medical research – their malfunction is often associated with serious diseases such as cancer.

Deindl studied at the University of Tübingen and earned his Ph.D. in 2009 at the University of California, Berkeley. He conducted postdoctoral research at Harvard University. Leaving the United States, in 2014 he moved to Uppsala University in Sweden; he has held a professorship in Molecular Biophysics there since 2022. His research has been recognized with international awards: in 2017, he received a European Research Council Starting Grant; in 2019, the EMBO Young Investigator Award; and in 2022, an ERC Advanced Grant.

The Humboldt Professorship is Germany's most prestigious research award. It goes to researchers who have established themselves abroad and are invited to come to Germany. It is awarded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation with the aim of strengthening Germany's position as an international center of research excellence.

Endowed professorships

Field	Name	Sponsor
Law		
Artificial Intelligence Law	Professor Dr. Michèle Finck, LL. M	Carl Zeiss Foundation
Humanities		
Philosophy and History of Science	Professor Dr. Reinhard Kahle	Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker Professorship (Udo Keller Foundation Forum Humanum)
Modern Taiwan Studies	Assistant Professor Dr. Yu-chin Tseng	Education Ministry of the Republic of China (Taiwan)
Economics and Social Sciences		
Financial Literacy and Economic Didactics	Professor Dr. Taiga Brahm	Dieter von Holtzbrinck Foundation
Gifted and Talented Education in STEM Subjects	Assistant Professor Dr. Katerina Tsarava	Hector Foundation
Educational Neuroscience and Cognitive Psychology	Assistant Professor Dr. Michiko Murayama	Alexander von Humboldt Foundation
Medicine		
Advanced Preclinical Metabolic Imaging and Cell Engineering	Professor Dr. André Martins	Alexander von Humboldt Foundation
Preclinical Imaging of the Immune System	Professor Dr. Bettina Weigelin	Adolf Leuze Foundation
Functional and Metabolic Brain Imaging	Professor Dr. Kristina Herfert	Carl Zeiss Foundation
Clinical Parasitology and Global Health	Professor Dr. Steffen Borrmann	DAAD Foundation
Transfusion Medicine	Professor Dr. Tamam Bakchoul	DRK-Blutspendedienst and Baden-Württemberg-Hessen gGmbH
Data Science for Vision Research	Professor Dr. Philipp Berens	Hertie Foundation
Neurodegenerative Diseases	Professor Dr. Thomas Gasser	Hertie Foundation
Computational Sensomotorics	Professor Dr. Martin Giese	Hertie Foundation
Cell Biological Foundations of Neurological Diseases	Professor Dr. Matthias Jucker	Hertie Foundation
Functional Neurogenetics	Professor Dr. Philipp Kahle	Hertie Foundation
Translational Imaging of Cortical Microstructure	Professor Dr. Esther Kühn	Equipment sponsored by the Hertie Foundation
Neurology/ Epileptology	Professor Dr. Holger Lerche	Hertie Foundation
Clinical Neurogenetics	Professor Dr. Ludger Schöls	Hertie Foundation
Machine Learning for Clinical Neuroscience	Professor Dr. Kerstin Ritter	Hertie Foundation
Complementary Medical Procedures	Professor Dr. Holger Cramer	Robert Bosch Foundation
Clinical Pharmacology	Professor Dr. Matthias Schwab	Robert Bosch Foundation
Occupational and Social Medicine	Professor Dr. Monika Rieger	Südwestmetall Employers' Federation (Südwestmetall)
Preclinical Imaging and Imaging Technology	Professor Dr. Bernd Pichler	Werner Siemens Foundation
Science		
Continual Learning and Multimodal Datastreams	Professor Dr. Gerard Pons-Moll	Carl Zeiss Foundation
Machine Learning	Professor Dr. Matthias Hein	Robert Bosch GmbH
Informatics and the Didactics of Informatics	Professor Dr. Maria Knobelsdorf	Carl Zeiss Foundation






Volkswagen Foundation programs

Momentum funding for three Tübingen researchers

The Volkswagen Foundation's Momentum Funding for First-time Professors program provides support to freshly-appointed professors. The grant gives them scope to further develop their research long term, or to tackle new topics. The grant is made for an initial four-year period and may be extended for a further two years. The Volkswagen Foundation approved just eleven Momentum grants across Germany in 2025.

How viruses take over the plant cell nucleus

In the project NEWCLEAR, Professor Rosa Lozano-Durán investigates how Gemini viruses attack plants, causing severe diseases. The viruses alter the cell nucleus by pushing the host's DNA to the periphery and establishing their own factory for viral replication. Rosa Lozano-Durán's goal is to understand these processes and their consequences for both viruses and hosts. To this end, she is expanding her model viruses to include human viruses and utilizing laser microdissection. The goal is to find new strategies against infections – and not just in plants. Lozano-Durán has received Momentum funding of 920,000 euros for the project.

And there was quantum light

Professor Marcus Scheele of the Institute of Physical Chemistry is developing supercrystals made of quantum dots as part of the QuantumLeaP project. The dots are intended to serve as energy-efficient light sources. Quantum dots are nanocrystals that behave similarly to atoms and are therefore often referred to as artificial atoms – for example, they arrange themselves into crystalline structures just like atoms. Marcus Scheele aims to adapt protein crystallization techniques to produce defect-free structures. The goal is to develop new QD supercrystals, tiny semiconductor crystals measuring just nanometers. These could be used in displays and as highly efficient light sources. Scheele's project is receiving 930,000 euros in Momentum funds.

More efficient discovery and production of new antibiotics

How can new antibiotics be discovered more quickly? This question is at the heart of the Momentum project led by Professor Nadine Ziemert of the Institute of Microbiology and Hygiene at the Faculty of Medicine. In her project, she aims to systematically accelerate the search for urgently-needed compounds which act against pathogenic bacteria. To do this, she combines machine learning algorithms with methods from synthetic biology and molecular biology to match up genetically encoded biosynthetic pathways with potential target molecules in pathogens. This can help medical researchers to predict effective new active compounds. For this work, Ziemert is receiving a Momentum grant of around 940,000 euros.

Left to right:

Rosa Lozano-Durán

Marcus Scheele

Nadine Ziemert

Anja Wolkenhauer



Peter Loskill

Carl Zeiss Foundation supports organ-on-a-chip research

Opus Magnum Grant for fresh assessment of Pliny

Anja Wolkenhauer, Professor of Latin at the University of Tübingen, has been awarded a three-semester Opus Magnum grant from the Volkswagen Foundation. Her project focuses on the 37-volume work of natural history by the Roman author Pliny the Elder (c. 24–79 CE), the Naturalis Historia.

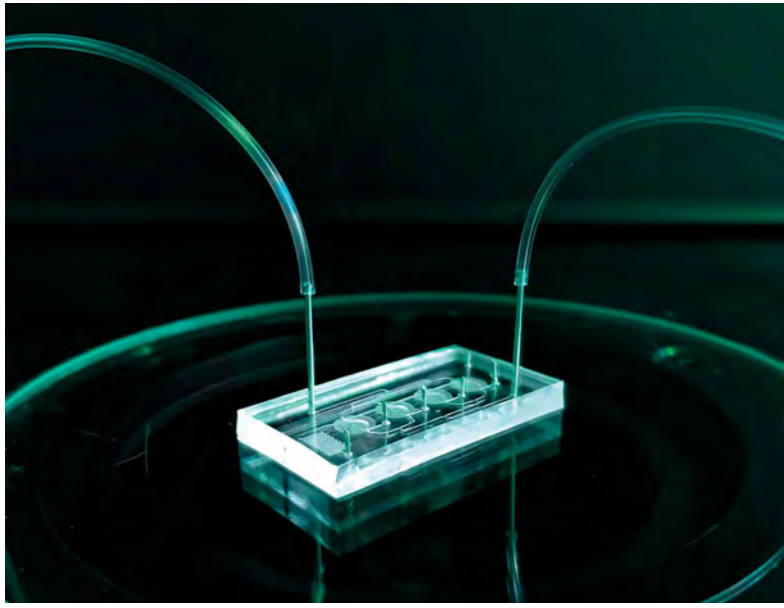
With the Volkswagen Foundation sponsorship, Wolkenhauer is producing a monograph that reinterprets Pliny's work in the field of historical human-nature relationships. The Naturalis Historia had an impact not only in Roman antiquity, but also made an important contribution to early modern natural philosophy. Wolkenhauer examines the work to determine, for example, Pliny where the differences between humans and animals lie, and what humans are permitted to do in nature. The project has its roots in the Tübingen collaborative research center Other Aesthetics.

The Opus Magnum initiative enables professors in the humanities and social sciences to engage in intensive work on a monograph, and to open up perspectives for early-career researchers working with them on the projects.

To further advance cancer immunotherapy, the Carl Zeiss Foundation is providing some six million euros over six years to a Tübingen research group. The ImmuneMPS project is developing models of the human immune system, called organ-on-a-chip systems, to simulate aspects of the immune response. The project is led by Peter Loskill, professor for Organ-on-a-Chip Systems at the University of Tübingen Medical Faculty and the Institute of Natural Sciences and Medicine (NMI) in Reutlingen.

With tissue culture models, complex biological processes can be replicated outside the body. These models also allow several organ models to be combined into a multi-organ system. The research focuses on areas such as the human immune response, how cancer begins, and how tumors respond to treatments.

Such models would provide biomedical research with another method for testing new therapies, which have to undergo a lengthy development process. This ranges from the search for new drugs and initial testing in the laboratory via animal studies to human trials, which, in the best-case scenario, result in medical approval. On average, this can take more than 13 years. Making the development process more efficient in the future is one of the goals of organ-on-a-chip technology.



Organ-on-a-chip systems enable scientists to replicate biological processes for investigation in the laboratory.

The Hector Foundation supports AI in education research

AI is transforming many aspects of everyday life, including schooling. To harness the educational power of AI effectively and responsibly, Education Sciences and Machine Learning researchers at the University of Tübingen are collaborating on AI-supported projects designed to have a rapid and direct positive impact on students, schools, and teachers. In 2025, the H.W. & J. Hector Foundation approved 6.2 million euros in funding for six research projects to run for a period of three years.

The projects:

The project **Empowering Informatics teachers in the field of AI through advanced professional training and post-graduate education** is developing a modular training program for teachers in the new, mandatory school subject of Media Literacy and Computer Science.

The project **AI-supported promotion of reading and writing in preschool** is developing an AI-supported app to develop reading and writing skills, so that more children meet the minimum reading standards by the end of primary school.

The project **VOILA – Voice-operated intelligent learning assistant for gifted children** is developing an AI tutor to individually support gifted elementary school students and to provide them with educational challenges beyond the standard curriculum.

In the project **ETQ-AI,** the goal is to improve teaching quality through an AI-supported feedback system, giving teachers real-time feedback on their lessons via an app.

In the **COMPASS – Comprehensive open math platform with adaptive self-regulation support** project, the learn-



The Hector AI + Education Future Fund was launched in November 2025. The launch brought together researchers, teachers, and foundation representatives to lay the groundwork for nine interdisciplinary projects.

ing platform MatheBattle (math battle) is being optimized so that the exercises adapt even better to children's abilities while promoting their self-regulated learning.

Under the project title **Immersive AI,** researchers are developing an AI dialogue partner for learning environments in virtual and augmented reality.

In the newly established Hector AI + Education Future Fund, Education Science and Informatics researchers are working together to develop practical solutions such as learning assistants, apps, and digital platforms. Three accompanying research projects are jointly funded by the Hector AI + Education Future Fund and the University of Tübingen. They focus on **ethical considerations** regarding dialogue-oriented AI in education, the **legal perspective** on the use of AI in education, and the **challenges** associated with its practical application in educational settings.

All projects are integrated with the LEAD Graduate School & Research Network, in which more than 200 researchers from various disciplines collaborate to study education and learning processes.

Wellcome Trust sponsors brain research into decision-making

Whether we are planning leisure activities or making important life decisions, gathering and evaluating information is central to our thinking and decision-making. Such everyday processes can be disrupted by mental illness. Those affected make hasty decisions or are no longer able to decide at all; both extremes have a huge impact on daily life. An international research team led by Professor Tobias Hauser from Computational Psychiatry at the Tübingen University Hospitals seeks to decipher the underlying brain mechanisms of decision-making; this should enable targeted therapies. The project receives a research grant of nearly six million euros from the Wellcome Trust and will run for five years.

Using functional magnetic resonance imaging, the researchers are compiling the largest dataset to date on the symptoms of indecisiveness and of jumping to conclusions. A total of 150 patients with schizophrenia and 150 with obsessive-compulsive disorder are being examined using MRI brain scans to identify the neural mechanisms underlying these cognitive distortions. Building on these findings, computer-aided models will be used to develop treatments for these symptoms. Particular attention is being paid to the role of the neurotransmitter dopamine, which plays a key role in decision-making processes in the brain. The aim is to find out the extent to which changes in dopamine function during information gathering influence the neural networks involved in decision-making.



Tobias Hauser investigates the cognitive and neural processes which lead to psychological illness.

Sponsorship across many fields

Dr. K. H. Eberle Foundation research prize

The Dr. K. H. Eberle Foundation Research Prize at the University of Tübingen was presented in 2025 to Professor Carolin Führer of German Studies and Professor Ulrike Cress of the Leibniz Institute for Knowledge Media. The two researchers were honored for their project "Literary knowledge constructions with AI: Co-constructive learning in the German language classroom of the future." The Dr. K. H. Eberle Foundation's Research Prize supports innovative projects that address pressing questions for the future. It is endowed with 100,000 euros.

The award-winning project examines how young people engage with complex and ambiguous texts. This engagement is central to the development of manifold perspectives and opinions in a democratic society. At its core are three questions: how can AI be used to facilitate constructive knowledge acquisition and meaningful follow-up communication regarding literature? how can AI help us understand linguistic, historical, and cultural differences? and how can it motivate engagement with literature while simultaneously promoting a better understanding of ambiguous texts?





Top:
Alexandra Zoller (left), of the Dr. K. H. Eberle Foundation presents the certificate to Carolin Führer of the Institute of German Language and Literature; she received the award alongside the Knowledge Media Research Center's Ulrike Cress.

Gips-Schüle Young Researcher Prize 2025

Dr. Teresa Wagner received the 2025 Gips-Schüle Young Researcher Prize, which comes with 10,000 euros, in the life sciences category. Wagner earned her Ph.D. from the University of Tübingen in 2023 with a thesis on immunotherapy for cancer. She developed a new diagnostic method that allows immunotherapies to be monitored in real time. The focus is on an immune checkpoint protein (SIRPα). The spatial distribution of cells that carry this protein on their surface indicates whether the immunotherapy is working or not. Teresa Wagner developed a new tracer substance that can be used to map the distribution of SIRPα-expressing cells within the tumor with the highest precision.

The Gips-Schüle Foundation supports research for the benefit of humanity and promotes visionary young researchers in Baden-Württemberg. Its focus is on science, informatics, engineering, and mathematics as well as interdisciplinary projects.

Bottom:
Left to right: Vice-President Katja Schenke-Layland, prizewinner Teresa Wagner, Gips-Schüle Foundation chairman Stefan Hofmann, former State Minister of Science, Research and the Arts and foundation board member Peter Frankenberg



University Association helps make convivial outdoor space

In 2025, on the occasion of its 100th anniversary, the University Association presented the University of Tübingen with a special anniversary gift: outdoor furniture for the decking in front of the University Library cafeteria. The eight tables, sixteen benches, and two loungers have created a space for learning and socializing. ''With our donation, guided by the motto 'Supporting rather than celebrating,' we aim to improve the quality of life on campus and help ensure that the University offers places for exchange and learning even outside of seminar rooms and lecture halls,'' said Christian O. Erbe, chair of the University Association and honorary senator of the University of Tübingen, at the handover ceremony.

The University Association brings together all those who feel connected to the University. Through their donations, members enable the association to support students, doctoral candidates, and researchers without red tape. Through fundraising campaigns, the University Association contributes to the University's status as a center of excellence and supports it as the region's leading research hub.



Universitätsbund Chairman Christian O. Erbe (center) and Business Manager Alexander Gorskiy (right) present the new outdoor furniture to University Library Director Regine Tobias (left), University Executive Vice-President Andreas Rothfuß, and Karin Amos, Vice-President for Teaching and Learning.



International

Taking on global responsibility

In a time marked by international tensions, the academic world demonstrates the power of sharing ideas. Under the umbrella of the European CIVIS university alliance and through long-term partnerships such as that with Dōshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, the University of Tübingen combines networking in research and teaching with public engagement. Internationalization thus strengthens the University's profile as an open, responsible research and teaching institution with a global impact.

Trusted networks – CIVIS

The University of Tübingen has joined with ten other European institutions of higher education in CIVIS – Europe's Civic University Alliance. These partners work together to promote student exchanges, develop joint courses, open up opportunities for research, and advance cooperation formats with non-academic agents in European civil society. CIVIS members are also working closely with strategic partners in Africa.

The ECKSTEIN Public Engagement Lab

Tübingen's historic old town was home to a cutting-edge project: in May 2025, the University of Tübingen's pop-up store, ECKSTEIN, opened its doors, providing a space for dialogue between the town and the academic community. Until the end of July 2025, it hosted workshops, panel discussions, exhibitions, and performances on various topics.

The project was part of the Tübingen CIVIS Open Lab initiative, which connects CIVIS member institutions with local groups. The Open Labs seek to make the universities more participatory, inclusive, and open.

Among other things, citizens had called for a greater in-depth examination of issues related to aging, and this was taken up in a transnational CIVIS Open Lab project, which invited participation at the regional level. An initial in-person meeting of international partners took place at the ECKSTEIN venue. This led to the creation of the "Tackling the Challenges of Aging" project which is being implemented by the European project partners in their respective local communities.

Dialogue formats that appealed to mixed audiences played a special role. The "Dialogbar" and the "Science Snack" events fostered dialogue on equal terms between researchers, students, and the general public, including international students and people from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In this way, the ECKSTEIN public engagement lab complemented the University's conventional mobility and cooperation formats with a locally rooted, European-inspired dimension.

Teaching Civic Engagement

With its Micro-Program in Civic Engagement, the University of Tübingen is making a significant contribution to innovative and practice-oriented teaching. The program is open to students from all disciplines who wish to actively apply their academic knowledge to real-world social contexts.

Developed as part of the CIVIS Alliance, the program is organized by the universities in Athens, Bucharest, Madrid, and Tübingen. Students from all eleven CIVIS partner institu-



A place for the public and the University to share their ideas: the ECKSTEIN pop-up store

tions can enroll in selected courses at these universities. Participants not only acquire interdisciplinary skills but also gain experience in addressing social, cultural, and political issues. The program opens up international perspectives for students by incorporating global examples of civic engagement and promoting intercultural cooperation. In doing so, it supports key strategic goals, such as global awareness, diversity, and responsible science communication.

A central component of the program is active participation in projects where students gain firsthand experience in how academic theories on democracy, social change, or civic engagement can be translated into practical action. This strengthens teamwork skills, communication skills, and critical thinking.

Reaching out globally

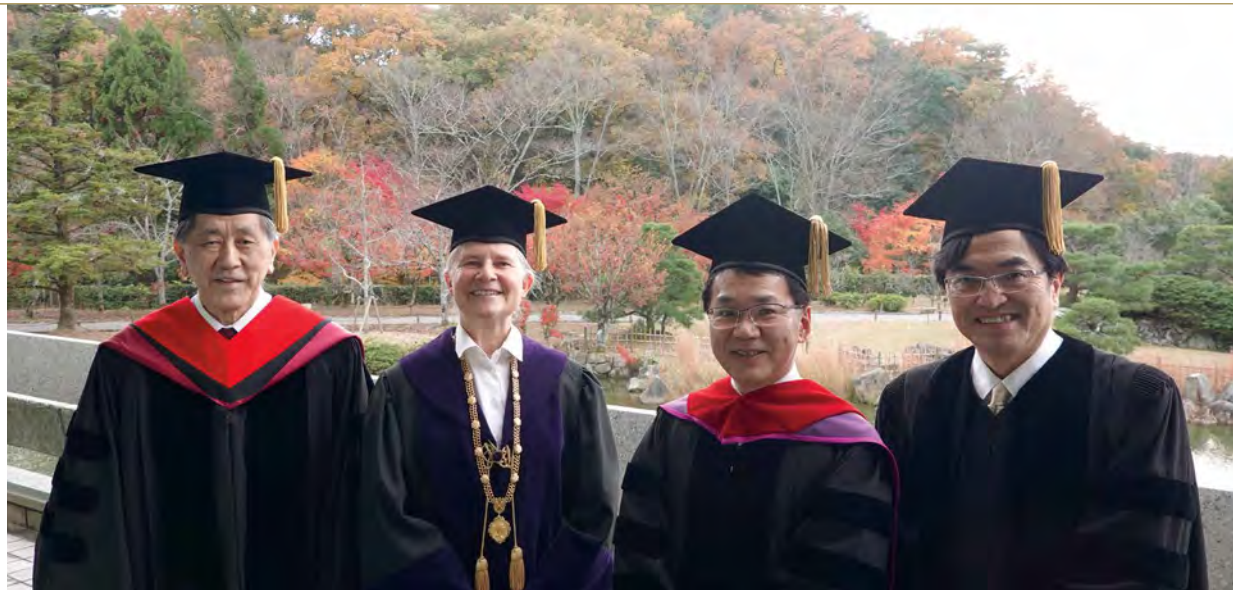
Early Career Rescue Fellowships support freedom of research

In 2025, the state of Baden-Württemberg launched the Early Career Rescue Fellowship program, an initiative designed to open up new opportunities for up to 14 researchers whose careers are at risk. With 3.6 million euros, the program aims to bring to the universities of Freiburg, Konstanz, and Tübingen researchers whose work in the U.S. is no longer possible due to restrictions such as travel bans or reduced funding. The two-year fellowships are based at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Freiburg, the Zukunftskolleg at the University of Konstanz, and the College of Fellows at the University of Tübingen.

The program gives postdocs an international environment for their research during a critical phase of their careers. The program enables the University to fulfill a social mission on an international level while also safeguarding the principle of academic freedom, said President Karla Pollmann. It opens up career prospects for early-career researchers in the German and European academic landscape.

The initiative began with a joint effort by the Network of German Institutes for Advanced Studies, which in 2025 drew attention to the increasingly difficult conditions for research in the United States. The state of Baden-Württemberg responded by launching the Early Career Rescue Fellowship program as part of the "Global Partnership in Science" funding package, which totaled 24 million euros.

Tübingen's College of Fellows offers researchers an independent, interdisciplinary research environment – ideal conditions during the critical phase between completing a doctorate and securing a professorship. Many of the Fellows introduce new research directions and contribute to the further development of research and teaching at their host university.



Longstanding partners, left to right: Aiji Tanaka, President of Waseda University; Karla Pollmann, President of Tübingen University; Katsuhiro Kohara, President of Doshisha University; and Renta Nishihara, President of Rikkyo University

Joint celebrations for Dōshisha University's 150th birthday

The University of Dōshisha celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2025. The University of Tübingen used this occasion to build on its connections with the Kyoto-based institution, one of its closest and most longstanding international partners. To mark the celebrations, a Tübingen delegation including President Karla Pollmann; the Dean of Humanities, Professor Angelika Zirker; as well as Japanese Studies' Professor Monika Schrimpf and Assistant Professor Fynn Holm, went to Kyoto.

In this anniversary year, Tübingen's Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Letters at Dōshisha University reaffirmed their intention to further strengthen their ties. Plans include expanding joint activities in teaching, research, and academic exchange beyond Japanese studies – particularly in the humanities, but also in the social sciences, life sciences, and in medicine, as well as in emerging fields such as digital humanities, medical technology, sustainable development, and artificial intelligence. Both partners emphasize their shared responsibility to address wider challenges at the local and global levels and view international academic cooperation as a crucial contribution to this task.

Another priority in the coming years will be supporting early-career researchers, for example, through the EU Campus Fellowships or more research exchanges. Close ties already exist in areas such as gender and diversity studies, which are continuously being developed through workshops, conferences, and bilateral projects.

Cooperation between the two universities has existed since 1990 and originated in Japanese Studies. In 1993, the Tübingen Center for Japanese Studies was opened at Dōshisha University. It was the first overseas branch of a German, and indeed a European, university at a Japanese institution of higher education. In 2012, Dōshisha University became a strategic partner of the University of Tübingen. The partnership was further strengthened by the opening of the Dōshisha EU Campus at the University of Tübingen in 2018. The Dōshisha EU Campus supports academic mobility, initiates collaborations in Europe, and facilitates joint projects. These include conferences, language programs, the EU Campus European Studies Program, and intercultural training for students.



The Summer School students with their Tübingen student buddies, who were there to help out during the four weeks.

Summer School on Disinformation

The Tübingen International & European Studies (T-IES) Summer School, organized by the University's International Office, brought international collaboration to the University of Tübingen in the summer of 2025. For four weeks, 21 students from various countries, including the United States, Italy, South Africa, Canada, and the United Kingdom, worked together in an intensive academic program on the topic ''Weaponization of Knowledge: the Historical Legacy of Propaganda and Disinformation in the US and Europe.'' Building on the saying ''knowledge is power,'' they explored historical and contemporary forms of knowledge production, the construction of reality, and the mechanisms of political influence. They discussed academic texts, examined sociological foundations, analyzed forms of political communication, and investigated how knowledge is deliberately used to secure power.

The T-IES Summer School also strengthens the ties between the University of Tübingen and its U.S. partner university, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), from which twelve of the participants came. The Summer School was organized by the International Office at the University of Tübingen. In her closing remarks, International Office director, Dr. Christine Rubas, emphasized the importance of critical information awareness. She encouraged the students to always question who benefits from certain bodies of knowledge and to remain aware of their own biases. The official closing ceremony provided a festive setting for the presentation of certificates and personal farewell gifts, underscoring the program's unique character.

Our partners around the world

The University of Tübingen maintains regular exchange programs with numerous institutions of higher education around the globe, as well as with our partners in CIVIS – Europe's Civic University Alliance, in The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities, and in the Matariki Network of Research Universities. The University of Tübingen hastwo offices in Asia (in Kyoto, Japan, and in Seoul, South Korea). And we are highly active in the European Union's Erasmus Program, involving partnership deals with hundreds of other European institutions.

University of Tübingen branches

Tübingen Center for Japanese Studies,
Dōshisha University - KYOTO
Tübingen Center for Korean Studies,
Korea University - SEOUL

North America

Canada

Mount Allison University - SACKVILLE, NEW BRUNSWICK
Ontario Colleges and Universities - ONTARIO
Université Laval - QUÉBEC, QUÉBEC

United States of America

University of Alaska - FAIRBANKS, AK
Northern Arizona University - FLAGSTAFF, AZ
California State Universities - CA
University of California San Diego - SAN DIEGO, CA
University of Denver - DENVER, CO
Connecticut State Universities and Colleges - CT
Yale University - NEW HAVEN, CT
Georgetown University - WASHINGTON, D.C.
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa - HONOLULU, HI
Butler University - INDIANAPOLIS, IN
Valparaiso University - VALPARAISO, IN
Bellarmine University - LOUISVILLE, KY
University of Massachusetts - BOSTON, AMHERST, MA
Boston College - BOSTON, MA
Tufts University - MEDFORD, MA
Washington College - CHESTERTOWN, MD
University of Maryland - COLLEGE PARK, MD
University of Michigan - ANN ARBOR, MI
Western Michigan University - KALAMAZOO, MI
University of Missouri - COLUMBIA, MO
Washington University - ST. LOUIS, MO
Montana State University - BOZEMAN, MT
North Carolina State Universities - NC
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill - CHAPEL HILL, NC
Princeton Theological Seminary - PRINCETON, NJ
Hobart and William Smith Colleges - GENEVA, NY
State University of New York - STONY BROOK, NY
Oregon University System - OR
Reed College - PORTLAND, OR
Temple University - PHILADELPHIA, PA
College of Charleston - CHARLESTON, SC
University of Tennessee - KNOXVILLE, TN
Rhodes College - MEMPHIS, TN
University of North Texas - DENTON, TX
University of Washington - SEATTLE, WA

Latin America

Argentina

Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina - BUENOS AIRES
Universidad Nacional de Cordoba - CORDOBA

Brazil

Univates em Lajeado - LAJEADO
Universidade Federal Fluminense - NITERÓI
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul - PORTO ALEGRE
P.U.C. do Rio Grande do Sul - PORTO ALEGRE
Universidade Federal de Pernambuco - RECIFE
USP Campus Universitario Ribeirão Preto - RIBEIRÃO PRETO
Universidade de Santa Cruz do Sul - SANTA CRUZ
Universidade Federal de Santa Maria - SANTA MARIA
Universidade de São Paulo - SÃO PAULO

Chile

Pontifícia Universidad Católica de Chile - SANTIAGO
Universidad de Chile - SANTIAGO

Ecuador

Universidad San Francisco de Quito - QUITO

Colombia

Universidad de los Andes - BOGOTÁ
Universidad Icesi - CALI

Mexico

Universidad Iberoamericana - CIUDAD DE MÉXICO
El Colegio de México - CIUDAD DE MÉXICO
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México - CIUDAD DE MÉXICO
Universidad de Guadalajara - GUADALAJARA
Universidad de Guanajuato - GUANAJUATO
Universidad de Monterrey - MONTERREY
Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla - PUEBLA
Universidad de las Américas - PUEBLA

Peru

Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú - LIMA
Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola (USIL) - LIMA

Uruguay

Universidad de Montevideo - MONTEVIDEO
Venezuela
Universidad de los Andes - MÉRIDA

Asia

China

Jilin University - CHANGCHUN
City University of Hong Kong - HONG KONG
University of Hong Kong - HONG KONG
Nanjing University - NANJING
Peking University - BEIJING
Renmin University of China - BEIJING
Fudan University - SHANGHAI
Tongji University - SHANGHAI

Georgia

Ilia State University - TBILISI

India

Ashoka University - SONIPAT

Israel

Hebrew University of Jerusalem - JERUSALEM
University of Haifa - HAIFA

Japan

Hiroshima University - HIROSHIMA
Dōshisha University - KYOTO
Ritsumeikan University - KYOTO
Aichi Prefectural University - NAGAKUTE
Kansai Gaidai University - OSAKA
Chuo University - TOKYO
Rikkyo University - TOKYO
Sophia University - TOKYO
Waseda University - TOKYO

Jordan

University of Jordan - AMMAN
Yarmouk University - IRBID

Kazakhstan

Nazarbayev University – ASTANA

Kyrgyzstan

American University of Central Asia – BISHKEK

Malaysia

Monash University - KUALA LUMPUR

Singapore

National University of Singapore - SINGAPORE
Singapore Management University – SINGAORE

South Korea

Chungnam National University - DAEJEON
Jeonbuk National University - JEONJU
EWHA Womans University - SEOUL
Hanyang University - SEOUL
Korea University - SEOUL
Kyung Hee University - SEOUL
Seoul National University - SEOUL
Sogang University - SEOUL
Sookmyung Women's University - SEOUL
Sungkyunkwan University - SEOUL
Yonsei University – SEOUL

Taiwan

National Tsing Hua University - HSINCHU
National Chung Hsing University - TAICHUNG
National Cheng Kung University - TAINAN
National Chengchi University - TAIPEI
National Taiwan University – TAIPEI

Thailand

Chulalongkorn University - BANGKOK
Mahidol University - BANGKOK

Africa

Egypt

German University in Cairo – CAIRO

Botswana

University of Botswana – GABORONE

Morocco

Université Hassan II de Casablanca – CASABLANCA

Mozambique

Universidade Eduardo Mondlane – MAPUTO

Namibia

University of Namibia – WINDHOEK

Rwanda

University of Rwanda – KIGALI

Senegal

Université Cheikh Anta Diop – DAKAR

South Africa

University of Cape Town - CAPE TOWN
University of KwaZulu-Natal - DURBAN
University of Johannesburg - JOHANNESBURG
University of the Witwatersrand - JOHANNESBURG
Nelson Mandela University - PORT ELIZABETH
University of Pretoria - PRETORIA
Universiteit van Stellenbosch – STELLENBOSCH

Togo

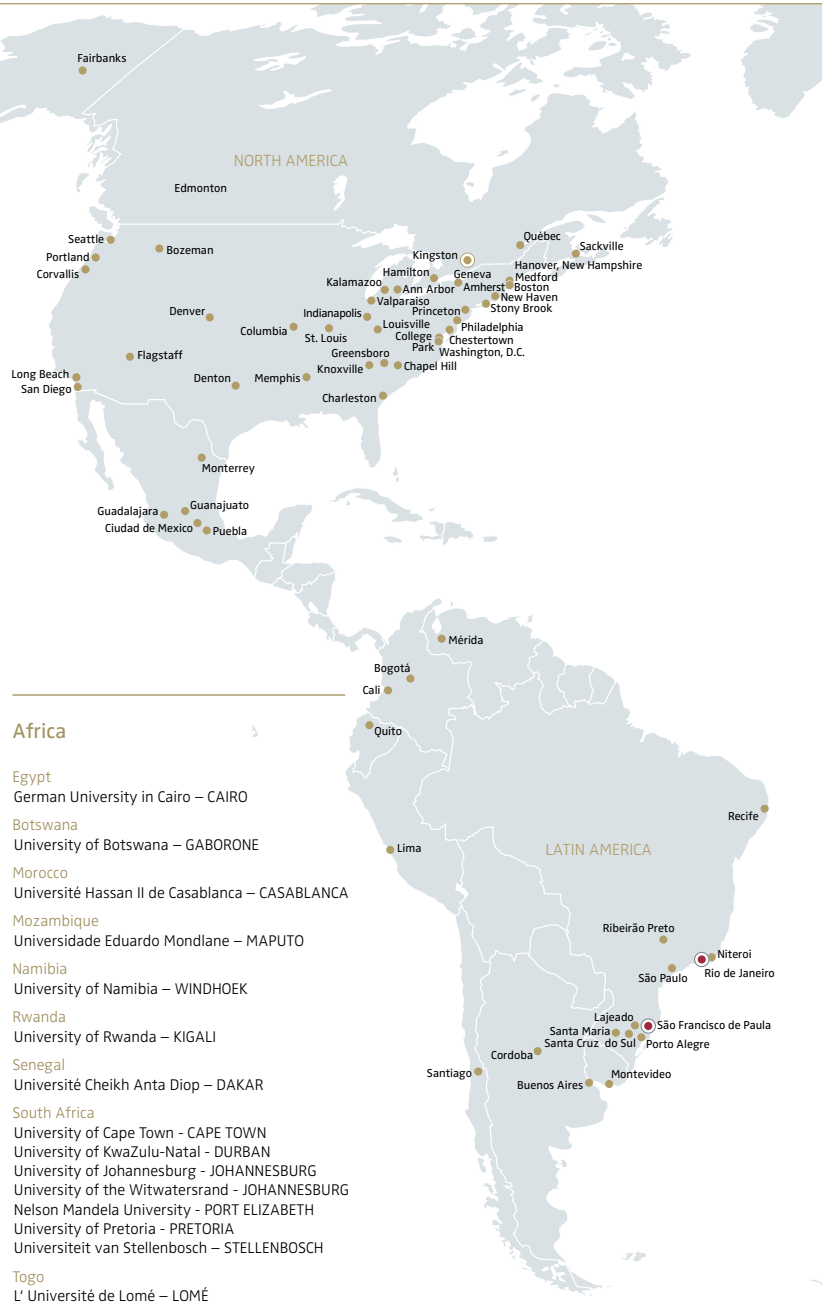
L' Université de Lomé – LOMÉ

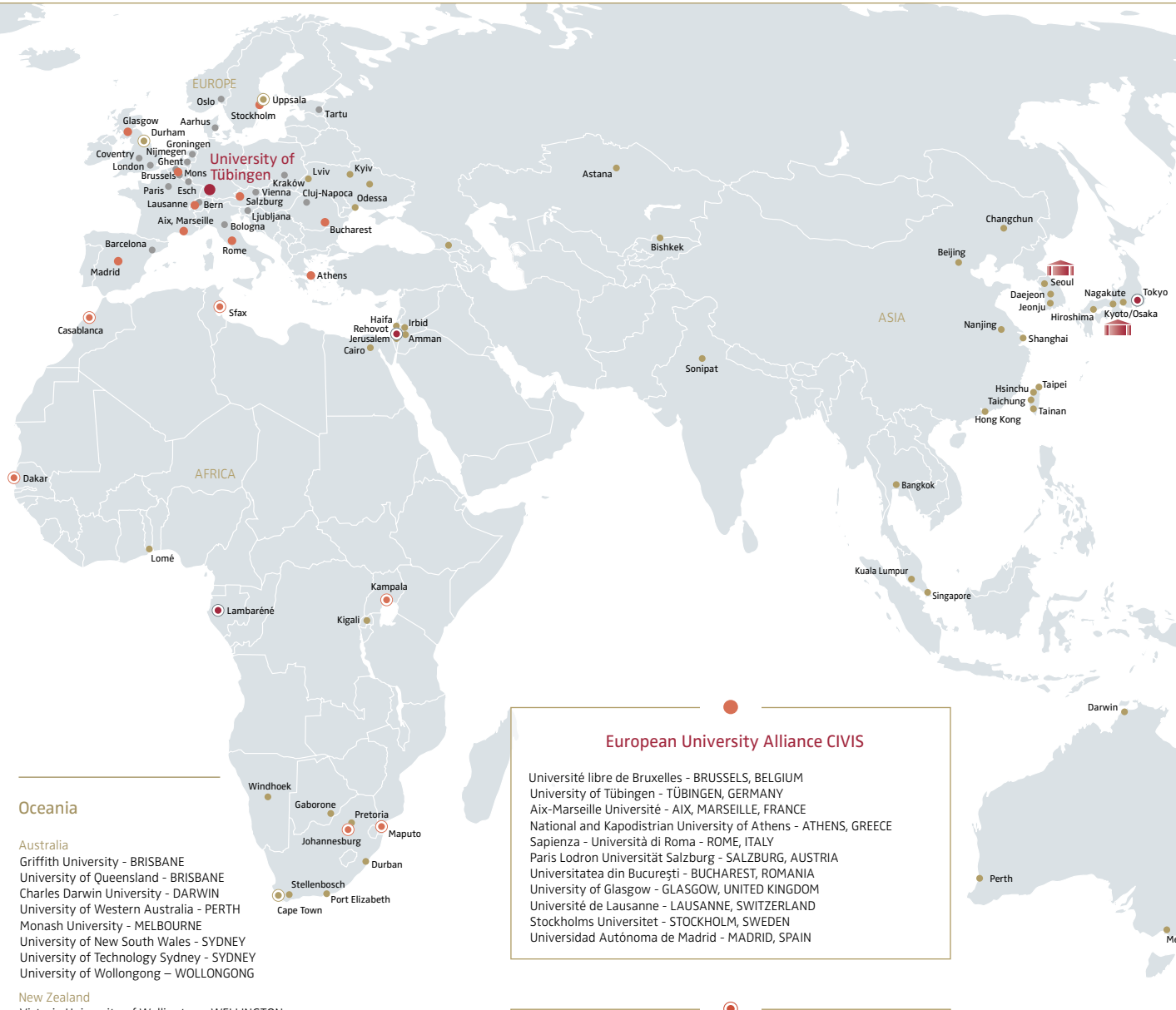
Tunisia

Université de Sfax – SFAX

Uganda

Makerere University - KAMPALA





The Guild research network

Ghent University – GHENT, BELGIUM
UCLouvain – MONS, BELGIUM
Aarhus Universitet – AARHUS, DENMARK
University of Göttingen – GÖTTINGEN, GERMANY
University of Tübingen – TÜBINGEN, GERMANY
Tartu Ülikool – TARTU, ESTONIA
Université Paris Cité – PARIS, FRANCE
Université Paris Sciences et Lettres – PARIS, FRANCE
University of Warwick – COVENTRY, UNITED KINGDOM
King's College London – LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM
University of Bologna – BOLOGNA, ITALY
Université du Luxembourg – ESCH/ALZETTE, LUXEMBOURG
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen – GRONINGEN, THE NETHERLANDS
Radboud University Nijmegen – NIJMEGEN, THE NETHERLANDS
Universitetet i Oslo – OSLO, NORWAY
University of Vienna – VIENNA, AUSTRIA
Uniwersytet Jagielloński – KRAKÓW, POLAND
Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai – CLUJ-NAPOCA, ROMANIA
University of Glasgow – GLASGOW, UNITED KINGDOM
Uppsala Universitet – UPPSALA, SWEDEN
University of Bern – BERN, SWITZERLAND
Univerza v Ljubljani – LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA
Pompeu Fabra University – BARCELONA, SPAIN

The Matariki research network

University of Tübingen - TÜBINGEN, GERMANY
Durham University - DURHAM, UNITED KINGDOM
Queen's University - KINGSTON, ONTARIO, CANADA
University of Otago - DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND
Uppsala Universitet - UPPSALA, SWEDEN
University of the Western Cape - CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

European University Alliance CIVIS

Université libre de Bruxelles - BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
University of Tübingen - TÜBINGEN, GERMANY
Aix-Marseille Université - AIX, MARSEILLE, FRANCE
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens - ATHENS, GREECE
Sapienza - Università di Roma - ROME, ITALY
Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg - SALZBURG, AUSTRIA
Universitatea din București - BUCHAREST, ROMANIA
University of Glasgow - GLASGOW, UNITED KINGDOM
Université de Lausanne - LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND
Stockholms Universitet - STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
Universidad Autónoma de Madrid - MADRID, SPAIN

Oceania

Australia

Griffith University - BRISBANE
University of Queensland - BRISBANE
Charles Darwin University - DARWIN
University of Western Australia - PERTH
Monash University - MELBOURNE
University of New South Wales - SYDNEY
University of Technology Sydney - SYDNEY
University of Wollongong – WOLLONGONG

New Zealand

Victoria University of Wellington - WELLINGTON

Europe

Ukraine

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv – KYIV
Kremenchuk Mykhailo Ostrohradskyi National University - KREMENCHUK
Ivan Franko National University of Lviv - LVIV
Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National University - ODESSA

CIVIS associated members

Université Hassan II de Casablanca - CASABLANCA, MOROCCO
Université Cheikh Anta Diop - DAKAR, SENEGAL
Makerere University - KAMPALA, UGANDA
Université de Sfax - SFAX, TUNISIA
Universidade Eduardo Mondlane - MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE
University of the Witwatersrand - JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

Collaboration with research institutions

Federal University of Rio de Janeiro - RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL
Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul /
Pró Mata Research Station - SÃO FRANCISCO DE PAULA, BRAZIL
CERMEL - LAMBARÉNÉ, GABON
Weizmann Institute of Science - REHOVOT, ISRAEL
Riken Institute - TOKYO, JAPAN



Studies in Tübingen

Looking to the future

International trends and demographic change are being felt at the University of Tübingen; while overall student enrollment has declined slightly, the proportion of international students has reached a new high. The year 2025 also saw a wide range of student activities as well as a growing need for counseling and support.

More international than ever

The overall number of students enrolled at the University saw a slight decline in 2025, reflecting the general demographic trend in Germany. In the 2025–26 winter semester, more than 28,000 students were enrolled in Tübingen, approximately two percent down on the previous year. The proportion of female students remained high at nearly 60 percent. At the same time, the proportion of international students at the University of Tübingen reached a new record: sixteen percent, or 4,495 individuals. This included 1,307 newly enrolled students from outside Germany – 5.7 percent of the new enrollments in the winter semester 2025-26.

Tübingen remains a popular place to live and study. "With our long tradition, our research excellence, and our vibrant campus, we have every reason to look to the future with confidence," President Karla Pollmann said, "Those who come to Tübingen become part of a research-intensive university with one of the best reputations in the world. And that is attracting a growing number of international students."

Student numbers by institution

Faculty	Enrollments, winter semester 2025/26
Protestant Theology	357
Catholic Theology	124
Law	2,168
Medicine	4,967
Humanities	6,646
Economics and Social Sciences	5,184
Science	8,499
Center for Islamic Theology	106
Leibniz Kolleg	52



Counseling services focus on mental health

In 2025, more than a quarter of students took advantage of the advice provided by the University's counseling services. The trend toward in-person consultations continued, with 2,259 individual counseling sessions taking place on campus. Demand for email and telephone advice was lower, with more students preferring to discuss their concerns face-to-face with a counselor. This reflects the importance of personal contact in complex or emotionally stressful situations.

Students increasingly reported personal issues beyond the typical developmental concerns of young adults. While uncertainty is a natural part of starting university, intense pressure to perform, anxiety, a lack of social connections, and homesickness have become more apparent as students progress through their studies. Counseling sessions with prospective students showed that these concerns reflect broader debates about changes in society and the economy; career prospects, academic success, and post-study job security featured strongly in these consultations.

In approximately 900 of the 6,669 counseling sessions, the focus was on coping with mental stress. In 2025, many students also sought counseling after failing key exams in their degree programs and facing considerable uncertainty as a result. In 2025, 513 counseling sessions focused on this topic, up from 475 in 2024 and 391 in 2023. The University is currently exploring options for an early warning system that can reach and help students in danger of failing before their situation becomes critical.

Other topics covered in academic and personal counseling included difficulties with learning and self-management. Without feedback and reassurance, learning can be a lonely experience. For this reason, the counseling services offer various extracurricular learning and methodology workshops where concerned students discover that other students also face academic and personal challenges. This experience has a positive impact on their basic psychological needs and intrinsic motivation. In 2025, approximately 1,000 students participated in the Student Counseling Service's 36 workshops.

An event sponsored by broadcaster Südwestrundfunk, "Exit Einsamkeit" (Exit Loneliness: Learning together instead of studying alone) drew a large crowd. It was part of Südwestrundfunk's statewide "Night Against Loneliness" campaign. The experiences gained from the workshops and personal counseling underscore how important these services and personalized support are for academic success and for empowering students to take control of their lives.

Awards

Human rights award for Refugee Law Clinic

At Tübingen Human Rights Week in June 2025, the Law Faculty's Refugee Law Clinic (RLC) received the Human Rights Award in recognition of its long-term commitment to training volunteers to provide support to refugees.

The RLC runs a certificate program open to students and doctoral candidates from all disciplines. Participants gain a thorough understanding of international human rights as well as German migration and asylum law. Each year, 30 to 40 students enroll in the two-semester program, which also includes interdisciplinary workshops on topics such as cultural anthropology and trauma awareness.

A central component is hands-on participation in regional counseling centers such as the Asylcafé Reutlingen, the Tübingen Asylum Center, and the Coffee to Stay counseling service. Under the guidance of experienced lawyers, social workers, and volunteers, students conduct counseling sessions on typical issues relating to immigration and asylum law.

The Refugee Law Clinic in Tübingen was set up in 2016 as a student initiative. The goal was to respond to the critical refugee situation at the time by offering structured training and counseling services. The initiative evolved into an established program, which was initially funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). The RLC is now supported by funding from the University President's Office and the Faculty of Law.



The Refugee Law Clinic team, left to right: Selina Holzinger, Patricia Tumele, Selin Wacker, Micha Heinkelein

The University's Teaching Prize goes to Social Sciences team

The University of Tübingen's Teaching Award for 2025 went to the team behind the Master's seminar "Gender and diversity in the early days of empirical social research," run by Professor Ursula Offenberger and drama educator Dorothee Engbers. Based on the seminar material, the students developed a play, titled Drawing Lines (The struggle for equal rights). The script was written by student Leonie Holdik.

The play explores the often-overlooked contributions of women and African American researchers to early social research. By artistically addressing power structures, mechanisms of exclusion, and issues of equality, the project broadens access to socially relevant topics beyond academic circles. The public premiere took place in February 2025, accompanied by a theater education workshop. The project was also part of the activities for Black History Month.

The 5,000 euros in prize money will be used to fund an English-language version of the play, a video documentary, and the illustration of a textbook on qualitative social research. The Teaching Award has been presented annually since 2007 and is sponsored by the University Association.



Vice-President for Learning and Teaching Karin Amos (right) presents the Teaching Award to (left to right) student scriptwriter Leonie Holdik, drama educator Dorothee Engbers, and Ursula Offenberger.

Student Commitment Prize for MEDI godparents

The 2025 Student Commitment Prize was awarded to the MEDI-Paten project, founded in 2022 by medical students Niclas Wiebe and Linda Maschke. (Paten means "godparents" in German and refers to persons who help take care of a child they may not be related to.) The initiative arranges personal mentoring between children with cancer and medical students, who visit the children regularly outside of a medical setting. Whether playing, reading aloud, or doing crafts together, the students give the children company, confidence, and moments of relaxation; at the same time, they are helping family members and hospital staff.

What began as a student initiative has grown into a professionally organized team offering a wide range of programs. These include the neonatal project CuddleBuddys, an annual fundraising run, and special surprise events. Recently, a partner project has been launched in Tanzania to expand the model internationally. The prize money of 1,000 euros will be invested in participatory activities, mini-events, and the expansion of professional structures.

The Commitment Prize has been presented each year since 2010; as with the Teaching Award, the most worthy projects are selected by the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee and funded by the University Association.



Linda Maschke (second from right), Niclas Wiebe, and the other members of the MEDI godparents project receive the Student Commitment Prize.

Sustainability Lecture und Sustainability Prizes



Thomas Potthast from the International Center for Ethics in the Sciences and Humanities, prize winner Paul Götzl, Vice-President Samuel Wagner, and prize winners Elias Grenz, Clara Winter, Nicolai Dambacher, Julia Güntherodt, Rebecca Mast, and Elizaveta Shcherbinina

November 2025 saw the Sustainability Lecture and the presentation of prizes to students who produced outstanding theses in the field of sustainability. Three Bachelor's graduates were selected for awards. Clara Winter (Biology) demonstrated that longer intervals between mowing fields of alfalfa and clover can significantly reduce breeding losses among skylarks. Elias Grenz (Philosophy) took Leipzig as a case study to examine how transport policy can be designed to be both climate-friendly and socially equitable. Elizaveta Shcherbinina (Biology) showed that microplastics in the soil increase cadmium uptake by plants, which poses risks to food safety and human health.

The prizewinning Master's theses were by: Paul Götzl (Chemistry), who contributed to the development of sustainable chemical processes by investigating the CO_2 binding properties of a specific nitrogen-containing molecule; Julia Gütherodt (Global Studies), who analyzed the socioeconomic causes of illegal gold mining in Ghana and the potential of community-based agroforestry as an alternative; and Nicolai Dambacher (Geography), who developed theory-based concepts for the multifunctional use of church buildings to integrate them sustainably into processes of social change.

The Sustainability Prize for a doctoral thesis went to Dr. Rebecca Mast (Geoscience). Her work weighed the expansion of renewable energies in Africa against the conservation of biodiversity. It showed that rising electricity demand can be met without building new large-scale hydroelectric power plants – which lead to a loss of biodiversity – provided that existing facilities are optimized and combined with solar and wind power.

The Sustainability Lecture was delivered by Professor Katrin Böhning-Gaese from the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research and the University of Leipzig. She spoke on the topic of "Nature and Humans in the Anthropocene," emphasizing that the state of the Earth is critical due to rising prosperity; the enormous consumption of energy and resources is placing a massive strain on the climate and biodiversity. We are living in the Anthropocene era, in which human activity is the dominant influence on Earth's natural systems.

Böhning-Gaese emphasized that biodiversity is the foundation of stable ecosystems and human well-being, yet the effects of its destruction are often underestimated. Böhning-Gaese called for a systemic, evidence-based, and inclusive transformation process, including the protection and restoration of natural habitats. Discussions at the event made it clear that the future can be actively shaped if scientific findings are consistently translated into political and social action.

Funding for international mobility

Support from the German Academic Exchange Service

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) statistics showed an overall increase in international mobility for the University of Tübingen in 2024 (the year of the most recent data at the time of writing), continuing the trend over several years. Total funding from the DAAD amounted to around 9 million euros, 1.2 million euros more than in the previous year.

Once again, the majority of funding went to the "Programs and Projects" category, approximately 6.6 million euros. In the "Individual Funding" category, around 2.4 million was allocated.

The number of international students, doctoral candidates, and visiting scholars who received scholarships for study or research stays in Tübingen rose to 186 in 2024, up from 130 the year before. The DAAD funded 132 stays abroad for Tübingen students, doctoral candidates, and researchers.

Baden-Württemberg STIPENDIUM Scholarships

The Baden-Württemberg Foundation has been funding exchange programs between Baden-Württemberg universities and their partner institutions around the world since 2001. In Tübingen, the Baden-Württemberg STIPENDIUM scholarships are open both to students from partner institutions abroad who come here, and to Tübingen students seeking to study outside Germany. In 2025, 71 international exchange students who came to Tübingen for a semester received a total of 155,000 euros in funding. In addition, 58 students from the University of Tübingen who went abroad on an exchange program received 169,000 euros in funding.

Through the "Regional Development Component" program, introduced in 2017, the Foundation supports exchanges with partner universities in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. In 2025, 21 doctoral students at the University of Tübingen from countries including Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Jamaica, Zambia, Cameroon, and Rwanda received a total of 94,200 euros in funding via the Baden-Württemberg STIPENDIUM program. The program is now well established at the University of Tübingen and serves to start, maintain, and promote relationships with institutions primarily in Africa.

Baden-Württemberg STIPENDIUM (BWS) plus is another Baden-Württemberg Foundation program that supports new and innovative cooperation projects between universities worldwide. In 2025, the "TüExTLV" project, an exchange program in the life sciences between the University of Tübingen and Tel Aviv University, received BWS plus funding.



Structure and policy

Strong foundations for research and teaching

Every day, University staff work to strengthen the foundations of successful research, teaching, innovation, and the fulfillment of social responsibility. Changes in key leadership positions, awards recognizing exceptional commitment, and new initiatives help shape our University, all of which in turn actively helps to shape change in society.



Vice-President Katja Schenke-Layland will focus on strengthening transfer into society.

University management

Katja Schenke-Layland joins the President's Office

Professor Katja Schenke-Layland became the University Vice-President for Research, Innovation, and Transfer in April 2025, succeeding Professor Peter Grathwohl, who retired in March. Schenke-Layland has been a Professor of Medical Engineering and Regenerative Medicine at the University of Tübingen's Faculty of Medicine since 2011; and she has directed the Natural and Medical Sciences Institute (NMI) at the University of Tübingen in Reutlingen since 2018.

Schenke-Layland was one of two professors appointed in 2011 to establish the joint Medical Technologies program with the University of Stuttgart; in this capacity, she made a significant contribution to the development and design of the curricula for both the joint Bachelor's program and the international Master's program in Tübingen. From 2018 to 2025, she also served as Dean of Studies for Medical Technologies and Medical Radiation Sciences. Schenke-Layland is also a Principal Investigator at the Center for Bionic Intelligence Tübingen-Stuttgart (BITS). On the international stage, she serves on the International Advisory Board of the MERLN Institute for Technology-Inspired Regenerative Medicine at Maastricht University (Netherlands), and on the Scientific and Industry Advisory Board of the CURAM Research Centre for Medical Devices at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Katja Schenke-Layland studied biology, sociology, and psychology in Jena. She earned her doctorate in biology there in 2004, specializing in cardiovascular tissue engineering. She then received a research fellowship from the German Research Foundation (DFG) and an NIH Ruth L. Kirschstein Postdoctoral Research Fellowship. She conducted research at the Saban Research Institute of the Children's Hospital Los Angeles (affiliated with the University of Southern California) and at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). At UCLA, she served as an Assistant Research Professor before returning to Germany, supported by one of Germany's most prestigious funding grants for early-career researchers, the Fraunhofer Society's ATTRACT program, to join the Fraunhofer Institute for Interfacial Engineering and Biotechnology (IGB) in Stuttgart.

CampusCafé: Talking with the President

CampusCafé is a new format introduced by University President Karla Pollmann to boost internal communication. It is an informal meeting with a group of students, employees, or academic staff, who can discuss matters of concern to them. The first CampusCafé took place in June 2025, with students. Topics discussed over coffee and tea included the situation for students of Archaeology; relaxation rooms; mitigating circumstances in exams and essay deadlines; conflicts between students and lecturers; course evaluations, and anti-discrimination. The President thanked the students for the enthusiasm they brought to the talks, which ran for nearly two hours.

The second CampusCafé happened in October, this time with academic staff, who introduced topics such as provenance research, fixed-term employment contracts, the recruitment of early-career researchers, job descriptions and evaluations, the quality of study conditions at the University libraries, and mental health. President Pollmann pledged to consider the suggestions made and to work with all parties to identify potential solutions and areas for improvement.

In December, a number of support staff met with the President at the third CampusCafé. Up for discussion were matters as varied as the challenges of digitalization, additional burdens caused by building works, career development opportunities, staff development and professional training, sustainability and environmental protection. The President said she was impressed by the way staff tackled the challenges arising in their respective areas of work.



Relaxed atmosphere, serious topics: CampusCafé with President Karla Pollmann



Left to right: Vice-President Monique Scheer, Executive Vice-President Andreas Rothfuß, President Karla Pollmann, and Vice-Presidents Katja Schenke-Layland, Karin Amos, and Samuel Wagner

The President's Office

Updated 31 December 2025

President
Professor Dr. Karla Pollmann, Ancient Studies and Art History

Executive Vice-President
Dr. Andreas Rothfuß

Vice-President for Learning and Teaching
Professor Dr. Karin Amos, Institute of Education

Vice-President for International Affairs and Diversity
Professor Dr. Monique Scheer, Institute of Historical and Cultural Anthropology

Vice-President for Research, Innovation, and Transfer
Professor Dr. Katja Schenke-Layland, Institute for Biomedical Technologies

Vice-President for Sustainable Development and First General Deputy
Professor Dr. Samuel Wagner, Interfaculty Institute of Microbiology and Infection Medicine



Members of the University Council (from left): Daniela Eberspächer-Roth, Lena Ganschow, Matthias Anbuhl, Renate Schubert, Heike Oberlin, Moritz Hardt, Stefan Teufel, Irmgard Männlein, Ingrid Hotz-Davies (as Equal Opportunities Officer and advisory member), Chair Bernhard Sibold, and Jacob Bühler

Board of Trustees

External members

Updated 31 December 2025

Chair
Bernhard Sibold | formerly of Deutsche Bundesbank, Stuttgart

Matthias Anbuhl | Deutsches Studierendenwerk, Berlin

Dr. Michael Bolle | Carl Zeiss Foundation

Daniela Eberspächer-Roth, PhD, PhD | Profimetall Xellar Gruppe, Hirrlingen/ IHK, Reutlingen

Lena Ganschow | SWR, Baden-Baden

Professor Dr. Moritz Hardt | Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems, Tübingen

Professor Dr. Renate Schubert | FernUni Schweiz, Brig/ETH, Zürich

University internal members

Updated 31 December 2025

Deputy Chair
Professor Dr. Irmgard Männlein | Faculty of Humanities

Jacob Bühler | student

Professor Dr. Heike Oberlin | Faculty of Humanities

Professor Dr. Stefan Teufel | Faculty of Science

Tributes to outstanding achievements

Silver University Medal for Dieter Kern

In October 2025, the President presented Professor Dieter Kern with the Silver University Medal in recognitions of his commitment to research and the scientific community, both in Tübingen and beyond. Kern strongly influenced the Institute of Applied Physics, particularly in the fields of nanotechnology and nanostructures. He also served in a liaising capacity for young academics with the German Research Foundation from 2006 until well after his retirement.

With his experience, willingness to listen, and his diplomatic skills, he played a pivotal role in helping early-career researchers to access research funding, while encouraging them on their academic paths. By conferring its Silver Medal, the University of Tübingen expresses its gratitude to Kern for his many years of dedication and for the formative impetus he provided for the advancement of scholarship at the University.

President Pollmann presents the University's Silver Medal to Dieter Kern.



Bronze University Medal for Thomas Bonenberger

Thomas Bonenberger received the University's Bronze Medal in recognition of his contribution to the University's development. He began his Tübingen career at the International Center for Ethics in the Sciences and Humanities before transferring to the then Faculty of Economics.

In overseeing the merging of two smaller faculties into the current Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences Bonenberger demonstrated a keen understanding of structures and processes and brought together diverse academic cultures. Bonenberger went on to implement a number of key University projects aimed at modernizing the University and centralizing services. He retired in 2025 after 33 years at the University.



The Student Health Management and University Sports team at the FISU Healthy Campus Awards ceremony. Left to right: Dr. Verena Burk, FISU Vice-President; Juliane Kloos, Ingrid Arzberger and Hannah Besel from the University of Tübingen; and FISU President Leonz Eder.

University of Tübingen receives FISU Healthy Campus label

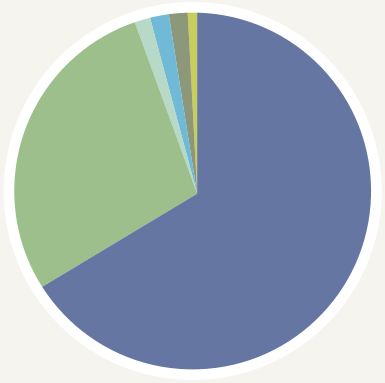
At the 2025 World Conference of the Fédération Internationale du Sport Universitaire (FISU) in Bochum, the University of Tübingen was awarded the FISU Healthy Campus Label. Tübingen is one of the first German universities to hold this internationally recognized certification for promoting health and well-being on campus. The FISU Healthy Campus program aims to foster the physical, mental, and social health of University members. Tübingen received the FISU platinum level - the highest tier of certification.

The label is given in recognition of the coordinated and visible progress achieved in Tübingen. This includes health-promoting initiatives ranging from exercise, nutrition, via prevention programs to mental health initiatives, for both staff and students.

University finances

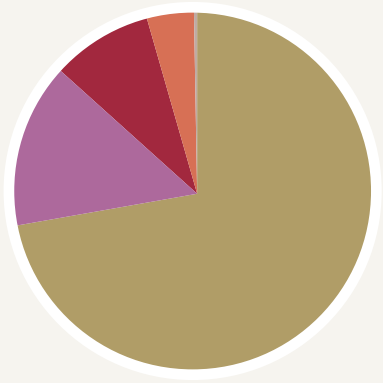
University budget (excluding Medicine, in millions of euros)

Revenue 2025 (473.5)



- Earmarked funds from State of Baden-Württemberg 315.6
- Third-party funding for research and teaching 132.0
- Third-party funding for professional training and services 7.3
- Other operating income 7.5
- Liquidation of special items 7.5
- Income from other accounting periods 3.7

Expenditure 2025 (481.2)

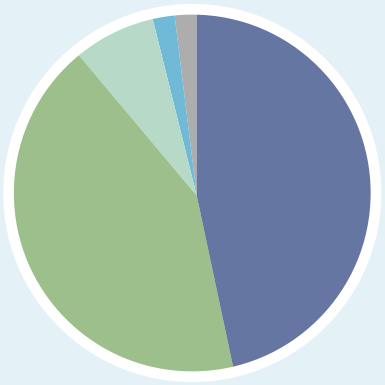


- Payroll costs 348.6
- Other operating costs 69.2
- Materials for teaching and research 42.7
- Depreciation of intangible assets, property and equipment 20.7
- Taxes 0.02

Faculty of Medicine budget (in millions of euros)

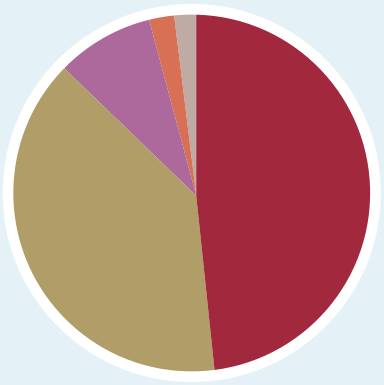
rounded figures * * preliminary figures

Revenue 2025 (365.6)*



- Earmarked State of Baden-Württemberg funding 171.2
- Third-party funding 154.3
- Other income 26.2
- State funding for investments 7.6
- Income from DFG projects and overhead allowance 6.4

Expenditure 2025 (356.2)*



- Staff and operating costs 173.0
- Third-party funding expenditure 138.4
- Other 30.8
- Investments via State of Baden-Württemberg funding 7.6
- Investments via third-party funding 6.5

University building projects

Investing in the future of AI – Cyber Valley I building complete

The State of Baden-Württemberg officially handed over the new Cyber Valley I building to the University of Tübingen in November 2025, underlining the University's role as one of Europe's leading hubs for artificial intelligence and robotics. The building provides space for both foundational AI research as well as work seeking practical applications for new technologies.

The new five-story building has 6,400 square meters of modern workspace designed specifically to meet the needs of large, multidisciplinary AI research groups. A central atrium featuring a multifunctional event space creates additional opportunities for scientific events, lectures, and forums for exchange. The design aims to foster an ideal environment for interdisciplinary collaboration.

The new building is covered by a membrane roof of lightweight foil cushions. Inside the building, the focus is on high energy efficiency and sustainability. The facade combines integrated photovoltaics with sun-shading devices. 1,000 square meters of photovoltaic panels are installed on the roof. The state of Baden-Württemberg invested around 77 million euros of funding in the building.



The state government hands over the "key" to Cyber Valley I. Left to right: Christoph Keplinger (Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems), Minister of Science Petra Olschowski, Marcus Wandel and Andreas Hölting (both from the Baden-Württemberg state properties office), University President Karla Pollmann, Tübingen Mayor Boris Palmer, Minister of Finance Danyal Bayaz, Professors Michèle Finck and Matthias Bethge (both University of Tübingen)



Climate-conscious construction: photovoltaic panels are integrated into the facade of the Cyber Valley I research building.

Creating equitable structures

Tübingen receives Wrangell Tandem funding

The Wrangell Tandem program provides funding for two outstanding female researchers at once: it supports an assistant or tenure-track female professor on her path to tenure and enables her to hire a researcher who has recently earned her doctorate, so they can jointly develop a new field of research. This ''tandem'' runs for three years and is sponsored by the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Science, Research, and the Arts.

In 2025, Professor Yağmur Mengilli, who holds a tenure-track professorship in Social Pedagogy at the University of Tübingen, was accepted into the Margarete von Wrangell Program along with her research partner Dr. Elisa Thevenot. Mengilli's research focuses on adolescence as a life stage, its forms of expression, and its specific challenges. With a transnational perspective on youth and gender, she views young people as barometers of social developments and examines how new identities emerge. As part of the Wrangell grant, Yağmur Mengilli hired recent Ph.D. graduate Elisa Thevenot to work with her on the project ''Doing Youth by Making Space.'' The project looks at youth cultural practices in a community's common spaces.



Elisa Thevenot (left), Yağmur Mengilli (right)

Striving for greater gender equality

The University of Tübingen is committed to further reducing structural gender inequalities. To achieve appropriate gender representation among professors, it has joined the German Rectors' Conference resolution, ''Towards greater gender equality in the appointment of professors.'' The document identifies specific measures which, if implemented, can lead to institutional cultural and structural change and contribute to greater gender equality.

The resolution focuses on more actively recruiting women in the early stages of their academic careers to expand the pool of candidates for professorial appointments. The German Rectors' Conference calls for more gender-equitable appointment procedures, pay and benefits structures, as well as the institutional embedding of gender sensitivity - and for implementation to be monitored.

In 2025, 31.6 percent of all University of Tübingen professorships were held by women; some of those are assistant or W1 professorships, both with or without tenure track. The proportion of women holding full professorships was 28.8 percent. The University's gender equality plan aims to increase the proportion of female professors holding full professorships to at least 35 percent by 2027. For assistant professorships (with or without tenure track), the target for 2027 is 60 percent. At the heart of the University's strategy is an active recruitment process. Established measures, such as the Athene Program for promoting early-career women researchers or financial support for childcare, also help keep women in academia and advance their careers. All measures are professionally monitored and evaluated by the Gender Equality Representative and the University's Team Equity office.

Success in the 2030 Women Professors Program

The Women Professors Program aims to sustainably increase the number of female professors in Germany and to structurally anchor gender equality in academia. Following an external review of the University of Tübingen's gender equality concept, the University of Tübingen was once more invited to submit applications to the project sponsor - the German Aerospace Center - for grants to establish up to three new tenured associate (W2) or full (W3) professorships to be filled by qualified women. The German government is providing 320 million euros for the program, which runs for eight years.

The University of Tübingen has been successfully participating in the Women Professors Program for many years. During the three previous phases of the program (2008, 2013, 2018), the University secured nine professorships through the program, including chairs in art history, comparative zoology, and media studies.

Family-friendly services

In December 2025, President Karla Pollmann signed a three-year-action plan for increased family-friendliness at the University of Tübingen. The plan was developed as part of the "Family-Friendly University Audit," a process of dialogue with various groups in and around the University. The action plan focuses on three areas designed to support employees and students: greater flexibility in the workplace; better options for balancing academic study with family life; and exploring new options for childcare.

The Family-Friendly University Audit helps the University in the ongoing process of refining its services aimed at helping its members to balance work or study and family life.

Children's Sports Week

School vacations can be a challenging time for families with children. While many children associate this time with fun and relaxation, for parents it often means increased organizational demands: the absence of the daily school routine creates gaps in childcare that need to be filled. To support its employees in this regard, the University of Tübingen ran its third Children's Sports Week in August 2025 at the Institute of Sports Science. The vacation program is for children aged seven to eleven whose parents work or study at the University of Tübingen and aims to help University members manage their work-life balance.

For the 50 children participating, the week was not just about having fun doing sports but also about learning core values such as fairness, empathy, and team spirit. For students at the Institute of Sports Science, the Children's Sports Week also served as a valuable learning opportunity. It was organized by 17 students as part of the seminar "Designing, Organizing, and Evaluating Sports" in the Bachelor of Science in Sports Science program. The program gave them practical experience in combination with valuable insights into the needs and specific characteristics of this age group.

Sustainability writ large

2025 Paper Atlas Prize

Sustainability is an integral part of University operations. Procurement standards, internal processes, and services are designed to conserve resources and measurably reduce environmental impact. As a result, the University in 2025 received the German Environment Ministry's Paper Atlas Prize for the tenth time in a row.

The long-term integration of sustainable procurement processes is evident in the consistent use of recycled paper bearing the Blue Angel ecolabel. Over the past ten years, the use of recycled paper has resulted in savings of more than 32 million liters of water and approximately 7.2 million kilowatt-hours of energy. This volume of water corresponds to the daily requirements of over 265,000 people. The energy saved would be sufficient to meet the annual electricity needs of approximately 2,070 three-person households. These savings demonstrate just how effectively ecological responsibility can be implemented in the daily life of the University, and to what extent sustainable action has already become an integral part of University life.

The Pro Recycling Paper initiative therefore renewed its recognition of the University's best-practice example of sustainable paper procurement in the higher education sector. Accepting the award, President Pollmann said the University was committed to sustainability as a guiding principle across all areas of operation and was continuously refining its internal processes.

The University joins the Tübingen Climate Pact

In 2025, the University of Tübingen joined the Tübingen Climate Pact, a voluntary alliance of more than 90 local companies and institutions that work together to implement environmental protection goals. The University's Vice-President for Sustainable Development, Professor Samuel Wagner, accepted the certificate in October; this reaffirms the University's long-standing commitment to sustainable development and strengthens its collaboration with the Tübingen community, local businesses, and regional institutions in the fight against climate change.



President Pollmann with Parliamentary Secretary of State Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter and Marc Gebauer, spokesman for the Pro Recycling Paper Initiative

The University has operated under the European „Eco-Management and Audit Scheme" (EMAS) since 2011; as part of this, the University publishes an annual environmental statement and an energy report. This continuous reporting serves as the foundation for transparent and verifiable progress in climate protection.


Taubenhändler
SCIENCE &
INNOVATION
DAYS

Celebrating knowledge

The Power of sharing ideas

The University maintains an open exchange with other parts of society, on a range of issues affecting everybody. A University-sponsored citizens' council on artificial intelligence and freedom has opened up new avenues for public engagement on issues shaping the future. Established formats such as the Writers' Lectureship, the Global Ethics Lecture, and the Media Lecture brought prominent voices to Tübingen and provided a space for reflection on values and democracy. Musically, the University underscored the need to remember and learn from past atrocities with the world premiere of the oratorio "Anne's Passion."

Academia in society: the citizens' council on Artificial Intelligence and Freedom

With the citizens' council on Artificial Intelligence and Freedom, the University of Tübingen responded to a key challenge: the growing need in society for clarity regarding the opportunities, risks, and transparency of artificial intelligence. At a time when AI systems are affecting every aspect of our lives, it is now more important than ever to establish frameworks that enable citizens to contribute to the direction of publicly-funded AI research.

In March 2025, the citizens' council issued nine recommendations for policies on public AI research and development. The council submitted the list to Petra Olschowski, Baden-Württemberg's Minister of Science, Research, and the Arts.

The council consisted of 40 people from across the State of Baden-Württemberg and included members from both urban and rural areas, from various age groups, of German and migrant backgrounds, and with varying levels of education. The council discussed AI matters with experts from the University of Tübingen over four Saturdays, with Minister Olschowski in attendance at the first meeting.

The Council suggested creating a secure infrastructure to facilitate data sharing; establishing a central office for proposals on AI research, and improving connectivity among doctors, patients, and researchers through the use of AI. On transportation policy, the council recommended forming a permanent citizens' assembly to improve the safety of bike lanes and reduce CO_2 emissions from road traffic.

The project was carried out by the Center for Rhetorical Science Communication Research on Artificial Intelligence (RHET AI Center) at the University of Tübingen and funded by the University of Tübingen's Excellence Strategy and the Volkswagen Foundation.



Four sessions, nine recommendations, one topic: how can citizens engage in conversation with researchers focusing on artificial intelligence?

Debates, speeches and culture



Jenny Erpenbeck

2025 Tübingen Writers' Lectureship: the view from former East Germany

The 38th Tübingen Writers' Lectureship featured lectures and discussions by writers born in the former East Germany – Jenny Erpenbeck, Peter Wawerzinek, and Ute and Werner Mahler, as well as the historian Reinhard Müller. Erpenbeck read from her novels and essays and gave a lecture with the title "Verworfene Anfänge" (Discarded Beginnings), in which she quoted abandoned novel openings that reveal her writing as a process of engaging with several decades of German-German history.

Jenny Erpenbeck lives in Berlin, where she works as a freelance writer and theater director. She achieved international success with her novel *Kairos*, which won the International Booker Prize. Her works have been translated into over 30 languages.

Ute and Werner Mahler spoke about their long-term photography project *Ein Dorf* (1950–2022), which features photos of Ute Mahler's home village, Berka, covering more than seventy years. Ute and Werner Mahler received the Gold Medal of the German Photo Book Prize in 2024 for their works reflecting everyday life in East Germany.



Ute and Werner Mahler

In the discussion "Talking About Silence," Erpenbeck and historian Reinhard Müller discussed the silence surrounding the crimes of Stalinism, the Nazi dictatorship, and the East German state. The final lecture, "On the Use of Words Through the Ages," was delivered by Peter Wawerzinek. It was an entertaining and thought-provoking evening, on which Wawerzinek sang and rhymed, and shared stories from his writing workshop. Wawerzinek, born in Rostock in 1954, is a freelance writer, director, and radio playwright; he lives in Magdeburg.

The Tübinger Writers' Lectureship is sponsored by the Würth Foundation and Adolf Würth GmbH & Co. KG. It has been held annually since 1996 and has been directed by Professor Dorothee Kimmich since 2005. Authors are invited to hold public lectures as well as workshops for students.





Left: Reinhard Müller
Right: Peter Wawerzinek

Global Ethics Lecture: Reporting on a destabilized world

As the speaker at the 16th Global Ethos Lecture, Natalie Amiri addressed the topic "Endangered Values: Human Rights in a Destabilized World." She took the audience on a journey to some of the world's regions in turmoil: to Rojava in Syria, where Kurds are fighting for autonomy; to Iran, where the regime strips away human rights and tortures and kills its citizens; and into the spheres of influence of the great powers, as she spoke about Russian autocracy and the pressure on U.S. democracy.

Amiri knows many of these regions from personal experience. A German-Iranian journalist and writer, Amiri studied Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in Bamberg, Tehran, and Damascus. Starting in 2015, she headed the German broadcaster ARD's bureau in Tehran, a position she had to leave for security reasons in 2020.

Amiri called for moral consistency in politics and everyday life, for an end to double standards, and for greater ethical reliability in a world where people ultimately strive for a common global ethic.

Since 2000, the University and the Global Ethic Foundation have been hosting the Global Ethic Lectures, in which prominent figures from the fields of culture, politics, science, religion, and public life share their perspectives.



Natalie Amiri



Media Lecture: Harald Lesch on the enemies of the informed society

On June 25, 2025, astrophysicist and bestselling author Harald Lesch spoke at the University of Tübingen on "The Informed Society and Its Enemies." The focus was on how populism, social media, and artificial intelligence are changing our understanding of truth, the quality of public debate, and political decision-making processes – and thereby endangering the foundations of democratic public life. Lesch described a shift toward a society characterized by hype, outrage, and growing polarization, which is increasingly losing its ability to reach compromises and build consensus.

Lesch stressed that an informed society is indispensable for democracy. Citizens must be able to make fact-based decisions about the community. Yet it is precisely this ability that is being eroded, Lesch said. The AI revolution is making disinformation cheaper, easier to produce, and more credible than ever before. At the same time, Lesch observes two parallel trends: an increase in false certainties and a growing sense of total doubt. Both undermine the idea of a patient, truth-seeking, error-tolerant approach to knowledge that underlies scientific thinking. What is needed, he said, is nothing less than a new Enlightenment.

Harald Lesch



The Tübingen Media Lectureship is organized jointly by the University of Tübingen, the Institute of Media Studies, and SWR Studio Tübingen.

The oratorio "Anne's Passion"

The oratorio "Anne's Passion" by Ukrainian-born Jewish composer Evgeni Orkin had its world premiere in January 2025 at Tübingen's Collegiate Church. The University's Academic Choir and the Württemberg Philharmonic Orchestra Reutlingen performed the work before a packed house and a large online audience. The occasion marked the 80th anniversary of Anne Frank's death; her diary entries form the basis for the composition.

Musically, the oratorio explores Anne Frank's life in hiding from the Nazis. Orkin employs an expressive musical language that explores the tension between a child's perspective and the existential threat of persecution. The composition is intended both as a memorial to Anne Frank and as a cautionary reflection on anti-Semitism and political violence. The Tübingen-born soprano Johanna Pommranz sang the role of Anne Frank. Jürgen Herold took on the speaking role of Anne's father, Otto Frank.

Orkin, a Ukrainian Jew, combines his personal experiences with the historical dimension of the subject. The opportunity to premiere the work in Tübingen arose from existing contacts between the composer and Philipp Amelung, the music director at the University of Tübingen.

To shed light on the oratorio's theme from various perspectives, the world premiere was accompanied by an academic program delivered by participants from Musicology, Media Studies, and the Institute for Research on Right-Wing Extremism.



The 2025 Children's University

The University of Tübingen opened its lecture halls to children aged seven to twelve in April and May 2025. The Children's University events give children the opportunity to explore scientific and academic topics in an age-appropriate way. The program addressed questions such as "Why do wild animals come into the city?", "Why do people dress up?" and "Why is the United States of America so big?"

On July 5, young researchers were able to conduct experiments in the lab, explore the human senses, or learn why no one needs to be afraid of the children's hospital – all as part of the Children's University Research Day.

Many departments and institutes participated in the Children's University and the Children's University Research Day, including Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Medieval German Studies, the Green Workshop in the Botanical Gardens, the local environmental "Bunte Wiese" (Colorful Meadow) initiative, the AI Makerspace, Cultural Studies, Mathematics, Physics, the Faculty of Medicine, and the Neuroscience school pupils' laboratory.

Prizes awarded by the University

Leopold Lucas Prize for the Age of the Living

The 2025 Dr. Leopold Lucas Prize was awarded to the French philosopher Corine Pelluchon for her contributions to issues such as animal welfare, the climate crisis, and the state of pluralistic democracy. She conceives of human beings not only as guided by reason, but also as vulnerable physical beings capable of forming relationships. This leads to a sense of responsibility toward both other humans and non-human entities that share our world. Pelluchon places particular emphasis on the rights of sentient animals and the protection of the biosphere, which she links to social justice. She advocates for realistic, democratically viable solutions, developing an ethically grounded vision of social transformation toward an ''Age of the Living.''

Pelluchon is a professor of Political Philosophy and Applied Ethics at the Université Gustave Eiffel in Paris. She has received several French and German academic prizes and is a Knight of the French Legion of Honor.

The 2025 Dr. Leopold Lucas Junior Prize was awarded to Dr. Bahadir Eker for his thesis, ''Matters of Perspective. A Theory of Deep Temporality.'' The jury noted that it represented an original contribution to the complex philosophical debate on the metaphysics of time.

The Dr. Leopold Lucas Prize was established in 1972 by Consul General Franz D. Lucas and has become one of the most prestigious peace prizes in the field of academic research. The award goes to individuals who have made a major contribution to greater tolerance and better relations between people and nations, and who have helped to promote a philosophy of tolerance.



Left to right: Birgit Weyel, Dean of Protestant Theology, Honorary Senator Frank Lucas, prize winners Corine Pelluchon and Bahadir Eker, and University President Karla Pollmann

Awards for outstanding science communication

The University of Tübingen awarded Professor Tobias Hauser the 2025 Tübingen Prize for Science Communication. Hauser, a neuroscientist, received the award for his public awareness campaign on obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). He and his team developed a comprehensive public awareness campaign, including a website, YouTube videos, the press, and social media posts – such as a collaboration with an influencer who herself has OCD. The jury said Hauser and his team had engaged in a direct yet sensitive dialogue.

The Junior Prize for Science Communication went to archaeologist and historian Dr. Michael Kienzle for his public outreach regarding his research into castles and the medieval nobility. Kienzle examines the archaeological and historical origins of the Greifenstein estate some 20 kilometers from Tübingen. Kienzle and his colleagues make this research accessible to the public through events, videos, publications, and press appearances.

The awards are part of the University of Tübingen's Excellence Strategy; they recognize innovative and successful research communication.



Tobias Hauser at the Prize for Science Communication award ceremony

2025 Hans Bausch Media Prize

The Hans Bausch Media Prize was awarded to Regina Cazzamatta in 2025 for her study "The Homogenization of Fact-Checking Content Through Platform Partnerships: a Comparison of Eight Countries." Cazzamatta's study established a foundation for evaluating fact-checks on social media platforms – an important topic for democratic societies as citizens are exposed to online media with few quality controls.

In addition, the inaugural Hans Bausch Special Prize was awarded to Jeanette Kollien for her Master's thesis, "Digital Sustainability as a Guiding Principle for Communication Platforms." In her study, Kollien develops her own model for online sustainability and evaluates communication platforms on the sustainability criteria of energy and resource consumption, data protection, the use of free software, and a focus on the common good.

The Hans Bausch Media Prize is awarded jointly by the University of Tübingen and the regional broadcaster SWR. The prize recognizes scholarly work that is of particular significance to the fields of online ethics, the digitization of the media, and the social changes these bring.

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