JMU Times

FLYING HIGH
Studying in Germany at the Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg

International atmosphere
The International Office, Graduate Schools & more...

Innovative technologies
Functional materials, Nanotech & more...

Inspiring environment
Vineyards, River Main, city beach & more...
Fire at night

A floating stage surrounded by Würzburg’s industrial heritage – then concerts, open-air cinema and a fire show to top it off. That’s all part of Würzburg’s Hafensommer. Culture? There is plenty in Würzburg: Africa Festival, Mainfranken Theatre, Mozart Festival, Umsanst & Draußen outdoor music festival, street theatre festival, film weekend & more.

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Welcome to the University of Würzburg

Excellence based on tradition? Definitely! The roots of the Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg reach back to the year 1402. It was the sixth university to be founded in the German-speaking world at that time after the universities of Prague, Vienna, Heidelberg, Cologne and Erfurt.

State of the Art in university teaching and research? Of course! In addition to the four classical faculties of Medicine, Theology, Philosophy and Law there are lots of innovative degree programmes, most recently, for example, in Functional Materials Technology, Human Factors and Computing Systems, or Media Communications. There are some 23,000 students studying and performing research at the University of Würzburg, some in historical surroundings, many in state-of-the-art buildings. Your lectures might be in the baroque Residence, which is a UNESCO world heritage site, or in the traditional teacher training seminary at Wittelsbacherplatz.

Other buildings have only been in operation for a few years, for instance those that house the Pharmacy and Computer Science departments. And new developments are happening all the time. There are many reasons to come to the University of Würzburg to study. This brochure will introduce you to some of them at first hand:

Our students themselves will tell you what they like best about the subject they are studying, why they are studying in Würzburg and what they think about the city and life as a student here. What if, after reading our magazine, you think you would like to come to the University of Würzburg to study? Great! Then we look forward to hearing from you. Send us an e-mail. Call us on the telephone. Or drop in and see us.
Spoiled for choice: World heritage site, wine festival, or one of the many other events that take place here – starting with the Mozart Festival, to the Africa Festival to the Umsonst & Draußen long weekend of outdoor music? There are more than enough reasons to choose Würzburg. The city lies nestled in the idyllic valley of the River Main, surrounded by vineyards, and not far from the hills of the Spessart, Rhön and Steigerwald. Some 135,000 people call Würzburg their home and almost 30,000 of them are students, making Würzburg a lively, young city. There is lots to discover here.
In touch with the real world

“Life is short. The more you do in life, the more you get out of it, and the greater the challenge, the more progress you make.” Xiaoxiao Liu has a simple explanation for why she set out for Germany after completing middle school in Beijing, spent three years at secondary school here and is now a student of Business Computing at the University of Würzburg. Her philosophy: “Only when you really give yourself challenges do you realise how much energy you have inside.” And that is why she is now preparing for her finals for her Bachelor and is already planning the next step – moving on to do a Master in Business Management – at the University of Würzburg, of course. After all, firstly, she really likes the city. “There is a river here, and Würzburg is surrounded by hills. That is so nice,” Xiaoxiao says. Secondly, she finds that the students in Würzburg are very well looked after. The dean’s office in the Economics faculty has always been able to provide competent advice whenever she had a problem. At the moment Xiaoxiao is learning Java, the programming language, for her degree in Business Computing. She is enjoying her course. What she particularly likes is the mix of a grounding in Economics and Business and the direct applications on the computer. That is one of the reasons why she is doing research into the economic effects of social networks on business for her Bachelor dissertation. “That is keeping in touch with the real world,” she says. And what next? She wants to complete her Master’s and then either do a doctorate or find a job in a firm. She would prefer a company which does business with China. Whatever challenges the future may hold, Xiaoxiao feels she is extremely well-prepared.

Financial crisis or not, a degree in Economics or Business Studies is a good investment. The Economics Faculty in Würzburg has reacted to the increase in demand for places with a huge expansion of its facilities and in addition to the current eleven chairs a further five have been set up. This has improved the way students are looked after.

Economics and Business Studies (Wirtschaftswissenschaften), Business Computing, and Business Mathematics are the Bachelor degrees offered by the Faculty. A thorough grounding in Business and Economics is provided in the Bachelor in Economics and Business Studies. It prepares students for a successful start to careers in management or in the economics departments of medium-sized and large companies. Competence in economics is also highly valued by trade associations, ministries, and research institutes. Business Mathematicians are in demand in banking, insurance, in research and development, in consulting and further education. The degree combines Mathematics, Economics and Computer Science and the Bachelor takes six semesters to complete. Then the graduate can start his or her career or go on to do a Master in Business Mathematics. All the qualifications required by IT experts in business can be gained in six semesters in the Bachelor in Business Computing. The degree combines subjects from Business Studies and Economics with Information Technology. Students who want to stay on at the university to continue their studies will find there are tailor-made Master programmes in Business Computing, Economics, Business Management and Business Mathematics.

For the Master in Economics, the faculty cooperates with the Law, Political Science and Geography departments. And those who are already in the workplace, can take a continuing education programme, an MBA in Business Integration.

What do I like about Business Studies in Würzburg? The choice of courses is excellent. I particularly like the fact that we can go to lectures offered by other departments, such as Law or Business Computing and these courses count towards our degree. We can also gain credit points for our placements or our work as tutors. You don’t have that at many other universities. The contacts that the Faculty has with other countries are great, too. I went to Sweden for a semester, to the University in Umeå and all the classes were in English. The dean’s office was very helpful in getting it all organised. It is worth staying on after you have got your Bachelor. The Master’s programmes offer a huge range of subjects in which to specialise. They really leave nothing to be desired.

Carina Seubert

Why did I come from Stuttgart to Würzburg? Economics has a good reputation here. This reputation is partly thanks to eminent professors such as Peter Bofinger who is a member of the government think-tank, the Wirtschaftsweisen, or the equities specialist Ekkehard Wenger. For me as a student, it is important that the professors should be approachable and easy to contact and that they should provide help and advice. What makes the programme here much easier is the fact that there is an intensive tutoring system in almost every subject. In fact it is a good way to earn some extra money. I have worked as a tutor myself. The Faculty also has good contacts with other countries. I am going off to spend a semester in Bangkok soon and I already know that the classes I take there will count towards my degree in Würzburg. And Würzburg? Just a really nice city. Especially when you are sitting on the banks of the River Main in the evening enjoying the last rays of sunshine.

Fabian Wagenblast
Law rocks!

law? That was a subject Simon Hembt had given very little thought to. He actually wanted to study music. He has played the guitar since he was six and for years he has been performing in the band “Set Alight”. So why is he now to be found in Law lectures? “I did placements with event managers and saw how much you need to know about law in this business,” he says. He also came across Law when he was doing his alternative national service, in a school for the disabled. There, for example, you were not allowed to take photographs of the children without their parents’ consent. That awakened Simon’s interest and in the end he decided to do a degree in Law. Jurisprudence instead of rock’n’roll. Simon has not regretted his change of mind for a moment. “People say Law is dry and boring, but that is not the case,” he says. Anyone who is interested in politics, the economy and society will get a lot out of this degree programme.

Würzburg: a centre for European Law
Foundation subjects such as History of Law and Philosophy of Law are taught. One particular speciality in Würzburg is European Law. There is a post-graduate course in European Law but it can also be taken in tandem with the conventional Law degree. Later on, Simon wants to specialise in music and media law. “For that, foreign languages are essential.” So he is taking classes in Legal English. The Law departments in Würzburg are proud of the impressive number of foreign language classes they offer. Apart from English, students can take Spanish, Chinese, Russian and other languages. In these courses, students learn about the legal system in the country and the legal terminology.

Studying for a Law degree, learning legal English, giving some 50 concerts a year with his band. Is that not more than enough? “You have to be quite good at time management,” he says. “If you keep up to date with your studies and take all the mock exams, you are well-prepared for the real thing.”
First point of contact

What subjects can I take in Würzburg? How do I apply and what are the admission requirements? International students who want to come to Würzburg always have lots of questions, especially at the beginning. The University International Office is there to make sure that they get all the right answers. “We are the first port of call for students from other countries who want to study in Würzburg,” says Katharina Gerth, head of the International Office. Five of her staff are dedicated entirely to looking after the incoming students. They give advice by e-mail or over the phone or at first hand in their offices. And they are supported by a strong network of “tutors” who are there to provide international students with help and advice (see next page). The International Office does not restrict its help to matters directly concerned with students’ university courses. “International students can come to us with any questions they might have”, the advisers in the International Office agree. “We will help them find a solution or put them in touch with the right people.” There are numerous things that have to be done which are outside the University itself, for example registering with the city authorities, opening a bank account, obtaining health insurance – these are frequent subjects which crop up when students ask for advice. Or they ask: Am I allowed to work to help finance my studies? How much am I allowed to earn? Where can I apply for a student grant? What is the cost of living in Germany? What is the best way to look for accommodation? The International Office helps students to get started. Or international students want to know how to behave in their day-to-day contact with Germans and what the best way to meet them is. The advisers are often asked questions such as these and offer students who are interested their “Home away from home” programme in which they are teamed up with German families or individuals. Or they suggest taking part in the classes on “Global Systems and Intercultural Competence.” In these classes German and international students compare notes and find out what their cultures have in common and what differences there are. Or they draw the students’ attention to the face2face programme run by the Language Centre. In face2face, two students from different countries meet regularly to learn each other’s language. This gives the international students a chance to meet Germans and improve their German – and find out more about their host country.

Whether you are coming for one semester or to do a full academic degree in Würzburg, all students from other countries who come to the University and settle in the city are grateful for any help and support they are given when they first arrive. It is a good thing that the International Office has a strong network of “tutors”. The tutors are some 50 German and international students who are here to help new arrivals find their feet. You might be from Mexico, South Africa or China: along with the Letter of Admission, all new young students receive an information leaflet from the tutors containing the names of the tutors, or they can look for their “own” personal tutor on the internet. This might be someone who lives in the same hall of residence or who has the same mother tongue, or is studying the same subject. What do the tutors do? More than you might think. They often meet new arrivals at the railway station with the keys to their room and take them to their accommodation at any time of the day or night. They help with any necessary paperwork on their arrival. They accompany them to the city authorities where they have to register, or go with them to the health insurance office. In other words: “We are here to help you with all the day-to-day questions you might have,” as the tutors put it in their information leaflet. The tutors’ guiding principle: If someone comes looking for help and support, the tutors are there to assist him or her – or will find another tutor who can do it for them if they themselves are too busy. The tutors also look after young visiting academics in the University Graduate Schools to help them settle and feel at home in Würzburg. They lend a hand at various events organised by the International Office, such as the Introductory Meeting at the beginning of each semester where the heads of the University welcome the new students, by which time the students will normally have taken their first steps in Würzburg – perhaps with one or other of the tutors guiding them along.

Contact
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international@uni-wuerzburg.de
www.international.uni-wuerzburg.de

Help and support from the start

Together we are strong: The tutor network at the International Office helps students from other countries when they come to Würzburg.

Photo: Daniel Stricker / Pixelio.de
More than just the Oktoberfest and beer

The aim of the English Language Program offered by the Humanities Faculty I is to give international students a better insight into German culture and history. One of the lectures is entitled “Culture and Life in Germany – An Applied Geography: The South” We went to have a look.

First surprise: there are German students here, too. More about that later. Second surprise: it is not the usual 45 or 90-minute lecture, but a generous 135 minutes. However, although there is no break, there is no sign of restlessness, no one is yawning. Third surprise: a huge variety of interesting subjects are covered. The lecture moves from the meaning of the acronym BASF – Badische Anilin- und Soda fabrik – to the main ingredient of Weißwurst Bavarian sausage – veal – to the annual hours of sunshine in Freiburg – more than 1800, and there is more, more breadth and more depth.

Something that is no surprise: when Peter Süß asks the international students what Bavaria is famous for, students answer in the following order: Oktoberfest – Beer – sausage – the Alps.

To ensure that this is not all they know about Bavaria and Germany, the Humanities Faculty I has held classes in English since the winter semester 2009/10 in their “English Language Program”. These classes are run by the historian, Dr Peter Süß, and he and his colleagues give students a grounding in German history, culture and geography. Or, for the first time in the summer semester 2011, the German legal system. All the classes are held in English.

Not every international student in Würzburg has to learn German

“It is not the case that every international student who comes to Würzburg comes here to learn German. Post-graduate students often come here because of a particular subject, for example the Space Master students. Here the students come from all over the world and their classes are held in English,” Dr Süß explains. The Humanities faculty offers these classes in English to give students like these the opportunity to find out more about their host country. The classes have proved extremely successful: between 30 and 50 students attend each semester to find out about baroque and rococo art in Germany, or the German culture of remembrance, or cross-cultural comparisons of Germans in America and Americans in Germany. The classes are held from mid-October to mid-December and from the middle of May until the end of July in order to allow American exchange students to earn credits in their three term academic year system. In his lectures, Peter Süß focusses on German life and culture in southern Germany.

So, what are the capitals of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg? And how many administrative regions are there in each of these federal states?

What was the role-model for the German regions? Is that not something an exchange student from France might perhaps know? In fact, it was the French départements on which the German federal states were based. And why does the coat-of-arms of Baden-Württemberg display the Austrian colours? Maybe there is a student from Germany’s southern neighbour in the lecture hall who knows that Freiburg and district once belonged to Austria?

Peter Süß’s informative lecture sweeps through many aspects of German culture and institutions. He covers Porsche and the new Green Party prime minister of Baden-Württemberg, moves on to the largest ceiling fresco north of the Alps and the town hall cellar in Rothenburg, Richard Wagner and Ludwig II of Bavaria, and explains the south German culinary specialties Leberkäse and Maulaschen.

Peter Süß presents his immense knowledge of Germany and its people with a twinkle in his eye. Again and again, he encourages his students to make their own contributions, he knows almost all of them by name. The atmosphere is relaxed but very focused. And when a German student admits that he has no idea what the ingredients of a Weißwurst are, the class enjoys a little joke at his expense: “He eats without knowing. Very courageous!”

The “English Language Program” consists of more than just lectures. “Every semester we have a few events which are more on the social side,” Dr Süß says. Anyone who wants to join in can take part in a guided tour of the Residence in English or visit the Würzburg Hofbräu brewery. There is an organised trip to Bamberg and, of course, a wine-tasting in State Winery. “At the end there is a written examination and the students can earn ECTS points,” Süß explains.

Sausage – Oktoberfest – Beer – the Alps: This is the order in which international students list what they associate with Bavaria. Further down their list they also include Ludwig II and his castles such as Neuschwanstein.

Photos (from top): Manfred Walker, Michaela Schöllhorn, Wandersmann, chrger / all: pixelio.de
What is this – a holiday village on the Med? No – this is one of the student halls of residence right next to the Hubland university campus.

Not alone

There is always something going on here, and I like that.” Kristina Grotuzaite lives in one of the Würzburg student halls of residence. She enjoys the company. “You meet people in the corridor, you have a little chat, you try and find out if there’s a party that evening.” In the shared kitchen everyone has their own shelf space and a section of the fridge. Usually, though, the students cook and have their meals together – the most recent thing on the menu was spaghetti with meat and vegetable sauce. There is also an area outside for the students to have barbecues. A hall of residence is a good place to meet students from all over the world. Kristina comes from the town of Klaipeda in Lithuania and is studying German and French in Würzburg. Most of her fellow-students are German, but there also some from Asia and Africa. Generally speaking, halls of residence tend to be pretty international places. There are over 20 halls in Würzburg. Rents range from 180 to 280 Euros a month. Most of the places are allotted through the Studentenwerk which runs a number of halls for students. If you want a room where you can live close together with other students, you should apply well in advance. The Studentenwerk also helps students to find private accommodation and you will find more information about the other halls on their website.

Kristina Grotuzaite comes from the town of Klaipeda in Lithuania.

Mensas & more

The Studentenwerk is the office that provides many of the student services in Würzburg. It not only runs the student halls of residence and helps students find private accommodation, but also runs the university restaurants and cafeterias. The Studentenwerk is also the place to go for student loans. The advisors for the German student loan organisation Bafög have their offices here. They can offer advice on student credits and other means of financing your studies. Students who require social or legal advice will also find help at the Studentenwerk. www.studentenwerk-wuerzburg.de
S tudents of Medicine in Würzburg are simply the best, especially when it comes to their results in their Physikum exams. If we look at the results over the last ten years, they are regularly among the top five universities in the country. Not bad when you consider that there are 36 faculties of Medicine in Germany. The fact that Würzburg always does well shows that the teaching here is well above average. Würzburg’s score in the Physikum was not the only reason for Robert Emmerich to choose Würzburg as his university at which to study Medicine. “I was attracted by the fact that it is possible to do Experimental Medicine in tandem with the conventional degree programme. That is the ideal subject combination if you want to pursue a career in research later on,” he says. And so he moved from Cottbus to the River Main. What he liked right from the start: “We were allowed to practise doctor-patient dialogues using actors as patients,” says Robert. He was given the task of explaining to his patient that he has lung cancer. And then he had to check whether the patient had fully understood the information he had been given. There are a number of reasons why Würzburg does so well compared with other universities. Speciality-trained teaching coordinators check the lectures, introduce innovative forms of teaching, and are go-between for the students and the academic staff. On the e-learning platform Wue-Campus, additional material is put online to supplement the lectures and tutorials. You can even see live pictures from the operating theatre, for instance if a surgeon wants to present a new operating procedure.

“I definitely wanted to study in Bavaria; there I had a choice of three universities: Munich, Erlangen and Würzburg. Munich is too big, what I had heard about Erlangen was not so good, and so I came to Würzburg. I have not regretted my decision. I liked the fact, for example that from the start we were confronted with situations a doctor is faced with in his everyday practice with actors as patients. That was good experience. What else do I like about Würzburg? The fact that doctors have to do training I did when I left school, I got a job straight away in a really good bar... and that the semester ticket means that students have really cheap transport on the buses and trams.”

“Actually, I wanted to go to Tübingen. The central clearing office for university places ZVS, however, sent me to Würzburg. At first I was a bit surprised, but I am now very happy to be here. Würzburg is not such a big city and is fairly compact. I really like the historical city centre. There are lots of festivals here and plenty of places to go out to at night. The Sport Uni offers different kinds of sports, which I also really like. Last semester I did fencing, at the moment I am working on improving my swimming techniques. I also do circuit training which was a great help when I took part in the Würzburg marathon.”

“Medicine? Simply the best!”

Lara Wilczek

“Why did I choose to come to university in Würzburg? Because I had heard that Würzburg has more hours of sunshine than most other parts of Germany. No, seriously. I came to Würzburg because Medicine in Würzburg has a very good reputation. In the university rankings you see that again and again. And I’m happy to say that I have found the programme here to be really well-organised, which means than there is only a limited amount of stress. Apart from that there is a Teddyklinik, a teddy-bear clinic run by medics and dentistry students. We can practise allaying children’s fear of doctors there. That was really good fun.”

Romy Langhammer

“My university at which to study Medicine was not the only reason for Robert Emmerich to choose Würzburg as his university at which to study Medicine. “I was attracted by the fact that it is possible to do Experimental Medicine in tandem with the conventional degree programme. That is the ideal subject combination if you want to pursue a career in research later on,” he says. And so he moved from Cottbus to the River Main. What he liked right from the start: “We were allowed to practise doctor-patient dialogues using actors as patients,” says Robert. He was given the task of explaining to his patient that he has lung cancer. And then he had to check whether the patient had fully understood the information he had been given. There are a number of reasons why Würzburg does so well compared with other universities. Speciality-trained teaching coordinators check the lectures, introduce innovative forms of teaching, and are go-between for the students and the academic staff. On the e-learning platform Wue-Campus, additional material is put online to supplement the lectures and tutorials. You can even see live pictures from the operating theatre, for instance if a surgeon wants to present a new operating procedure. In the Skills Clinic in Würzburg, the emphasis is on clinical practice. Students can learn and practise the basic medical techniques on dummies at their own pace: taking blood samples, sounding lungs, doing ECGs, inserting bladder catheters, doing ultrasound scans. After practising on simulators, doing the same things with real patients is bound to be much easier. Of course, Medicine is a very demanding degree. But still, the atmosphere among the students is good: “We help each other along, lend each other our notes and spend our spare time together,” says Robert. What does he think of Würzburg? “Just great!” And for those students who want to get away from Würzburg for a while, the university has plenty of exchange programmes to offer. The Faculty of Medicine has ties with European countries, Japan, Brazil, Tanzania and the USA.”

Maximilian Franke

“Medicine? Simply the best!”

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Michaela Mooz

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Michaela Mooz
Taking blood samples, stitching an open wound, inserting a bladder catheter: of course, there is always a first time for every physician to do these things on a patient. It is a good thing for both of them if the doctor has practised it beforehand. Medical students can do this in the Würzburg Skills Clinic. There the medics are taught basic medical procedures under strict supervision, either on volunteers or on dummies. The courses follow the degree syllabus and supplement the theoretical classes in the various departments. The scenarios look very real: the Skills Clinic has proper wards and rooms for patients, an intensive care unit and even an exact copy of an operating theatre has been built. The only thing that is missing is the stress of the real-life situation. After all, a dummy can’t scream “ouch”.

Biomedicine. The graduates of this degree are not medical doctors, but they are well-prepared for a career in medical research. The students get an insight into a wide range of projects in medicine and the natural sciences. “I really like this mixture,” says Conny Unger. The course starts off with a lot of Biology, but Chemistry, Physics and Anatomy are important subjects, too. Later, Biochemistry and various medical subjects are added such as Physiology, Pharmacy and Microbiology.

“We students are introduced to the most varied research groups,” says Katharina Heil. There is a team in the Biocenter studying skin cancer, or a working group which is making the movement of individual proteins visible in the cell using fluorescence microscopy. The students work closely with the scientists in the Rudolf Virchow Center. In this renowned institute for Biomedicine, research is being conducted into proteins which are important for human health and which cause illness when they malfunction. In their block practicals the students can spend longer periods of time working on individual pieces of research and look in-depth at some of these subjects. These practicals sometimes take place in the vacations.

“But the degree in Biomedicine still leaves time for other things. You just have to make time for yourself,” Katharina says. She, for instance, has taken charge of the international section of the Student Council. The international section consists of German and international students. They organise things for the international students such as preparing meals together, going on trips to other cities or visiting wine festivals. “It is nice to meet students of other subjects, and getting to know students from other countries is fun and is always very interesting.”
After the lecture out into the sunshine. Study and relax: You can do both on the green Hubland campus.
Sunny Franconia

Franconia has a perfect climate. It is warmer here than in the rest of Germany. There are more hours of sunshine and there is relatively little rain. A good place, then, to sit on the banks of the River Main, get on with some reading or prepare for classes. Or just to rest and watch the boats go by.

10 good reasons for coming to Würzburg

Good weather Würzburg is one of the warmest places in Germany. Here, spring arrives earlier, there are plants which you would only expect to find south of the Alps.

Good research Würzburg’s academics regularly win prizes for their research and students benefit from this knowledge in their studies.

Good courses You can take a course in engineering and learn Mandarin at the same time because Würzburg is a traditional University with the full range of subjects on offer.

Good accomodation 268 Euros is what students pay for their rent and utilities on average in Würzburg. In Munich students pay 348 Euros for the same thing.

Good contacts Würzburg University has partner universities on all five continents. Good prospects, then, for foreign students who want to come here.

Good atmosphere The population of Würzburg is 135,000, almost 30,000 of them are students. They keep the city young and ensure a lively student atmosphere.

Good life Running in the vineyards, barbecues on the banks of the Main, parties in the clubs. Würzburg has everything to offer – sport, culture and night life.

Good food The Mensa, as the student cafeteria or refectory is known in Germany, regularly gets top marks from the students. The food is always delicious.

Good teaching The teaching staff are real professionals. And they put their lectures online as well as assignments and other tasks, everything the modern student needs.

Good Un! Good research, good teaching, good city. The best environment for the best days of your life – your student days. At the University of Würzburg, of course.
No time to get bored

Sometimes it is a good thing if you are not given a choice. Otherwise Joanna Konarska might have chosen a different university for her semester abroad. Now, the 21-year-old exchange student from Poland cannot imagine being anywhere else. “I like it here a lot. I was lucky to be able to come to Würzburg,” Joanna comes from Elblag in the north of Poland. There she is studying German. “I want to be an interpreter. When my German lecturer asked me whether I would like to spend a semester in Germany, of course I said ‘yes’ at once.” Actually, Würzburg was the only university on offer. “The German department here has an exchange programme with Elblag, so that the choice had been made for me. Today I am glad that it was.” Joanna is aware of the advantages of studying in Würzburg: all the green spaces in the town and on the Hubland campus where you can relax. “My favourite place is on the banks of the River Main but I also sometimes like to lie in the sun on the Hubland campus between lectures.” Joanna has arranged her timetable so that she has time for things like this. “I think it is great that I can choose my own classes from all the courses on offer and make my own timetable. In Poland we were given our timetables, so that it was more like school.” Joanna keeps busy after classes, too. Whether it is a coffee break with her friends or an evening in one of the clubs and bars, “There is no time to get bored here.” The Mensa in Würzburg has received a number of awards and Joanna can understand why. “The selection of food is great and it is not expensive.”

Meeting people from all sorts of different countries

Joanna is happy at the University of Würzburg. “I like the life here at the uni, this international atmosphere. I have never met so many people from so many different countries. And every day I meet more,” she says. She is also full of praise for the members of the International work group, AK Internationales. These are students who volunteer to arrange various events for international students, for example, cooking an evening meal together or organising parties. Joanna joins in whenever she can: “I think it is great what they do for us. Next week I am off to Berlin on a trip organised by the International Office. I am looking forward to it already.” As she said, there is no time to get bored here.

Books and PCs

German Studies und Digital Humanities: That is the course combination Jenny Poser decided to register for at the University of Würzburg. Digital what? This degree course has existed here since winter semester 2009/10 and Jenny is one of the first students to take this subject. Digital Humanities forms a bridge between the humanities and the new technologies. The course includes the digitalisation and editing of texts, pictures and maps to provide easily accessible data to answer questions raised in Arts and Humanities research. A successful degree can lead to a career in the print or electronic media, where the graduate can take on organisational, consultancy and management tasks. There are also jobs in research, journalism, public relations and advertising. “I would like to work in a publishing company once I have finished. Then it’s not a bad idea to know about online media,” says Jenny to explain her choice of subject. She particularly values the variety provided by this subject combination: reading a lot for German, plenty of hands-on experience in Digital Humanities. She also likes the fact that her course is very inter-disciplinary. “We can take classes in other Arts subjects and the credits obtained there count towards our degree.” Joanna knows that being an editor is not a bad career. “It is a good opportunity to improve one’s general knowledge, she finds. That is always useful for a potential editor. To take this course, Jenny moved specially from Karlsruhe to Würzburg.”

Würzburg is simply a beautiful city”, she says. And she really loves the university campus. “You could not dream of a better location, with this view over the old town to the fortress.” When she heard she had been allocated an apartment in a newly-renovated student hall of residence close to the campus, she was more than delighted. Study in Würzburg? “Most certainly,” says Jenny Poser. The German Department is great, the lecturers are really nice and the town: “simply fantastic!”
The big wide world of the media

Media Communications – what is that all about? Officially, the course is described as “teaching media competence from the perspective of various disciplines.” The variety of the subjects involved gives students an integrated training in the range of subjects relevant to all the areas covered by the media,” as it says in the prospectus. Perhaps Jana Heins and Simon Georg Kolmstetter can explain better what it is. They should know, because they were among the first students to take the new course of study when it began at the University of Würzburg in the winter semester of 2010/11. Simon believes it is not nearly as dry as it first sounds.

“We look at media from all sorts of different angles,” Jana sums up the course. In other words, she studies Psychology, Economics, Law, Computer Science, Marketing and PR, of course, all from the point of view of the world of media. In practice, the kind of questions covered might be:

**Psychology:** Why is it that people can enjoy sad movies where they soak innumerable handkerchiefs with their tears, while others take pleasure in horror films which make their flesh creep. This is where media psychologists come into their own. Or: Can the new media contribute towards making learning easier and if so, why? Instructional psychology can provide us with the relevant answers.

**Marketing:** What type of advertising campaign is most suitable for the intended target group? How much information can be included without overtaxing the potential customer? How much information do you need to make it interesting and prevent them from switching off? How much of this information is retained by the person looking at the advertising? Media communications experts should be able to provide well-founded answers to all these questions.

**Computer science:** How can a user interface be designed so that the consumer gets the same kind of buzz as with the Apple iPad? This is also the kind of thing Media Communications students investigate in their course.

“The spectrum of subjects is incredibly wide,” says Jana. For an analysis of the media offered by the local Würzburg radio station, Radio Gong, for example, she went along and talked to the editor-in-chief, while others in her class examined various television stations or newspapers. The professors also invite guest lecturers from the media industry to Würzburg to talk about their work – and perhaps the work of the future Media Communications graduates.

Sasha Naujoks, for example, who until recently was responsible for some very popular docu-soaps for the private television network RTL and who has since moved to another private television company, ProSiebenSats. Or Florian Drücke, the managing director of the German Federation of the Music Industry, came to talk about the current developments and challenges facing the music industry.

And talking of current developments: of course a central role in the coursework for the degree in Media Communications is given to the new media, in other words, the internet, twitter, facebook and so on are at least as important as newspapers, radio and television. All these subjects are covered in the lectures and seminars in Media Communications. Simon tells us: “Last semester we had a lecture on Music and the Media, for instance.” Anyone who wanted to know more about the history of radio as well as the history of MTV or who wanted to find out how music works in advertising or why music has always been in the focus of the censors found the answers here.

The range of subjects involved in Media Communications is a reflection of the areas in which graduates will be able to make their careers. They might become programme planners for radio or television, multimedia designers, campaigners in an advertising agency, organise opinion polls or join the gaming industry, develop or evaluate e-learning projects and virtual learning worlds, work in the press or public relations departments of companies and institutions, or in academia. There are more than enough potential fields for employment.

And in view of the fact that people are spending more and more time with the media – whether it is reading newspapers or magazines or sending tweets, experts will be in high demand in the future. Jana and Simon have a fairly clear idea of what their futures will be like.

“I would like to work in corporate communication or marketing and advertising,” says 24-year-old Jana, who has already completed a training in industry as a PR assistant. Simon is also very taken by the world of advertising - in particular the design aspect. Basically, however, he can imagine going for a job in television. Perhaps he will become the creator of a new docu-soap.
Making and editing videos, recording radio plays, enhancing pictures using Photoshop: any student can enrol in these courses in the Media Education Centre for free! There are also classes in theory, such as those in media psychology, e-learning and film studies. In a number of these courses, teaching methods are a central focus so that they are of particular interest for students studying to become teachers. The teachers-to-be learn how to work with modern media and they find out which media can most effectively be used in the classroom.

Daniel Soldaczuk did his degree in Teacher Training for Hauptschule with a focus on History. He spent a lot of time in the Media Education Centre when he was a student. “The breadth of what is on offer there is amazing: you can make videos, podcasts, work with interactive whiteboards and all the courses are very hands-on. You can use what you learned later on in your teaching.”

In the Media Education Centre, students recorded the fairy tale, “The Three Feathers”. The experience taught them how many things pupils can learn with this type of creative work: writing a script, allotting roles, practising clear articulation, adding music. “It is a really good project and is very motivating for the pupils,” says Daniel Soldaczuk.

During the European Football Cup, students did a fun video project. They set off with a camera, interviewed football fans and caught all the emotions soccer arouses on film. As they developed the finished product they learned at first hand all about the advantages and disadvantages of the various video editing systems.
“The good thing about the University of Würzburg is that there is a friendly, familiar atmosphere. In Würzburg you are not thrown in at the deep end as you often seem to be at other universities. You don’t feel that you are left to your own devices and even if you don’t use the various offers of help that exist, it is reassuring to know that they are there. The university offices are very helpful. My experience in Frankfurt was not nearly so good. WueCampus is also a great bonus. It is a central internet platform which gives us students easy access to lecture scripts and other teaching material. The use of the system is widespread, all our lecturers post material for us. That makes the life of a student much simpler.”

Kristof Korwisi

"Human Factors in Computing Systems is only offered in Hamburg and Würzburg at the moment. I come from Hamburg and had a good look at the course there, went to some lectures. In the end I decided on the course in Würzburg. The classes are better here, so are the teaching methods. You can tell that the professors take a great personal interest in our degree programme. Unlike Hamburg, in Würzburg we are linked in with other subject areas such as ergonomics. And we have lots of study trips.

We have been to visit the mechanical engineers at the Technical University in Munich, the Chair for Ergonomics, and the centre for Traffic Sciences in Veitschochheim with its driving simulator. As a place to live, Würzburg is a much more welcoming university town than Hamburg – not so enormous.”

Lara Luttmer

“What fascinates me is the potential of applications in the field of Human Factors in Computing Systems. Wherever man meets a computer system today, whether it is a mobile phone or in the car, there are very interesting areas in which to work. The university’s Computer Centre is really good. There students can get good software very cheaply or even for free.

The town itself is great. The best thing about it is that you can get from A to B very quickly. Lots of places are easy to get to on foot. It is not far by bike to the lake at Erlabrunn – a fantastic local recreation area. And in Würzburg there is no shortage of culture. If you want to do some sightseeing on your own, you can download MP3s from the city’s website. Then, you can go off on your own to the Residence, for instance, with your free personal audio guide.”

Christian Treffs

"What I find fascinating about the subject of Human Factors in Computing Systems is that there is a great variety of potential careers in this field. Whether it is a computer, satellite navigation system or mobile phone: how should these gadgets be configured so that they remain user-friendly? This is one of the subjects covered by Human Factors in Computing Systems. The students acquire knowledge in the fields of computer science, psychology and medicine. And in particular information about the human factors, in other words the factors which enable them to understand and improve the interaction between people and technology.

Putting people first

“The human being is very definitely at the centre of our course of studies, not the systems or the logarithms.” Kristof Korwisi, explains why he chose to take this course. Naturally, it involves a certain amount of Computer Science. Software Engineering is part of the syllabus, as are Psychology and Physiology – after all, the student has to learn how the human being and his senses work.

“We have some classes which are exclusively for this course, such as Ergonomics and Introduction to Human Factors in Computing Systems.” Lara Luttmer appreciates this and says it is one of the reasons why she came from Hamburg to study at the University of Würzburg. She has not regretted it. "The course is well-structured and our course counsellor is extremely committed on our behalf.”

Career-oriented

The subject Human Factors in Computing Systems has great potential career-wise. All three students agree on this. And they are not the only ones. Christian Treffs has done a placement at Continental in Regensburg in the Navigation & Maps Department. “When I told them what course I was taking, their reaction was very enthusiastic: ‘That definitely sounds like a qualification we can use here.’”
Biographies

Birgit Herrmann, 25, is a student of Modern China in Würzburg. “I wanted to do something with languages and have always been fascinated by Asian scripts and characters. That’s how I came across the subject at the University of Würzburg on the internet”, she tells us. And once she had read the details of the course, she realised, “This is the one for me.” Nice teachers, a friendly atmosphere, and a good sense of community. This is how Birgit describes her experience in Modern China. It is not an overcrowded subject. Every year there are only about 30 or 40 new students. “That means we all know each other quite well,” says Birgit. One reason why a group of complete strangers quickly become friends is the fact that there are four weeks of intensive language classes before the actual course begins. These four weeks are pretty hard going, Birgit remembers, but they give you a good indication of whether the language suits you. And the test at the end? “Not so bad, as long as you do a bit of work for it.” Unfamiliar Chinese characters, strange grammar and a language in which the syllable “ma” can mean mother, horse, hemp or scold, depending on how it is stressed — is that not really complicated? “It takes a while to be able to distinguish the sounds, but once you have heard them a few times, you get attuned,” Birgit thinks. Anyway, the language teaching in Würzburg is so good that you know enough to make yourself understood in everyday situations fairly quickly. After six semesters, Birgit is ready to go off to China for a year. She will be working in a Middle School as a language assistant for German and will be able to improve her Chinese. And when she has finished? Probably go on to do a Master’s specialising in Chinese for business and after that, definitely go back to China.

Nina Teneva grew up and went to school in Bulgaria. In Würzburg she did her Bachelor in Modern China, spending six months in Beijing. It is not surprising to hear that travel is one of her main hobbies. Later on, when the China expert is working for her living, she does not necessarily want to “spend year after year in the same place.” Everyone who registers for Modern China in Würzburg knows that he or she will be spending their fourth semester at Beijing University – in particular, in order to improve the language skills they have acquired so far.

“It was amazing. Such a big city, so chaotic, so stressful,” Nina remembers her impressions from her first few days in Beijing. She changed her mind, though. It was not long before she was thinking: “It’s so cool to be living in such a dynamic city.” Classes in the mornings, exploring in the afternoons and going out in the evenings (and doing preparation for classes in-between times), that is how she spent her time in Beijing. Beautiful parks, so much to see from the Forbidden City to the Olympic stadium, and Chinese people who proved to be extremely patient with foreigners, these are the things which are ingrained in her memory. And the huge clothes markets where the student could put her language and bargaining skills to the test. “In Beijing there is always something to see and something to do,” the student says and she wants to go back as soon as she can. And her course in Würzburg? How does she see things now, just before she finishes her degree? “If I had to choose again, I would do exactly the same thing.”

A long journey

It was pure chance that led Birgit Herrmann to study “Modern China” in Würzburg. “I wanted to do something with languages and have always been fascinated by Asian scripts and characters. That’s how I came across this subject at the University of Würzburg on the internet”, she tells us. And once she had read the details of the course, she realised, “This is the one for me.” Nice teachers, a friendly atmosphere, and a good sense of community. This is how Birgit describes her experience in Modern China. It is not an overcrowded subject. Every year there are only about 30 or 40 new students. “That means we all know each other quite well,” says Birgit. One reason why a group of complete strangers quickly become friends is the fact that there are four weeks of intensive language classes before the actual course begins. These four weeks are pretty hard going, Birgit remembers, but they give you a good indication of whether the language suits you. And the test at the end? “Not so bad, as long as you do a bit of work for it.” Unfamiliar Chinese characters, strange grammar and a language in which the syllable “ma” can mean mother, horse, hemp or scold, depending on how it is stressed — is that not really complicated? “It takes a while to be able to distinguish the sounds, but once you have heard them a few times, you get attuned,” Birgit thinks. Anyway, the language teaching in Würzburg is so good that you know enough to make yourself understood in everyday situations fairly quickly. After six semesters, Birgit is ready to go off to China for a year. She will be working in a Middle School as a language assistant for German and will be able to improve her Chinese. And when she has finished? Probably go on to do a Master’s specialising in Chinese for business and after that, definitely go back to China.

Subtle sounds

Modern Chinese

“Modern China” at the University of Würzburg puts particular emphasis on the teaching of Mandarin. More than half of the teaching hours are dedicated to language acquisition. In order to intensify and perfect their language skills, students spend the fourth semester at Beijing University. The credits obtained there are an integral part of the course and thus count towards the degree. As the classes are small, students learn Chinese rapidly and effectively. Central to the course of study is Modern China, its economy, its society, its culture. The students gain a comprehensive knowledge of the developments in China today, at the same time Chinese History and Civilisation are also important. Students are given the opportunity to specialise in certain aspects and develop an individual course profile.
Time to browse...

Is there anything in the way of knowledge today that has not been digitalised? In the United States, at least, Amazon now sells more electronic books than books printed on paper in the traditional manner. But still, when a bookseller sets up his tables in the Humanities building of the University, it is only a few minutes before students and lecturers can be seen poring over the boxes and perusing the contents for second-hand treasures. It looks as if the book as we know it is far from dead.
**Simply a great University**

Abdelmoula Lebzouque is always on the go. At the University and in the city of Würzburg he has found a place where he can use his talents and interests to the full: he was one of the founder members of the Arbeitskreis Internationales (International Work Group on the Student Representative Council), he has helped organise the Würzburg Marathon and joined a political party. And now he teaches a language class in the University Language Centre. And at the same time he was taking his degree in Sociology, Psychology and Philology, which he really enjoyed: “The people were very kind, I had extremely interesting discussions with professors and fellow-students, the library is excellent, there is internet access all over the university campus, the food in the Mensa is good – Würzburg is simply a great university.” He is just as enthusiastic about the city and the people, too: “Würzburg is a romantic city with its vineyards, fortress, all the parks and green spaces. I have made a lot of friends here. In the summer we go for bike rides along the River Main every weekend.” The student from Morocco seems to have an endless list of things he likes about Würzburg: the pubs and bars, the sports on offer at the University sports centre, political satire and cabaret, public debates, and arthouse cinema. “This city offers so many opportunities that I never get bored.” Abdelmoula feels at home in Würzburg: “I have been here for years now, the city has become part of me with good things and less good things, kind people and not-so-kind people. When I arrive back in Würzburg, it’s like coming home.” Würzburg and the people of Würzburg are dear to his heart and he is not thinking of leaving soon.

**Learning German**

Würzburg is a good place to study. “Würzburg ist eine al_ Universitätsstadt m__ einer ho___ Lebensqualität.” Mira Simeonova is filling in the blanks. The 19-year-old from Bulgaria is taking the placement test for the German language classes at the University Language Centre. Then she will be told which level is most suitable for her. In the Language Centre, international students can learn German. They are advised which course is best for them and are prepared for the DSH, the German language proficiency test for university admission. This exam is a requirement for non-native speakers who wish to study for academic degrees in Germany. Mira Simeonova wants to take Computer Science at Würzburg. After she has passed the DSH, she will still be able to take classes at the Language Centre to continue to improve her German. “We offer courses at all levels throughout the year,” Ingeborg Florescu, head of German as a Foreign Language at the Language Centre tells us. “We look at the specific language requirements for the various subjects.” Then students are taught such skills as writing academic papers, making presentations, and so on. Mediothek, Computer Lab and face2face Language lessons in the Language Centre are anything but dull. The teaching staff frequently include topics about Würzburg and the University, so that the students learn something about their study environment. The Mediothek offers language learning software, films, audio files and other media. In the Computer Lab students can work with interactive language learning programmes. And face2face offers a one-to-one version of a conversation lesson. Here two students from different countries who want to learn each other’s languages meet and practise together. International doctoral students and visiting academics can attend language classes here, too. The participants come from all over the world: China, Korea, Japan, Israel, Syria, Haiti und many European countries. There is a pleasant atmosphere in the language classes. “We often work in small groups, so that everyone has an opportunity to speak,” says Iryna Fomuk from the Ukraine. In her Advanced German class she is in a group with Dong Li from China, Zakariae Sedjari from Morocco and Joanna Konarska from Poland. All of them are full of praise for their language teachers. “They take a great interest in us as individuals,” Mira Simeonova says.
SCIENTIFIC CAREERS

Introducing the University of Würzburg Graduate Schools

The University of Würzburg is one of the leading international universities in many research fields, such as Medicine, Biology, Psychology, Physics or Chemistry. “Würzburg is a great place to start a scientific career,” says Dr Stephan Schröder-Köhne, head of the University of Würzburg Graduate Schools Office, “and we attract top doctoral students from all over the world.”

There are four Graduate Schools at the University of Würzburg. The largest one is the Graduate School of Life Sciences with some 300 doctoral students. It is funded by the “Excellence Initiative” of the German federal and state governments.

In addition, there are three other Graduate Schools in the fields of the Humanities, of Science and Technology and of Law, Economics and Society. Altogether, about 450 doctoral students are enrolled in the four Graduate Schools. About 30 per cent of them are from outside Germany. What is special about the Graduate Schools? The traditional PhD is organised in a master-apprentice relationship: a doctoral student works on an academic project, supervised by a single professor.

At a Graduate School, the doctoral students are integrated into a wider context: In Würzburg each doctoral student has three experienced academic mentors who give their support. At the same time, the young academics belong to a peer group of about 15-20 postgraduate researchers working on related topics. In the peer groups, the young researchers exchange ideas at regular meetings and they attend seminars, lectures and retreats together. There are also opportunities to acquire transferable skills, useful for careers outside the University. There are more than 45 such courses every year covering subjects such as writing grant applications, presentation skills or intellectual property law.

Internationalisation in academia is essential. That is why the Graduate Schools strongly encourage their doctoral students to be active at an international level. “We expect them to find out what is going on in the global scientific community and to join networks, by taking part in international conferences, for example”, Schröder-Köhne points out.

Students also improve their intercultural skills. Here, the Graduate Schools cooperate with the University project “Global Systems and Intercultural Competence”. International doctoral students who want to learn German can do so in courses organised by the University Language Centre.

“We encourage them to learn German,” Schröder-Köhne emphasises. “We would like them to feel at home and to become integrated more easily outside the University as well.”

www.graduateschools.uni-wuerzburg.de

Würzburg Graduate Schools

In-Kyung Kim comes from South Korea. She is pursuing her doctorate at the Graduate School of the Humanities in the section “Education and Culture”. Her doctoral thesis is on “Philosophising with children and its significance for intercultural learning”.

“Elocution, rhetoric or creative writing: these workshops for doctoral students make the Graduate School special. They are not only useful and necessary at the university but for our later careers. The workshops make us aware of our strengths and weaknesses and give new impetus to develop important skills alongside our academic research. They also give us an opportunity to exchange ideas. The Graduate School of the Humanities also offers workshops on analysis and methodology, interdisciplinary cooperation, academic writing and scientific conduct. Our Graduate School consists of four sections: “Education and Culture”, “Philosophy, Languages and the Arts”, “The Middle Ages and the Renaissance”, and “Antiquity, History and Religion”, so that the subjects of our theses can be interdisciplinary.”

Ajaraman Gnana Oli from India is about to complete his PhD at the Graduate School of Life Sciences (GSLS). His thesis project: “Oxidative Stress – Role in Genomic Damage and Diseases” with Prof. Dr. Helga Stopper.

“It was pretty easy to settle in the GSLS. When I arrived in Würzburg, the GSLS arranged a guide for me to help with registration at the university, health insurance, opening a bank account and getting a residence permit at the city hall. This was an immense help. There are plenty of opportunities to meet international fellow students and visiting scientist. For example, the GSLS supported club run at the university guest house helped me to find Indian students and get moral support at first. Moreover, the club arranged every other week visits to German historical places to learn about the culture. I really enjoyed every trip. At the same time, I enjoyed the Indian cultural events which are supported by the GSLS and arranged by Würzburg Indian Society. I also enjoyed the social activities with my German colleagues according to their local traditions. At my working group, we had a good proportion of international students and the group is headed by a multicultural person, which both fostered a comfortable research environment. Overall, I greatly express my gratitude to the GSLS, making me successful, not just as a graduate student but as a scientist.”
**Student Initiative**

Integrating Internationals

A day trip to Lake Constance, walks in the vineyards, barbecues or preparing a meal together: the student AK Internationales (International Working Group of the Student Representative Council) has set itself the task of making sure the international students are never bored or lonely. “Especially when they are new to Würzburg, students often don’t have much idea of what there is to do in their spare time,” says Jessica Rex, a member of the Working Group. “We see it as our job to help them to integrate and show them something of our culture and our country.” The important thing about these events is that the students should enjoy the time they spend together and meet each other.

How can the international students find out about what events are being organised for them? The International Working Group has a page on the University website which is updated regularly, they are on facebook and also mail as many students as possible directly. “Sometimes you have to be quite imaginative when it comes to making the events known”, says Jessica. One way of telling students about the Working Group is through the German language classes. Every semester the members of the International Working Group go to the Language Centre and introduce themselves and their project to the students in the German classes. Any student who is interested in finding out more about the latest get-togethers can put their name on the mailing list. “We collect the e-mail addresses when we get all the students together,” says Jessica. “That helps us a lot to keep in touch with the students and keep them up-to-date with the events we have planned.”

The work group has about ten members who are there all the time and about another 15 who are ready to help out whenever necessary. They are funded by the University, which gives them a fair amount of freedom: “When we are planning something we can focus on the content and not have to worry whether we are going to break even.” One of the most popular events every semester is the renowned Würzburg Erasmus party.

**Choosing a Career**

PR for Art

Botticelli, Raffael & co.: It was the Italian painters and builders who lured Sarah Aloisi from her home town near Cologne to study in Würzburg. The History of Art department here has a strong Italian bias and that was what attracted her to Würzburg rather than other university towns. A further advantage is that the Martin von Wagner Museum is part of the university and here it is possible to study many of the masterpieces in the original. Sarah has since completed her degree.

Her desired field of work: Public relations and event management for art, culture and history of art. She has already gained considerable experience during a number of placements, each of which lasted for several months and this confirmed her in her chosen career. Her first practical was at the Schloss Solitude Academy in Stuttgart, which is dedicated to promoting artists. There Sarah worked in public relations and events. She went on to work in sponsoring at the Schirn Gallery and the Städel Museum in Frankfurt am Main. Later on, Sarah did a professional traineeship in Würzburg with the Marketing and PR Agency Weigang Pro. It is usual to do this type of traineeship (Volontariat), particularly in public relations and the media. In general a university degree is required. The agency’s clients for whom Sarah is responsible come from a number of different fields. If she likes, she will be able to apply the marketing and public relations skills she acquired there to a career in the field of culture, but equally to the kind of products and brands she has had experience with.

Students baking in the Mensa kitchen: In the weeks before Christmas in Germany it is the custom to bake traditional German Christmas biscuits. This is one of the initiatives of the International working group AK Internationales.
Würzburg is green

The vineyards surrounding the city change colour with the seasons. A park in the shape a crescent encircles the city centre. The banks of the River Main make the perfect setting for sunbathing, barbecuing, running or cycling. You never have far to go if you want to get out and about. Nature in the city.
Studying the living object

The Botanic Gardens of the University of Würzburg are the ideal place to rest, and relax. If you like, you can take a leisurely walk through its greenhouses from the desert to the rain forest – complete with tropical ants. But of course the Botanic Gardens are used for academic research, too. Here the gardeners cultivate the rare plants the botanists require for their research.

Keen biologists

Zoology, Botany, Ecology and Tropical Biology, then Biochemistry, Bioinformatics, Cell and Development Biology, Microbiology, Genetics and more: the variety of subjects offered by the Würzburg Biology Department is tremendous. David Fecher and Daniela Pezzetta are delighted with the choice. Both have already completed their Bachelor and of course they want to do their Master in Würzburg as well, where else? What made David decide on Würzburg? "I had a look at the university rankings and Biology in Würzburg comes out very well. Then I went to the open days and saw for myself what a wide range of subjects there is here and how well research in the Biology Department is interlinked with other disciplines, for instance, Medicine." It suited David down to the ground, because he has always found Biomedical research particularly exciting. He took Virology early on, in the fourth semester and he did his Bachelor dissertation in the same field, on genetic activity in retroviruses.

In Biology in Würzburg you can try out lots of different areas and find out what you are most interested in," says Daniela. She herself had set her sights on Neuro-Biology at first. “But then I saw that plants are more interesting than I thought.” That is why she did her Bachelor dissertation in Pharmaceutical Biology, on the question of how plants defend themselves against pathogenic bacteria. Daniela says: “The great thing about Biology, apart from the variety, is the choice you have as a student. You can start to specialise as early as the fourth semester and work on your own in the research labs.”

Of course, you do not work without supervision – and here Daniela sees one of the great advantages of Würzburg: even in the large practicals at the beginning of the course, there is one supervisor for every five students, later the groups are even smaller. It is all very personal and individual.

“When you start your course, you are guided through the first few months, and that is a huge advantage,” Daniela and David agree on this. They are both members of the Biology student council which represents the interests of the students. The Student Council organises the Freshers’ Week for new students together with the academic staff, for example. They are also the best people to talk to if you are thinking of doing Biology in Würzburg.
How life functions

Just see if we can isolate this gene from the bacterium, dissect it, insert its genetic material into another type of bacterium and then wait and see what happens.” This is something you can do for yourself in your second semester in the practical classes in Bioanalysis if you take Biochemistry in Würzburg. Lisa Gutjahr and Clemens Weiß have just successfully completed this experiment. They are two pioneers, at least as far as the degree in Biochemistry at the University of Würzburg is concerned. They are students in the first group to start the subject in the winter semester 2009/10. Both of them made a conscious decision to be among the first. “My idea was that if you are in a new degree course, you will have much more say in how the course develops than in which one has been going for years”, Lisa explains her motivation in deciding on the University of Würzburg. And that is exactly what happened: “In fact we are expected to make our own contribution,” she says.

In this degree course there is a very familiar atmosphere – no wonder, with a maximum intake of 24 new students every year. “Here you are not just another matriculation number. Everyone knows everyone else, even the professors,” says Clemens. The close contact between the academic staff and the students pays off. Lisa, Clemens and the other students are asked regularly to evaluate the lectures and classes, to make suggestions as to how things might be improved and say what they expect from the coming semesters. “The best thing is that they listen to us,” says Lisa. Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Medicine: the Biochemistry degree has common ground with a number of related subject areas. That means that the options offered are very varied. Practical work takes up a fair amount of the syllabus. Biochemistry students spend many hours in the labs and learn basic lab techniques early on. “You are more or less on first-name terms with bio-molecules and in the practical classes you learn what is technically possible, for instance, in DNA and protein analysis,” says Clemens. The standard of teaching is high, the atmosphere in the lab is good. The prospective biochemists are a well-rehearsed team. Because the group is so small, the students get to know each other very quickly. Everyone makes friends and they are encouraged to help each other. What impresses Lisa und Clemens most? The broad-based, comprehensive grounding in Chemistry, they both agree. “Without that knowledge, you would not be able to understand many of the processes that go on in the human body”, says Clemens. “This knowledge helps us a lot in our analyses”, adds Lisa. Why did they choose to do Biochemistry in the first place? “I have always been interested in what goes on in physical processes at the molecular level,” says Lisa. Her goal: to identify disruptions in these processes and then develop medications to remedy these disruptions. Biochemistry is ideally suited to pursuing these aims. In Chemistry she would not have the Biology aspect, in Medicine she would not have the Chemistry. And why did she choose Würzburg – apart from the fact that it was a brand new course? “Chemistry at Würzburg University has a very good reputation. Even in the international rankings, it is close to the top”, says Lisa. Which rankings? In the European Excellence Ranking of the Centre for University Development (CHE), Chemistry in Würzburg was in the “top group” with two gold medals for its research work. In its encouragement of young researchers, Würzburg is well-placed. It is “one of the top addresses in Europe for young researchers”, according to the CHE ranking. Outside the labs there is a good environment for students: “The campus has everything we need within a stone’s throw of each other: the lecture halls, the library, the cafeteria”, says Clemens. No wonder that they both agree that it was worth risking choosing a new course of study.

The more deeply research penetrates into the microcosm of life, the more it comes upon complex networks between the molecules. To find out more about this, one needs a basic knowledge of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Medicine. The degree in Biochemistry at the University of Würzburg teaches all of these. Whether it is a question of the synthesis of proteins or the activation of genes, Biochemistry examines the basics of life processes at the molecular level. Biochemists look at the construction of individual cell building blocks and their metabolism as well as the complex interaction between these building blocks in the cells. They also conduct research into the communication which takes place between the individual cells. The Bachelor degree in Biochemistry at the University of Würzburg takes six semesters and preparations are underway to introduce a four-semester Master degree which builds on the Bachelor degree.
Enthusiasm about work in the laboratory is essential for anyone who wants to do a degree in Chemistry. The Chemistry undergraduates Benedikt Wanner, Michael Drisch und Lisa Mailänder all agree on this. There are lab practicals during the semester, but also some in the vacations: then you can spend four weeks intensive work with flasks and test tubes, taking notes and writing calculations in your lab log and on the board.

Maths and Physics are part of the course
And when they are not in the laboratory? Generally, the prospective chemists spend their mornings at lectures and the afternoons are spent in tutorial groups. At the beginning of the course there is plenty of Maths and Physics, “because you really need them for Chemistry,” Lisa says. “There is a good mix of theory and practice when you do Chemistry. You are not just sitting at a desk all the time,” Benedict adds. Lisa particularly likes the relaxed, friendly atmosphere: “After two or three semesters, you know practically everybody, including the people in the work groups and the administrative staff.” Lecturers and professors? “They always have time to listen to our questions, even outside the designated office hours,” says Michael. The professors have exciting research projects, too, and the students can join in on this work and be at the forefront of research. This could be the subject of their Bachelor dissertation, which they are allowed to choose themselves. Benedikt, for example, is writing about the active ingredients of an African plant which might have a later application in the treatment of cancer. Lisa is working with water-based colourants which show “amazing fluorescence” and which are interesting for other areas of science. This is typical of Chemistry in Würzburg: it is linked up in so many ways with other subjects, such as Biology, Physics, Medicine, Pharmacy and Food Chemistry.

Pharmacy and Food Chemistry
The work in the lab is in the forefront in the Pharmacy and Food Chemistry syllabus as well. The Institute is on the Hubland campus next door to the Chemistry Department. There is exciting research being done there, too. New antibiotics and painkillers are being developed. They are also concerned with quality control – in other words, including the detecting of counterfeit medicines. Food chemists also examine how effective and safe food additives are.
From the quantum world to the galaxies

They make the thinnest wire in the world. It is made of gold and is a million times finer than a human hair. They manipulate the angular momentum or spin of electrons. And thus advance the dream of superfast and powerful quantum computers. Physicists at the University of Würzburg are participating in the largest machine in the world, the Large Hadron Collider in Geneva, where they are looking for undiscovered elementary particles. They are researching into new solar cells. Printed on to foil, they are inexpensive. And lots more. Physicists from the University of Würzburg are working in all kinds of fields – from astrophysics to energy research to the miniature world of nanomaterials. Their regular publications in well-known science journals bear witness to the fact that they can hold their own at an international level, too.

And what did Johannes Tran-Gia like best about his Physics degree course? A field trip to the Vulkaneifel European Geopark. “We had to apply various measuring techniques to find out the geological composition of a maar volcano,” the student tells us. For example, tremors are set off using a sledge hammer and geophysicists can measure the propagation of sonic waves underground using sensors they have inserted into the ground and draw conclusions about the composition of the rock there. “Basically it is the same technique which is used in oil exploration,” says Johannes.

Physicists are also in great demand in medicine. If this all seems rather unspectacular, Johannes did his dissertation in a completely different field: The question he set out to answer was: How well is the heart muscle supplied with blood? Pictures from the MRI scanner helped him in his search. “At the moment it is a very complex process to find out how much blood flows through a particular area of the heart in a given time,” says Johannes. Doctors would like to know this, however, in order to be able to establish how badly a heart has been damaged after a heart attack, for example, and where scar tissue may have formed. For them it would be ideal to have a perfusion chart showing the degree of damage in different shades of colour. Physicists are working on this. Johannes Tran-Gia chose Physics because he enjoyed Maths and Physics at school. And why did he come to Würzburg? “The Physics department offers a broad-based curriculum in all areas of Physics, but it is still not too big,” he says. At the same time the professors have a good reputation and the academic staff are very nice. He also liked the fact that the Faculty of Physics and Astronomy has numerous partnerships with the USA, UK, France and Japan – after all, Johannes says travel is his “main hobby”. No wonder, then, that he seized the opportunity to spend a year in Edinburgh in Scotland to do his MSc there. There are many career options open to physicists. Johannes realises that, too. He is attracted to working in research, but he can also imagine himself teaching in a school, or working in publishing with her and only seven other students to teach her the statistics software SPSS. “The teaching staff spend an incredible amount of time with us,” Johanna reports. The 22-year-old has just finished her fourth semester and already completed three research practicals. “If you want to get some insight into research while you are still at university, Würzburg is the place to be,” Johanna tells us. Johannes has not even spent five minutes with Freud, who preferred his patients on the couch. Robert Kratzer, a Bachelor student, agrees. Würzburg’s leading position in Psychology is regularly confirmed by the rankings. Of course, the quality of the teaching is not unrelated to the size of the student intake. Johanna studies together with 55 others in her year, and in Robert’s year there are 72, so that there is a very familiar atmosphere. “We all know each other,” he says. Why did Johanna come to Würzburg? She does not have to consider long: “The size of the city is perfect. Not too big, not too small.” Then there is the flair of an old historical town with its Residence, its traditional pubs and bars and the many festivals. Robert is in a wheelchair and the accessibility of the buildings clinched it for him. “All in all the buildings are pretty well furnished with ramps and lifts,” he says. Würzburg compares well with other West-German universities and if there are a few steps to overcome, other students are always there to help.
What we like about Würzburg

Young people from all over the world come to study at the University of Würzburg. Here they reveal what they like best about the town. And they sent us some photographs of their favourite places.
Simply delicious

Turkey steaks with peanut and chilli crust on a bed of Asian vegetables with coconut and curry sauce, grilled tilapia fillet on white pineapple and pepper sauce, fresh chanterelle mushrooms in a creamy herb sauce with napkin dumplings: no wonder the Burse run by the Studentenwerk in Würzburg is regularly one of the top student cafeterias in Germany. In 2007 it was voted Mensa of the Year, an award they are keen to regain. These good results are achieved thanks to their customers, because it is the students who cast their votes in a poll for Unicum. By the way, if you prefer local and regional food, there is plenty of that as well. Freshly-prepared salads, for example, with Schnitzel or Bratwurst.
Sputtering’ it says on the door. What on earth goes on in this lab at Röntgenring? “Sputtering, that was really good,” says Verena Kleiner. Her fellow-student Christopher Brandt explains what it is all about. The students learn how to deposit an ultra-thin layer of silver on various objects. Only then can these objects be examined under an electron microscope. Verena and Christopher are studying Technology of Functional Materials, abbreviated to TecFun. Functional materials are important in all sorts of fields: display technology, bio-materials and polymer materials, regenerative energy and medicine.

In Würzburg, scientists are developing a technology that allows adjustment of the transmittance of windows. These so-called electrochromic windows can be used to manage the climate in buildings thus saving energy. Students gain an insight into the development of these new materials in their course work and during practical classes. For example, at the Würzburg Fraunhofer Institute for Silicate Research which is participating in the course programme, research is conducted in piezo materials – materials which generate electrical current when exposed to mechanical pressure or which change shape when they are put under current. What might that be good for? “It means that the mechanical forces which occur when an aeroplane is in the air can be converted to electrical signals which can then be measured. In this way material fatigue or damage to the plane’s surface can be recorded,” Manuel Röder, another student of the Technology of Functional Materials explains. Manuel and Verena were two of the first students to enrol in TecFun, in what was then a brand new course of study. We would certainly do the same again”, they both say and Christopher agrees.

What do they like best about the course? “The friendly atmosphere, working in small groups. We are real team workers and do a lot together outside the university as well.” The students are extremely happy with the way their work is supervised. Coordinates ensure that the organisational side runs smoothly. They see to it that the planning of the various participants in the course, the University itself, the Fraunhofer Institute, the South-German Plastics Centre, SKZ, and the Centre for Applied Energy Research is coordinated. A further asset for TecFuns is the new subject which has been added to the course, Regenerative Medicine. What does Medicine have to do with materials? More than you would think. After all, the surfaces of artificial joints and other implants have to be such that the human organism does not reject them. Equally exciting are carrier substances containing medicines which they release in the human body.
Tiny towers, a hundred times thinner than a human hair with which specific individual photons can be fired off: Physicists at the University of Würzburg are world leaders in the production of sophisticated nanostructures such as these. “Here, you are at the cutting edge of research,” says Arash Rahimiiman. He had a look at several universities in Germany which offered his preferred course of study, Nanostructure Technology, and settled on Würzburg because he liked the student environment here best. “If I was to do Nanostructure Technology at all, it had to be in Würzburg”, Arash, who was born in Gießen, says. One of the reasons why he is so convinced is on the Hubland campus – the microstructure lab which is where the experts produce the tiny photon cannons. “Here, they do not simply do research into nanostructures, they actually produce them,” Arash describes one of the advantages of Würzburg. Students are confronted with these technologies early on in their studies. Physics, Chemistry and Maths form the basis for the course, too. What Arash particularly appreciates is that “Würzburg offers a wide range of nanotechnology applications and you can be fairly flexible in choosing what you want to specialise in.” In the area of energy technology, for example, the researchers here work with nano crystals to make solar cells even more efficient. Nanotechnology also plays an important role in making better computers and in new applications for medicine and biology. Arash himself has started on his doctorate – in nano-optics. “We are analysing the properties of new kinds of lasers and light sources which are made in the microstructure lab.” The doctoral student thinks the practical relevance of the course beats everything: “Whatever you do here, you notice that it is important for industry and for business.” This is certainly true of the little Würzburg nanotowers! Elements which can shoot off individual photons are essential in making the transfer of data bug-proof.

Into the nano-cosmos

by Oliver Ruf, Pavlo Beylin and Maria Siegmund have UWE in their sights.

Into space

One result of students’ suggestions is that that their Maths lectures will be even more engineering-oriented in future. The students like being in Würzburg. “The night life is really great”, says Maria, who comes from Berlin, and she is not being ironic. “Although Würzburg is fairly small compared to Berlin, there are plenty of different things to do, “Just climbing one of the hills in summer and looking down on the town is fantastic,” says Pavlo. Or lying back and enjoying the night sky. You never know. You might spot a satellite.
Finding new solutions

Valentin Burger is studying Computer Science. And he likes kiting, preferably near the campus. All he needs: a kite, the right winds and clear skies. And this is what Valentin likes so much about Würzburg. “The good summer weather.” However, it was neither the fair weather nor the “great opportunities for leisure activities”, that was the deciding factor in the student from Wunsiedel settling on Würzburg as his choice of where to go to university and which course to take. Although, or perhaps because Valentin enjoys kiting as well as almost every other sport, he did not want to take Sport at the university but decided on Computer Science instead. “I was looking for a challenge.” It was the engineering content of the degree course in Würzburg that clinched his decision. When people think of Technology and Computer Science they seem to think of nerdy stereotypes. An unwarranted prejudice, Valentin thinks. “The best computer scientists do not necessarily sit at their computers all the time. It is much more a question of confronting new problems, finding new solutions as well as theory and she has not been disappointed so far. In one of the practical courses Isabel built and programmed a small robotic vehicle together with her male colleagues. They had to programme the robot to drive through a maze and also simulate the whole sequence on the computer. With the aid of a camera suspended above the robot the accuracy of the simulation could be verified. The whole thing took up a great deal of time, but the progress made simply with constant trial and error taught them a lot and was a great fun. Isabel is also convinced by the quality of the teaching of theory: “Our Computer Science professors are extremely well-prepared, give interesting lectures and can explain things really well.”

If she has a question about the content or the organisation of her studies, the professors or lecturers take time to talk or reply to e-mails straight away. “Before one of the exams, one of the tutors spent two hours with me and answered all my questions.”

Well looked after

A university which is not overcrowded, professors who know their students. Esther and Valentin feel extremely well looked after. The students also contribute to the academics’ research projects and thus prepare themselves for life once they have got their degrees. But with all this studying, you need some time off. It is good that the University of Würzburg has such a wide range of sports on offer. “I spend a lot of time at the Sports Centre,” says Valentin. There he can try out the less common sports such as baseball or rugby. Weather permitting, he plays football or beach volley on the campus or flies off with his kite.

Isabel Grimm: “There is no reason why you should not take Computer Science if you are a woman.”

Esther Fee Feichtner: “Working together with men is not at all complicated.”
Still at school but at university, too

Julius Popp is studying Mathematical Physics. He went to lectures at the uni when he was still at school because he wanted to know more than was taught in the school classroom. Julius was a so called “Early Student” at the University of Würzburg. School pupils from the 10th class on can do that. Early Studies classes exist in Chemistry, Maths, Computer Science, History, Political Science and a number of other subjects. Any exams the early students pass will count towards their degree once they are enrolled as full-time students. And as early students they are not left on their own. The university and their schools appoint tutors to help them.

Women are not rare creatures here

“I have always been a practical person”, Martha Keller tells us. After she left school she trained as an architectural draughtsman before she decided to get a deeper insight into the subject at the university. Now she is studying Maths and Applied Physics in Würzburg in the Computational Maths course. “I was surprised at how important practical experience is in these subjects”, says Martha. The kind of straightforward calculations following a certain formula everyone knows from school are not important. What counts much more is discussing these things together. Nor is it important whether you are a man or a woman, Martha is convinced. “Women are not exotic creatures here. What counts is the passion for the subject.”

Maths and more

Boredom is not something Veronika Karl has to worry about: beside maths theorems and equations she is learning all about the computer world. Veronika is taking Computational Mathematics with Applied Computer Science, a course which is fairly new at the University of Würzburg. “Maths and Computer Science complement each other, they have a lot in common,” the student tells us. But the differences are interesting, too: the computer scientist often sees a subject quite differently from a mathematician. The different points of view widen your horizon. Computational Mathematics combines Mathematics with a science or engineering subject. Computer Science is just one of the “applied” subjects. The others are Biology, Chemistry or Physics. Number crunching and programming are only part of how Veronika is spending her time at uni. She is also taking the “Sinicum” in the Chinese Department, a two-year course in Mandarin, Chinese history and culture. “Learning a language makes a nice change from life as a Maths student,” Veronika tells us. When she needs to switch off from all that swotting, she still has time to take Thai-Bo classes in the Sports Centre or go to the university cinema where the Uni Film Club shows the latest movies – “a good alternative to television,” Veronika says.

Maths and Physics

Should I do Mathematics, or should I do Physics? Not an easy question. What about Mathematical Physics, then? That was Julius Popp’s choice of subject combination. “You learn the most important things in both Maths and Physics. Then you can go into what interests you most. For instance, Applied Mathematics or Experimental Physics.” What happens if you realise at some point that you feel drawn to either pure Maths or pure Physics? Then it is not difficult to change your course, because the Bachelor in Mathematical Physics is fairly flexible. Julius particularly likes working in teams with other students. “We do our assignments in groups of two to five people. Then we sit down and try and work things out and calculate until the problems are solved. Usually the students can find a quiet corner in the computer science building where there are plenty of desks for students to work in small groups. Julius sets aside 10 to 15 hours a week for this team work – more than for lectures. What does he like best about the Hubland campus? “In the Mensa building there is a Room of Silence.” It is important for Julius. After he left school he studied the philosophy of yoga at the Yoga Institute in Mumbai in India for nine months. When he wants to relax and meditate between lectures, the Room of Silence is a good place to do it.
Books, CDs & Co.

Studying without books and specialist journals? Impossible! An important place to head for, then is the Würzburg University Library with its enormous collection of more than three million individual media waiting for enquiring minds including CDs and DVDs. Books, journals, German and international daily newspapers, are available both in paper and electronic versions. The latter is particularly useful for students: with their uni password they can access a great number of textbooks and journals online from home.

Judith Pasquay is particularly appreciative of what the uni library has to offer. For her, the best thing is the new book scanner. With it, students can scan articles from journals and chapters from books and save them in a digital format. "That is really useful when there are books you have to read that are in great demand but they can't be removed from the library," says Judith.

Judith is quite familiar with the library. She is a Hiwi there – that is what the student assistants are called who are paid to do various jobs in different parts of the university. Judith sometimes sits at the information desk of the library. "How long are you open today?" She is asked this question all the time, although the opening hours are clearly displayed in large letters. And they are quite impressive. During the week the library is open until midnight and until 10 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

In order to prevent the information desk from being overrun by people seeking help, the university library offers classes on how to use the library, for example literature research in data banks. School pupils can take part in these classes, too, and there is no charge, because the university library sees itself as an institution which serves everyone. Of course, Judith Pasquay has no need for these training sessions. Her Hiwi job means that she is pretty clued up about things, "and that is a great help when I have to look things up," she says.

The job at the university has other advantages. She has chosen her working hours so that they fit between lectures. "If I had a job anywhere else, I would have to go down into the town all the time. This way I can just walk across from the lecture hall to work and am back in the lecture hall just as quickly."
Team spirit on the playing fields

When everything is new, the gym, the equipment, it makes training much more enjoyable,” says Carina Breunig, the university of Würzburg’s football star. She knows what she is talking about. It is not long since the 25-year-old from Crailsheim was scoring goals in the first division of the national football league for TSV Crailsheim. Now she plays for ETSV Würzburg.

The sports student knows everything there is to know about sports on the international scene as well. She played for a season for the University of South Florida in the top American league. She was in the German national football team when they played in Bangkok and Budapest.

But it is Würzburg where Carina feels most at home, this is where she wants to stay. “Sports students all know each other. It’s all very friendly,” she says. The teaching staff know the students by name, make sure that everyone gets a place in their classes and help if there are any problems. “In places where there is a big intake of students, the whole thing becomes much more anonymous,” says Carina. “Würzburg is just the right size,” she is sure.

She is taking Sports Studies and Latin to become a teacher. Both departments have good reputations. For her second subject, Latin, Carina spends a lot of time behind the historic walls of the Residence. “Latin is quite demanding and the lecturers expect a lot of you,” Carina says. But getting the degree will be more than worth the effort. With the university women’s football team Carina won the German Universities’ Championship in 2010. She scored ten goals in the competition and was top scorer.

What about the city? “Würzburg is special.” There is always something going on and Carina will never forget the legendary parties held by the sports students.

The University Sports Centre is open to all students

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Brazil meets baroque

My favourite pub? Kult! Débora Rinaldi does not hesitate for a moment – although the choice of pubs and bars in Würzburg is huge. “The atmosphere there is relaxed and friendly, it reminds me a bit of home,” the 27-year-old adds. She comes from Porto Alegre in southern Brazil and has been in Germany for several years now. At first, she only knew Würzburg from visits to a friend here, then she enrolled at the University of Munich and does not regret moving to Würzburg. On the contrary: “I knew cities like Würzburg from visits to the big cities. In Würzburg I realised that Germany does not just have one German culture, but that even within Bavaria there are differences,” she says. She liked Würzburg straight away: “In Würzburg everything is within easy reach, you don’t waste time getting from place to place,” she says. She can spend the extra free time recharging her batteries. “Whether I am at the Hubland campus, in the Residence gardens, in the ring park or the vineyards, wherever I go there are green spaces where I can relax,” says Débora with a smile. Then there are all the cultural events. The Harbour Summer with its gentler sounds, rhythm and drums at the Africa Festival or rock, rap, electro and co. at the Umsonst & Draußen free open-air festival. “What Würzburg has in the way of culture is amazing and there is really something for every taste,” says Débora. She is really impressed by the University, too. “The people in the International Office with whom I had the first contact were so kind and helpful. I felt really welcome,” she remembers, and goes on, “The teaching staff were very open and friendly, the seminars and lectures were well-organised”. She wants to go back to Brazil in 2014. Why 2014? “Isn’t it obvious? That’s when the football World Cup will be in Brazil. And after the great atmosphere in the country when Germany hosted the World Cup in 2006, I definitely don’t want to miss it in my own country.”

Politics & Sociology

Our training in the empirical methods of social research is really good. We learn how to collect, evaluate and work with data. In our election polls, for instance, we find out the opinions of the people of Würzburg on political subjects and ask them what parties they vote for. The results are representative and politicians also take an interest in our findings! These are aspects which Felix Bruch particularly likes in his degree in Political and Social Studies. Political Science, Sociology and Social Research Methodology are closely combined in this degree.

The degree course is very practice-oriented and it prepares students for their future careers. In the module Media and Communication, for example, the students work together with editors from the local newspaper group Main Post, because newspapers, television and other media will provide most of the jobs for graduates of Political and Social Studies. But there are other job opportunities, too, for example the graduates can go into politics or put their knowledge to the test as research assistants in parliament, whether at a national, state or European Union level. “Our teachers are extremely knowledgeable and always prepared to help us,” says Julia Nikogosian. What she particularly likes about Political and Social Studies is that “the course covers a wide range of subjects and we have a number of options.” In International Relations, for example, the students can choose to specialise either in global political relations between states or concentrate on a particular geographical region such as Latin America. There are also options such as Law, Economics, Geography or Indology – this is a course on the languages and culture of India. A placement lasting several weeks is an integral part of the degree course. Then students can gain experience of the workplace at first hand.
While she was still at school, Elisabeth Lemp knew that she wanted to go to Würzburg. She was doing a practical in a special needs school in Hesse. When she told them that she wanted to study Special Needs Education, they all told her: “Würzburg, you have to go to Würzburg.” So it is no wonder that the student from Gießen has made the city with the baroque Residence her new home.

What Elisabeth likes about her degree course is that it is combined with plenty of practice. Students of Special Needs Education do seven different practicals during their course of study. Elisabeth enjoyed them very much. “For us it is really important to gain hands-on experience.” If the 24-year-old works in a special needs school later on, it is her experience which will count as well as the theory. In her degree, theory and practice are about half and half. “It is really well-balanced,” Elisabeth says. “And the quality of the teaching is really high.” In Würzburg students can take the subjects Education for learning difficulties, Education for physical disabilities, speech therapy education, Education for mental health disabilities and Education for behavioural difficulties. In addition to the chosen special subject, there are classes in educational theory and teaching methods for individual school subjects. “It is a very broad-based degree,” Elisabeth thinks, and she likes that. Her course has become more diverse. There has been a great increase in the number of subjects on offer in Special Needs in the last few years.

Just a question of passing exams? Certainly not as far as Elisabeth is concerned. She follows her inclinations and strengths and now that she has completed the basic studies, she can concentrate on subjects that really interest her. One of the seminars she attended, for instance, was called “Recreational activities for schoolchildren with learning difficulties,” which is not a compulsory subject. She took the class anyway and is pleased she did. By the way, Elisabeth went back to Hesse for one of her placements. Her supervisors did not want her to leave again, they were so pleased to have someone with such a thorough training as the Special Needs students are given in Würzburg.

Würzburg is the place to go!

Würzburg is the place to go!

While she was still at school, Elisabeth Lemp knew that she wanted to go to Würzburg. She was doing a practical in a special needs school in Hesse. When she told them that she wanted to study Special Needs Education, they all told her: “Würzburg, you have to go to Würzburg.” So it is no wonder that the student from Gießen has made the city with the baroque Residence her new home.

What Elisabeth likes about her degree course is that it is combined with plenty of practice. Students of Special Needs Education do seven different practicals during their course of study. Elisabeth enjoyed them very much. “For us it is really important to gain hands-on experience.” If the 24-year-old works in a special needs school later on, it is her experience which will count as well as the theory. In her degree, theory and practice are about half and half. “It is really well-balanced,” Elisabeth says. “And the quality of the teaching is really high.” In Würzburg students can take the subjects Education for learning difficulties, Education for physical disabilities, speech therapy education, Education for mental health disabilities and Education for behavioural difficulties. In addition to the chosen special subject, there are classes in educational theory and teaching methods for individual school subjects. “It is a very broad-based degree,” Elisabeth thinks, and she likes that. Her course has become more diverse. There has been a great increase in the number of subjects on offer in Special Needs in the last few years.”

Just a question of passing exams? Certainly not as far as Elisabeth is concerned. She follows her inclinations and strengths and now that she has completed the basic studies, she can concentrate on subjects that really interest her. One of the seminars she attended, for instance, was called “Recreational activities for schoolchildren with learning difficulties,” which is not a compulsory subject. She took the class anyway and is pleased she did. By the way, Elisabeth went back to Hesse for one of her placements. Her supervisors did not want her to leave again, they were so pleased to have someone with such a thorough training as the Special Needs students are given in Würzburg.

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Würzburg is the place to go!
Würzburg has a good international atmosphere

International students feel well looked-after at the University and at home in Würzburg. This was borne out by a poll of students all over the world taken by the company i-graduate in the autumn of 2010.

The poll was taken in 22 countries in all five continents at 700 universities and colleges with more than 150,000 participants. The International Student Barometer is hailed by its organisers as the largest survey of students worldwide which asks international students how satisfied they are with their host city and host university. In the autumn of 2010 the organisation concerned, i-graduate, polled international students in Würzburg for the first time – with excellent results for the University.

The results in brief: The International Office in Würzburg gets top marks from the international students. The advisers there are rated 11th out of 203 in Europe. In Germany, they are in third place, out of the 38 German universities which took part in the survey. Würzburg’s other strengths: good student accommodation and the huge variety of sports on offer. The academic staff are also praised for giving their students plenty of feedback. That is a brief summary of the results of a poll of a total of 307 students from other countries who study in Würzburg. Just under a third of those polled took the time to complete the i-graduate online questionnaire.

Why Würzburg? Recommended by friends, information on the website, advice from lecturers at home. Those were the reasons given by the international students in that order, when they were asked which factor was the most important in their decision to apply to Würzburg. Most of them were intending to come to Germany. Its education system has a good reputation, the quality of teaching and research is good, the interviewees said.

Plenty of praise for the University and the city: The international students in Würzburg were lavish with their praise. They are happy with the range of classes on offer as well as the quality of the lectures. International students feel extremely well looked-after by the International Office, their rating almost perfect. Top marks were also given to the Studentenwerk for the way they helped and gave advice. And the city of Würzburg comes out tops, too: welcoming and surrounded by beautiful countryside. The cost of living was confirmed as being relatively low and the opportunities to make new friends rated as high. The results are summed up by i-graduate: “Würzburg seems to have a good international atmosphere”. 
All wired up

Accessing the internet quickly on your laptop by Wi-Fi in the lecture hall or the library? No problem. The university is well-supplied with Wi-Fi – the number of access points is growing all the time. The Computer Centre has seen to that. It is the central service unit for everything to do with information technology.

The Computer Centre offers students a wide range of valuable services, for example PC classes. There students can learn to edit photographs with Photoshop, do the layout for leaflets and flyers with InDesign, edit videos with Pinnacle Studio. Then there are classes in Excel, Windows, Linux and other programmes. These classes are free of charge for students. They are financed with the student semester contributions. This is also the case for numerous software products which students can obtain from the Computer Centre free of charge or at a reduced price – to use at home as well.

In the computer labs in the departments and in the Computer Centre, students have not only computer work stations, but also scanners, printers and other hardware at their disposal. Any problems or questions to do with IT are dealt with by the service team and the centre’s telephone hotline. A large number of the academic staff use WueCampus, the university’s central e-learning platform. There they post lecture notes or extra practice exercises which can be downloaded. Law students, for example, can find tricky cases to solve, medics can treat virtual patients – the Computer Centre is in charge of this, too. They administer the platform together with the Computer Science department.

Lively Campus

The Night of Lights, uni cinema, parties, concerts, sport, graduation ceremonies or just a chat in the cafeteria: there is always something going on at the uni…
Degree programmes you can take at the University of Würzburg

Languages, Culture, Media
- Ancient Near Eastern Studies
- Archaeology (Classical, Pre- and Protohistoric Archaeology)
- Classical Greek Studies
- Comparative Indo-European Linguistics
- Digital Humanities
- Egyptology
- English and American Studies
- Ethics
- European Ethnology/Cultural Anthropology
- French Studies
- German as a Foreign Language (for Graduates in German from other countries)
- German Studies/German Language and Literature
- History
- History of Mediaeval and Modern Art
- Indology/South Asian Studies
- Italian Studies
- Latin Studies
- Human Factors in Computing Systems
- Media Communication
- Mediterranean World in Antiquity
- Modern China
- Museology and Material Culture
- Musicology
- Philosophy
- Philosophy and Religion
- Russian Language and Culture
- Spanish Studies

Mathematics & Computer Science
- Business Computing
- Business Mathematics
- Computational Mathematics
- Computer Science
- Human Factors in Computing Systems
- Mathematical Physics
- Mathematics

Natural Sciences
- Biochemistry
- Biology
- Biomedicine
- Chemistry
- FOKUS Chemistry
- FOKUS Physics
- FOKUS Physics-Nanostructure Technology
- Food Chemistry
- Geology
- Mathematical Physics
- Pharmacy
- Psychology
- Physics

Engineering
- Aeronautic and Aerospace
- Informatics
- FOKUS Physics-Nanostructure Technology
- Nanostructure Technology
- Technology of Functional Materials

Life Sciences
- Biology
- Biomedicine
- Dentistry
- Experimental Medicine (tandem course)
- Medicine
- Pharmacy

Law and Economics
- Business Computing
- Business Mathematics
- Chinese Studies
- Classical Archaeology
- Classical Greek Studies
- Comparative Indo-European Linguistics
- Computational Mathematics
- Computer Science
- Digital Humanities
- Economics (VWL)
- Educational Sciences
- Egyptology
- English and American Studies
- Ethnomusicology
- European Ethnology/Cultural Anthropology
- European Law
- Experimental Medicine
- FOKUS Physics
- FOKUS Physics and Nanostructure Technology
- Food Chemistry
- History of Mediaeval and Modern Art
- History of South Asian Studies
- Italian Studies
- Latin Studies
- Mathematical Physics
- Mathematics
- Music as a Teaching Subject/Science of Music Education
- Nanostructure Technology
- Philosophy
- Physics
- Political and Social Sciences
- Pre- and Protohistoric Archaeology
- Psychology
- Psychological Psychotherapy (post-graduate course)
- Russian Language and Culture
- Special Needs Education
- Space Science and Technology
- Teacher Training for Grundschule / Gymnasium / Hauptschule / Realschule / Special Needs Education

Education & Society
- Art as a Teaching Subject
- Education
- Human Factors in Computing Systems
- Lutheran Theology
- Music as a Teaching Subject/Science of Music Education
- Philosophy and Religion
- Political and Social Studies
- Psychology
- Roman Catholic Theology
- Special Needs Education
- Sports Studies
- Teacher Training for Grundschule / Gymnasium / Hauptschule / Realschule / Special Needs Education

Note: The list continues with more degree programmes.
An aerial view of the university campus

There is plenty of space on the university Hubland campus and room for new buildings, too, with the best possible facilities for our students’ lectures, seminars and lab work. And the future? It is a stone’s throw away where the city is developing a new district. 39 hectares have been taken over by the University. (upper left corner of photograph) Good prospects for the coming years.

A new district has emerged in Würzburg: 39 hectares of it have been taken up by the university.


Conversion of building for use by Organic Chemistry Department. Completion date: 2012.
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Würzburg has an attractive old town
Round about the Town Hall and the
Würzburger Brunnen fountain, you can shop,
stroll or sit and watch the world go by.