

Mission statement of the University of Freiburg (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg i.Br.)

Founded in 1457, the University of Freiburg is one of the oldest German universities and is now one of the nation's leading research and teaching institutions. Proud of its 550-year history in the center of Europe, the University of Freiburg is consciously aware of its intellectual roots in the occidental Christian tradition, especially in the humanism of the Upper Rhine. Building on the original disciplines of theology, law, medicine, and philosophy, it cherishes its mission of passing on the classical cultural heritage to new generations and continuing the southern German liberal tradition. At the same time, the university is dedicated to defining and pioneering new research areas and promoting a strategical interweaving of the natural and social sciences with the humanities.

Freiburg's central position in Europe, in the corner where Switzerland, France, and Germany meet, where it is nestled in one of the oldest cultural landscapes north of the Alps, has had an unmistakable influence on the town. The university is an essential element of the quality of life in Freiburg; both in the academic sphere and in the perception of the general public, the activities of the university are of central importance and highly attractive. From time immemorial, teaching, learning, and research have formed an indivisible whole. A glance at the list of leading academic figures and Nobel prize winners associated with the university, even only of those who taught and researched in the twentieth century – featuring well-known names such as A. Weismann, E. Husserl, M. Heidegger, W. Eucken, H. Friedrich, H. Spemann, H. Staudinger, A. von Hayek, P. Ehrlich, O. Wieland, G. von Hevesy, H. Krebs and G. Köhler – provides evidence enough that the University of Freiburg is and always has been a charismatic center of supreme academic achievement in all disciplines. On this basis, the University of Freiburg views its social task as being situated at the point at which progress, liberty, and responsibility intersect.

The University of Freiburg thus shows consideration for the life situations of women and men in all domains of society and promotes measures for realizing equal opportunity and a higher percentage of female employees, both at the university itself and further afield. In addition to being a general expression of societal responsibility, this policy also serves to further the excellence of research and instruction in all academic disciplines.

Philosophy still forms the center of the great network of the humanities at the University of Freiburg today. The institution owes a great deal of its worldwide recognition to the intellectual excellence of its humanities disciplines.

It is evident and internationally recognized that the University of Freiburg is pursuing a consistent policy to set up cross-disciplinary networks at all levels. In the area of teaching, this involves an above-average proportion of interdisciplinary modules and a consistently cross-disciplinary orientation of the courses at the Master's level. Where research is concerned, this notion manifests itself in the founding of interdisciplinary centers and above all in the founding of the Faculty of Applied Sciences, which makes the University of Freiburg the only classical university to combine traditional disciplines with the entire spectrum of microsystems technologies.

We strongly believe that top-level research – firmly established on the foundation of a solid grounding in an individual discipline – can only be successful in the interplay between the disciplines. This conviction has led us to persistently stimulate the development of transdisciplinary networks in all of the central research and teaching areas. On the one hand, this strategy will open up new research fields, and on the other hand it ensures that we are optimally equipped for the scientific challenges of the twenty-first century. The life sciences, which link biochemistry, molecular cell biology, systems biology, applied science, neurosciences, medicine, mathematics, physics, and various humanities disciplines, already constitute a successful and internationally highly acclaimed example of this strategy. This initiative promises outstanding solutions to some of the centra

I scientific problems of our time. In close collaboration – increasingly documented in joint appointments – with external research institutions such as the five Fraunhofer Institutes, the Max Planck Institute of Immunobiology, and the Kiepenheuer Solar Physics Institute as well as partners in the business sector, the university has a major role at the forefront of the development of innovative forms of cooperation and in exploring new research fields. Notable discoveries and significant technical innovations with genuine practical applications have already resulted from the bundling of these research capacities within and beyond the university. This synergetic effect is reinforced by the university's membership of the European Confederation of Universities on the Upper Rhine (EUCOR), a cross-border tri-national association of the seven universities of the Upper Rhine, founded in 1989. The University of Freiburg wholeheartedly supports the vision of a single unbounded research landscape in the upper Rhine region in which universities and businesses work together in close collaboration. Collaboration in all areas of teaching and research on the basis of the intensive exchange of students and lecturers, the setting up of joint research programs, reciprocal recognition of study credits and degrees, and the development of bi- or even tri-national university courses are some of the central tasks and objectives of this confederation of universities.

Thanks to these initiatives and preliminary results, and in association with disciplines and faculties which have all been given a first-class rating, the University of Freiburg is confident of maintaining its leading position in the German university landscape. The infrastructural conditions for sustained top-level performance in teaching and research are optimal. The university's leading position in research is simultaneously the basis for an excellent education, which makes the University of Freiburg one of the most attractive academic centers in Europe; its graduates have high recruitment potential as the elite of the academic, economic, and political world of the future.