The University of Bamberg –
Steeped in Tradition and Committed to the Future

From the Former Academia Ottoniana to a Modern University with
Four Academic Faculties and Distinguished Degree Programmes
The University of Bamberg is both modern and rooted tradition.

Forward-looking structures and state-of-the-art facilities almost present the appearance of a newly founded institution, but our university is committed to the traditions of its long history.

Prof. Dr. Dr. habil. Godehard Ruppert,
President of the University of Bamberg
Academic learning is a method-driven process. The methods employed in our applied computer science programmes, for instance, range from digital editions of medieval texts and cognitive modelling used in psychology to reconstructive 3D imaging for building and architectural research. The excellent promotion of our young academics throughout the course of their studies and research careers is central to our philosophy. The Trimberg Research Academy (TRAc) and the Scientific Career Service provide these young scholars with structured academic support.

Beginning with the Academia Ottoniana in the 17th century, and continuing with our present-day institution, the University of Bamberg has seen itself explicitly as a “House of Wisdom”. It was founded in 1647 by Prince Bishop Melchior Otto Vost von Salzburg as a centre for contemporary humanistic education.

The "domus sapientiae" of past centuries is now home to the programmes offered by the university’s four academic faculties: Humanities; Social Sciences, Economics and Business Administration; Human Sciences; and Information Systems and Applied Computer Science. The academic disciplines are closely linked to the focal areas of our overall profile:

- Education & Life Planning
- The Individual & Society
- Languages & Cultures
- Business & Markets

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The excellence of our research programmes is substantiated not least of all by the volume of third-party funding which has grown over the years from 2.37 million euros (2000) to 29.6 million euros (2016). We owe this increase primarily to the most renowned of Bamberg’s research projects: the National Education Panel Study (NEPS) which has been managed by the university-affiliated Leibniz Institute for Educational Trajectories (LIfBi) since 2014. The project, founded on an interdisciplinary network of outstanding researchers, examines topics of educational processes and competence development in Germany.
Academic Support and Real-World Education

Time spent pursuing a university degree is a special phase in a person’s life. This is why our instructors not only give seminars, but also mentor and assist students throughout their studies and encourage them to challenge themselves both at the university and beyond. We are truly committed to the ideal of comprehensive education. This approach stems from our sense of tradition and our historical roots – and it couldn’t be more contemporary.

It is our belief that an outstanding university education is defined by qualification programmes and opportunities that motivate and inspire students to individually pursue their interests. For this reason, students in our nearly 80 accredited bachelor’s, master’s and teaching degree programmes are encouraged to work as independently as possible. The application of theoretical knowledge to practical experience is ensured by curricula featuring practice-based seminars, training courses and degree-related internships. And with our Career Days event, we provide students in all fields with an early opportunity to explore post-university career prospects.

Furthermore, we provide an environment in which the humanistic notion of man’s place in the world can be experienced and explored holistically. This is exemplified by numerous literary readings, concerts, theatre productions and art exhibits, and by the university’s poetics professorship which was created in 1986.

We feel a responsibility to encourage our students to play an active role in moulding both their own living environments and the broader society. Opportunities are provided by our university clubs and organisations dedicated to social, political, journalistic or religious involvement, and by our numerous student committees, societies and working groups.

Comprehensive education, as we understand it, takes time. Our flexible course offering allows for individual freedom and is our answer to changing living conditions and increasingly flexible life and career paths. Nearly every degree offered in Bamberg can be pursued part-time. Our multi-subject bachelor’s programmes invite students to explore myriad subject combinations and to create an academic profile based on individual interests.
As an internationally renowned research centre, the University of Bamberg is committed to the academic exchange of knowledge and ideas, and it promotes networking and partnerships with numerous foreign universities and research institutions. For years, foreign exchange opportunities, special degree programmes and inter-university partnerships have drawn foreign students to Bamberg and led Bamberg students abroad.

At the University of Bamberg, internationality is more than a mere formality; it is desired, encouraged and is indeed a way of life. Following in the footsteps of the world-traveling Jesuits who founded the Academia Ottoniana in 1647, Bamberg’s scholars share their knowledge and skills worldwide. In close cooperation with foreign partner universities, we have created joint master’s degree programmes in subjects like economics and political science. Degree programmes like the European Joint Master’s Degree in English and American Studies promote cross-cultural competence and prepare graduates for positions of leadership both at home and abroad by providing the opportunity to acquire and share knowledge all over the world. And conversely, guest professorships facilitate the intensive transfer of knowledge and ideas from abroad to Bamberg.

Exchange programmes and inter-university partnerships ease both the placement of Bamberg students abroad and the accommodation of foreign students in Bamberg. Our university’s Welcome Center, which was founded in 2010, provides support and assistance for our foreign guests. Numerous academic endeavours involving networking, exchange and cooperation are coordinated from Germany.

Each year, over 400 students take advantage of opportunities to pursue foreign studies, complete an internship or teach at a school abroad. Looking only at the EU’s popular Erasmus Programme, an average of approximately 25% of students in each year’s class participate in an exchange, making the University of Bamberg the most active of Bavaria’s universities. We offer a steadily increasing selection of international degree programmes, including the master’s degree programme in International Software Systems Science and the new elite master’s programme in Cultural Studies of the Middle East.

The university’s first international partnership, with the University of South Carolina in Columbia (USA) in 1983, has been followed by 300 similar programmes in 60 countries. With a view to tradition, a main focus has been placed on institutions in Southern and Eastern Europe, as even the original Academia welcomed 250 Bohemian students to Bamberg between 1648 and 1803.

Members of our university experience culture as an integral part of academic life, and German and foreign-language theatre productions, literary readings and art exhibits are just a few examples of this. Both the International Office and Language Centre function as key facilitators of this cultural cooperation and exchange.
High-Tech Resources, Service and Individual Support

Technology connecting people: Thanks to the comprehensive modernisation of all university service processes and the expansion of information systems in recent decades, studying and working at the University of Bamberg is faster and more flexible than ever – but no less personal.

Books and Media: A total of 1.6 million books and other physical media are available in our six university library branches, and e-books, electronic periodicals and other online resources represent 1 million additional titles. The paradigm shift towards hybrid libraries is therefore not merely a vision of the future, but a current reality. Far beyond simply making these media available, the university library has simultaneously broadened its services to include the development and transfer of skills required for the effective and efficient use of information resources.

The university archives are also working to incorporate their valuable collections of materials dating from as far back as the 16th century into these modern information structures and to make them easily accessible in a highly networked research environment. This means that materials like digital versions of hand-written documents and records pertaining to university history, as well as a dynamic catalogue of professors, will all be equally accessible online.

The Internet and Information Technology: 2,000 computer-equipped workstations and 800 laptops are available to university employees. 11,000 high-speed network connections make it possible to transmit 1 gigabit of data per second. The university is currently connected to the German academic network at 2 times 3 gigabits per second. Materials required for lectures and seminars can be accessed on the university’s e-learning platform, the Virtual Campus (VC). Students can also work in Branch Library 4 and the ERBA Library during the night by gaining entry using their student chip card.

Thanks to eduroam, our students and staff can establish wireless connections to the internet at a great many universities and research institutions worldwide. Each day, up to 5,000 students and staff log in using one of the university’s nearly 350 wireless access points. And some of our scholars are already publishing their articles and books as “open access” documents, meaning that the global community can access these works online and free of charge.

This modern IT infrastructure and other innovations like our numerous online services and a personalised chip card that functions not only as student identification and university library card, but also as a semester ticket for public transport and method of payment at the university all save a great deal of time – time that we invest in all aspects of individual advisory services and resources handled by the Student Service Centre. The centre, in which all student service departments are located under one roof, began operations in 2013. At the University of Bamberg, the individual is our top priority.
Lena Anette Fischer, born in 1991, is pursuing a master’s degree in applied computer science part-time. Raimund Wolf, born in 1953, attends lectures at the University of Bamberg as a guest student.

The most recent re-certifications in 2012 and 2015 acknowledge not only the ways that increasingly flexible studies benefit lifelong learning, but also efforts towards contact networks and re-entry programmes, and a focus on the topic of elder care. A further milestone on the path to fulfilling our centuries-old commitment is represented by the establishment of the KinderVilla, a facility which provides daycare and kindergarten education for the children of both university students and staff. Beginning in 2017, this offering has been rounded out by a large-scale daycare facility located at the ERBA.

One group to whom we feel an ever greater responsibility is people with a migration background: many of the displaced arrive in Germany with good qualifications for university studies here. For this reason, the University of Bamberg has created special programmes and an advisory service for refugees interested in pursuing a degree. The economist Herbert Brückner has predicted that integration will pose the greatest challenge in coming years, and our university is doing its best to meet that challenge.

Establishing and maintaining values like comprehensive equal opportunity and sustainable family-friendly policies for employees and students demands a great deal of effort, but we are happy to put in the time to make them a reality. Our commitment to family issues has been rewarded since 2005 with certification as a family-friendly university. The initial steps towards this distinction were a series of structural improvements including the deregulation of core working hours, the expansion of childcare availability, and the establishment of the Family Services Office.

The mandate to diligently and dutifully address and engage “the intellectual currents of the day” was laid down for us in the university’s foundational charter of 1647. The social responsibility implied in this philosophy has characterised our self-conception throughout the years and is expressed today in our family-friendly working structures, our commitment to equal opportunity and in a course offering that is carefully tailored to ever-changing, ever more diverse academic developments and the increasing demands placed on continuing education.

A Commitment to Social Responsibility

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Regionally Rooted – Partners and Networks

Cooperation between academia, commerce, culture and society benefits all parties: scholars investigate concrete issues and, together with their students, contribute to the regional implementation of potential solutions. With its various cooperative projects, the University of Bamberg is a considerable regional influence and is also a source of knowledge and specialists ideally suited for the local labour market. In this way, the university contributes significantly to assuring the competitiveness of the Upper Franconian region and to meeting demands for generations of qualified staff.

The cornerstone for the only German partnership of its kind was laid by the cooperation agreement of the “Technology Alliance of Upper Fanconia”. For the first time, all universities in one region – in this case Bamberg, Bayreuth, Hof and Coburg – joined forces to promote their common interests and strengthen their expertise in the areas of research, teaching and continuing education. The alliance’s core focus areas are energy, mobility, raw materials and information technology.

In addition to our university’s many professorships, two competence centres in particular offer expert support and consulting services for businesses operating locally and trans-regionally: the Competence Centre for Applied Personnel Psychology (KAP), and the Centre for Heritage Conservation Studies and Technologies (KDWT). Numerous companies in the Bamberg area and beyond have profited from their expertise.

In addition to academics and commerce, the University of Bamberg has maintained cooperative relationships with partners in the city and the region since its founding. Historically, smaller Catholic territories, imperial cities and knightly administrations, among other such groups, all sought expert opinions, legal findings and counsel from the professors in Bamberg’s faculty of law which was founded in 1735. Today, the university cooperates with city and regional business development partners to involve medium-sized companies in the networking opportunities provided by the KMUni event series – a showcase of current, practically relevant research projects.

Together with both the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Upper Franconian Chamber of Skilled Crafts, the university organises a so-called “tandem” series that provides a platform for exchange between scholarly theory and practical application. Additionally, involvement in the Deutschlandstipendium scholarship programme creates ever stronger bonds between the university and regional businesses and institutions.
University and City – Two Habitats in Harmony

According to survey data, the quality of life and general beauty of the city of Bamberg are consistently rated among the highest in Germany – and not just since the 1993 addition of the 73,000-inhabitant cathedral city to the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites. Even at first glance, Bamberg’s old quarters reveal extensive evidence of university influence and academic life, and the university itself profits from the historic flair of the city centre. But the university is also aware of the responsibility that comes with the concept of a “university in the city.”

Listed historic buildings like the former Jesuit college (today An der Universität 2) or the Marcus-Haus at Markusplatz – now home to the Humanities and Human Sciences and Education faculties – illustrate the philosophy behind the “university in the city” utilisation concept: in centuries-old Bamberg, the exuberant students whose energy fills the numerous brewery tap-rooms, pubs and beer gardens are an inherent part of life in the city – not merely a peripheral phenomenon. And it is precisely this atmosphere that distinguishes the University of Bamberg from many of Germany’s other academic institutions.

But even outside the officially listed World Heritage area, there is an interesting architectural interplay at work between the university and the city. The buildings which house the university’s Faculty of Social Sciences, Economics and Business Administration, for instance, exemplify the unadorned, functional architectural style of the 1960s, whereas the new home of the Faculty of Information Systems and Applied Computer Science at the former industrial fallow of the ERBA-Island shows how well state-of-the-art infrastructure can be integrated into established urban areas.

World heritage status is not only an aspect of the university’s campus however, but also an object of research for scholars of heritage conservation, art history and other disciplines. They have seized the unique opportunity to apply the cutting-edge methods being developed in their fields to the study of this very heritage – and in so doing, to contribute to its preservation.
We are proud to be an educational centre and a university town.

With the University of Bamberg, our 65 schools and numerous other educational institutions, Bamberg is an attractive academic hub with a broad sphere of influence.

Andreas Starke,
Lord Mayor of the City of Bamberg