

GOETHE UNIVERSITY FRANKFURT AM MAIN
»AUTONOMOUS AND AHEAD«





ADORNO



DÖNHOFF



HABERMAS



HORKHEIMER



MOUFANG



THE ROOTS OF OUR IDENTITY

Goethe University, founded in 1914, stands out historically among German universities since it was initially established and funded by Frankfurt's citizens. As such it follows in the tradition of Frankfurt's Paulskirche, from where Germany's democratic constitution was first proclaimed. In its early years, Goethe University benefited from a culture of private patronage in Frankfurt, a former ›free city‹ and a centre of trade. Frankfurt's autonomous citizens' university established a unique model in Germany as an independently founded and democratically legitimized institution.

As a comparatively young establishment Goethe University has always taken a modern approach. It was here, for the first time, that independent faculties for economics, social sciences and the natural sciences were set up, researching into socially relevant issues. The University soon developed an avant-garde reputation. Prominent academics – Adorno and Horkheimer for instance – taught the ›Frankfurt School‹ of critical theory, and von Laue and Stern lectured in quantum physics. Despite such innovation, the University pursued the classical principle of ›*universitas*‹, teaching a comprehensive range of subjects and encouraging interdisciplinary research. This notion of universal knowledge is reflected in the University's namesake, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, one of Germany's greatest polymaths.



An aerial photograph of a university campus. In the foreground, there are several modern, multi-story buildings with light-colored facades and dark roofs. Some buildings have large windows and balconies. To the left, a road with cars is visible. In the background, there are more buildings, some under construction with cranes, and a large green area. The sky is clear and blue.

THE TRADITIONAL UNIVERSITY AS A MODEL

RESEARCH-ORIENTED TEACHING

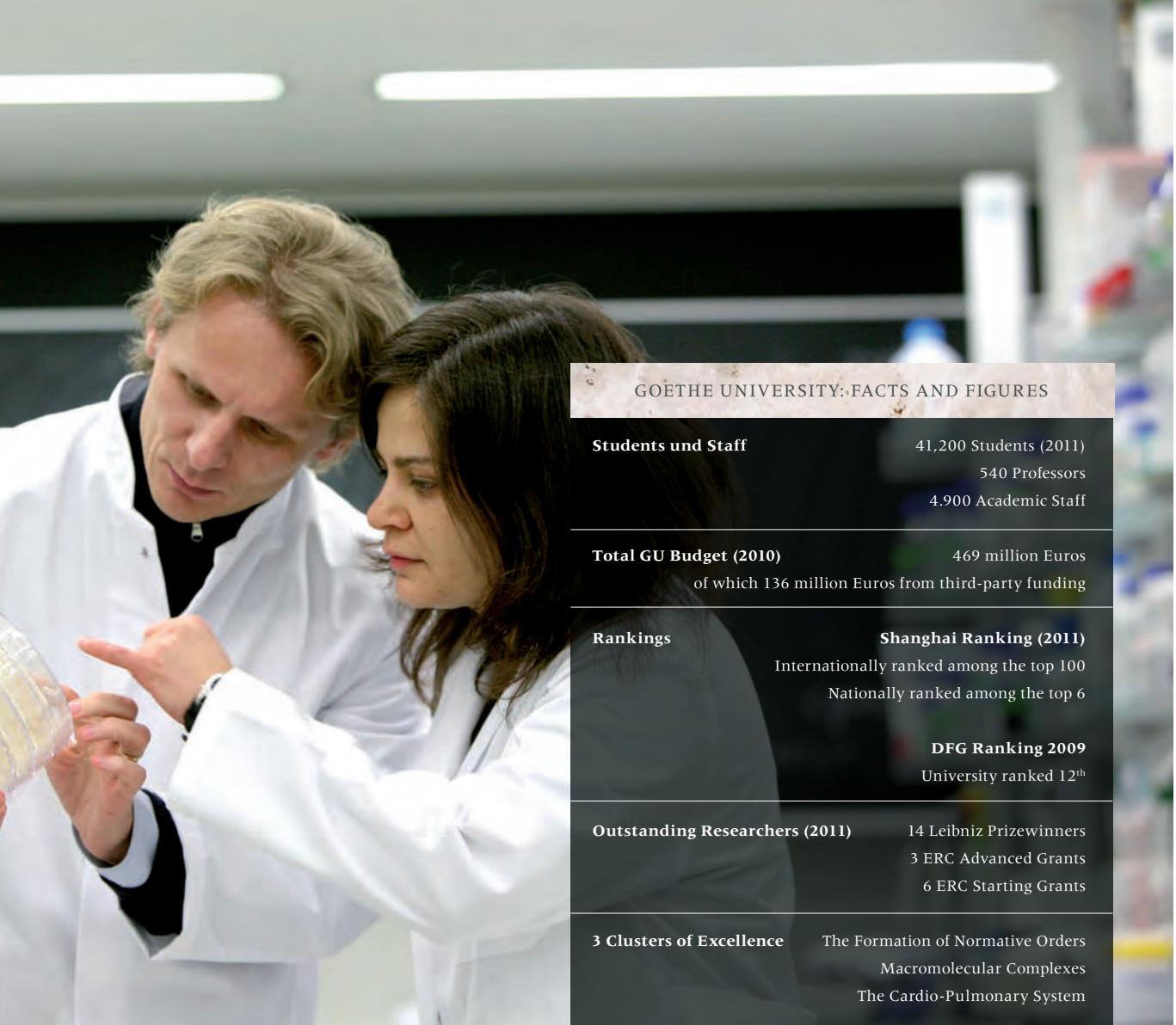
The new buildings currently taking shape on the Westend campus bear witness to Goethe University's more recent evolution. An analogous reorganisation is taking place internally, aimed at ensuring excellence in teaching and research, as well as in its support for young academics. At present the University is among the ten leading research-oriented universities in the country and foremost of all research universities in the State of Hessen. Currently a third of its budget is derived from third-party funding, in particular through the German Research Foundation (DFG), and this funding is on the increase. With three Clusters of Excellence and four LOEWE Centres, the University was placed well above average in both the first round of the German Excellence Initiative and the competitive LOEWE programme run by the State of Hessen. Goethe University was also among only a handful of universities demonstrating research strength in all disciplines – from humanities and social sciences through to natural and life sciences – across a fully comprehensive spectrum of subjects.

TAKING STOCK AND NEW HORIZONS

Over the past decade, Goethe University has undergone a fundamental transformation. By returning to our original principles – autonomy, modernity and a comprehensive range of subjects – we have succeeded in re-establishing our distinctive profile. And today, we see ourselves in many respects as a national flagship for other universities, one that demonstrates the generous level of support Hessen provides for its universities. Over the past years, the government of Hessen has actively supported us by investing large sums to fund major renovation work at the University as well as a new programme of construction.

EMBRACING THE FUTURE

Research at the University covers the full spectrum of academic disciplines. Our researchers do not work in ivory towers but tackle socially relevant questions, always eager to find new approaches to solving problems. The University currently has nine areas of research strength and three more are being established. Among these is a Cluster of Excellence dealing with the 'Formation of Normative Orders' in a globalised world, together with research into the history of the humanities as well as empirical research in education. In the sciences, research focuses on structural biology, the cardio-pulmonary system, cell and gene therapy, cancer research, biodiversity and climate, and heavy-ions. Some of our newer fields of research include the complexity of languages and the molecular basis of cognitive processes (a collaboration involving both neuroscience and the humanities), integration and migration, as well as the regulation of financial markets. Following in Goethe's footsteps, we see ourselves as open-minded, confident, and curious to find the answers to tomorrow's questions.



GOETHE UNIVERSITY: FACTS AND FIGURES

Students und Staff	41,200 Students (2011) 540 Professors 4,900 Academic Staff
Total GU Budget (2010)	469 million Euros of which 136 million Euros from third-party funding
Rankings	Shanghai Ranking (2011) Internationally ranked among the top 100 Nationally ranked among the top 6 DFG Ranking 2009 University ranked 12 th
Outstanding Researchers (2011)	14 Leibniz Prizewinners 3 ERC Advanced Grants 6 ERC Starting Grants
3 Clusters of Excellence	The Formation of Normative Orders Macromolecular Complexes The Cardio-Pulmonary System

INTERDISCIPLINARY AND INTERNATIONAL

Socially relevant topics form the focal point of our research. These often demand an interdisciplinary or even trans-disciplinary approach, made possible through the broad diversity of subjects we offer. Top-level research is often carried out in close collaboration with our partners outside the University, for instance the Max Planck Society or the Helmholtz or Leibniz Association, and we regard these institutions as crucial in helping to create a critical mass in competitive research fields. More and more projects are being tackled in multinational teams and we have established links with universities abroad who share our research interests. Among these are the University of Toronto, Fudan University in Shanghai and the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. Our joint ventures include summer schools and offers of guest professorships to renowned academics.

TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE

The University is fully committed to teaching excellence. The »Bologna Reform« calls for the establishment of a European norm with regard to greater student mobility between universities as well as diverse and flexible study programmes as well as a reduction in the time spent on studies. Taking this into account, we have introduced the Bachelor degree as our standard qualifying exam in response to the increasing number of incoming students we experience each year. However, throughout this process of change our main objective has been to maintain the high quality of our courses. Some initial hurdles have had to be overcome during the changeover period, such as the recognition of academic credentials or the large number of exams that students are expected to sit. This has led us to set up so-called »Bologna Workshops« specifically to address these issues and gather suggestions from all sides as to how improve the structure of these new courses. The concept has already gained recognition throughout Germany and these workshops are now seen as an integral part of our ongoing internal quality assessment programme.

RESEARCH AND TEACHING: INEXTRICABLY LINKED

Goethe University maintains a »classical« education mandate, in terms of the spectrum of subjects it offers and the close link between research and teaching. The Bachelor degree ensures students both fundamental methodological competence and a recognized qualification. At Master degree level and during postgraduate studies, students are brought into contact with ongoing research projects, in keeping with Humboldt's educational ideals. Analogous to the top universities in the USA, the brightest students are encouraged to work in interdisciplinary research projects and here they benefit from close and continuous contact with researchers working in the field. In addition, training for PhD students and postdocs is being restructured and programmes are set up, such as the Goethe Graduate Academy – GRADE – targeted at postgraduates across the University. The percentage of PhDs and Habilitations completed at the University is well above average: 47.2 % and 31.9% respectively, compared to a national average of 41.9 % and 23.4 %. These figures demonstrate that the University is progressively establishing a strong profile in graduate training.



THE RIGHT PLACE FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

We are a comparatively young university with a modern organizational structure. We are able to attract young international researchers approaching the peak of their creativity and offer junior researchers – who often leave this country due to a lack of perspective – excellent opportunities to return to Germany under our tenure-track scheme, including the possibility of permanent contracts. The issue of equal opportunities is taken very seriously and we offer various scholarship programmes. One of these is directed at students from backgrounds with limited access to higher education. We proactively support women academics at the University and in 2009, making full use of our legally autonomous status, we ensured that women comprised close to 50% of all professorial appointments. Alongside this, we offer a ›Dual Career Programme‹ to allow researchers' partners to take up positions in Frankfurt. Under this scheme, the economists Nicola Fuchs-Schündeln and Matthias Schündeln, and two biochemists, Paola Fucini and Sean Connell were able to join us. In line with our principle of diversity, we have established a number of research models, ranging from support for individual research projects to research centres and larger collaborative ventures. Our aim, wherever possible, is to provide constantly changing modern and experimental forums that help foster innovation.

A MODEL UNIVERSITY OF THE FUTURE
AUTONOMY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

From the outset, Goethe University has enjoyed a different legal status compared to other universities. At its inception it was run privately. Now it has become a foundation with a publicly regulated legal status (*Stiftungsuniversität*) and is the only former privately funded citizens' university in Germany to have undergone this transformation. The University now enjoys a unique degree of institutional autonomy, with freedom to choose professors, manage sites and buildings, select students, decide on teaching curricula as well as give researchers full freedom to develop their ideas. The University is exploiting these opportunities to the full, systematically improving both research and teaching and is looking for new sources of funding with the aim of achieving even more independence from the public purse. Inspired by what leading universities in the US have achieved in this direction it is in the process of setting up its own capital fund. The interest thus generated will be of direct financial benefit to the University in the long term. Professional fundraising initiatives have already borne fruit and the University now holds the largest number of sponsored professorships of any university in Germany. There is also a prospering alumni network.



RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

We have acted quickly in response to our new status by making a number of important internal organisational changes. Here we have oriented ourselves, as have a number of universities, towards a business model, establishing an Executive Board of Directors plus a Council. However, unlike many other universities, we have a clear division of power between the Executive board and the University governance, represented by the Council and Senate. On a second decentralised tier, we are currently also trying to ensure that the Deans take on more responsibility. Notwithstanding this, we wish to ensure the continued existence of flat hierarchies: we can neither afford nor want to forego the vast potential reservoir of competence offered by all members of the University. Professors and students enjoy full rights to have their say, and are integrated in decision-making processes. One such example is the series of ›Bologna Workshops‹ where students and professors come together to develop suggestions for structuring the new courses of study, in effect ›reforming the reforms‹. In the long term, we want to achieve an atmosphere where open discussion across all subjects can take place. We see this as essential in order to maintain innovative impulses throughout the University. Here we set ourselves apart from other universities and institutions that favour a purely business-like model.

CLOSE TO SOCIETY

As a self-regulated organisation, the University is well aware of its social responsibility in a democratic society. Not only are we accountable to the public, we also hope to make a valuable contribution to society. We approach this in two ways. First, by tackling socially relevant themes trying to find answers to the questions they pose. Some themes form part of the current key research areas already mentioned here. Secondly, we see it as our remit to provide education in a much broader sense, through events and lectures for the general public, as well as pupils. Furthermore, we have established a forum for international artists. Among these are musicians who have recently founded the Skyline Symphony, a Frankfurt-based chamber orchestra under the direction of Michael Sanderling.

The University's cultural plurality is reflected in initiatives such as the ›House of Silence‹, the first intercultural place of contemplation in any German university. And last, but not least, we have undertaken a critical look at our own history, taking on the responsibility of addressing in particular the more recent period of German history.



WESTEND – NIEDERRAD – RIEDBERG

In the mid-1990s, following the withdrawal of American troops from Frankfurt, the State of Hessen seized the unique opportunity to acquire the site of the former conglomerate *IG Farben* in Frankfurt's Westend. It was the State government's declared objective to allow Goethe University to develop here into the most modern university in Europe. Since then, a sum of over half a billion Euros has been invested in new buildings. Several academic disciplines have already moved onto the campus, including the humanities, social sciences, economics and law. The campus houses a new lecture hall complex, a large extension to the university restaurant, the new ›House of Finance‹ and a new building for the Cluster of Excellence dealing with the ›Formation of Normative Orders‹. Soon, highly reputable non-university partner institutions will occupy sites around the campus. Among these are the Max Planck Institute for the European Legal History, the Leibniz Institute for Educational Research and Educational Information as well as a new Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics. With the completion of the third building phase, we will have reinvented ourselves on all our three campuses. However, for the time being we also occupy a fourth campus in Frankfurt Bockenheim, where languages, cultural studies, informatics and mathematics are still taught, and this is also where the University President's office and main administration is situated. In the future, the Westend campus will be home to the humanities and social sciences, the Riedberg campus will house the natural sciences, and medicine will be concentrated at our campus in Niederrad.

The Niederrad campus is home to all medical disciplines, from preclinical studies through to clinical research. The hospital there provides a full range of services and is currently undergoing a programme of total renovation at a cost of 800 million Euros. The Cluster of Excellence for the ›Cardio-Pulmonary System‹, the Ernst Strüngmann Institute and the Georg-Speyer-Haus are also located here and these are soon to be joined by two new health centres, funded by the Helmholtz Association.

The Riedberg Campus on the other hand is where physics, chemistry, biology, pharmacy and the geosciences are taught. In 2011 we opened a new ›Biologicum‹ to house researchers in the Cluster of Excellence for ›Macromolecular Complexes‹ as well as the Otto Stern Centre with its state-of-the-art lecture halls. Looking ahead, we also plan to relocate chemistry as well as mathematics and informatics in new buildings. Riedberg is already home to highly renowned institutes, such as the Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies (FIAS) and two Max Planck Institutes: the MPI for Brain Research and the MPI of Biophysics. With our teaching resources and research now concentrated on these three campuses we see ourselves as being ideally placed to address the challenges of the future.



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HELGA OTT, SENCKENBERGANLAGE 31, 60325 FRANKFURT AM MAIN

TEL: (0049) 69 798-22472

FAX: (0049) 69 798-28530

E-MAIL: PRESSE@UNI-FRANKFURT.DE

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