SOWI-INFO: INCOMINGS

HANDBOOK FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
AT THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
Welcome to the Faculty of Social Science!........................................................................................................... 2

1. Orientation Day .............................................................................................................................................. 3

2. Your schedule.................................................................................................................................................. 4
   2.1 Class hours.............................................................................................................................................. 4
   2.2 Classes.................................................................................................................................................... 4
   2.3 Credits and Grades................................................................................................................................. 5
   2.4 Course Catalogue(s).............................................................................................................................. 5

3. Exams ............................................................................................................................................................ 6
   3.1 In-class Exams (Klausuren) .................................................................................................................. 6
   3.2 Research Papers ..................................................................................................................................... 7
   3.3 Oral Exams............................................................................................................................................. 7

4. Academic Research......................................................................................................................................... 8
   4.1 Academic Writing.................................................................................................................................... 8
   4.2 The Social Science Library.................................................................................................................... 8

5. The University Alliance Ruhr (UA Ruhr) ..................................................................................................... 9

6. The Faculty .................................................................................................................................................... 10
   6.1 Where are we?....................................................................................................................................... 10
   6.2 The Faculty of Social Science................................................................................................................ 10
   6.3 Studying at the Faculty.......................................................................................................................... 11
   6.4 Additional Offers by the Faculty ............................................................................................................ 12
   6.5 Additional Offers by the University....................................................................................................... 12

7. At the End of the Mobility Period .............................................................................................................. 14

8. Contact Information .................................................................................................................................... 14
WELCOME TO THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE!

As a regular student, exchange student or a freemover at the Ruhr University Bochum you may expect exciting lectures and seminars, but also establishing contacts to German and international students, summer and Christmas parties, boat trips and Glühwein – depending on your period of stay in Bochum.

This booklet will provide some guidance for arranging the academic side of your stay at the RUB. While the International Office is dealing with accommodation, visa issues and inscription procedures, the Erasmus coordination of the Faculty focuses on counselling you on classes, helping you to choose and sign up for courses and making sure that you have anything you need in order to succeed in a new academic and cultural environment.

This guide contains information for both exchange and regular full-time students and might be useful to anyone who is not familiar with the Ruhr University or German academic system in general.

With kind regards,

Vira Bushanska
(Departmental Erasmus Coordinator)
1. ORIENTATION DAY

The Orientation Day at the Faculty of Social Science is organized in a week before the start of classes and is mandatory for exchange students. Our Erasmus Coordinator will make you familiar with the most important facts for organizing your studies. It is also a great way to get to know local students!

Part I: 16.00

Meeting Point: at the Info Point
Exiting the subway (U35), walk up the stairs and turn right. Walk towards the university, until you see a big shield with a campus plan on it. We will meet here to walk to the Faculty together.

Please take with you:
- Learning Agreement
- Questions regarding the studies

Programme
- The Faculty & German academic system
- Choosing your courses
- Registering for the courses via Campus Office
- Dos and Don’ts for an exchange semester
- Short tour through the Faculty building

Most students change their Learning Agreements during the first month. Once you have finalized your Learning Agreement stop by at the Faculty Erasmus Office to get it signed. It then has to be send to your home university.

Part II (optional): 19.00

After an exciting first day at RUB we will organize a little get-together in the Bochum’s bar street Bermuda triangle.

Programme
Get to know other exchange students and current students of the Faculty.
2. YOUR SCHEDULE

The summer and winter term dates can be found online.

Each student has to create an individual course schedule by him-/herself. We are glad to advise the incoming students and assist them by signing up for courses in Campus Office during the orientation day and in the consultation hours of Departmental Erasmus Coordinator.

2.1 CLASS HOURS

One peculiarity of the German academic system is its use of time: All classes start with c.t. (“cum tempore” = “with time” in Latin) if not stated otherwise. This indicates that classes start 15 minutes later and end 15 minutes earlier than indicated. The only exception is the first period: classes usually start at 8.30 am and end at 10 am.

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>08.30–10.00</td>
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If the time is indicated as s.t. (“sine tempore” – “with no time”), the class starts on time.

Please note that not all departments use this system, so we recommend being on time for the first class.

2.2 CLASSES

**Lectures: Vorlesungen**
Lectures take place in lecture halls with approximately 100-200 students. Professors present the information during the lecture and answer the students’ questions. Attendance is not compulsory. Lectures are completed with an in-class exam.

**Laboratory course: Übungen**
Lectures are often accompanied by “Übungen”. These consist of smaller groups and allow more time for discussion of the information presented during the lectures and/or for practical exercises. For most Labs regular attendance is required.

**Tutorials: Tutorien**
Tutorials are offered along with lectures and/or Labs to give the students an opportunity to review the contents of lectures/labs in a smaller group. Attendance is not compulsory.

**Seminars: Seminare**
Seminars are taught by professors or scientific researchers. Usually, about 30 students participate in a seminar. Seminars are designed for intensive and interactive discussion of the literature or students’ presentations. 

In order to sign up for courses and participate successfully students should be able to use the following **IT-Services:**

**Campus Office** is the Online System of the university where students can sign up for courses and access their grades at the end of the semester. Campus Office is available at the PCs in the University Library and the University Administration building (UV). The student-ID and password will be needed.

**Moodle** is the RUB’s virtual classroom. Here you will find in-class presentations, literature, your teacher’s contact information, and the syllabus of the courses you have signed up for. The password is usually announced in the first session.

### 2.3 Credits and Grades

For each course credits and conditions for taking an exam and becoming a grade are mentioned in the course description. In most of the courses students can choose between getting 3 credit points for proved performance (active participation – without a grade) or getting full credit points (5 in B.A. and 6 in M.A.) by taking an exam.

Class with proved performance (Studiennachweis)..................................................3 CP

Class with an exam (Leistungsnachweis).......................5 CP (Bachelor) / 6 CP (Master)

The grading system is 1 to 5, where 1 is the best grade.

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### 2.4 Course Catalogue(s)
There are three course catalogues at our faculty adjusted to different students’ needs. Those can be found online at our website.

Sowi-Info
This course catalogue includes all the courses taught at our faculty (in German and in English). It is possible to get the Sowi-Info as a hard copy as well at the SSC level 01 (the script number is S280).

International Course Catalogue RUB
The International course catalogue includes all the courses taught in English at the university + language classes.

Common Course Catalogue RUB- UDE-TU Dortmund
The Common Course Catalogue is designed for students who only wish to attend classes taught in English. Through the cooperation with the Faculties of Social Sciences of the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE) and the Technical University Dortmund students can attend courses at all the three universities. For more information regarding this cooperation see page 9.

After choosing the proper courses students should register online in “Campus Office” (the electronic system of the university). The step by step tutorials can be found here.

3. EXAMS

The examination period at RUB depends on the type of an exam. The three exam types are discussed below.

The main exam period is the last week of the lecture period and the first week of the semester holidays.

3.1 IN-CLASS EXAMS (KLAUSUREN)

Registration
Usually you are required to register for in-class exams on Campus Office\(^1\). Registration periods are determined by the lecturers. An overview of all courses in which you have registered for exams can be found at: “Anmeldungen zu Prüfungen”. Time and venue of the exam will be indicated here as well. In addition, you can withdraw from the exam here.

Exam periods
Most in-class exams can be taken twice each term. Appointments are usually determined by the professors. The first exam period mainly includes the last week of the lecture

\(^1\) One common exception are graduate students who are fulfilling requirements in undergraduate classes. In this case, your lecturer will be able to give you further information.
period and the first week of the semester holidays. The second exam period begins shortly before the beginning of the next term and includes the following weeks.

**The exam**
As a rule, you should be early for the exams. During the last class make sure whether you need to bring something, such as paper or any kind of approved aid (calculator, formulary), or if these are provided. In addition you have to bring an ID, preferably government-issued. In some cases, your RUB ID might suffice.

Grades will be published in your personal account on Campus Office, unless agreed otherwise, and you will get a notification per e-mail.

### 3.2 RESEARCH PAPERS

**Registration**
Your professor/teacher will let you know how to “register” for a paper during the course.

**The exam**
The exact length, the topic and the structure of a research paper should be discussed with the professor. Sometimes a paper proposal is required. In that case, you will be given further instructions.

Mostly papers for the winter term are due by the end of March and papers for the summer term by the end of September. In special cases professors may grant an extension. However, this MUST be discussed beforehand.

### 3.3 ORAL EXAMS

**Registration**
Your professor/teacher will let you know how to “register” for an oral exam during the course.

**The exam**
Topics of the seminar should be discussed in the exam. The exact conditions of the exam need to be discussed with the professor.
4. ACADEMIC RESEARCH

4.1 ACADEMIC WRITING

Formal requirements for the papers may differ depending on the faculty/department. Differences may concern the margins, whether or not writing double-spaced, and many other apparently small settings. Several departments of the Faculty of Social Science have published their own handbooks on their websites. When in doubt, ask your professors if they have any specific preferences or requirements.

There are colloquia offered for graduate and postgraduate students (and sometimes even for undergraduate students), which also deal with questions of academic writing (Sowi-Info: „Abschluss- und DoktorandInnen-Kolloquien“).

In addition, RUB offers support for international and German students who wish to improve their academic writing skills:

*Writing Support Center (Schreibzentrum; SH 1/198)*
WritingCafé: Peer Counselling Mo - Fr, 10.00 – 16.00

The Writing Aid Center offers workshops (with and without CP), writing groups and consultation, including workshops on writing academic papers in foreign languages (also for international students writing in German) [Homepage](#).

4.2 THE SOCIAL SCIENCE LIBRARY

While there is the main library in the center of the Campus, the Faculty of Social Science has its own library. It is located in building GD.

Books may be borrowed from Friday afternoons to Monday mornings. In this case, they have to be given back by noon on Monday at the latest. Books borrowed on every other weekday are only given out in the evening and due to be returned by noon on the following day.
5. THE UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE RUHR (UA RUHR)

As part of the UA Ruhr, several universities in the Ruhr area cooperate closely. That includes the RUB, the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE) and the Technical University (TU) Dortmund. **Exchange students may take classes at any of the alliance universities.** This is of particular interest to the students who wish to take classes in English only, since we are able to increase an offer of classes significantly through this cooperation. Each term, the Faculty of Social Science at RUB publishes an English Course Catalogue in cooperation with the Faculty of Social Sciences of the UDE and the TU Dortmund. You can find the Common Course Catalogue [here](#).

Cooperation on this scale is possible because of the excellent public transport system that connects the universities. Students automatically receive a term public transport ticket upon matriculation. Thus, **commuting is possible with no additional cost.**

Classes taken in Duisburg-Essen or Dortmund are included in the Transcript of Records issued by the RUB at the end of the student’s stay. Exchange students should inform us before the end of the semester if they have taken classes at another university. This is how we ensure no classes are missing in the transcript.

As an exchange student, you should contact the departmental coordinators at the UDE or TU Dortmund if you wish to take classes there (see contact information in the Common Course Catalogue).
6. THE FACULTY

At the beginning of the semester you should take enough time to look for your classrooms. Probably you are not the only one wandering around these floors; don’t be afraid to ask for help! Often it can be helpful to look at the emergency exit maps, since they include room numbers.

6.1 WHERE IS THE ERASMUS OFFICE?

You will find our ERASMUS office in GD 1/161.

If you are looking for a building, check the RUB Campus Plan. The Faculty of Social Science is situated in the building GD. You usually enter the building on level 03, where the cafeteria is located. Get to the level 1 and follow the signs.

The Campus Plan as well as information for wheelchair users, cyclists and car users can be found here.

6.2 THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

The Faculty of Social Science is mainly situated in the building GC. You can find both academic and administrative offices here. This does not include central administrative units, such as matriculation or student services, but the ones that have to do with your academic schedule. The faculty’s most important spots are introduced below:

**The Registrar’s office (Das Prüfungsamt)**
The Registrar’s office is the “book-keeper” of every class and exam students take. Nowadays, most of this is done on Campus Office, but regular full-time students still need to register in the beginning of their degree, register for their thesis, and documents are issued here, such as degree certificates and diploma supplements.
Ms Kuttler/Ms Karwacki, GD 1/171, 1/173, Tue-Thu 10.00-12.00 am

**The Dean’s Office (Das Dekanat)**
The Dean’s Office “manages” the Faculty and coordinates anything to do with teaching and studying. Professor Stefan Schirm is the current Dean of the Faculty of Social Science.

**Internship Counsellor’s Office (Das Praktikumsbüro)**
Regular full-time students enrolled in one of our programmes have to complete an internship. In addition, they have to take a class focusing on job perspectives and opportunities for social scientists and hand in a report. This class is taught by Dr. Heike Hoppmann. Internships should be discussed with her beforehand.
Dr. Heike Hoppmann, GD 1/165, Tue 13.00-14.00, Website

**Counselling for prospective and current graduate students (Die Masterberatung)**
Anyone interested in pursuing a graduate degree at the Faculty should contact our Counselor Alica Mielke. Applications should also be handed in here.
Ms Alica Mielke, GD 1/161, Wed 13.00-15.00

**The students’ representatives (Die Fachschaft)**
Each year students elect their representatives to the Faculty to represent their interests and provide help to the students.

GD 03/129, [Website](#)

**The representative for gender equality**
In all issues regarding gender equality in the university context contact:
Christiane Grinda: [gleichstellung-sowi@web.de](mailto:gleichstellung-sowi@web.de), GD 03/133

### 6.3 STUDYING AT THE FACULTY

Exchange students may take courses from the following degree programmes:

#### Bachelor of Arts/Undergraduate degrees
- B.A. „Social Science“
- B.A. „Culture, Individual, and Society“
- B.A. „Politics, Economics, and Society“

#### Master degrees
- M.A. „Management and Regulation of Work, Economy and Organisation“
- M.A. „Health Care Systems and Health Care Economics“
- M.A. „Urban and Regional Planning“
- M.A. „Globalisation, Transnationalisation, and Governance“
- M.A. „Culture and Person“
- M.A. „Methods of Social Research“
- M.Ed. „Social Science“

#### Inter-faculty degrees
- M.A. „Gender Studies“
- M.A. „European Culture and Economy“
- M.A. „Ethics – Economics, Law and Politics“

#### Classes by other Faculties or Departments
Students may take classes offered by other faculties or departments as well. Regular international students can select these as part of the optional area of studies (Ergänzungs-/Optionalbereich). Modules that are thematically related to Social Science, such as Economics, are especially popular.

#### Language Classes
The language classes offered by the ZfA ([Zentrum für Fremdsprachenausbildung](#)) are highly recommended. [More information](#).
6.4 ADDITIONAL OFFERS BY THE FACULTY

**Buddy-Programme**
The Buddy Programme connects international and regular students at the Faculty of Social Science. The programme consists of academic support and leisure activities with the Buddy group. It is a great opportunity to get to know local students, to improve foreign language skills, to increase inter-cultural competence and make new friends worldwide. [Apply via the Form](#)

**Ersti-Welcome**
In the first week of studies the Dean and the Professors present the Faculty and Chairs to new students by a panel discussion and champagne reception. The programme is included in [Sowi-Info](#).

**Cafeteria System**
The faculty regularly offers three-hour-workshops providing an introduction to methodological research approaches. This includes sessions on analysis tools such as Stata or MaxQDA as well as topics regarding research design. [The Cafeteria System Programme](#)

**Quo Vadis?**
Our internship and career counseling office invites alumni to explain their own career paths and give the current students advice regarding career planning. [The Quo-Vadis-Programme](#)

**SOPRA**
Our alumni association promotes networking and dialogue between students, graduates and teachers and organizes several events, excursions and workshops throughout the semester. [The SOPRA Programme](#)

**Research Support: “Forschungswerkstatt” and “Methodenzentrum”**
These are educational projects offering research related consultation and workshops to students planning or writing an empirical (quantitative or qualitative) Bachelor or Master thesis. Programmes of [Forschungswerkstatt](#) and [Methodenzentrum](#)

6.5 ADDITIONAL OFFERS BY THE UNIVERSITY
**University Sports**
The University offers 350 sports courses of 90 different kinds of sport: from badminton to windsurfing.

**Centre of the Arts “Musisches Zentrum”**
The Centre of the Arts offers courses and events in various artistic disciplines. Students may participate in choirs, orchestra, theatre projects, learn painting or photography. [Programme](#).

**Career Service**
The Career Service offers workshops and counseling that may help you improve your skills and develop new approaches for career planning. [Programme](#).

**Language Practice Meet Up “Sprachcafé”**
The Language Café opens its doors every Monday from 5-9 p.m. during the lecture period. Coffee, tea and entertainment are included. Participation is - of course - free of charge! [Find out more](#).
7. AT THE END OF THE MOBILITY PERIOD

**Confirmation of Stay**
Please get the Confirmation of Stay signed at the International Office (RUBiss). The form is usually provided by the home university and should be signed no more than 14 days before departure.

**Transcript of Records**
Please come by the Faculty’s Erasmus Coordination or write an e-mail to international-services@sowi.rub.de including the following information:

- matriculation number (stated on your RUB student ID)
- changes to the learning agreement (if any)
- courses taken at UDE or TU Dortmund (if any)

If you need your transcript agreement to be sent by post, please let us know the exact address.

Students also have to cancel their registration at the citizens’ bureau, close the bank account etc. Detailed information is provided by the International Office [here](#).

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Ms Vira Bushanska**
  International Services/ERASMUS Coordination
  Faculty of Social Science
  GD 1/181
  Universitätsstraße 150
  44801 Bochum

  Consultation hours: Wed: 10-12 and by appointment
  Tel. +49 (0234) 32-22966
  international-services@sowi.rub.de
  www.sowi.rub.de/internationales/

- **Ms Magdalena Rooch**
  International Office/RUBiss
  SSC 1/235
  Universitätsstraße 150
  44780 Bochum

  Office hours: Tue, Fri: 9:30-12:30
  Magdalena.Rooch@uv.rub.de