

er-
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out
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Asking
the right
questions
at the
right
time.

We work for
tomorrow

**UNI
GRAZ**



Pamela Stückler is Head of the University Library

Photo: Universität Graz/Tzivanopoulos

Who needs printed resources these days?

“Nobody needs printed books today, or so people say. In a world where digital media play a central role and information is supposedly just a ‘swipe’ away, printed books provide a valuable contrast: these physical artefacts connect us with the past and shape our understanding as we look to the future. They offer a tangible experience that digital formats cannot replicate. As we stride on into a digital age, the richness and depth of printed materials continue to inspire reflective thinking and bear witness to our cultural heritage. Printed resources may not be essential, but they are valued.”

What do you remember of your Alma Mater?

“More than anything, the sense of curiosity. Learning to ask important questions and answer them: for instance how we can measure and calculate the enormous cosmic distances to faraway galaxies, or how stars are born. And I remember long discussions with students on the lawn in front of the faculty, or sunny and rainy days in a city that is perfect for strolling and thinking. With colleagues and friends from many different countries the world around me became increasingly networked and the view of the heavens ever more fascinating – from Spain to the Netherlands, then Germany and the US, pursuing the exciting search for evidence of life in the universe – a pathway that began back then in Graz.”

Photo: Kevin Trageser/Redux/latif



Lisa Kaltenecker is an alumna and professor at Cornell University's Carl Sagan Institute

Photo: Thomas Luef



Peter Riedler is Rector of the University of Graz

What does “success” look like for a university?

“From my personal perspective there is one superb yardstick that gives a sense of whether we are succeeding: when I find myself sitting every day opposite fascinating individuals who are part of our university. When I meet researchers whose love for their subjects is unmistakable. And whose aspirations encompass depth as well as breadth. From the University’s perspective there is also a clear criterion for success:

international visibility. We can assess this easily with a simple question like: ‘Who wants us’? Do our study programmes attract international students? Do researchers want to work with us? Do companies seek partnerships with us? In these terms we as the University of Graz have every reason to be confident. Because we’re keeping our promise to work for tomorrow – every day.”



Photo: Universität Graz/Tzivanopoulos

Nermine Malanovic is a Senior Scientist at the Department of Molecular Biosciences

What are the requirements for excellent research?

“Excellent research needs an environment in which scientists are given the freedom to think and work independently. Networking and dialogue with other researchers and industrial partners is also essential. It’s enormously helpful to hear an alternative perspective on a line of questioning. On a personal level what is needed is self-confidence and trust in your own intuition, so that you don’t get discouraged by external influences. And of course researchers need adequate resources and support to convert their ideas into excellent research results. This is particularly important for those with families, so that they can balance their laboratory and teaching work with their private lives.”



Birgit Bednar-Friedl is
Professor of Economics

Photo: Universität Graz/Tzivanopoulos

To what extent can the University pursue a mission?

“In reality every scientific institution has a mission these days. The University of Graz, for instance, declares: ‘We work for tomorrow’. This implies targeted, forward-thinking research. As a climate scientist I interpret that to mean: ‘We research solutions for climate protection and for adapting to climate change.’ However, to develop solutions we must have sound basic research on the climate system and the relevant natural and human systems. Finding the best solutions – taking account of cost efficiency, effectiveness and social justice – then provides policymakers, administrators and business leaders with a scientific basis for their decision-making. The research sector’s role ends with presenting research findings in a way that’s comprehensible for various different target groups, without anticipating their decisions.”

How much swarm intelligence does a university need?

“Collaboration between many individuals – in research environments in particular – leads to creative approaches, innovative ideas and a broader perspective on complex problems. And exchanging ideas also helps students improve their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This fosters holistic education and training that goes beyond simply factual knowledge. Swarm intelligence at our university plays a key role in developing social values like teamwork, empathy and respect for different views. Students and researchers can develop important social skills which prepare them for the demands of their professional and socio-political lives.”

Manfred Hartbauer
is Professor of Zoology



Photo: Universität Graz/Tzivanopoulos

Does a technology region need a comprehensive university?

“As a student I found it important to get myself organised, to draw up a plan and develop my independence. That is one of the many merits of a university. Innovative companies today must be able to depend on the autonomy and personal responsibility of their employees, if they are to be successful.

Another important aspect is that a broad-based university generates a similarly broad range of career profiles, which is vitally important for global businesses in particular. Complex problems need interdisciplinary teams, not just technical skills. But there is still one more assignment to tackle: Public awareness – and students’ awareness too – of the importance of the university as an economic driver still needs a lot of improvement.”

Tina Ehrke-Rabel
is Professor of
Fiscal Law



Photo: GWA technologies



Nina Pildner-Steinburg is
Managing Director of GAW
technologies and an alumna
of the University of Graz

What makes a successful university?

“The people. Creative people who are curious about the world, who analyse traditional and existing knowledge carefully, so that they can re-examine it critically and test it against the developments of our world, and who have the courage to throw things out when it seems expedient. That makes room for new ideas and ensures innovation can happen. This needs people who thrive on interaction with others and who are ready to take responsibility.”

Photo: Marija Kanižaj



Photo: Marija Kanizaj

Christian Gruber
*from the Department of
Molecular Biosciences*

How does science combine with business?

"The University of Graz is really good at combining tradition with modern developments. One example is artificial intelligence. Instead of being intimidated by new technologies, students and employees are motivated to engage with them in a critical way. Combining this with a sound basic education in science makes the University of Graz particularly special for our biotech start-up Innophore. Artificial intelligence certainly opens up many new possibilities, but we still need human judgement – the 'human in the loop'. And this requires an interest in technology as well as excellent research know-how."



Photo: Marija Kanižaj

Michael Haneke is an Oscar-winner and has an honorary doctorate from the Faculty of Catholic Theology

What links art and religion, and what divides them?

“Where do we come from? How do we manage our anxieties? Who do we love, and who loves us? And: what is our destiny? These big questions about human history and about each of us as individuals, are addressed by art and religion – each in their own way and from different perspectives. They are attempts to understand the world; but art poses questions without believing in answers, while religion tries to provide answers. This links the two areas and also sep-

arates them. And just as art theory interprets theology, theology also addresses art theory: thoughtfully, but also constantly in danger of becoming possessive and so limiting the genuine potential for meaning in an unjustified way. Art – including the art of film, naturally – can be a subject for theological discussion. But it remains autonomous and defends itself robustly against interpretation.”

Does the Balkan region begin in Graz?

“Since the fall of communism and subsequent immigration from the Balkan states, the University of Graz has acquired an important bridging function in the education and research networks of the region and their integration into the European Higher Education Area. A key aspect of this is the University’s core research area Southeast Europe which brings together Slavic Studies, History, Cultural Anthropology, Sociology, Law and Political Science. In other words, interdisciplinary Balkan expertise begins in Graz. This fosters fruitful academic ties with the future-focused region between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and also good cultural relationships between neighbours.”



Photo: Anna Petzer

Tatjana Petzer
is Professor of Slavic
Literary and Cultural
Studies



Photo: Marija Kanižaj

Christian Niedermayr has been in charge of “Libresso”, the coffee shop in the university’s main building, for 17 years now

What does the university like to eat?

“The favourite item on our menu is consistently our club sandwich. It’s always popular. And pasta salad of course. That’s a must for many of our customers. We tried experimenting with a couscous salad for a change, but unfortunately that didn’t work. Our signature dish is also worth a mention: iced coffee, made with espresso instead of filter coffee, which our customers can enjoy together with a fantastic view from the unique terrace of our university library. And there’s one more thing: the incredibly generous tips from our customers – many thanks to you all.”



Kathrin Otrek-Cass is Professor of Innovative Curriculum Design

Photo: Marija Kanizaj

What happens after the lecture?

“University teaching can make use of creative approaches and digital media. For example, lectures can be interactive. Using digital media makes them windows into new worlds. As well as completing conventional assignments, if students can also work flexibly on projects such as creating videos, podcasts or games, then teaching and learning becomes seriously fun. However, using digital media does not replace critical thinking. Being able to question information is an essential skill. True understanding comes from discourse with others, from listening to and debating differing viewpoints in presentations and discussions.”

What's the University doing in Greenland?

“Linking research and teaching is very important to the University of Graz, and both should be at the very highest standard. After all, research couldn't happen without well-educated students, as it's they who do most of the academic work, e.g. as doctoral students or postdocs. Just as important is the financial support that research gets from University funds, because project funding doesn't stretch to meeting all the expenses. One successful example of this is the University of Graz's research station in Greenland, which was set up with the generous support of Dr Christian Palmers. It's a place where students and researchers from the University of Graz meet colleagues from all over the world. This is how excellence is born.”



Photo: Universität Graz/Vilgut

Wolfgang Schöner is Professor of Physical Geography



Photo: Universität Graz/Tzivanopoulos

Georg Vogeler
*is Professor of
Digital Humanities*

How fit for the future are the humanities?

“The humanities might seem backward-looking because, amongst other things, they deal with the past. But the past is important, so it should be made accessible to everyone using the power of digitalisation. For that to work, humanities scholars have to demonstrate their understanding of people and of their cultural needs. For AI-generated text, for instance, linguists first explained to computer scientists how language works. If we’re to be able to interpret historical documents in the future, we need algorithms that don’t even exist yet. So the humanities are asking key questions of current trends and helping to answer them. That’s the future.”

Would you recommend the University of Graz to other people?

“Absolutely. The successful partnership that the University of Graz and Leipzig University have enjoyed for many years shows the strength of the bonds between our two institutions. This partnership, which was launched in 1987, has continued to grow over time and is the main reason why we’re forging new paths together in teaching, research and university development. What’s been particularly impressive is the work we’ve done together as part of the Arqus alliance and on collaborative projects such as the Joint International Master’s Programme in Sustainable Development. It’s productive cooperation like this that makes the University of Graz an outstanding partner at international level.”

Photo: Christian Hüller/Universität Leipzig



Eva Inés Obergfell
is Rector of Leipzig
University

Exploring problems in greater depth or homing in on solutions?

“I’ve encountered a fair few universities during my academic career. The University of Graz stands out, however, particularly thanks to the remarkable range of subjects it covers. The possibility to collaborate across discipline boundaries is a boon for every single researcher, and this exchange of ideas needs to be encouraged and even demanded. This offers a great many benefits, especially in fields of future relevance such as sustainable mobility. In this way, the University is creating an atmosphere for research that breeds innovative ideas. Coupled with the expert support you get for administrative issues, the result is an environment in which excellence thrives.”

Photo: Universität Graz/Izivanopoulos



Nina Hampl is Professor
of Active Mobility

Is that art, or can it be got rid of?

“Who makes art? And what does art do with us? These are questions that are hugely important on a societal level. I firmly believe that we need women and men with vision who express the zeitgeist in the form of structures and works of art. The motto should be: ‘Always be open to something new that joins seamlessly to what has gone before.’ Art has to venture into the public space if it is to be able to engage with the present. And Graz has a lot to offer in this regard, such as the Light Sword statue in front of the historic Opera House. Like the works by Jannis Kounellis in the RESOWI building, it shows that the city and University of Graz are engaging with the present rather than living in the vacuum of the past.”

Photo: Marija Kanižaj



Sigrid Alber is a member of the Graz Guides

Can the University do digital?

"As an early-stage researcher, you get to know a lot of different institutions, and all of them are having their problems with the digital transformation, from lost e-mails to handwritten holiday requests. And although there are some stumbling blocks at the University of Graz too, you get the sense that 'digital' isn't a dirty word. But that's not all. Everywhere you look, work is being done to help shape the digital world, from the new course in 'AI and society' to the IDea_Lab, where we're bringing innovations like UniGPT into the University and conducting interdisciplinary research using state-of-the-art machine-learning methods. It goes without saying that a fully fledged university of the arts and sciences should be thinking about society rather than just focusing on technology."



Photo: Damian Gorczyzny

Jana Lasser
is Professor of
Data Analysis

How do you define excellent university teaching?

"Excellent university teaching is built on the specialist knowledge and corresponding research skills of the people delivering it. Two things I'd say were key are the motivation to engage in proactive self-study and a love of your subject. That's achieved through processes of dialogue conducted between equals and with as flat a hierarchy as possible. Through research-focused teaching that gets students involved in the current research process in an interactive and constructive way. And through curiosity, which is aroused by joint problem-solving, critical analysis and a passion for your subject rather than by pre-prepared answers."

Stephan Moebius is
Professor of Sociological Theory
and Intellectual History



Photo: Manuel Schaffernak

Do you need to have been to Graz?

Foto: Daniel J. Schwarz/Unsplash



Photo: wildundwunderbar

Catherine Walter-Laager is Swiss (from Zurich), Professor of Early Childhood Education, and Vice Rector for Studies and Teaching

“You don’t need to have been to Graz” was the opinion of Thomas Bernhard. Yet Graz is well worth a visit not only from a tourist perspective but also as an undisputed student city. “But why’s that?” we ask the Vice Rectors of the University of Graz.

“I can definitely recommend Graz. You can really exert yourself here or just take things incredibly easily – it’s up to you. It’s a city that simply has everything you need, and you can get everywhere quickly on foot or by bike. Besides being unbelievably pretty, with parks, a lot of green space, a palace, the river and lots more, Graz is also packed full of fun-loving people. If I had to pick out three good things about the place? The consistently nice weather. The wonderful food, with a lot of local specialities such as pumpkin-seed oil. And, of course, our University, which is definitely the most student-friendly one far and wide.”



Photo: Markus Deak

Markus Fallenböck is Austrian (from Graz), Professor of Technology and Innovation Law, and Vice Rector for Human Resources and Digitalisation

“After spending 15 years in Vienna, I’m confident about comparing the two, and Graz is the perfect size with its 300,000 inhabitants. It’s big enough to have all the main facilities you might need. The city also has a fair bit to offer on the cultural front, with its opera house, theatres and lively festival scene. And all these are close together. And we’re lucky enough to work right in the middle of the city on the most beautiful self-contained university campus. Definitely worth a visit. Incidentally, one reason you need to have been to Graz is the fact that it’s the biggest city in Austria. Because Vienna is a province...”



Foto: JJFarq/Shutterstock

Photo: Universität Graz/Tzivanopoulos



Mireille van Poppel is Dutch (from Doetinchem), Professor of Sports Science and Vice Rector for Internationalisation and Gender Equality

“In the Netherlands, they say that wherever the land slopes upwards a bit, that’s a mountain. So the Schlossberg in Graz is worth a visit in itself, given the views over the really green city that you get from the top. What’s more, Graz can rightly claim to be a very, very lively city, not least because the 30,000 students and 5,000 staff that make up our University have a major hand in powering the city’s heartbeat. I’ve also noticed that everyone’s connected to everyone else in a really good way. And the University of Graz is a clear and central part of this network.”

“If you live by Lake Constance, of course you’ll know Vienna. But Graz? I was genuinely surprised when I arrived here nearly two decades ago to find a pleasant city that was warmer and friendlier. Full of fun people with an entrepreneurial streak who’ve always impressed me with their trustworthiness and unfailing reliability, amongst other things. And then there’s its geographical location: from my new home in Graz, a completely new world and completely new perspectives have opened up for me, with my new neighbours in the shape of Italy, Slovenia and Hungary. And we mustn’t forget our University, of course: it offers a broad range with great potential for more in-depth study that opens many doors.”

Photo: Marija Kanizaj



Joachim Reidl is German (from Konstanz), Professor for Microbiology and Vice Rector for Research

The Habsburgs took up residence in Graz from 1379 to 1619, a status that has left the city with a number of significant architectural monuments.

Around 303,000 people live in Austria’s second-largest city, which was European Capital of Culture in 2003.

Graz’s historic centre was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999 –and rightly so.

Graz is a centre for technology and innovation in Austria, especially in the fields of automotive engineering, mechanical engineering and environmental technology.

Graz is happy to be called Italy’s northernmost city. Gaudeamus igitur!

Graz’s cultural festivals – styriarte, steirischer herbst and evelate – are internationally acclaimed.

The city is home to four universities with 53,000 students and 13,500 staff between them.



Photo: Marija Kanizaj

Eva Roblegg is Professor of
Pharmaceutical Technology

How are new things born?

“Every supreme achievement in science or academia is founded on creativity. But it can only succeed if we keep up a regular dialogue with our colleagues and students. Engaging in active debate with young people is very important for researchers, because it encourages us to leave the comfort of our own area of expertise and strike out in new directions. So teaching and excellence are inextricably linked. As a university city, Graz has one major thing going for it in this regard, which is that many young and knowledge-hungry people are enriching our work, as is our proximity to researchers at the Medical University of Graz and the Graz University of Technology, which works closely with us as part of NAWI Graz.”



Photo: Universität Graz/Tzivanopoulos

Antonia Bruneder is a postdoc at the Department of Public Law and Political Science

What makes gangsta rap academic?

“As one of the most successful musical genres in the German-speaking world at the moment, gangsta rap is attracting a great deal of attention, not just in musical circles but in society as a whole. This kind of music, whose content often glorifies violence or has homophobic or misogynistic elements, seems to have arrived bang in the middle of society and speaks mainly to a young audience. In my view, the huge relevance that gangsta rap has to society suggests that it should be tackled at an academic level. From a legal, sociological and musicological perspective, it throws up a great many questions that academic study could address, providing solutions that are in touch with the latest trends.”

Why should a world champion be into bees?

“There are some things that are bigger than all of us because they affect us directly. One of these is climate change, but another is declining insect populations. When insects disappear, biodiversity shrinks rapidly, and then we’re left facing a mass mortality event that will also have a huge impact on us human beings. For me, the bee is a symbol of insect protection and biodiversity. I’d like to show that everyone can do something, however small, to take a stand in support of nature. Planting a flower meadow, giving money to research or consciously questioning our own actions – every approach is good. We need to put a protective arm around nature. That’s something that’s close to my heart and that I want to raise awareness of.”
Sebastian Vettel



Photo: Jorj Konstantinov

Formula 1 world champion **Sebastian Vettel** shares his love of bee research with **Thomas Schmickl**, Professor of Zoology

The University of Graz and Sebastian Vettel are partners involved in the *BeeWild* project.



Paul Gragl
*is Professor of
European Law*

Photo: Universität Graz/Tzivanopoulos

What should Europe know about the future?

“When we say ‘Europe’, we’re often more likely to think of the European Union. This shows just how important the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law are that bring us together in this community. But we mustn’t forget that the EU brought peace and stability to the continent after hundreds of years of warfare, and it’s precisely this that makes it so attractive, not least for other countries that are looking to join. So we need more integration, e.g. by introducing majority voting in place of unanimous decisions. This won’t bring about the much-cited levelling down, either. Every member state has a strong cultural identity of its own anyway, which won’t be jeopardised by cooperation or the harmonisation of legislation.”

Competitor or partner?

“Partner, definitely – our two Universities are exploring new horizons together in teaching, science and research. Our close working relationship is helping to raise our international profile: cooperation opens the doors to large-scale, particularly cost-intensive projects like the new Graz Center of Physics. So our NAWI Graz partnership is still the only one of its kind in Austria. In the field of healthcare, we’ve managed to attract an institute of the Austrian Academy of Sciences to Graz for the first time in 50 years as part of the three-member BioTechMed-Graz alliance with the Medical University of Graz. It’s a pleasure to tackle large-scale projects together, and the collaboration is bearing fruit – for every one of our institutions.”



Photo: Helmut Lunghammer

Horst Bischof is Rector of
Graz University of Technology



Photo: Universität Graz/Tzivanopoulos

Bilgin Ayata is Professor of
Southeast European Studies

What can Europe learn from academia?

“Europe can learn from academia by recognising pluralism and diversity as sources of innovation and progress instead of viewing them as a threat – particularly in debates over migration and identity. Just like in academia, it’s important to be critical in questioning your own views and assumptions and to actively embrace openness and cooperation across borders. Given the rise of nationalism, these are vital lessons that form the foundations of both academia and democratic societies. This also includes protecting academic freedom. These principles are essential if we’re to create a fairer and more inclusive society.”

Photo: Marija Kamizaj

Andreas Strebinger
*is Professor of Marketing
and Business Analytics*



How good is the University when it comes to the "customer experience"?

"Our students experience the University in a wide variety of ways. Above all else, we want to give them that 'Eureka moment', the pleasure of acquiring a new skill on one of their courses and the sense of excited anticipation they get as they look forward to putting all this into practice. And delivering study programmes is like providing a service, from ensuring quick and easy access to course documents and friendly support from the teachers through to putting on a graduation ceremony that's full of atmosphere. In the digital space, we're currently working on a wide range of improvements, including for prospective students and new starters. The aim is for the experience genuinely to last a lifetime – a 'life-long customer journey' with the University of Graz, if you will."

What do you admire about the youth of today?

"Of course, the students we welcome nowadays are different from those of 20 years ago. The University has changed too, as a result of digitalisation if nothing else. So young people are organising themselves in a new and creative way. Although many of them come to me with their questions, on the whole they're well informed. They're really open to other cultures and aren't afraid to encounter them. They're thinking about the climate and the environment and getting actively involved in social causes. At the same time, they're looking at themselves and pondering how they can make the best out of their lives. However, young people are under enormous pressure and need to start thinking about their future careers early."



Photo: Marija Kantzaj

Claudia Harrer is much in demand in her job as a porter at the RESOWI Centre



Photo: wildundwunderbar

Vishal Kashyap is Professor of Business-to-Business Marketing

What exactly is implied by "We work for tomorrow?"

"In order to work towards the future, the University has to fulfil the aims of various stakeholders. The most important of these – the students – need to be readied for life-long learning and for solving the problems facing society both now and in the future. The academic staff are called on to engage with real-life problems as far as possible. The administration must make a targeted effort to provide a rich learning environment and make sure that alumni retain ties to the University long after they've graduated. The private sector needs to work with the University to help prepare young people for the demands of the modern world of work. And, finally, the University has to keep the public up to date on what it's doing to overcome the challenges of our times."

We work for
tomorrow

Founded
1585

6
Nobel Prizes
between
1923
and
1973

First doctorate
awarded to
a woman
1902

28,500
students

4,700
employees

120
study programmes

18
per cent of
students come
from abroad

Budget
296
million euros
including
38.7
million euros
in third-party funds

The six faculties:

Humanities

It all starts with curiosity

And ends with the art of understanding. Critical thinking, interdisciplinary research and engaging teaching guide us along our journey. Research into the humanities at the University of Graz draws from the wealth of knowledge we hold across a broad range of disciplines. While they differ widely in terms of content and methodology, these disciplines all centre on examining spiritual and cultural worlds and recording knowledge, offering a point of reflection on modern societal developments. This is a place where structure meets modern-day relevance, where historical depth and tradition meet analysis and innovation. Several highly lucrative internationally awarded grants (ERC grants, Cluster of Excellence) are at the forefront of a rich research landscape. Being awarded these underscores the relevance of the issues and approaches we explore and demonstrates that the humanities' ability to uncover meaning and reason is more crucial and in demand in these uncertain times than ever before.

Natural Sciences

We are just an advanced breed of monkeys...

*...on a minor planet of a very average star.
But we can understand the Universe. That
makes us something very special.*

Having this quote from Stephen Hawking as a banner on our website shows precisely what this department stands for. We have an insatiable thirst for knowledge, an undying urge to explain the inexplicable and to apply revolutionary approaches in real-world situations. Our research is diverse and interdisciplinary, unburdened by limitations, and always moving forwards.

We cover the entire spectrum from the tiniest building blocks of matter to the superlatives of the universe, from basic research to applied research, from pure curiosity to practice-oriented results. The Cluster of Excellence, a highly lucrative distinction achieved by the MetAGE research group on healthy ageing, is just one example.

Law

Don't believe everything you think

The faculty's goal is clear. We want to be an institution that takes an interdisciplinary and international approach to the world of law – to work with our students to explore the most important topics of our time.

The legal, economic, social and technical frameworks under which legal practice, in its widest sense, functions, are undergoing radical change. These challenges are not only shifting how we teach, but also what we teach. It is not enough to simply teach "the law". Instead, we need to communicate a mindset that helps students develop skills that can withstand this constant change.

To do this requires a rigorous approach to academic excellence, a broad foundation that can be built on, and the methodological skills to implement it in the real world. But above all, it requires curiosity and the courage to follow it wherever it may take us.

2 Clusters of Excellence

The Austrian *Cluster of Excellence* funding programmes support large teams on their journeys to discover new findings in highly promising fields of research. The University of Graz's research fields are *MetAGE research into ageing* (lead) and *Knowledge in Crisis*.

We are a proud member of the **Arqus European University Alliance**. Arqus connects us with eight powerhouses of university research in Granada (ESP), Leipzig (DEU), Lyon (FRA), Maynooth (IRL), Minho (PRT), Padua (ITA), Vilnius (LTU) and Wrocław (POL) – which, like us, are known for their cooperation with other institutions in the region.

17 ERC grants

The European Research Council awards grants that enable outstanding researchers to carry out innovative research projects.

We also maintain **strategic partnerships** with universities in Nanjing (CHN), Waterloo (CAN), Ljubljana (SVN) and Montclair (USA).

Business, Economics and Social Sciences

Standing on the shoulders of a giant

One of world-famous Graz researcher Joseph Schumpeter's three main aims in life was to become the greatest economist the world had ever seen. Our goals are of a similar scale. Just like Schumpeter, the faculty focuses on future-oriented topics such as innovation and entrepreneurship – although what this looks like in practice differs from discipline to discipline. The faculty is involved in several of the University's fields of excellence – including Climate Change and Smart Regulation – covering the entire spectrum from top publications to industry contacts. How can regulations surrounding artificial intelligence and self-driving cars be made smart enough to give us the greatest benefit? How can we effectively transform our economy into a more sustainable one without this leading to greenflation and a drop in prosperity? These are just some of the future-looking questions we deal with at the faculty.

Catholic Theology

This side of Eden – still relevant

Religion is and remains a defining factor in our world. It shapes the day-to-day lives and thinking of many people. Numerous political and societal developments and problems can only be understood with an awareness of the religious contexts behind them. Our faculty acts as a place of critical reflection at the polarised intersection of belief and reason, navigating the tensions between the church, culture and society. Biblical studies, history, philosophy, ethics, world religions, dogma, morality, liturgy and practice: Our research fields and projects are hugely varied, but they all revolve around God and our world. Substantiated. Future-oriented. Socially relevant. But which god are we talking about here? And do we mean by 'the world'? To remain contemporary yet critical, theology has to be open to new ideas and allow societal debates and topics in.

Environmental, Regional and Educational Sciences

What kind of world do we want to live in...

...and how can we use the opportunities available to us to create a positive future for ourselves and the environment? These questions are driving the newest faculty at the University of Graz towards world-leading achievements in its unique range of subjects. We concentrate on topics that are highly relevant to our modern society. From conquering social challenges and encouraging inclusion in education and the wider world, to developing practical solutions for the climate crisis across the fields of energy, mobility and the sustainable economy, from public health to global planetary health. Innovative teaching empowers students to work scientifically, think critically and make responsible decisions. Because individual, societal and environmental development are all inextricably intertwined.



Photo: University of Oxford

Viktor Mayer-Schönberger is
*Professor of Internet Governance at the
Oxford Internet Institute and Honorary
Professor at the University of Graz*

Is Graz up there with Harvard and Oxford?

“Definitely. It is for me, anyway. I was a professor at Harvard when I did my habilitation in Graz, and before I went to Oxford. My habilitation in Graz was a special personal achievement for me. And not just because my colleagues at the University of Graz were my role models in many respects. But also because my great-grandfather was a caretaker at the University of Graz more than a century ago. It was like completing the loop. Equally important, however, was the fact that at the University of Graz, I always felt we were looking to the future. The energy and joy of innovation wash over me whenever I’m there. It’s a truly special university!”

Is knowledge in a state of crisis?

“In every specialist field, the amount of knowledge processed and made available to us through the latest technology far exceeds the capacity of any one individual. This dynamic development of knowledge is giving us illusions of power in terms of the amount of control we have over the foundations of human and non-human life. At first glance, it’s completely illogical to talk about a global knowledge crisis – as if its existence could ever be in doubt! But paradoxically, our knowledge is fragile precisely because it is booming and expanding, and because our analysis, critical reflection, and intelligent, situational application of it is lagging behind.”



Photo: Marija Kanizaj

Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl
is Professor of Philosophy

Why do we need the seventh faculty?

“Democratic stability is never guaranteed. Quite the opposite: international statistics show that we have been in a long period of increased deconstruction of democracies. A country being democratic is not a given. Again, quite the opposite: The majority of people around the world do not live in a free country. In this context, the seventh faculty helps to facilitate fact-based, public debate through scientific communication. It is about communicating scientific findings – in my work, particularly about democracy research. People can only make cognisant political decisions in a world open to well-founded, public debate.”



Photo: Universität Graz/Tzivanopoulos

Katrin Praprotnik *is a postdoc in political science*

How much science is there in theology?

"Theology has a supernatural research subject: God. We can't prove the existence of God – nor can we disprove it. God is plausible. So theology explores the limits of reason. It also works with two key sources: the Bible and Christian tradition. Both have had a lasting impact on western (and other) cultures. So theology is important in the context of cultural studies. Theology at Graz is outspokenly self-critical in terms of the extent to which Christianity has contributed to discrimination and is pushing to counter this with scientific methods that reveal the humanising potential of Christianity for people and society."

Photo: Universität Graz/Tzivanopoulos



Martina Bär is Professor of Fundamental Theology

Physik
ist wie
Magie ...
nur echt.

Martin Sterrer is Professor of Experimental Physics



Photo: Marija Kanizaj

What does the abbreviation GCP actually mean?

"Forces play a key role in physics. At the Graz Center of Physics, the GCP, we bring the forces from the different physics fields at the University of Graz and Graz University of Technology together under one roof. This architectural landmark, one of Austria's largest university construction projects, raises the visibility of our research and range of studies both physically and metaphorically. Combined, we have reached the necessary size to be internationally competitive and attractive to the brightest minds out there. With cutting edge infrastructure and the synergies this generates, we work on pioneering topics from light-matter interaction to sustainability, from energy materials to particle and astrophysics."



Photo: Alfred-Wegener-Institut

Alfred Wegener (1880–1930) – on the left – was a meteorologist in Greenland and geophysicist at the University of Graz from 1924 until his death. His continental drift hypothesis dramatically changed how we see our world

As Alfred Wegener himself once said:

“We shouldn’t always think that it is our fault alone if we don’t understand something printed or written. Where logic falters, we can generally fill in the gaps with formulae.”

Other key names and Nobel Prize winners from the University’s recent history include **Ludwig Boltzmann, Carl Ferdinand Cori, Gerty Cori, Karl von Frisch, Victor Franz Hess, Otto Loewi, Fritz Pregl, Joseph Schumpeter, Erwin Schrödinger and Julius Wagner-Jauregg.**





Where does knowledge blossom?

“Plants make up 82 percent of the Earth’s biomass. Their vital role in biological processes, and as a source of nutrition, is becoming all the clearer in the context of the global challenges we are facing. The Botanical Garden at the University of Graz is helping here in a number of ways. Scientific studies of its living collection are delivering new findings in the field of botanical research. Students here gain expert knowledge – as an external place of learning, it enables them to explore these organisms with senses beyond sight alone, leading to greater awareness and understanding of plants for us all. In this inspiring oasis, a place that people also come to for a sense of peace and relaxation, knowledge blossoms – right in the heart of the city!”

Ulrike Grube is in charge of outreach at the Botanical Garden

Photo: Marija Kanizaj

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