

# AMERICAN COLLEGE PROGRAM



Université de Fribourg - Universität Freiburg

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## Academic Life at the University of Fribourg

**Georges Python** founded the Université de Fribourg / Universität Freiburg (Alma Mater Friburgensis) in the year **1889**. It is a public cantonal university and is financed by the Canton of Fribourg, the Swiss Confederation and other non-university cantons.

The Rector and the Vice-Rectors run the University. The current rector is Professor Astrid Epiney from the Faculty of Law. Other administrative organs of the University include the Senate, the University Assembly and the Commission de recours.

The University is divided into **5 Faculties** (Theology, Law, Economics and Social Sciences, Letters, Science) as well as **7 interdisciplinary institutes**. The various Faculties are **spread among the different campuses and buildings**. The Science Faculty is located at the Pérolles-Plateau. Theology, Law, Arts and Economics are mostly at the main campus entitled Miséricorde, although a significant part of the Law Faculty resides at the Portes de Fribourg in a modern complex on the outskirts of town and at Beauregard. A sizeable part of the Economics and Social Sciences Faculty can also be found in the Regina Mundi building and on Pérolles.

There are currently about **10,000 students** in the various Faculties of the University. The demographic make-up of the student body is quite remarkable, in that it brings students from all over Switzerland and around the world (approximately 110 nationalities represented).

Traditionally, according to the American system of education, the University of Fribourg was structured more like a graduate school. This means that most students were working toward the *Licence - Lizentiat* (similar to a Master's degree) or the Doctorat - Doktorat (Ph.D.) However, since the mid-2000s the University of Fribourg has been on the forefront of the implementation of the Bologna reforms. Currently, students at the University are working towards their BA or MA and credits are attributed according to the ECTS system.

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A major characteristic of the University is of course its **bilingual nature**. This means that every student can attend **lectures or seminars in French as well as in German**. The lecture timetables of the Faculties have been organized to support bilingual studies. Most times, students can thus take a lecture in the other language without forfeiting the compulsory branch in their first language. Students are given the unique opportunity to work towards obtaining a **bilingual degree**. Because the Faculties are divided into French and German speaking sections, the number of participants at any one lecture remains relatively small compared with big European universities and allows teaching to take place in a more personal atmosphere.