

# Studying at the Law Faculty of the University of Fribourg



# What you can expect to find



The Law Faculty of the University of Fribourg is an institution with a long tradition of excellence: for over 250 years we have been training and educating the elite of the legal profession in Switzerland. A law degree from Fribourg is a springboard to a successful career. The Fribourg Law Faculty remains today a breeding ground for leadership personalities in the worlds of law, business and politics.

## Multilingual studies “à la carte”

German, French, and English: Fribourg is the only Swiss university to offer a legal curriculum in both German and French and, at the Master’s level, in English as well. Students can design their own trilingual programs “à la carte”: students decide on their own which courses they wish to visit, and in which language. In the lecture hall, the classroom, and at the pub in the evenings – Fribourg is a vibrant multilingual university town, on and off campus.

## Quality, not quantity

At Fribourg the learning atmosphere is enhanced by the spacious lecture halls and classrooms. With an average of 45 students per professor, the staff:student ratio is very high by national standards. This enables teachers at Fribourg to take into account the individual needs of students – both in class and in the assignment and correction of papers. Field trips in connection with courses and seminars provide students with valuable opportunities to spend time with professors and visiting lecturers.

## A young and vibrant city

Fribourg is a young city, where students make up one fourth of the population. Campus life provides students with a chance to meet people who share their interests and to build networks of friends and contacts that will accompany them throughout their social and professional lives in the years to come. The university campus is located in the centre of the city, where numerous housing opportunities are available. Fribourg is notable for its lively cultural scene, with varied concert programs and international festivals for all tastes. Bars and cafes scattered throughout the old mediaeval town provide a stimulating atmosphere for students to meet and gather. For those who enjoy outdoor activities, the Fribourg Alps, and the lakes of Murten and Neuchâtel are only a stone’s throw away.

# Studies and research

## A linguistic and cultural potpourri

Since its founding, the Fribourg Law Faculty has placed a high value on international exchanges. There is a strong emphasis on active participation in an international academic network. Students, researchers, and professors come from many countries around the world. The Law Faculty is an active member of international organizations that promote exchanges and cooperation between universities, and has concluded agreements with a large number of law faculties abroad. Fribourg students may choose from exchange programs with over 100 academic institutions around the world. These agreements also enable students from around the world to spend one semester or one year at the Fribourg Faculty of Law. The international nature of studies at Fribourg provides members of the University community with virtually limitless opportunities to widen their cultural and social horizons.

### Our study areas

Administrative law, business law, canon law, Church law, civil law, civil procedure and debt enforcement, commercial law, comparative law, constitutional law, criminal law, criminal procedure, criminology, European immigration law, European law, European private law, fundamentals of law, history of law, international law, labour law, law of obligations, legal procedure, philosophy of law, private international law, public international law, public law, Roman law, social insurance law, tax law.

**Fribourg is the only bilingual law faculty in Switzerland. The academic staff comprises 35 full professors from both the German and the French speaking parts of Switzerland, backed up by 50 associate professors, 70 teaching assistants and 20 lecturers, with a student body of some 1600 enrolled students. In addition to course offerings in all areas of the law, Fribourg is also an important centre of scholarly research on Swiss, European and international law. Legal theory, philosophy of law, sociology of law, and legal history also have high priority at Fribourg. The library of the Law Faculty contains 130 000 volumes covering all areas of law, and is open daily until late into the evening.**

## Teaching

### Law in theory and practice

With an offering of over 100 courses annually, the Fribourg Law teaching staff provides students a chance to learn the foundations of legal studies and to acquaint themselves with the most recent research in the field. The curriculum covers not only all fields of law, but also offers training in legal writing, argumentation, negotiating, and public speaking. By participating in internship programs, moot courts, and a wide range of seminars, Fribourg law students can enrich their course work with hands-on experience in the practice of law. Course offerings are rounded out, particularly at the Master's level, with numerous guest lectures by international experts from Switzerland and around the world.

## Research institutes

### At the forefront of teaching and legal research

The Faculty's six institutes for advanced research – Construction Law, European Law, Federalism, Religion and Law, Law and Economy, and International Business Law – have helped to secure Fribourg Law's place at the forefront of Swiss and international legal studies. Established and overseen by the Faculty's own widely renowned professors, the Institutes make an important contribution to both fundamental and advanced legal research. The researchers at Fribourg Law seek answers to concrete social questions. In addition to their own research and course offerings, the Institutes also take part in numerous small and large nationally and internationally funded research projects, prepare advisory reports for political and administrative bodies, furnish the courts with expert opinions for legal proceedings, and publish standard legal textbooks. Conferences organised by Fribourg Law – from the National Conference on Construction Law, to the Murten Lawmaker Seminars, the Family Law Symposium, and the Data Protection Congress – attract noted experts from throughout Switzerland.

# A full range of Bachelor and Master level courses for all interests

The program of studies at Fribourg Law is completed in two stages: at the Bachelor's level, you will acquire a general background in all major branches of law. At the Master's level you have the opportunity to concentrate on more specialized studies in the areas that match your personal interests. Students can choose from a wide and varied range of course offerings.

## Bachelor of Law – a broad foundation

The Bachelor of Law is an introduction to the fundamentals of law in three stages. Students gain a solid foundation in all of the essential branches of law.

### Program content

The Bachelor program covers the principal areas of statutory law: private law, public law, criminal law, commercial and business law, social welfare law, private international law and European law. Additional courses in Roman law, the history of law, and the philosophy of law provide students with an introduction to legal theory. Students may concentrate on specific areas of law, such as European law and religion and law. At the same time, they can also choose to focus on current legal issues of topical interest.

### A clearly structured program

Students receive personal guidance and counselling to help them steer their way through the broad range of offerings. Examinations at the end of each year (IUR I, IUR II, IUR III) provide them with an opportunity to keep track of the progress they are making. Exchange students staying for only one semester may take the exams at the end of that semester.

### Exchange studies

As a part of a well-established international academic network, Fribourg Law welcomes students from many different countries.

## Master of Law – Individualized areas of focus

The Master of Law curriculum offers maximum flexibility, allowing students to design their own individualized programs in keeping with their career priorities. For exchange students it is important that they consider both their home university requirements and course prerequisites when putting together their individual curriculums.

### An individualized program

The Master of Law program has been designed to be completed over a period of at least three semesters (90 ECTS credits). It enables students to build on the broad foundations acquired in the Bachelor program. Students can choose from among over 80 seminars, semester courses, and intensive three-week immersion courses. In addition to providing students with a high-level legal education, the Fribourg Law Faculty also places particular

value on the development of personal and social skills through interactive courses. Master's students are able to take part in Fribourg Law's famed special courses and seminars. Highly popular are "Skilex" – a week-long seminar in the Alps, combining practical legal studies, a winter sports vacation, and socializing – and the "Europe Week" – during which students have a chance to visit the various institutions of the European Union.

### International Offering

- **Bachelor and Master dual Degree – Fribourg/Paris:** this challenging dual degree offers students the possibility, by dividing their studies between Fribourg and Paris Panthéon-Assas, to obtain a dual Master's Degree in Swiss and French Law.
- **The Center for Transnational Legal Studies (CTLs), London:** a multicultural centre for teaching and research in international law.
- **East China University of Political Science and Law, Shanghai:** as of the autumn semester of 2013, students at Fribourg law now have the chance to complete one or two semesters at one of the most renowned law faculties in China.
- **Hong Kong City University:** experience a "dynamic university uniquely located right at the heart of Asia's World City where East meets West" (Prof. Way Kuo, President of CityU).
- **St-Petersburg State University:** the oldest institution of higher education in Russia – tradition and innovation.





“Fribourg was a clear choice for me. It’s an historic Swiss town with one of the best bilingual law schools in Europe. It’s a great place to travel from and there are all kinds of sports activities available. All my expectations were fulfilled – and more.”

Petra Belanova, BA law student,  
Erasmus semester in Fribourg

## Doctoral studies – research in a stimulating academic environment

At the University of Fribourg, scholarly research is seen as an inseparable element of an academic education. The Law Faculty maintains a wide range of research centres distinguished by the high level of legal scholarship they produce in all legal disciplines. Fribourg Law is an important contributor to the literature on the legal issues of today and the challenges of tomorrow. As part of a worldwide academic network, Fribourg Law provides an ideal setting for carrying out doctoral research.

### Dissertation

The preparation and successful defence of a dissertation is the principal requirement for obtaining a doctoral degree. The subject of the dissertation is chosen in consultation with the candidate’s doctoral adviser. The public defence of the dissertation may be scheduled at any time after completion of four semesters as a doctoral candidate.

Students may also enrol in the six-semester “ProDoc” program under the auspices of the “École doctorale romande pour les fondements du droit européen”, which specialises in interdisciplinary graduate research. Studies at the “École doctorale” focus on the historical, philosophic, economic, and political foundations of European law.

### Admission requirements

Master of Law from the University of Fribourg with a grade point average of 4.75 or higher. In special cases, the Board of Professors may grant an exemption from this requirement.

Master of Law from another Swiss or foreign university with a minimum grade point average of 4.75, subject to the condition that the candidate is also eligible for admission to the doctoral program at the university from which he or she graduated.



“For me, the broad range of possibilities that the Paris II – Fribourg curriculum offers, both in law and in international relations, is confirmation that I made an excellent choice. The chance to get a law degree that covers two different legal systems is likely to be a major advantage for anyone interested in an international career.”

Alexandre Wirz, Student, Paris II

# Academic Information for exchange students

## Application for courses

### No registration required:

Courses at Bachelor's level.

Semester courses at Master's level.

### Registration required:

Block courses, seminars and special seminars at Master's level.

## Exam sessions

There are two exam sessions each year, one in spring, one in winter. Nearly all Bachelor courses are offered on a one-year basis. Exchange students staying in Fribourg for one year normally take their exams during the June session. In case of failure, students may repeat the exam(s) in September, provided that they fulfil the necessary conditions. Exchange students staying only for the autumn or the spring semester can take their exams during the January/February or the June session. They should be aware that – for them only – examinations in full-year courses will be based on the content covered during the semester they were in attendance, and that, if successful, they will be granted one half of the allotted ECTS credits. For certain courses, this will not be possible, however, and examinations will cover material from the entire full-year course. Should they fail one or more exams, students are permitted to repeat them during the next session. **Block course exams** take place at the end of each course. Failed exams cannot be repeated. **Semester course exams** take place in January/February, and in June. A failed exam may be repeated once only. At the end of each exam session all grades are recorded. The original record is sent to the coordinator at the home university. Students may consult their results on the internet. Exchange students must take their exams during the regular sessions.

## Academic Requirements

Exchange students should plan their course of studies with their coordinators, based on the requirements of their home universities. This should be done before their arrival in Fribourg, but no later than within the first three weeks of the semester. Exchange students should have sufficient proficiency in spoken and written French, German, and/or English to attend and understand lectures without particular difficulty – at least a B1 level as defined in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.

### Introduction to Swiss Law

Specially designed for exchange students, this course provides an introduction to key aspects of Swiss law (including the role of Public International Law and European Law in Switzerland). It is taught during the autumn semester.

[www.unifr.ch/ius](http://www.unifr.ch/ius)

### Language courses

#### Intensive French Courses for exchange students

Before the autumn semester, 3 weeks, cost: CHF 500.

Before the spring semester, 2 weeks, cost: CHF 400.

#### Free language courses

During the semester, the University Language Centre offers free courses in French, German, English and Italian.

[www.unifr.ch/centredelanguages/en](http://www.unifr.ch/centredelanguages/en)

## Student services

### Welcoming and Orientation Meetings

Students are advised to arrive a few days prior to the start of either the French intensive course or the start of the semester, in order to get settled and familiarise themselves with the Fribourg University environment. Other orientation sessions may be offered during the semester, to assist, for example, in preparations for exams.

### Guidance counselling

The exchange coordinator remains at the disposal of students to help them with any problems or questions they may encounter.

### Disabilities

The University of Fribourg provides assistance to accommodate the special needs of students with disabilities.

[www.unifr.ch/uni-info/en/index/disability](http://www.unifr.ch/uni-info/en/index/disability)

### Computer Services

Upon arrival all students receive their personal login information granting them access to university computer facilities, including the internet and their university e-mail accounts.

### Social and Leisure activities

The University is home to various student societies and associations. The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) meets regularly and organises several events during the year.

### Sports

All students enjoy access to the University sports facilities.

### Medical Insurance

Medical insurance is compulsory in Switzerland. Students from EU/EEA countries must ask their home insurance company for a European Health Card.

They should also verify that their insurance provides them with full coverage while they are abroad. Students from non EU/EEA countries must take out Swiss health insurance with a Swiss insurer of their choice, or have insurance from a company in their own country with offices in Switzerland. For detailed information please read: [www.unifr.ch/international/en/in/before-leaving/assurance](http://www.unifr.ch/international/en/in/before-leaving/assurance).

### Civil Liability Insurance

All students participating in programs abroad must make sure that their civil liability insurance provides them with a coverage while studying abroad.

### Visa / Residence Permit

For EU students: no visa is required. Upon arrival in Fribourg students must request a *Student Residence Permit*, which will be delivered to them by the "Service de la population et des migrants / Amt für Bevölkerung und Migration" within a few weeks. The cost is approx. CHF 100, depending on the duration of the stay. Non-EU students must contact the Swiss Embassy in their country a few months (at least 3 months) before their departure. Upon request addressed to the Faculty of Law's Erasmus and International Relations Office or to the International Relations Office, students will be provided with an attestation of their registration at our university.

### Living expenses

Average monthly expenses: accommodations – CHF 450 to 600; food – CHF 400 to 600; public transportation (depending on location) – CHF 60 to 80 (many students have a bicycle); books and study materials – CHF 250 to 800 (annually); miscellaneous – CHF 200.



"Here at Fribourg, because it's a bilingual university, I have a chance to take free language classes and improve my German. Also, it's very easy to meet other students in Fribourg, because the classes are small. For me, the Erasmus Program has been a great opportunity. It's given me the chance to meet people from all over the world, which has really widened my horizons."

Jacky von den Eertwegh, BA law student,  
Erasmus semester in Fribourg

# Fribourg at a glance

## Accommodation

The Faculty of Law's Erasmus and International Relations Office helps students to find suitable accommodation in Fribourg (a furnished room in a student residence, hostels, or private accommodation). Students will be provided with lists of addresses.

## Apartis

Foundation for student housing.

[www.unifr.ch/apartis](http://www.unifr.ch/apartis)

## Cultural diversity

The Old Town of Fribourg enjoys an extremely picturesque location in a bend of the Sarine River. The many mediaeval buildings with their Gothic facades – including the town's landmark, the St. Nicholas Cathedral – constitute one of the most important architectural clusters of the kind in Europe. Many public places also display important works by well-known modern artists, including Jean Tinguely and Mario Botta. A rich variety of public and private museums in the town offer exhibits on a wide range of subjects, from modern art and cultural history to puppets and sewing machines. And, of course, chocolate also ranks high on the Fribourg cultural agenda: the famed Villars chocolate factory, now in operation over 100 years, is an architectural landmark in the modern section of town, while in the Old Town a traditional confectioner's workshop provides a demonstration of artisanal chocolate making. For more robust appetites, there are working breweries with restaurants attached, where you can have a meal and try out the local beer. Known as a cultural bridge between the German and French speaking parts of Switzerland, Fribourg is also home to 17 real bridges that add to the charm of a stroll through the city. The city's oldest bridge dates to the 13th century; the newest, the La Poya Bridge, was opened in autumn 2014 and is now the longest cable-stayed bridge in Switzerland.

## English

Each semester, a number of Master's courses are taught in English.

## Festivals

Fribourg is home to a colourful array of festivals, including the now legendary FIFF "*Festival International de Films de Fribourg*", the International Guitar Festival, the jazz festival "*Les Georges*", the Festival international de Musiques sacrées, the International Folklore Festival and the International Organ Festival. These highlights offer students an extraordinary opportunity to expand their horizons in cultural encounters.

## Fribourg's hot-spots

In the evenings, visitors are spoiled for choice between theatre ("*Equilibre*" – the new theatre of Fribourg, Aula Magna of the University), jazz, rock, dancing (Frison, Le Nouveau Monde, La Spirale) and much more besides – including the trendiest bars and restaurants (Banshees' Lodge Pub, Le Soussol, Le Quai, Le xxème, Lapart, Café de l'Ancienne Gare, Le TM, Yatus, Rock Café).

## Food and drink

Fribourg is a culinary oasis, host to many fine dining places in and around the city. For their daily needs, students can enjoy a wide choice of meals and snacks at the University dining hall and cafeteria.

## Nature

From town and campus, out into the countryside. Leave the bustle of the city behind and bathe your senses in the magically wild, natural setting of the Gottéron valley. Take a stroll along the river, or follow the hiking trails in the conservation area around Lake Pérolles, and marvel as you stand beside the towering rock faces in the magnificent, protected natural setting.

## Tradition

The "Bénichon" is an annual three-day celebration with a tradition of many centuries. The name – from the Latin "benedicto" – refers to the religious origins of the festival, which began as a local celebration consecrating completion of the town's new church. The Bénichon normally takes place in September. In November, the Fribourg carnival season begins, culminating with colourful parades, Guggenmusik, laughter, and fun filling the cobblestone streets of the Old Town before the coming of Lent. In early

December, Fribourg celebrates its patron saint, jolly old St. Nicholas, each year as he rides through the town on a donkey waving to the crowd, while his helpers pass out sweets to the children lining his path. This is also the season for the open-air Christmas market, where traditional pastries and crafts are on offer. And, of course, for keeping up the oldest student tradition of all, the many bistros, bars, and beer cellars through the Old Town are open all year round.



Alabama Amsterdam Ankara Antwerpen  
Athens Augsburg Barcelona Beijing Bergen Bern  
Besançon Beyrouth Białystok Bilbao Bologna  
Bonn Bordeaux Bradford Bratislava Brescia  
Brno **Bruxelles** Bucarest Budapest Castello  
de la Plana Cergy Pontoise Clermont Ferrand  
Coimbra Copenhagen Craiova Dublin Durham  
Firenze Freiburg Gent Glasgow Gran Canaria  
Graz Grenoble Groningen Hamburg Hannover  
**Heidelberg** Hong Kong Istanbul **Jerusalem**  
Jensuu Köln La Réunion Le Havre Leiden Leipzig  
Louvain Liège Lima Linz **Lisbonne** Ljubljana Loc  
**London** Louvain-la-Neuve Luxembourg Madrid  
Málaga Mannheim Milano Moncton Montpellier  
München Münster Napoli Nice Nijmegen Norwi  
Oslo  
Paris **Paris** Pecs Poitiers  
Reykjavik Roma Rouen Rovanie  
Santiago de Compostel  
Sofia Southampton Stockholm  
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Torino Toulouse Trento Tübingen Turku Valenc  
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