

Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS)

I. Objectives

The University of Freiburg accords high priority to its plan to found an international research institute (the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies / FRIAS) for the major central profile areas at the university. It is intended (1) to furnish a very attractive working environment for visiting scholars from abroad and, particularly, for the university's own top researchers, (2) to make a decisive contribution to improving the international competitiveness of the University of Freiburg, (3) to be a top-class world player in the profile areas, and (4) to contribute considerably to determining the research discourse in the chosen interdisciplinary themes. In comparison with the existing Institutes for Advanced Studies in Princeton, Stanford, Vancouver, Oxford, Cambridge, Bologna, Berlin, Wassenaar, Stockholm and elsewhere, the FRIAS will have a decisively **new emphasis** in terms of structure:

- Four Schools define top-level research at the University of Freiburg and can claim a leading position at the international level: Historical Studies, Language and Literature, Life Sciences, and Soft Matter Science.
- An inner-university competition held every six years may lead to the redefinition of the Schools (allocation to different disciplines); this ensures that the Institute is dynamic and can be adapted to future fields of excellence. The balance between the Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences will be maintained as a vital constituent of Freiburg's profile.
- As a rule, a School will not continue in existence for longer than twelve years.
- The fact that the university's own top scholars are exempted from other duties (for 3 years) allows for a concentration of research potential in Freiburg itself.
- The establishment of Junior Fellow Research Groups which are competitively funded from an international perspective will open up new research and skills areas.
- The autonomy of the FRIAS's Board of Directors should promote a focused research strategy and flexible invitation policies (ad-hoc appointments of Fellows).
- The Directors are free in their academic management.
- If a Fellow is to be appointed for over twelve months, his or her appointment will take place after consultation with the Board of Advisers of the School in question.

- Before an individual Fellow takes up his or her position at the FRIAS, an agreement will be drawn up between the Fellow and the Boards setting out essential aspects of the research stay.
- The FRIAS (especially the Advisory Committee and the external Fellows) will serve as a centre of expertise for the strategic orientation of the university as a whole.

The structure of the FRIAS is determined by three guiding principles.

1. Focus on the individual The Institute will invite researchers at all postdoctoral levels, of proven excellence, to carry out or put the finishing touches to a major piece of research. The decisive criterion for invitation is entirely the excellence of the individual researchers and the quality, range, and innovativeness of the results of their research thus far. An interdisciplinary focus is desirable. There is a residence and attendance obligation.

2. Priority of research The Fellows' period at the Institute is intended above all for the execution and completion of their planned research. The Fellows are expected to develop new research fields and initiatives which intensify Freiburg's network both nationally and internationally.

3. Free choice of themes, joint research fields The research themes will typically be subject to a high degree of dynamism, which is constituted by innovational methods and/or content. Thematic stipulations are not imposed on the Fellows, in order to allow the individual researchers involved the space to develop their own scholarly creativity.

II. Organization of the FRIAS

Fellows: The profile of the Fellows in the Schools of the FRIAS depends on the nature and the culture of the associated disciplines. The fundamental principle is that approximately 30 – 50% of the Fellows should come from the University of Freiburg. This aspect is of central importance, since it creates a possibility for coherent intensive research phases within the framework of the scholars' own home environment, so that they not forced to leave their own university in order to have windows for research.

The ratio between internal and external Senior and Junior Fellows can be kept flexible. As a rule, there should be between twelve and fifteen Fellows in each School at any given time.

The ***internal Fellows*** (max. 5 in addition to the Director and Deputy Director) are appointed, generally for three years, by the Directors of the School, with the approval of the Board of

Advisers. Selection occurs in consultation with the faculty in question on the basis of an open application procedure. The Fellow's time at the FRIAS is intended for research; other duties are subsidiary for the period of association. In agreement with the Directors, the internal Fellows are free to decide to what extent, in addition to their research in the School, they continue their association with their departments or chairs at the University of Freiburg. The assumption is that internal Fellows will be available for a certain, if limited, degree of teaching.

External Fellows are appointed by the Directors of the School in question; appointments for longer than twelve months are subject to the approval of the Board of Advisers. The budget allows for a maximum of five external Senior Fellows and three external Junior Fellows per School. This funding may be provided for long-term appointments; alternatively, however, depending on the requirements of the disciplines represented, the funding may be used for short-term Fellowships of one to twelve months' duration. Within the framework of the funding available, the Fellowships will be remunerated at a level which enables the Institute to make a competitive offer for a research stay in Freiburg, even in the fields of the Natural Sciences, Technology, and Medicine.

The agreement to be drawn up between the Directors and the Fellow will specify the direction of the research project, the theme of the planned conference, wishes concerning participation in teaching, particular equipment and assistance requirements etc. As a general rule, the Fellow's presence and residence in Freiburg is mandatory.

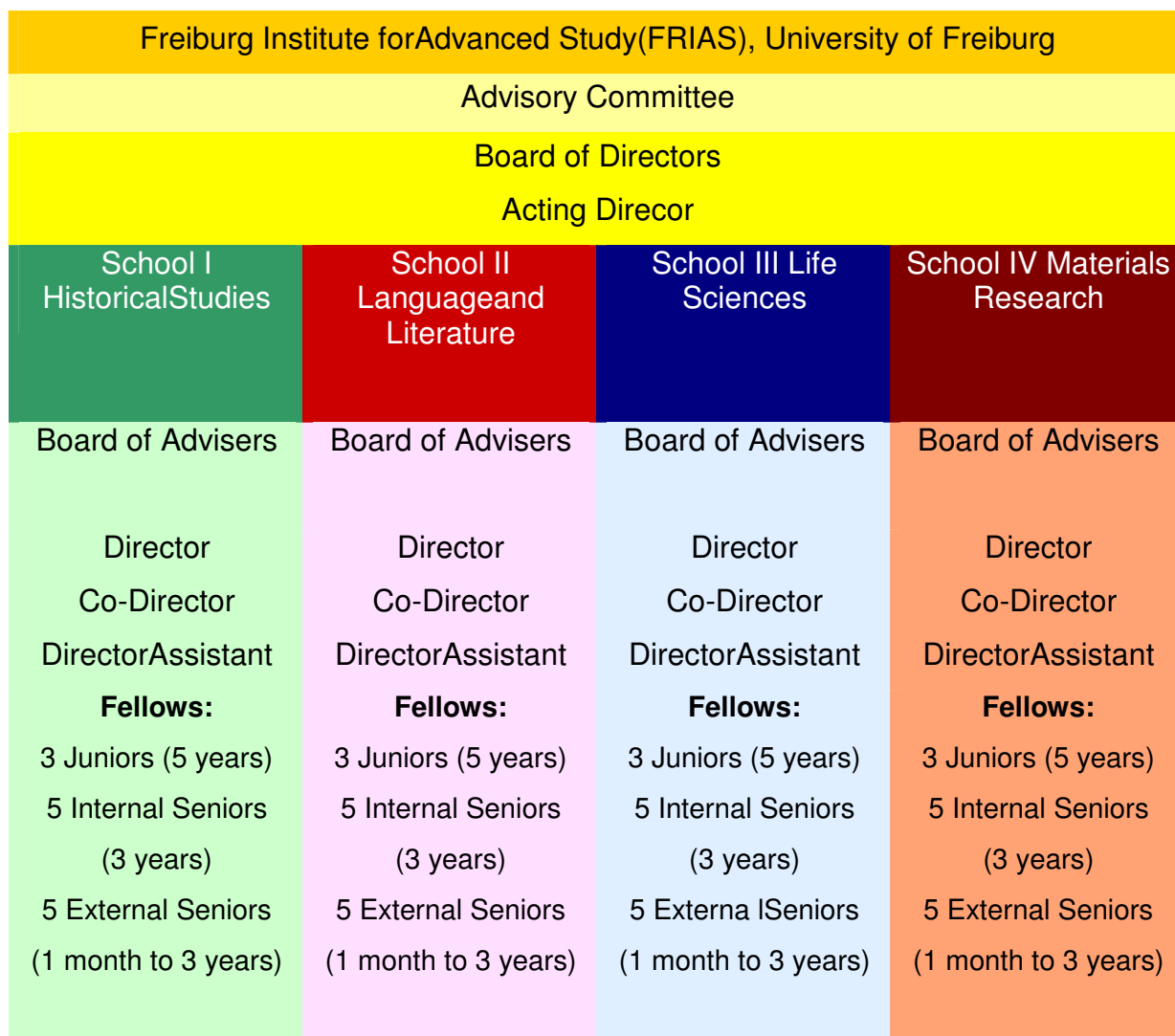


Diagram 4: Structure of the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS)

“New Universitas” and Communication within the FRIAS: For the duration of their association with the FRIAS, the external Fellows commit themselves to participating in the strategy meetings of the university management to evaluate and help to shape the implementation of the entire concept of the “New Universitas”.

The FRIAS will be provided with a Fellows’ Club. The Fellows can have lunch and dinner together, and attendance will be encouraged, but not obligatory. Particular value is attached to ensuring that the FRIAS should be as informally structured as possible, so as to provide the Fellows with space for intensive research with their colleagues and guests. More formal gatherings will be organized to intensify interdisciplinary communication, or for representing the FRIAS externally (representative function). The members of the FRIAS can present their research internally at regular colloquiums (organized as after-dinner speeches), and externally

through lectures. This can lead to the development of a “Major Theme“ for a given period, e.g. “Truth“. These colloquiums form an area of synergy for promoting interdisciplinary discussion in the sense of the “New Universitas”.

Publications: The Institute will publish a joint Yearbook. The individual Schools will publish annual reports and volumes of conference proceedings. Other publications and forms of publication will be agreed by the Schools themselves.

Conferences: Each School will organize at least two international conferences each year with the substantial participation of the external Fellows. The conference may take place in Freiburg or at another location. Its aim should be to increase the profile of the Institute and/or the School in question, should provide information to the public at large and not just scholarly circles, and it should prove an influential impetus for the research field. In addition, the Fellows organize workshops with invited guests.

Prizes: As an incentive for excellent research, each year research prizes are awarded in the Schools for the best publication by a Freiburg Junior Fellow, as well as a Communicator Prize for the most effective communication of the Institute’s research to the public at large.

Fellowships in the individual Schools: Up to fifteen Fellowships are envisaged per School (including the Director and Deputy Director). The external Senior Fellowships will be in the salary scale C4/W3. Emoluments will follow the “no loss, no gain” principle, borrowed from the established arrangements at the Berlin Institute for Advanced Study. Flexible funding possibilities in the form of scholarships, expenses budgets and non-tariff payment to take full advantage of the fiscal provisions of German law make it possible to find fair solutions in virtually every case. Individual and tailor-made emoluments are agreed with each FRIAS Fellow and set down in a written contract.

III. The four Schools of the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS)

1. School of Historical Studies

a. Objectives and organizational structure

The School of Historical Studies at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies views itself as an institution of international top-level research in the area of the historical disciplines. It combines profound *disciplinary* research in central and forward-looking thematic fields of

historical studies with an *inter- and transdisciplinary* orientation, by opening itself up to researchers from neighbouring disciplines which also use historical methods, integrating their approaches and research questions. The School will invite researchers to carry out or complete a major research project in the area of historical studies or related disciplines. The majority of the Fellows should be historians, but a strong minority could be made up of researchers in neighbouring fields which also use historical methods.

The central research field defined for the first term (2007 to 2012) is “Comparative European History”. The emphasis lies on the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but attention is also paid to pre-modern periods, especially the Early Modern era.

b. Research Theme for Term 1: “Comparative European History”

The history of the 20th century in Europe can no longer be deciphered by merely aggregating the history of individual nations. The national framework is not sufficient for an adequate understanding of central, pan-European developments and an accurate depiction of the declining impact of the nation state and the increasing importance of supra-national structures, especially in Europe. In recent years, however, the primacy of national history has also lost in plausibility when it comes to pre-twentieth-century history. Numerous central supranational historical phenomena, from Absolutism to modern dictatorships, can better be understood as varying expressions of very closely related basic processes rather than indigenous national projects.

It is beyond doubt that European history must be approached in a comparative manner. However, comparisons between European societies do not in themselves constitute a history of Europe, but should be seen rather as furnishing the preconditions for such a history. Such approaches develop levels or measures of comparison for the various fields of historical processes which make it possible to investigate both European national histories and supranational structures and transnational processes in the light of their shared fundamental structures. In this way one can differentiate between variants of European common development from nation-specific developments.

This is the core of the approach to the research field in the FRIAS’s School of Historical Studies. The point of departure for this is the phase of accelerated change which set in with the establishment of high industrialization in the final two decades of the nineteenth century. What was new in these decades from about 1890 to the First World War, in comparison with the take-off phases of the industrial revolution in the preceding decades, was that the

tendencies inherent to the modern industrial society of the most developed countries were now no longer limited to specific groups, but increasingly changed the life of virtually all people in these countries – through processes of urbanization and mass mobility, electrification and bureaucratic rationalization, the advance of the sciences and medicine, technological inventions, mass public opinion, the emergence of mass movements and ideologies. People's lives changed more fundamentally than ever before.

This dynamic of change was the start of a half-century of seeking and negotiating the appropriate political, cultural and social answers to a challenge unequalled by any that had preceded it. All the major social orders of the modern period came about in this period or reached their totalitarian extreme. Above all the new movements of socialism and nationalism can be read as reactions to the dynamic of change introduced before the turn of the century, as can the great dictatorships of the twentieth century which established themselves during or after the First World War; but so too can the endless variants of the constantly renewed adaptation of values and norms, of ways of life and everyday culture, to this new general framework.

In this phase – of about eighty years' duration – which we refer to as “High Modernism”, every possible variant of all possible models of societies was tried out and played through, often with disastrous results.

However, in the process, elements of certain principles also gradually emerged, hardened by experience, which proved their practicability and their superiority over the totalitarian models, especially after the end of the Second World War: a balanced combination of state welfare and market capitalism, the grounding of state and society in the rule of law, or the formulation of the relationship between freedom of the individual and social commitment.

With the crisis of industrialism in the 1970s, however, these answers began to crumble, and the social models were called into question again. Whilst in 1990/1991 the European West was celebrating its ultimate political triumph, its foundations were already eroding, leading to a renewed, prolonged pressure to adapt, a process whose outcome is still undecided. It was not just the significance of the nation state that began to disappear, however. The structures of industrialism which had emerged in the High Modern period were also getting brittle: the unchallenged position of the secondary sector, the received social hierarchies with their mass hosts of skilled industrial workers, the comprehensive state social welfare system or the traditional nuclear family. At the same time, a profound socio-cultural change took place, in

the course of which the orientation by the norms and values of the turn of the century began to lose in significance.

An interpretation of this kind is an attempt to formulate a point of departure for a comparative consideration of the history of Europe in the modern period. It should make it possible to take greatly differing studies, which did not explicitly focus on comparison – such as those on individual national histories, for example – and draw them into a comparative context, without prejudicing national-historical developments. An approach of this kind spells the end of exclusive recourse to national historiography; however, it does, however, bring to light nationally specific paths through contrast with other nations. At the same time, however, the approach directs the focus towards developments *before* the beginning of the high modern period, i.e. both to the ‘long nineteenth century’ and, more generally, to the ‘Sattelzeit’ around 1800. If one regards the period around 1900 as a phase of transformation similar in impact to the upheavals around 1800, the question of the relationship between these two phases will give rise to interesting insights, especially regarding the sometimes very different courses of events in the various European countries. Secondly, however, one should also highlight the effects of the even older common ‘ancient European’ traditions which continued to influence society and culture right up to the eve of the twentieth century, passing over the thresholds of the revolutionary upheavals between 1789 and 1848 and the beginnings of industrialization. Until the middle of the twentieth century, both liberals and those who were sceptical about progress continually turned to the more distant history of Europe as an essential landmark. Nationalism too drew its power from an admittedly often very one-sided interpretation and re-reading of the medieval and early-modern history of Europe, which in part amounted to a complete and utter *invention of the past*. On the other hand, the history of Europe before the nineteenth century provided a given, if certainly not undisputed, stock of common traditions, which could to a certain extent be fallen back on in laying the foundations for a new beginning.

The aim must therefore be, on the one hand, to integrate the core period of High Modernism into further historical perspectives which draw in the present, as well as the *longue durée* of European history as a whole. On the other hand, however, it is equally important to examine European High Modernism in the context of the global history of Modernism, be it in relation to colonial and postcolonial structures, or in relation to transnational economic, cultural, or political processes.

The outline given here does not constitute a research programme, but rather an interpretative framework as a common point of reference which will facilitate communication among the

various researchers and create a forum for discussion about comparative approaches to the history of European societies. The approach is intended to lead to the establishment of a broad-based interpretation of European modern history in Freiburg, and to create a magnet for the historians of the modern period in Europe whose influence extends far and near.

c. Ideal conditions at the University of Freiburg

For many years, the Department of History of the University of Freiburg has been developing a specialization in European history, building on the work of eminent century. The planned School of Historical Studies will be ideally complemented by the activities described and by the forthcoming PhD Training Group “The History of Europe in the Modern Period“, which will be closely connected with the School. Freiburg historians such as Ernst Schulin and Wolfgang Reinhard. This focus has been further expanded in recent years. The research field described above will build on the project “European History in the 20th Century“, launched four years ago, in which, in cooperation with historians elsewhere in Germany and in various other European countries, a series of European national histories are being written in the context of the above reflections. The Freiburg participants of the project are Franz-Josef Brüggemeier (focusing on Great Britain), and Ulrich Herbert (focusing on Germany), the coordinator of the project; they are joined by their fellow researchers Hirschfeld (Stuttgart) covering the Netherlands, Krumeich (Düsseldorf) and Jurth (Freiburg, Department of Romance Languages and Literature) for France, Woller (Munich) for Italy, Borodziej (Warsaw) for Poland, Calic (Munich) for Yugoslavia, Von Klimó (Potsdam) for Hungary, and Tanner (Zürich) for Switzerland. A research group entitled “Comparative European History” was set up, affiliated to Ulrich Herbert’s chair, in which the research questions and methodological approaches outlined above were explored and went on to form the basis for two pilot studies (Dutch Catholicism in the 20th Century; Mass Culture Debate in France). Roland G. Asch provides Freiburg with a specialization in European history in the Early Modern period, which is shaped particularly by his project on the European nobility and his comparative studies of the processes of state formation. The appointment of Jörn Leonhard to a chair means that Freiburg has gained one of the most high-profile historians of the younger generation, whose specialization lies in comparative European history. century. The planned School of Historical Studies will be ideally complemented by the activities described and by the forthcoming PhD Training Group “The History of Europe in the Modern Period“, which will be closely connected with the School. He is currently engaged in a large-scale project comparing the European empires of the 19th century. The planned School of Historical

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