

Academic and Administrative Affairs

Some Words on German Study Culture

Education in Germany is influenced by the Humboldtian idea of science dating back to the early nineteenth century and the ideals of Enlightenment. Accordingly students are expected to educate themselves rationally and independently. They are encouraged to find their own way of thinking and expand their abilities, resulting in independent reflection and self-contained analysis. Academic freedom is crucial to this concept.

Today these ideas are still present. Many curricula are kept flexible by containing areas of specialisation and a broad choice of elective courses. Students can select those fitting best their personal interests.

What does this mean for you? Use the first weeks of the semester to visit all classes you are interested in. Initially, this might be more workload than a normal semester usually contains. After a couple of weeks it will be easier to decide which courses to continue and which to drop. You can change your first choice of courses! Once you have decided which courses you want to take please do not forget to register for exams on time! The registration for exams is mandatory! The registration will presumably be possible from the middle of November (winter semester) or from the middle of May (summer semester). [Current dates and deadlines for examinations and registration](#) can be found on our website.

Since the curriculum is meant to be very flexible, clashes of courses cannot be avoided. It might seem unusual at first, but you will soon learn that this is a quite common issue. In case you really want to take overlapping courses, you can ask the lecturer when starting the course, if the lecture can be video taped and published online. Do not forget to get in touch with your fellow students to keep you updated about the topics covered in class. The attendance at lectures is generally not compulsory in contrast to seminars, practical courses and certain exercises.

However, we strongly recommend that you attend lectures regularly otherwise you will definitely struggle to pass it. Often lecturers discuss topics or do projects not included in scripts or power point presentations. They expect you to be present and actively take part in their lectures especially, if the group is small, which is an ideal condition to make the most of it. Questions can be asked and answered quickly in smaller groups, for instance. Also, lectures particularly at Master's level do not have a textbook to follow because they cover current research topics. Attending the lectures regularly you can be at the state-of-the-art of science and technology!

Students studying at TUM are expected to work and study independently and autonomously, especially at lectures. Seminars, practical courses, projects and exercises, however, often request group work.

In case of any questions concerning courses (organisation, content...) or difficulties with courses, please do not hesitate to contact the lecturer or the assistant on time or discuss it directly after the lecture. Every lecturer (assistant) offers consultation hours which you can



attend generally without prior registration. If there are no consultation hours then you can ask for an appointment via e-mail. Our professors and assistants are used to students having a lot of questions.

Keep in mind: The freedom each student is granted comes along with self-responsibility, self-organization and a good time management.

Master's program in Informatics – in detail

The Master's program in Informatics is a very good example for this concept. Students are very flexible in the choice of their courses and thereby, in the way how they focus there studies.

For example, you can choose lectures from a certain subject area in Informatics and in addition to that take a seminar, practical course, a guided research and the Master's Thesis in the same area. All in all, you can obtain up to 80 ECTS (out of 120 ECTS) in one subject area which is then obviously your specialization. Another possibility is to widen your knowledge and take lectures, practical course, a guided research, seminar and the Master's Thesis in different subject areas. For an overview please have a look at the "[Study Structure](#)".

The best approach for the first semester is to choose lectures from at least three different subject areas. Then you can still decide which subject area you want to specialize in. At the end of the lecture period of each semester (WS end of January, SS beginning of July) you can register for seminars and practical courses taking place in the upcoming semester. This is not an option for your first semester at TUM because the registration process is already over.

During your Master's program in Informatics it is mandatory to do an Interdisciplinary project in an application area different from Informatics. Again, you are here also very flexible which makes it sometimes a little difficult to find the right project. For further details please read the "[How-To for an IDP](#)".

In case, a student has bridging courses it is mandatory to take them in the first year. Please keep in mind, without passing them you are not allowed to continue with your Master's program in Informatics.

Generally, examinations can be taken as many times as you want as long as you fulfil the time limits. If you take an exam once you do not have to repeat it; you have the possibility to switch the courses. For detailed regulations please read the [Subject Examination Regulations](#).