

# Research areas of University of Jena

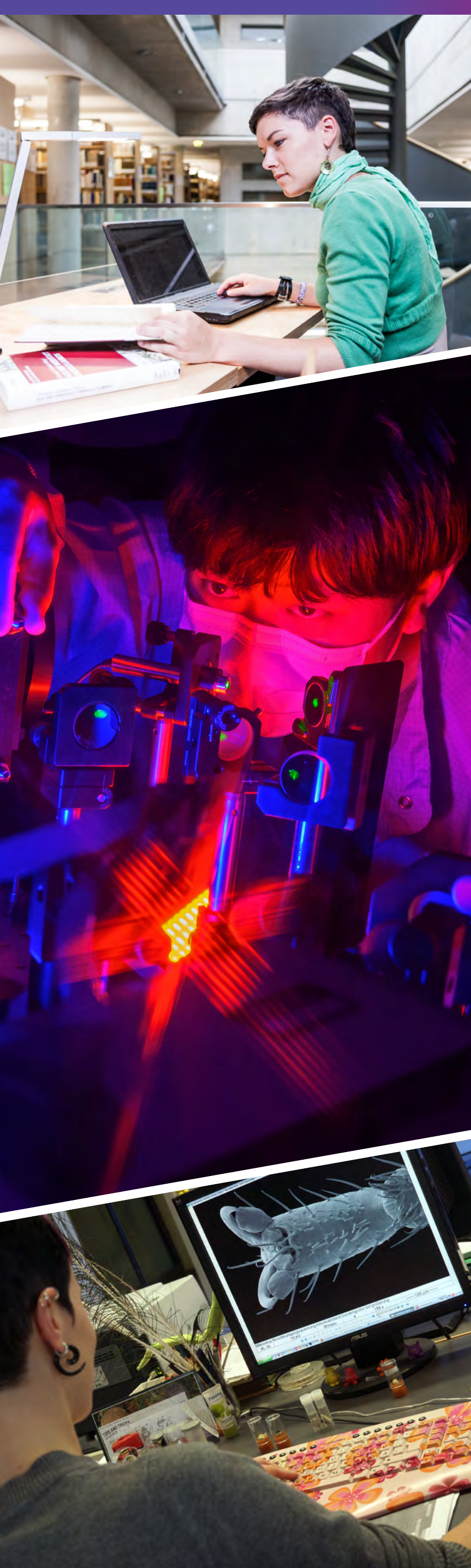
University of Jena is a centre of excellence in research and teaching – with a high international reputation and a thriving culture of collaboration. The university has organized its research into three profile areas:

- In [LIGHT](#), researchers make ground-breaking discoveries in quantum computing and photonic technologies, as well as innovations in developing recyclable and environmentally friendly materials for a sustainable future.
- In [LIFE](#), researchers reveal the intricate web of microbial interactions that sustain our life on Earth, and develop novel medical and ecological tools that benefit human and environmental health.
- In [LIBERTY](#), researchers delve into the forces that bind societies together and those that drive upheaval and transformation. Their work engages

with pressing global debates – from the climate crisis to the troubling resurgence of extremist ideologies within democratic societies worldwide.

In 2025, the University of Jena was awarded with [two Excellence Clusters](#) in the German-wide Excellence Competition: The “[Balance of the Microverse](#)” Cluster focuses on understanding microbial communities. The “[Imaginamics](#)” Cluster does research on what holds societies together: shared ideas and visions of the future. These clusters will be funded for the next seven years with up to 95 Million Euro.

In the next year, the University will apply for the German title of “University of Excellence”. Receiving this title is a great honour and would result in an additional funding of between 10 and 15 million euros per year.





# Excellent conditions for an academic career

The University of Jena is highly attractive for international early career researchers. More than 1,000 international doctoral candidates and 200 international postdocs have chosen the University of Jena as the place to conduct their research. They are benefitting from the excellent conditions that have been created in Jena for doctoral researchers and postdocs in the last few years.

As a pioneer in promoting early career researchers in Germany, the University of Jena was one of the first universities to set up a central [Graduate Academy](#). The Academy does not only provide services for doctoral candidates, but offers guidance for all phases of the academic career – from research-oriented studies to the doctoral and postdoctoral phases to the transition to professorship.

In 2012, the University has established a „[House for Early Career Researchers](#)“. It is the central point of contact for all researchers at Friedrich Schiller University. Here, doctoral candidates and postdocs find service, consulting, and training opportunities – all under one roof. Furthermore the University has established a doctoral council, that represents the interests of doctoral researchers in the University's committees since 2012.

The excellent quality of working conditions for researchers has been confirmed by the European Commission in 2025: The Friedrich Schiller University has received the „[HR Excellence in Research Award](#)“. This label honours research institutions that pursue a strategy to promote excellent working conditions for researchers.





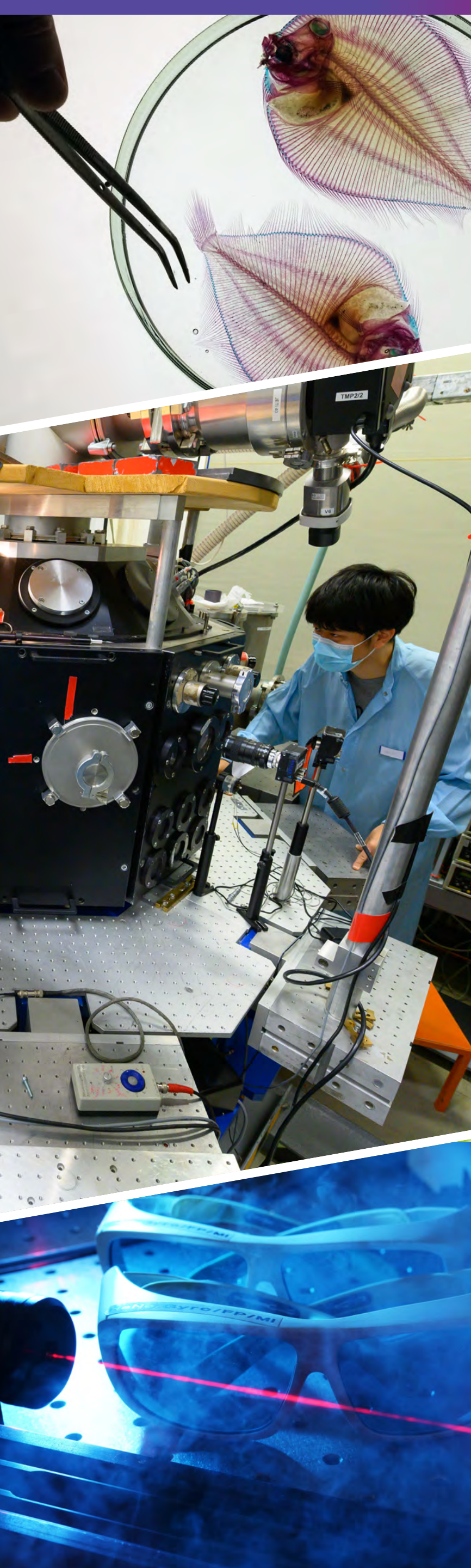
# A vibrant research hub, integrated in global networks

The university collaborates with many renowned research institutes in Jena and in Germany. These partnerships enable ground-breaking, interdisciplinary research projects that benefit both the university and the local research landscape. Joint initiatives in fields such as photonics, environmental science, and social sciences attract top international talent and foster a collaborative environment where resources and expertise are shared freely. No wonder the University of Jena is one of Germany's top 10 start-up universities.

On a global level, University of Jena [cooperates with more than 200 universities](#). It is a partner in a number of international research and university alliances, in large EU projects and interdisciplinary networks.

The University of Jena is one of the nine partner universities of the [European Campus of City Universities](#) (EC2U), a multicultural and multilingual European University Alliance. Together, the EC2U partners are creating an innovative space that enables seamless mobility between universities and cities. EC2U stands for new ways in shaping a united Europe and addressing global challenges.

As a University with a long-established tradition, the University of Jena is part of the [Coimbra Group](#) – an association of European universities with high international prestige and history. This partnership maintains the cultural and academic exchange, and encourages the internationalization.





# How to start a PhD in Jena

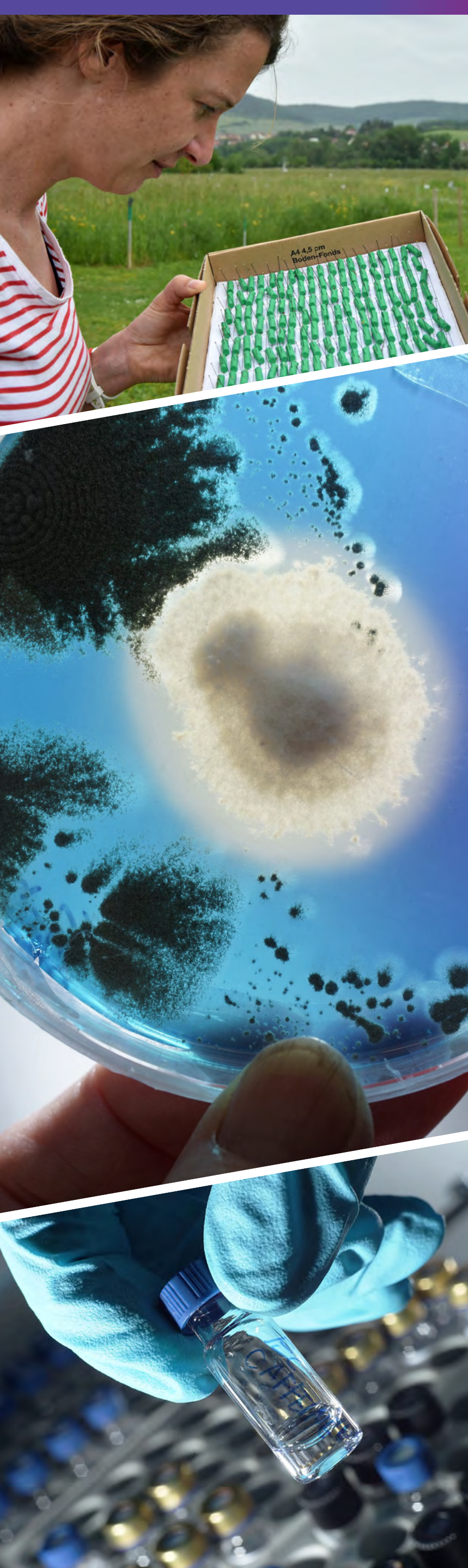
If you are interested in starting a PhD at Friedrich Schiller University Jena, there are three different ways of doing so: In a structured doctoral programme, through employment as a research assistant or through a scholarship.

There are more than 20 structured programmes at Friedrich Schiller University Jena. In these institutions, you will conduct thematically focused research around a jointly supported research programme and will be supervised by a team of multiple instructors. You can find an overview of all structured programmes at Jena University [here](#).

Another option to pursue a doctorate, is by an employment as a research assistant at the chair of a professor. In order to find these positions, you can search the [university job market](#).

A third way to start a doctorate in Germany is by searching for a supervisor and a funding individually. Therefore, you should ask a professor if it would be possible to conduct a PhD thesis under his or her supervision. In order to find a potential supervisor, please search the University's website to find the institute or chair that is most fitting to your research focus. A starting point for your search can be the list of [all the faculties of University of Jena](#).

As soon as you have found a supervisor, you can ask them about the possibilities of financing your doctorate. If there are no open working positions in the institute or at the chair of your supervisor, you could try applying for a scholarship. One common scholarship for foreign doctoral candidates is the [DAAD Research Scholarship](#).





# Frequently asked questions about starting a PhD

## **What are the language requirements? Do I have to know German?**

Whether you need to have German skills depends on your supervisor. If your supervisor agrees that English is the language of your PhD, you can write your thesis and do most of your work in English. For everyday life some German skills might be useful though.

## **Are there tuition fees?**

No. You do not have to pay tuition fees for a doctorate in Germany.

## **I am applying from abroad. Is my degree sufficient for admission as a doctoral candidate?**

Upon admission, the faculty checks whether your foreign degree is sufficient to be accepted for the doctorate in Jena. If your degree is not sufficient, the faculty may admit you to the doctorate under certain condi-

tions. One such condition could be, for example, that you have to complete a certain number of credits by attending seminars in the course of your doctorate.

## **Are there application deadlines for the admission as a doctoral candidate?**

There are no application deadlines for admission as a doctoral candidate. You can be accepted as a doctoral candidate at any time.

Application deadlines only exist if you want to apply for a doctoral position in a structured doctoral programme. About 25 per cent of all doctorates take place in such a programme in Germany. The majority of doctorates are conducted as so-called “individual doctorates”.

If you have any questions about starting a doctorate at University of Jena, you can contact the [Welcome and Service Desk for Doctoral Researchers and Postdocs](#).





# The city of Jena: History meets modern technology

Jena is a modern and lively city in the heart of Germany. It's special charm stems from its historically important past, the beautiful surrounding countryside, and the innovative international research and industry, as well as the diverse cultural life.

## A city of history and tradition

At the end of the 18th century, the city became Germany's most important intellectual centre – sparked by the presence of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller. In the nineteenth century, Jena developed into an industrial powerhouse thanks to the work of the three scientific and economic leaders Carl Zeiss, Otto Schott and Ernst Abbe.

## Modern cultural scene

In addition to museums of technology, science, literature, and art history, there is also an attractive and diverse cultural scene in Jena. For example, the annual »Kulturarena«, an open-air festival that attracts international musicians. Also, there are plenty of top-class events among the wide range of performances at the Theatre, Art Society, and Philharmonic Orchestra.

## Embedded in wonderful nature

The city is located in the Saale valley. It offers an almost Mediterranean landscape with limestone hills up to 400 metres high and has a variety of cycle paths and a charming area for taking a stroll or hike.





# A Tradition of Innovation: The History of Friedrich Schiller University

Since its foundation in 1558, the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena has been consistently at the centre of intellectual movements in the humanities and natural sciences.

At the end of the 18th century, the University became a centre of classical German philosophy, hosting among others: Johann Gottlob Fichte, Friedrich-Wilhelm Joseph Schelling and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Also, Friedrich Schiller, who was a professor of history at the University, wrote several of his dramas in Jena.

In the nineteenth century, Jena was home to some of the world's most renowned educational scientists such as Friedrich Fröbel and Peter Petersen.

In the natural sciences, the most distinguished representative of evolution theory in Germany, Ernst Haeckel, did his groundbreaking research at the University of Jena.

The optician and mechanic Carl Zeiss, the physicist Ernst Abbe and the glass chemist Otto Schott formed an impressive collaboration at the end of the 19th century, a unique example of cooperation between science and industry, that has been shaping the profile of scientific research at Friedrich Schiller University Jena to this day.

