

# FAQ Studying am CERES

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# 1. General information on studying at CERES

## 1.1 First Steps

### 1.1.1 Moodle Class “Welcome to Religious Studies”

In order to make your first steps in your new studies, you should enrol in the Moodle course "Religious Studies - Welcome and Information for New Students." There you will receive all necessary information, have an overview of important documents and videos that introduce you to studying and living in Germany.

You can find the Moodle class directly via Moodle, your “Letter of approval” or via this link:

<https://moodle.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/course/view.php?id=27428>

In order to log into Moodle, please take a look at 2.1 of this document.

### 1.1.2 Getting to know the important documents

Please read the relevant and important documents right at the beginning of your studies, which will serve as a basis for your studies and will make your start much easier.

These include:

- This FAQ
- Module Handbook 2018
- To Do List 2018
- eCampus - find - register - deregister courses

All relevant documents can be found here:

<https://ma.ceres.rub.de/en/program/documents/>

## 1.2 Examination regulation

### 1.2.1 What is an examination regulation?

Examination regulations (also called “PO” from German *Prüfungsordnung*) set out the framework conditions for studying at a university. They are legally binding and regulate, for example, the overall objectives of the degree programmes, subject combinations, prerequisites, duration of study and standard period of study, permitted forms of examination, framework conditions for theses and much more. The examination regulations are general for Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes and regulate, for example, the entire 2-subject model at RUB. Therefore, they do not explicitly address individual teaching and learning contents of the Religious Studies programme.

### 1.2.2 Which examination regulations is my examination regulation?

The PO is usually based on one's start of the degree programme. POs are sometimes revised and updated so that a new PO becomes binding. In this case, one nevertheless remains in one's own PO until the study programme has been completed or the respective PO expires. In the latter case, a change to the latest PO

is indispensable in order to complete the degree. You can see in eCampus to which PO you have been assigned. It can also be found, for example, on the certificate of study. The most recent and thus current PO for the Master's programme is the PO2018.

### 1.2.3 Where can I find documents for my examination regulations?

All documents concerning the respective POs are available on the CERES website.

German: <https://studium.ceres.rub.de/de/ma-programm/master-arts-alt/dokumente/>

English: <https://ma.ceres.rub.de/en/program/documents/>

In addition, a German version of the General PO can also be found on the website of the respective examination office.

### 1.2.4 Expiry of old examination regulations

Examination regulations are updated and revised every few years. This results in new, legally binding POs. Old POs are usually still accepted a few semesters after the new PO is published, so that it is possible to complete a degree in the old PO despite the new PO coming into force. Ultimately, however, old POs expire at some point. The PO2013 of the Master's programme, for example, expired at the end of the winter semester 20/21. All students who were in the PO2013 and were not able to complete their studies in WiSe20/21 had therefore to change to PO2016 or PO2018. In the case of a PO change, the module structure and the structure of the degree programme will change, so that former study achievements must be converted to the new PO.

If you are affected by an expiring PO and have to change to a new PO, please contact the study coordination.

E-Mail: [koordinationrelwiss@rub.de](mailto:koordinationrelwiss@rub.de)

## 1.3 Module Handbooks

### 1.3.1 What is a Module Handbook?

A module handbook is bound to the examination regulations. It deals with the subject-specific regulations of the respective subject of study. This means that, in contrast to the examination regulations, the module handbook is designed directly for the subject-specific regulations of the study programme in Religious Studies. The module handbook of the respective PO regulates, for example, the module structure, the course of studies and the various forms of examination.

Module manuals for the respective PO can be viewed on the CERES website.

German: <https://studium.ceres.rub.de/de/ma-programm/master-arts-alt/dokumente/>

English: <https://ma.ceres.rub.de/en/program/documents/>

### 1.3.2 Which information can I find in the module handbook?

The module handbook explains the structure of the individual modules. There you can find information on the number of courses, CPs (credit points), hours per week, content and objectives of the module, contact persons, forms of teaching, examinations, but also whether the courses are elective or compulsory (for elective and compulsory courses see point 2.2.4.).

## 1.4 Further information

### 1.4.1 What are the most important documents for my studies?

In addition to the examination regulations and the module handbook (see 1.1 and 1.2), every student should take a look at the study regulations and the subject-specific regulations. Some helpful documents for the study of Religious Studies are regularly updated on the CERES website. Here you can find, for example, sample timetables, course overviews and the To-Do-List of the respective examination regulations.

### 1.4.2 What forms of exams exist in the Religious Studies programme at CERES?

The study of Religious Studies at the CERES is accompanied by various forms of exams. Usually, the forms of exams are predetermined (see module handbook). Written exams, term papers and oral exams are envisaged. An exam does not have to be taken in every single course. This depends on the module structure.

### 1.4.3 How do I keep track of my study progress?

In addition to the official and legally binding documents mentioned above, there is another really helpful document for keeping track of the course of studies: The To-Do List, which was created by the Student Council. This list is available for both Bachelor's and Master's students of the various POs. It lists the course of studies according to modules and provides brief information on requirements, forms of exams and the relevance of grades for the final grade of the degree programme. It is therefore a smaller form of the module handbook. The orientation to the To-Do lists makes it easier for students to keep track of their studies. It is recommended to carefully fill out the To-Do List from the beginning of the study programme. The To-Do Lists are published on the CERES website.

German: <https://studium.ceres.rub.de/de/ma-programm/master-arts-alt/dokumente/>

English: <https://ma.ceres.rub.de/en/program/documents/>

## 2. Modules, courses, registrations, de-registrations

### 2.1 Course registrations (eCampus and Moodle)

#### 2.1.1 How can I register at eCampus?

On the CERES website you can find a document that explains step by step how to log in to eCampus. In the Moodle course "Religious Studies – Welcome and Information for New Students" you can also find a video tutorial.

In order to log in to Moodle, you have to log in with your RUB-ID and the corresponding password. If you do not have a RUB-ID yet, you can alternatively create a guest account until you have received all the necessary information. Courses can be found by typing the course name in the search field, if this does not work use the course number. It is important to pay attention to the correct semester! The respective semester in which a course is offered is either in front of or behind the course name.

#### **Important Links:**

Moodle: <https://moodle.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/>

eCampus: [https://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/ecampus/ecampus-webclient/login\\_studierende.html](https://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/ecampus/ecampus-webclient/login_studierende.html)

BA: <https://studium.ceres.rub.de/de/ba-programm/bachelor-arts/dokumente/>

MA: <https://studium.ceres.rub.de/de/ma-programm/master-arts-alt/dokumente/>

#### 2.1.2 Where do I have to register first: eCampus or Moodle?

A registration in eCampus should always be done before a registration in Moodle. Registrations in eCampus are binding and necessary to get CPs for the respective course. In addition, important information about the courses is often only passed on via the registration lists in eCampus.

Course registrations on eCampus usually start on 1<sup>st</sup> March or 1<sup>st</sup> September. However, first semester students should not worry too much about this. In the first week of each semester, there will be a welcoming event where the registration procedure for eCampus will be explained. Accordingly, first semester students can still register during the first week of the semester.

#### 2.1.3 Where do I get my passwords for the Moodle courses?

Moodle passwords are usually given out by lecturers during the first week of lectures, i.e. during the first course session, or distributed via the mail distribution list of eCampus registrations (this is another reason why prior registration in eCampus is important).

Exception online semester: In an online semester, Moodle passwords are usually distributed via mail (registrations in eCampus) or via the list of Moodle passwords on the CERES website.

## 2.2 Modules

### 2.2.1 What is a module and what is the difference between *module* and *course*?

A module always consists of several courses. By definition, modules are therefore not taken, but merely completed. Several courses make up a module. A module never consists of only one course (exception Master module S11 in PO 18). Courses can thus be lectures, seminars or exercises that together form a module. How many courses of which type have to be completed to pass a module can be found in the module handbook and additionally in the to-do list. In eCampus it is possible to see which course belongs to which module and what type of course has to be completed. In some cases, a course can be taken in several modules, but in the end it can only be assigned to one module (see 2.2.2). Explanations of individual course types are given below.

### 2.2.2 How do I attend to a module?

A module is not taken directly. Individual courses (seminars, lectures, etc.) together make up a module. You therefore complete the module when you have completed all the required courses and certificates of achievement. A look into the module handbook and the to-do-lists (explanations under 1.3), provides clarity about which courses have to be attended for which modules. It is important to note that some courses can be credited for different modules. This does not mean that this course will be credited in both modules at the same time. Students decide for themselves in which module they take the respective course.

**IMPORTANT: Courses can never be double credited!**

### 2.2.3 Can I split a module over several semesters?

Yes, and this is even necessary in most modules as courses of some modules are not completely offered in one semester, especially in the 1-sub. MA. Therefore, a completion of the module even has to be done in several semesters. However, it makes sense to complete the "PRE module", so your individual prerequisites for studying at CERES, as soon as possible in the first or if necessary second semesters.

### 2.2.4 What is a compulsory module, a compulsory elective module and an elective module?

A compulsory module has fixed courses that cannot be selected and must be taken in any case. In the Master of PO 2018 this concerns the module S11. Alternative courses cannot be attended.

A compulsory elective module consists of fixed courses, of which a certain number must be taken. For example, in the AC module, in addition to the internship, an internship-preparatory course must be attended, which is offered every semester.

An elective module consists of various courses, of which a certain number must be selected. The courses can vary from semester to semester and do not have to be repeated.

## 2.2.5 How to “combine” a module in eCampus??

Take a look at point 5.

## 2.3 Course forms and types

### 2.3.1 What does “Vorlesung”/”lecture” mean?

A lecture is usually supported by presentations of the lecturers. Discussions in the plenum - and thus with and among students - are not excluded. The lectures are organized by the respective teaching staff. However, the lecturer's share of speeches is usually significantly greater than in other course formats. The classic form of examination for a lecture is a written exam (there may also be deviations here).

### 2.3.2 What does “Übung”/”exercise” mean?

An exercise can accompany a lecture and thus deepen, expand or review the knowledge imparted in the lecture. In Religious Studies, however, there are also other forms of exercises (e.g. courses of the module R3 as well as of the module P, but this rather concerns the BA or your individual prerequisites). Exercises always require a large amount of cooperation from the students. Forms of examination within exercises can be homework, presentations or other performance certificates with a high degree of self-creation. In the case of language courses, a written exam can also be used to check the students understanding of a topic.

### 2.3.3 What does “Seminar”/”seminar” mean?

A seminar can be understood as a mixture of exercise and lecture. However, prior knowledge is usually assumed. The amount of speaking by the lecturer is usually much less than in a lecture. It is usually not about frontal teaching, but more about plenary discussion. Topics are studied in depth together, individually or in group work. Frequently, presentations are given or weekly assignments are requested, and a term paper may be written as a conclusion (module completion).

### 2.3.4 Recommendation on course assignments

Not all courses at CERES are offered regularly. This is especially the case for in-depth courses in systematics and history of religions as well as for the introduction to individual religions (R3).<sup>1</sup> Students are therefore advised to take courses in which they have a particular thematic interest when they are offered. It cannot be assumed that courses will be offered a second time.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that R3 is a B.A. module. However, if you need to catch up on basic knowledge, you can do so here, provided the course is offered in English. An R3 course can also be credited in Module C (see 4.2.5).

## 2.4 Credit Points, schedule, times

### 2.4.1 What are Credit Points/CPs?

Credit points (CPs) are the points that students receive at the end for a course, assuming they have passed it. These CPs stand for the amount of work involved, whereby approx. 1 CP should be more or less equivalent to 30 working hours.

### 2.4.2 How many CPs do I get for a class and how do I receive them?

Usually, you will receive 3 CPs for the participation in a course. To receive these 3CPs you need to do different tasks, depending on what the lecturer of the class requires. This might be a presentation, weekly Hand-Ins, a small paper or the like.

If you need more than 3 CPs, because you want to write the final paper for a module (usually 4 CP) or because you only need e.g. 2 CPs additionally to finish your C module, please talk to the respective lecturer early enough. 5 to 7 pages are approximately 1 CP. Thus, in order to achieve an additional 4 CP for the completion of a module, approximately 20 to 25 pages must be written (number may vary depending on the lecturer).

In order to receive CP in the system, you must be registered for the respective course in eCampus, otherwise CPs cannot be entered.

### 2.4.3 When will I get my CPs/results?

CPs are not awarded until the end of the semester, and sometimes not until the beginning of the new semester. So please be patient. However, if you have taken a course in the summer semester and the CPs have not been registered by December, or a course in the winter semester and the CPs have not been registered by August, you can point out the missing CPs to the lecturer.

If you need the CP quicker because, for example, you want to register your Master's thesis, please talk to the lecturers about your situation before the course ends.

## 3. Study Achievements

### 3.1 What do I have to do to pass a course?

Course requirements can vary widely and depend on the lecturer and the course. In general, regular and active participation is considered a basic requirement for successfully passing a course. In addition, various assignments may be given. Students are often required to prepare a presentation, write an essay at the end of the semester, or submit hand-ins or discussion questions during the semester. What students have to do to pass the course is set at the first session.

#### 3.1.1 Presentations

Presentations are prepared and presented either alone or in small groups of up to three people. The topics of the individual sessions during the semester are usually announced at the beginning of the semester. A presentation includes a PowerPoint (or similar programme) presentation, sometimes also a thesis paper. A research

question or hypothesis should be formulated at the beginning, if not otherwise agreed upon. A presentation can last between 15 and 45 minutes (depending on the lecturer's instruction) and should end with a discussion. Although footnotes do not have to be included in the presentation, a list of figures as well as a list of sources and references is absolutely necessary at the end. If literal quotations are reproduced within the presentation, these must be marked.

### 3.1.2 Essays

Essays are short written statements that can be between 3 and 10 pages long, depending on the assignment. Essays are shorter than term papers but have the same scientific standard. At the beginning, a question or thesis is posed, which is to be dealt with in the further course of the work. The structure always follows the same scheme: introduction, main body, conclusion, sources. Essays must be cited correctly, and a list of figures (when shown within the Essay), sources and references is an absolute must.

### 3.1.2 Hand-Ins

Hand-Ins are short summaries of the literature that students must prepare for the lesson. The page length is usually 1 to 2 pages. In these short summaries, students can write down what they have understood and will take away from the text, but also ask questions of the text or exercise criticism. A certain number of hand-ins must be submitted, which will be determined at the beginning of the semester.

### 3.1.3 Discussion Questions

Discussion questions as seminar content serve primarily to review the text which has to be read for the respective seminar lesson. These discussion questions are detailed formulated questions, not just one-sentence questions. Exact length specifications are possible. The formalities are determined individually by the lecturers. In general, discussion questions should not result in yes-no answers. This means that rather questions need to be asked about "how", "why" or "what" (and the like). They should also consider the whole seminar context and, at best, not be based on the text alone - unless they are discussion questions intended to contribute to the understanding of the text. Normally, lecturers who choose this format expect you to provide one to two discussion questions per session.

## 3.2 What to do to pass the module examination?

Usually, the module final examination consists of a term paper. Depending on the required CP number, the page length may vary. A rough rule is: 5 to 7 pages must be written per 1 CP. A term paper for 4 CP is accordingly 20 to 25 pages long. As with the Essay, at the beginning, a research question or thesis is set, which is to be dealt with in the further course of the work. Also, the structure always follows the same scheme: introduction, main body, conclusion, sources. Term Papers must be cited correctly, and a list of illustrations, sources and references is an absolute must!

In S11 however, you need to pass an oral exam in order to pass the module examination. You can find more information about S11 at 4.2.1.

### 3.3 What to consider when writing a paper?

When a term paper or the like needs to be written, certain standards and rules **must be followed**. One of the most important rules refers to the proper and correct citation. Every source, every quotation, every piece of information taken from a book, an article or the like must be indicated in a footnote and in the bibliography. If not cited correctly, students commit plagiarism, which in Germany can be punished with a fine of up to 50,000€ as well as expulsion from German universities! Therefore, please check from the very beginning if all information is given and cited correctly.

Apart from the citation, things like line spacing, number of characters, margins etc. have to be considered. Detailed instructions on how to write a term paper can be found here:

<https://ma.ceres.rub.de/en/program/documents/> (document: A Guide to Academic Writing: [https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer\\_public/df/a2/dfa2d6e5-82ba-4d85-8c09-e0356a149a61/guide\\_to\\_academic\\_writing.pdf](https://static.ceres.rub.de/media/filer_public/df/a2/dfa2d6e5-82ba-4d85-8c09-e0356a149a61/guide_to_academic_writing.pdf))

## 4. Master

### 4.1 Prerequisites for the Master programme

#### 4.1.1 What does "mandatory counselling" mean?

The "mandatory counselling" should have taken place before the enrolment in the Master's programme, at the latest when the Master's place is accepted. This conversation is a general counselling about the Master's programme, during which information about studying at CERES should be provided. In this counselling, the module structure is presented and it is explained which requirements have to be fulfilled in order to be able to complete the Master's degree in Religious Studies. Usually, this conversation takes place with the Dean of Studies. At the end of it, a written certificate is issued confirming the meeting.

If you have completed a Bachelor's degree in Religious Studies or the like outside the RUB, you must have a counselling interview with the Dean of Students **before** transferring to the Master's programme. You need the certificate to enrol the Master's programme in the SSC/online.

#### 4.1.2 What are PRE courses (prerequisites) and when do I have to take them?

Students who wish to pursue their Master's degree at CERES and either transfer to the Ruhr-Universität from another university or have completed a subject other than Religious Studies in their Bachelor's degree may need to catch up on courses. These may include introductory courses from the Bachelor's program and methods courses. In addition, it may be necessary to make up the 10CP language certificate in a source language. Which courses each student has to take as a prerequisite will be decided after the application or admission. Usually, the classes "Introduction to Religious Studies" and "Methods in Religious Studies" (names may vary) need to be taken by every student who does not have a background in Religious Studies. The courses must be passed in order to participate in the Master's program. However,

**they do not result in creditable CP for the Master,<sup>2</sup>** as they are only basic requirements, in addition to the actual Master courses.

#### 4.1.3 Are there any other important requirements?

Students who have completed their Bachelor's degree in a subject other than Religious Studies may be able to begin a Master's program with us, depending on the thematic focus of the Bachelor's program. It is important to note that a certain number of CP courses must not be exceeded in the Master's program. This means that not every Bachelor's degree in the humanities is suitable for an entry into the Master's program at CERES. Arrangements regarding prerequisites and admissions are made with the Dean of Studies.

In addition, evidence of at least 10 CP must be provided in a source language relevant to the study of religious studies. If you are unsure whether your language skills are sufficient, ask the study coordination.

## 4.2 Notes on modules of the MA program of PO18

### 4.2.1 What S11?

Module S11 consists of only one course: Key Concepts. It is, so to speak, the introductory module to the Master's program. Currently, this course is only offered in the summer semester. Students entering the Master's program in a winter semester will therefore take this course in the second semester. Important: S11, although it is the "introductory course", is not comparable to the course "Introduction to Religious Studies" - which must be taken as a prerequisite by some Master's students. These are two different courses.

Module S11, so the "Key Concepts" course, must be taken **by all** Master's students.

### 4.2.2 Module S12

In the module S12, seminars in the area of systematics must be taken and should thereby serve an intensive examination of different theories and methods of religious studies. In the 1-subject Master, 4 courses must be taken, whereby at least 2 courses should come from the area of theories and at least 1 course from the area of methodology (if possible), in the 2-subject Master at least one of two courses should be a theory seminar. The seminars within the module can be chosen freely, so that there can be an individual focus. Which seminars can be assigned to the module S12 can be found on eCampus.

### 4.2.3 The R-Modules

In the R-modules, a focus is placed on the history of Religions. The modules are divided geographically and chronologically. R11 deals with religious interrelationships from Western Asia and Europe up to the Reformation. Subsequently, courses can be taken in R12, which deal with the religious traditions of Western Asia to Europe since the Reformation. Courses on religions in Asia may be taken in R13. Students are not

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<sup>2</sup> Except for the course "Theories and Approaches". If your letter of approval states you need to do „Theories and Approaches“, this can then be counted as a C class.

required to take all 3 modules, but may choose 2 of the 3 modules. One module can be taken twice. Therefore, the following possible combinations result:

R11 + R11	R11 + R12	R11 + R13	R12 + R12	R12 + R13	R13 + R13
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In the 1-subject Master's program, 4 seminars must be taken in each of the two modules. There is a **final module examination in both modules**.

In the 2-subject Master's program, 2 seminars must be taken in each of the two modules. A **final module exam is only given in one** of the two modules.

#### 4.2.4 AC and SC Module

The AC module refers to the field of applied religious studies. The module SC refers to the research area. Students must choose one of the two modules. Decision preference depends on the particular goal of the degree. AC offers an insight into professions after the Master's degree and is intended to help build a profile. This module is primarily aimed at students who would like to enter the world of work outside the university after completing their Master's degree. In order to pass AC, an internship preparation course must be attended and an internship must be completed. To arrange an internship and for specific questions, CERES internship coordinators can be contacted. Contact information can be obtained from the CERES website.

SC, on the other hand, is aimed at deepening research knowledge and skills, and is thus of particular interest to those students who wish to pursue a scientific-academic career. The decision of which module is preferred is made after two completed semesters in the Master's program and should be well thought out based on one's own experiences in the programme. To pass the module, a research project must be completed and a publishable article based on it must be written. In addition, colloquia, workshops or courses at the Research School can be taken in order to achieve the required number of CP.

Further requirements and contents of the individual modules can be found in the module handbook.

#### 4.2.5 C Module

How to choose courses for C?

Module C represents the complementary area in the master's program. There are no prescribed courses in this module. Students must therefore "pick and choose" their own courses. It is possible to take courses in almost all faculties of the Ruhr-Universität, insofar as they make sense for the student's own profile formation in the study of religious studies. Courses from other faculties can also be attended. Please note here, that most courses of the Ruhr-Universität are held in German, so you need to take a look at the eCampus descriptions to see, if a course is offered in English.

If you cannot find information about the language at all, usually the class will be held in German.

If you found a seminar of another faculty, you are best advised to look through the course catalogues and contact the respective lecturers with an explanation of your desire to participate. Students who are unsure whether their desired course fits into their profile can contact the study coordination. In addition to thematically relevant courses, language profiling is also possible. Language courses can also be taken at CERES. In addition, it is possible to attend courses at CERES, e.g. Bachelor courses (S3 or R4), which are not officially open to Master students and are not a prerequisite. In this case, lecturers must be contacted in advance, as participation cannot be guaranteed. Likewise, further participation in CERES master courses is permitted if the master modules of the respective area have already been completed.

**IMPORTANT: Prerequisites cannot be added to module C!<sup>3</sup>**

### 4.3 Language of the Master's program

The Master of Religious Studies has been an international programme since the PO18. This means that the teaching in the Master is mainly in English. It may happen that individual courses are offered in German. Very good English language skills are therefore a basic requirement for a Master's degree in Religious Studies at CERES.

## 5. Graduation

### 5.1 How to “combine” modules in eCampus?

Modules must be combined in eCampus by the end of the program at the latest. This means that individual courses are assigned to the respective modules. This process has to be done manually. Since the procedure usually seems very complex, there are instructions. The study coordination recommends that all students first deal with these instructions themselves; this is usually successful. In general it has to be mentioned: Nothing can be done wrong. If modules have been combined "wrongly", this can be undone at any time. The instructions can be requested at any time from the study coordination via mail:

koordinationrelwiss@rub.de

Following the successful summary of the modules (if independent), the study coordination should first take a final look. Finally, the modules must be confirmed by the Dean of Studies. For this purpose, an appointment can be requested. Students do not take this step until the end of their studies, when all study achievements have been registered or when the final thesis is to be registered.

### 5.2 MA theses: Which examination office, with whom do I have to communicate?

Religious Studies does not have its own examination office. Theses must be registered with the examination office of Philology. Therefore, 2-subject students may have to communicate with two different examination offices if the other subject studied is not also part of the examination office of Philology. All information on the general procedure for the registration of theses and their preparation can be found on

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<sup>3</sup>There might be an exception for „Theories and Approaches“ since this prerequisite now counts to “introduction to Religious Studies”. Please ask your study coordinators about this.

the respective websites of the examination offices. (**Attention:** Most documents can only be found in German. In this case the examination office should be contacted).

<https://www.dekphil.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/pruefungsamt/pruefungsamt.html>

## 6. Help, problems, questions

### 6.1 Whom to contact for what situation?

#### *General information on contacting people at CERES (or university)*

The best way to make initial contact with anyone at CERES is by e-mail which is by most employees preferred instead of phone calls. All staff and lecturers have a RUB e-mail address, which can be found on the CERES website. Students are best advised to use their own RUB e-mail address for contact purposes, as private e-mail addresses can sometimes be classified as spam by the internal system. If you need to talk to someone personally, look for his/her office hours on the CERES homepage (see above). Always contact the person before via email or phone and arrange an appointment. Furthermore, you should always knock on someone's door and wait for an invitation before you enter his/her office.

#### *How to address someone in general or via mails*

If you meet someone in the hallway or want to write to fellow students e.g. via WhatsApp, please refrain from using forms of address such as "Lady", "Madam", "My Dear" or "Sir". These forms of address could be misunderstood and are not usually used in Germany. You can name fellow students simply by their first name. Staff members are addressed by Mister or Miss/Mrs. and their last name (if not otherwise agreed).

In general, e-mails should always follow formal rules. This means that a formal (unless otherwise agreed) greeting is used, or in other words: please respect academic titles. Address professors and/or PhDs using the correct formula, e.g. "Dear Prof. Dr. Knobler" or "Dear Dr. Freudenberg". You can check everyone's academic titles on the CERES homepage (<https://ceres.rub.de/en/people/>). If someone does not have a PhD or the title of a professor, please start your mail with "Dear Mr./Miss/Mrs." followed by the last name. If you are unsure about the pronouns of a person you can always use "Dear Maxima Mustermann", which is first name and last name without a "Mr." or "Mrs.".

In addition, the request and the reasons for the respective contact should be stated briefly and formulated. So please make sure to be understood correctly, state your question/problem as short, precise and clear as possible. The e-mail should always end with a formal greeting and, above all, with the full name of the student (first name, last name). Also, e-mails should not be sent indiscriminately to different CERES staff members. Whom students may contact for which concerns is explained below.

If unsure how to write an email, be oriented towards this example:

"Dear Prof. Dr. Exemplum,

this is an example email. I'm writing you because I need help regarding this problem. My matriculation number is 108 009 201 111.<sup>4</sup>

Thank you very much in advance!

Kind regards,

First Name Last name”

**Please take your time and make sure your E-Mails are formally and orthographically acceptable. Some people simply don't respond to emails not meeting this standard!**

**Furthermore:** It is completely normal to wait for a response for a week or two – especially when you wrote on Thursday evening/Friday or on weekends. If it is very urgent, staff members will try to answer as soon as possible, but please note that employees have a limited schedule and therefore cannot always respond immediately. If you did not receive an answer after two weeks, you might ask again via mail.

### *Study coordination*

The study coordination is considered the first point of contact for all students who have questions about general problems while studying. The reasons can be completely and utterly diverse. The general rule: Only if the study coordination cannot help you with your problem, the e-mail will be forwarded internally. It is therefore never a bad idea to contact the study coordination first (exception: agreements with lecturers or explicit questions about course content). The study coordination is also responsible for general student counselling and offers consultation hours by arrangement (in the online semester via Zoom).

E-Mail: [koordinationrelwiss@rub.de](mailto:koordinationrelwiss@rub.de)

[Even though you might get the cell phone numbers of the study coordinators (e.g. through WhatsApp groups), we would like to ask you **not to call or write** them at all to ask questions about courses, modules or eCampus. Staff members also have free time and will therefore only respond during their working hours.]

### *Secretariat of the teaching unit*

For the following concerns and questions, students can contact the secretariat of the teaching unit and thus Ms. Susanne Göhre directly:

- General questions on the subject of enrolment / prerequisite for admission to studies
- certificates for embassies / visas / health insurance
- Graduation certificates / graduation documents

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<sup>4</sup>Matriculation number only for organizational problems, for example, re-enrollment in a course

E-Mail: [susanne.goehre@rub.de](mailto:susanne.goehre@rub.de)

For all other questions and concerns not mentioned here, students should first communicate with the study coordination.

### *Dean of Students*

This position is responsible for issuing various form sheets and confirming module summaries in eCampus. General questions about studying should not be to the Dean of Studies, but to the student council.

### *Lecturers*

Lecturers are contacted if there are explicit questions about course participation or course content. As a rule, general questions about studying are not communicated via lecturers. Students should always observe the general formal guidelines when contacting lecturers. This means for e-mail contact, unless otherwise agreed: Formal greeting of the lecturer, content and reason for the e-mail, concluding formal greeting formula & full name of the student. It is advisable to also add the student number.

## 6.2 How to prepare for a student counselling meeting?

First, you need an appointment for the counselling, for which students contact the study coordination via e-mail: [koordinationrelwiss@rub.de](mailto:koordinationrelwiss@rub.de).

In a complete normal offline semester, open office hours are also offered without prior registration. The respective open office hours can be found on the website of the study coordination.

To prepare for a counselling session, it is always advisable to contact the study coordination office in advance by e-mail and briefly describe your concerns. In this way, the study coordinators can prepare for the counselling session.

If you have questions about the study programme, such as "Which courses do I have to take?", it is advisable to bring or submit a (as far as possible filled out) To-Do list. In online counselling sessions, the study coordinator may ask for a current Transcript of Records. This is an official document for registered courses in eCampus and serves as an overview for counselling purposes. The transcript can be retrieved in eCampus. It is also sometimes necessary for the study coordinators to take a look at the entries and registrations in eCampus via screen sharing. It is therefore helpful if Zoom consultations do not take place via a video-capable mobile phone, but via a computer/notebook/laptop that allows screen sharing and logging on to eCampus.

In face-to-face counselling sessions, the study coordinator can access the eCampus system together with you. It is therefore important to always bring your student ID and remember the password for eCampus.

## 6.3 How do I stay up to date and informed?

Students will be informed via various channels. It is recommended that you register on the mailing list with your official RUB e-mail address. Various information will be

distributed via e-mail (e.g. information from the study coordination, important information from lecturers, changes of courses, information from the student council). However, please note that not all mails via this list will be written in English since our Bachelors programme is taught in German. All mails relevant for International Students will be translated into English.

Click here to register for the mailing list:

<https://lists.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/mailman/listinfo/relwiss-info>

Furthermore, there are various social media channels:

#### Facebook:

Study coordination: <https://www.facebook.com/StudienkoordinationRelwissBochum>

Student council: <https://www.facebook.com/FSR.Relwiss.Bochum>

Group of the respective semester (updated within the group every semester):  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1532821466936499>

#### Instagram

Student council: [fsr\\_relwiss\\_bo](https://www.instagram.com/fsr_relwiss_bo)

#### Telegram

Student council: <https://t.me/RelWissCERES>

#### WhatsApp

BA group on request

MA group on request

#### Discord

<https://discord.com/invite/SGavSGajEk>

### *RUB-Mail*

All students at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum have a RUB e-mail address. This usually consists of the first and last name and sometimes additional characters and is always @ruhr-uni-bochum.de or @rub.de. This mail account must be checked regularly by all students. Grade entries, notifications & information distribution in Moodle courses as well as registrations in eCampus (among others) are received via this email address. It is not possible to change this information flow to another e-mail address (except by managing several e-mail addresses in one account, or by redirecting the mails). As there have been repeated problems with the RUB mail server in the past, it is strongly recommended that you use a mail management programme such as Thunderbird, Outlook or similar.

## 6. CERES committees

### 6.1 What committees can be found at CERES?

At CERES, there are various university committees in which the cooperation of students is necessary. But why is student involvement necessary? By involving students in internal structures, they have the opportunity to assert the interests of their own group in order to improve and maintain teaching at CERES. Without students, the committees cannot function. As a rule, the committees consist of a mixture of lecturers, CERES staff members and students of Religious Studies. The number of students participating is fixed for each committee.

The CERES committees include: the Student Council (FSR), the Student Advisory Council, the Quality Improvement Commission (QVK or QVM) and the Directorate.

Students are usually elected to the respective committees for one year (two semesters) by a plenary meeting of all CERES members. This includes the election of active members and deputies. Any CERES student can stand for election. General assemblies are usually also announced by the student council through various channels, although the student council acts "independently" in its own election and organises its own general assemblies. (See "6.2")

Besides the fact that participation in committees is very important for representing the interests of all students at CERES, participation also brings advantages in life.

### 6.2 What is the Student Council/FSR and what does it do?

The Student Council represents the interests of CERES students. In German it is called "Fachschaftsrat" or simply "FSR". So if you see "FSR" on any documents, displays, mails or the like, you should know it comes from the Student Council.

On the one hand, the FSR organises various activities for students (theme weeks, Christmas party, barbecue, semester welcome, etc.). On the other hand, the FSR also stands for general organisations at CERES from a student perspective and is thus an official university committee. Students can contact the Student Representative Council at any time when they have questions or they can become members themselves. More information about general meetings or FSR events is available via the social media channels. If you have any questions, students can get in touch via email: [religionswiss.fachschaft@google-mail.com](mailto:religionswiss.fachschaft@google-mail.com)

During semesters in which students are present or better said during offline-semesters, the FSR offers its own office hours where students can ask initial questions about their studies. The office hours can be found on the notice boards at CERES.

Any active CERES student can become a member. Members are elected during a FSR general meeting, the so called Vollversammlung (VV). Each student is elected for one semester and has to be re-elected afterwards. This Vollversammlung usually takes place at the beginning of each semester.

Since the FSR is an official committee of the university and is bound to the rules of the so called FSVK and the AStA, it is highly recommended to speak German if you want to join the FSR. Even though students, lecturers and members at CERES speak English, this does not mean that students from other faculties will always speak

English with you or that official documents and applications can be translated into English. If you have basic knowledge of German, you are more than welcome to join the FSR. If you cannot speak German, yet, there will be the chance to be a member of an consultative group for the FSR. The current FSR is still working on this, but in the future, it is planned to have a group of international students that should work closely together with the FSR to best represent the concerns of international students.

### 6.3 What does the Student Advisory Board do (Studienbeirat)?

The Student Advisory Board is formed by various students, lecturers and staff members of CERES. In this committee, decisions are made and voted on, for example on project planning or new examination regulations.

The advisory board is composed as follows: 2 professors, 2 academic staff members and 5 students (+ 5 student representatives).

### 6.4 What does QVM mean?

The QVM (Quality Improvement Measures/ Qualitätsverbesserungsmittel), also often referred to as QVK (Quality Improvement Commission/ Qualitätsverbesserungskommission), is mainly concerned with the financial resources available to CERES for the improvement of teaching. Students decide together with lecturers and administrative staff on the use and distribution of financial resources. This includes, among other things, the purchase of new teaching aids, the decision and vote on teaching assignments from external lecturers as well as reasonable measures to support the "best possible" teaching at CERES. Students vote from their own perspective and weigh up what the most reasonable measures are for all students at CERES. In this process, the focus can also be placed on completely new acquisitions that have been perceived as less relevant from the perspective of lecturers and staff.

The QVM is composed as follows: 2 lecturers, 1 administrative staff member and 4 students (+ 4 student representatives).

### 6.5 What is the Directorate (Direktorium)?

The Directorate manages the institute CERES and decides on all matters, unless the Higher Education Act or the RUB Constitution specify otherwise. Among other things, the Directorate decides on the use of the funds allocated to CERES and on staff members, unless they are assigned to professors.

The Board of Directors is composed as follows: 4 professors, 1 representative of the academic staff, 1 administrative staff member and 1 representative of the student community (+ 1 student representative).

## 7. General notes on the use of this document

This document "FAQ Religious Studies" was created by the Study Coordination Religious Studies and is intended to answer common questions about the study of the subject Religious Studies. Nevertheless, **this document is not legally binding.**

It is a document prepared voluntarily by the Study Coordination, which can and should contribute to the support in the daily study routine. All information is without guarantee. The valid and legally binding documents are the respective module handbook, the subject-specific regulations, the respective examination regulations and the general examination regulations of the Ruhr University Bochum.

Changes are possible at any time and will not be announced (information status: September 20<sup>th</sup> 2022).