

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 take 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, get an overview of important documents and find videos that introduce you to studying and living in Germany.

You can find the Moodle class directly via Moodle, your “Letter of approval” or you can use 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 documents right at the beginning of your first semester, since they 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 (PO)

1.2.1 What is an examination regulation (PO)?

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

1.2.2 Which examination regulation 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 is 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 will find to which PO you were assigned on eCampus. It can also

be found on your “certificate of study” (downloadable via eCampus). 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 (*Prüfungsamt*).

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 therefore had to change to the 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 office.

E-Mail: koordinationrelwiss@rub.de

1.3 Module Handbooks

1.3.1 What is a module handbook?

A module handbook is bound to the examination regulation (PO). It deals with the subject-specific regulations of the respective subject of study. This means that, in contrast to the examination regulation, the module handbook is designed primarily 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 each individual module. Here 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 regulation (PO) 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 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.

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

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 methods of exams. Usually, the methods of exams are predetermined (see module handbook). Typical exams include written exams, term papers and oral exams. Not every lecture requires a final examination, but it depends on the module structure. Make sure to check out the module handbook to see each module's examination method.

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 helpful form to document your 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, methods of examination and the relevance of grades for the final grade of the degree programme. It is therefore a smaller and easily understandable version of the module handbook. Using 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 do I log into eCampus?

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

In order to log into Moodle, please use your personal RUB-ID and the corresponding password. If you do not have a RUB-ID yet, you can alternatively create a guest account until you received all the necessary information. Courses can be found by typing the course name in the search box. 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

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 enrol in a course first: eCampus or Moodle?

Since eCampus manages the official registration to courses and thus keeps record of your study progress, enrolling in each course on eCampus is compulsory and should be done first. Registration for a course on eCampus ensures that you obtain the CP for each course you enrol in. Lecturers also use eCampus to communicate important information on their courses via registration lists.

Moodle serves as a tool for teaching and course structure. You should log into the moodle course to find readings, tasks, means to upload/download tasks or papers. Enrolling in moodle therefore grants access to the course's contents and material.

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

Moodle passwords are usually handed 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).

An exception is the 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.

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

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. 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 must be completed to pass a module can be found in the module handbook and additionally in the To-Do List. eCampus also gives an overview of the module structure, which courses belong to which module and what type of courses must be completed. There are a number of courses that can be taken in several modules, but each course can only be assigned to one module once (see 2.2.2). Explanations of individual course types are given below.

2.2.2 How do I attend a module?

You cannot enrol in a module, because modules are units that consist of different courses (seminars, lectures, etc.). You will therefore complete the module when you complete 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 must be attended for which modules. It is important to note that some courses can be accredited for different modules. This does not mean that this course will be credited in both modules at the same time. Students decide for themselves for which module the courses will be accredited.

IMPORTANT: Courses can never be double-credited!

2.2.3 Can I split a module over several semesters?

Yes, and this is even necessary for most modules as courses of some modules are not offered simultaneously in the same semester, especially in the 1-subject master's degree programme. Therefore, a completion of the module is only possible over the course of several semesters. However, it makes sense to complete the "PRE module", your individual prerequisites for studying at CERES, as soon as possible in the first two semesters.

2.2.4 What are a compulsory module, a compulsory elective module and an elective module?

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

A compulsory elective module consists of fixed courses, from which a certain number must be selected and attended. 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, from 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 do I “combine” a module on eCampus?

Take a look at 5.

2.3 Course forms and types

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

A lecture is a lecturer-centred course that consists of oral presentations by lecturer(s) that are accompanied by visual presentations and compulsory readings, so it consists mainly of frontal teaching. 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 methods 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 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 mainly concerns the BA or your individual prerequisites). Exercises always require a large amount of cooperation from the students. Methods of examination within exercises can be homework, presentations, or other performance certificates with a high degree of self-study. In the case of language courses, there could also be a written examination.

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

A seminar can be understood as a mixture of exercise and lecture and often takes the form of an interactive in-class discussion. Some prior knowledge may be assumed depending on how advanced the seminar is. The amount of speaking by the lecturer is usually much less than in a lecture. Usually, seminars create plenary discussions on basis of prepared readings for each session. Topics are studied in-depth together, individually or in group work. Furthermore, student presentations or weekly assignments are requested, and a term paper may have to be written as a conclusion (for 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 the history of religions as well as for the introduction to individual religions (R3).¹ 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.

¹ Please note that R3 is a B.A. module. However, if you need to catch up on basic knowledge, you can do so by joining R3 courses, provided the course is offered in English. R3 courses 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 of a course, after they passed it. CPs reward 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 CPs) 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 (that means about 2000 words) are approximately rewarded with 1 CP. Thus, in order to achieve an additional 4 CP for the completion of a module, approximately 20 to 25 pages or about 8000 words must be written (number may vary depending on the lecturer).

In order to receive CPs for your graduation, you must be registered for the respective course on eCampus, otherwise CPs cannot be added to your certificate.

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 took 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 CPs quicker because, for example, you want to register for your Master's final 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 must do to pass the course is set at the first session by each lecturer.

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 include a consistent and correct citation style and a list of figures (if applicable), sources and references is an absolute must.

3.1.3 Hand-Ins

Hand-ins are short summaries of the literature that students must prepare for the lesson on 1 to 2 pages. In these short summaries, students are required to outline the basic theses of the texts and what they understood, but also ask questions on the text or exercise criticism. A certain number of hand-ins must be submitted, which will be determined at the beginning of the semester.

3.1.4 Discussion Questions

Discussion questions serve primarily to review the assigned text which must be read for the respective session. They are intended to spark discussions about the text's contents in regard to the seminar's topic or priorly discussed topics. In general, discussion questions should not result in yes-no answers but ask about "how", "why" or "what" (and the like). These discussion questions are formulated in detail; exact length specifications are possible. The formalities are determined individually by the lecturers. They should also consider the whole seminar context and, at best, not be based on the text alone - unless the discussion questions are 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 that means about 2000 words equal 1 CP. Accordingly, a term paper for 4 CP is 20 to 25 pages long that means about 8000 words. As with the essay, at the beginning, a research question or hypothesis is determined, which will be answered or tested in the further course of the work. Also, the structure always follows the same scheme: introduction, main body, conclusion, sources. Term papers must include consistent and correct citation styles, and a list of illustrations, sources and references is an absolute must!

In S11 however, you need to pass an oral exam 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 (citation) 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 or in-text and in the bibliography. If not cited correctly, students commit plagiarism, which can be punished with a fine of up to 50,000€ in Germany 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. follow specific rules. 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)

4. Master

4.1 Prerequisites for the Master programme

4.1.1 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 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 complete a 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 CPs for the Master**,² as they are only basic requirements, in addition to the actual Master courses.

4.1.2 Are there any other important requirements?

Students who have completed their Bachelor's degree in a subject other than Religious Studies may generally be able to begin a Master's program at CERES, depending on the thematic focus of the Bachelor's program. In this case, you can catch up on missing but required knowledge. We grant access to our graduate program if you need not to catch up on more than 15 CP. 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, Dr. Jens Schlamelcher.

² If your letter of approval states you need to do „Theories and Approaches“, you can complete this with getting a good result in “Introduction to Religious Studies”. “Theories and Approaches” can then be counted as an S12 class.

In addition, evidence of at least 10 CPs 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 is S11?

Module S11 consists of only one course: Key Concepts. It is, so to speak, the introductory module to the Master's programme. Currently, this course is only offered in the summer semester. Students entering the Master's programme in a winter semester will therefore take this course in their second semester. Please note that 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, the "Key Concepts" course, must be taken **by all** Master's students.

4.2.2 Module S12

Module S12 contains courses from the systematic study of religion, i.e. theories and methods that are used in the discipline. In the 1-subject Master's programme, students have to attend 4 courses to complete module S12, of which 2 must be concerned with theories and at least 1 with methodology (the 4th can be either). In the 2-subject bachelor's programme, students have to enrol in two courses for S12, of which 1 must be a theoretical seminar. There can be an individual focus because students freely choose which theoretical or methodological courses they register for. More information on the S12 courses can be found on eCampus.

4.2.3 The R-Modules

In the R-modules, the focus is on the history of Religions. The modules are divided geographically and chronologically. R11 deals with religious interrelations between Western Asia and Europe up to the Reformation, while courses that deal with the religious traditions of Western Asia and Europe after the Reformation can be taken in R12. R13 is focused on religions in Asia. Students are not required to complete all 3 modules but must choose 2 of the 3 modules. One module can be taken twice to allow for a focus on one area/time/religion. 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 programme, 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 programme, 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. 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. 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 career-oriented profile outside of academia. 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 and an internship are compulsory. 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. 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 RUB 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 and 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 from almost all faculties (including any course from the CERES) of the Ruhr-Universität, insofar as they make sense for the student's own profile formation in religious studies. 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 have 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!³

³There 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.

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 programme 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 were falsely combined, 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 will first take a final look. Then, the modules must be confirmed by the Dean of Studies, Dr. Jens Schlamelcher. For this purpose, you need to schedule an appointment with him. 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: To which examination office do I belong, 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 (*Prüfungsamt der Philologie, Dekanat der Philologie*). Therefore, 2-subject Master's programme students may have to communicate with two different examination offices if the second subject studied is not 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 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 at the university)

The best way to make initial contact with anyone at CERES is by e-mail which is usually preferred to phone calls by most employees. 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 beforehand 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 emails

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 with their title (Prof. or Dr.) or Mr. or Ms. and their last name (if not otherwise agreed).

In general, emails 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. Schlamelcher". 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./Ms." followed by the last name. If you are unsure about the pronouns of a person you can always use "Dear (First name) (Last name)" which is first name and last name without a "Mr." or "Ms."; e.g., "Dear Jens Schlamelcher".

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

If unsure how to write an email, please use this example as help:

"Dear Prof. Dr. Exemplum,

this is an example email. I'm writing you because I need help regarding this problem. My matriculation number is 108 009 201 111.⁴

Thank you very much in advance!

Kind regards,

First Name Last name"

⁴Matriculation number only for organizational problems, for example, re-enrollment in a course

Please take your time and make sure your emails 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 is: Only if the study coordination cannot help you with your problem, will the email 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

[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 about enrolment / prerequisite for admission to the programme
- Certificates for embassies / visas / health insurance
- Graduation certificates / graduation documents

E-Mail: susanne.goehre@rub.de

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

Dean of Students

The Dean of Students of CERES and thus of the Religious Studies programme is Dr. Jens Schlamelcher. He is responsible for issuing various form sheets and confirming module summaries in eCampus. General questions about studying should not be sent

to Dr. Schlamelcher, but to the study coordination. If necessary, the study coordinator will contact Dr. Schlamelcher and forward any concerns to him.

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 keep the general formal guidelines when contacting lecturers. This means for email contact, unless otherwise agreed: Formal greeting of the lecturer, content and reason for the e-mail, concluding formal greeting formula and full name of the student. It is advisable to also add the student matriculation 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.

In an 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 email 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 via 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 necessary that Zoom consultations do not take place via a video-capable mobile phone, but via a computer/notebook/laptop that allows screen sharing and logging into 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 your personal 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 subscribe to the mailing list with your official RUB email address. Various pieces of information will be distributed via email (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 emails via this list will be written in English since our bachelor's programme is taught in German. All emails relevant for International Students will be translated to 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

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 Ruhr-Universität Bochum have a RUB email address. This usually consists of the first and last name and sometimes additional characters and always includes @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 email 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 an email management programme such as Thunderbird, Outlook or the like.

7. CERES committees

7.1 What committees can be found at CERES?

At CERES, there are various committees that aim at improving the quality of research and teaching, and in which the cooperation of students is necessary. But why is student involvement necessary? By involving students in internal structures, they can defend the interests of their own group in order to improve 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 into the respective committees for one year (two semesters) during 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 since student involvement is welcome on resumes.

7.2 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". If you see "FSR" on any documents, displays, emails or the like, 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 the 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

During offline semesters, the FSR offers its own office hours where students can ask initial questions about their studies. The office consultation hours can be found on the notice boards at CERES.

Any active CERES student can become a member of FSR. Members are elected during a FSR general meeting, the so called general assembly, *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* (larger university committees), it is highly recommended to being able 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 a 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 works closely together with the FSR to best represent the concerns of international students.

7.3 What does the Student Advisory Board (*Studienbeirat*) do?

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).

7.4 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 in to what the most reasonable measures are for all students at CERES. The student's perspective is crucial to maintain and improve CERES teaching for the students.

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

7.5 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).

8. 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.

This is the first version of the document. Changes are possible at any time and will not be announced (information status: May 12th 2022).

