A photograph of three young women with long brown hair, smiling and looking at a document held by the woman on the right. They are outdoors in a sunny, park-like setting with trees and a striped awning in the background. The woman on the left is wearing a dark top and a blue backpack. The woman in the middle is wearing a black and white striped t-shirt. The woman on the right is wearing a black leather jacket and holding a blue folder. A semi-transparent white box with a blue horizontal line is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title and authors' names.

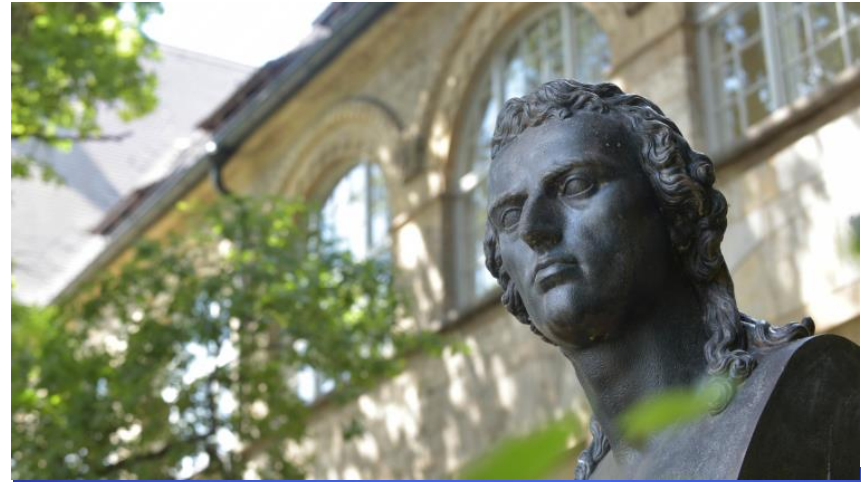
## Getting the best possible start for a doctorate: The Honours Programme for Future Researchers at Jena University

Hanna Kauhaus, Annika Bartsch

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# Friedrich Schiller University, Jena

- Traditional University founded 1558
- Thuringia, East Germany
- 10 faculties with broad range of disciplines in natural sciences, humanities, social sciences, law, medicine...
- 18.000 students in Bachelor and Master programmes, 3.700 PhD candidates
- Core research areas: LIGHT (optics and photonics), LIFE (microbiology and biodiversity), LIBERTY (enlightenment and romanticism, eastern europe)
- 1 cluster of excellence in German excellence strategy programme, runner-up of excellence universities





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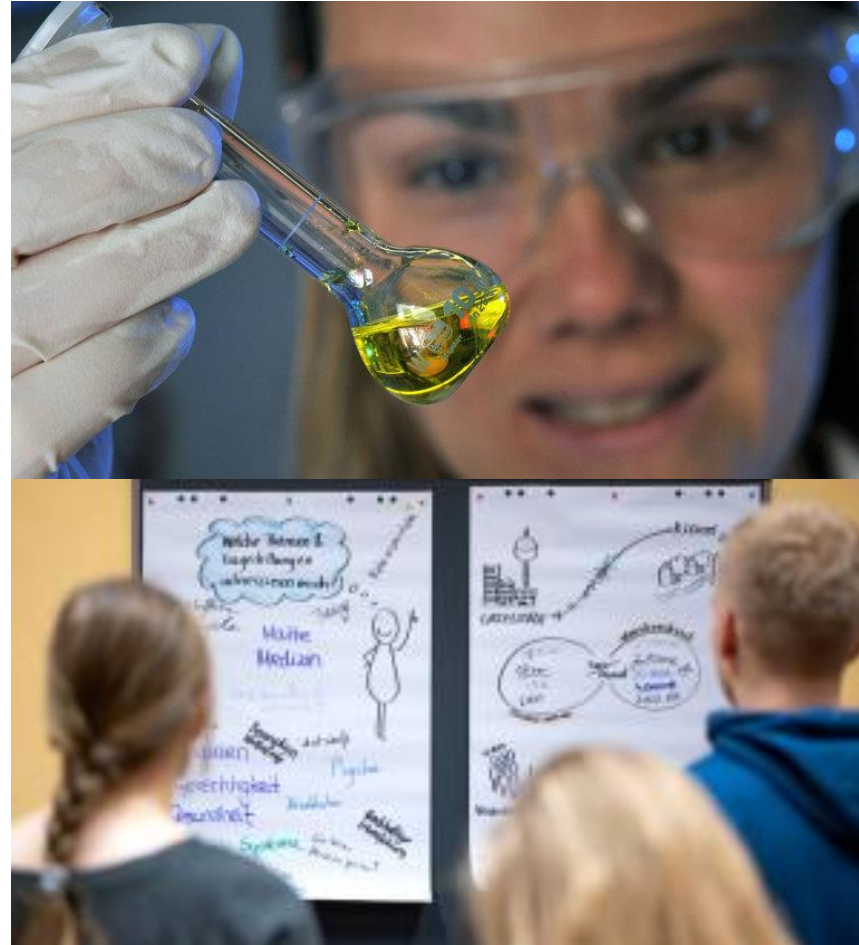
# Honours Programme for future Researchers: Target Group

- Application possible for outstanding bachelor and master students from all disciplines
- Students with particular interest in and considerable talent for research
- Conducting own research or publication project (either combined with bachelor/master thesis or extra project by choice)
- Support by a professor or postdoc/lecturer who will supervise the project
- Up to 75 students per year
- Selection process with senate committee



# Honours Programme for future Researchers: Goals

- Attract and support talented pre-PhD students
- Hands-on experience with research at an early stage, deeper insight into research processes
- Networking within the scientific community
- Interdisciplinary exchange with students and academics from multiple disciplines
- Key qualifications (i.e. good scientific practise, scientific presentations, time management)
- Informed decision for future career and PhD



# Honours Programme for future Researchers: Components

1. **Honours Mentoring:** supervisor of research project as mentor; mentoring programme with training and guidelines for both students and mentors
2. **Honours Workshops:** workshops and other events to train research-related key qualifications and to reflect on their own research and research culture
3. **Honours Funds:** 1.000€ per year for research-related costs (material costs, travel expenses for conferences or research stays, books)



# Critical points

- Part of **excellence strategy** of Jena university (funded for 6 years)
- **Expenses**: Staff: 0.75 coordinator, 0.25 administration, plus ca. 200.000€ for honours funds and workshops
- **Administration**: paying expenses for students
- **How many** students per year?
- What is **obligatory**, what is **voluntary**?
- **Students' ideas**, initiatives and peer networking
- Rooted in specific **discipline** (project, mentor, scientific community), but also **interdisciplinary** programme
- Role of **professors** and strategy of **programme**
- Application and **selection committee**

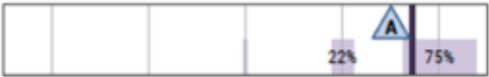
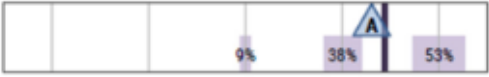
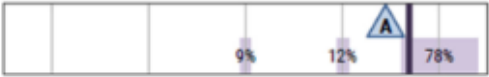






# Honours Programme for future Researchers: Feedback

## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF SUPERVISORS:

Of the 34 supervisors who participated in the survey, 20 are professors and 14 are postdocs. Overall Satisfaction with the Honours Programme (item 4) has not changed since the previous year and is high ( $M=4.4$ ), the respondents consider the programme goals to be achieved (items 1, 2, 3):

Summarizing statements	2021		2020					
1=I strongly disagree ... 3=partly ... 5=I strongly agree	N	M	M	1	2	3	4	5
1 The Honours Programme gives students a deeper insight into research processes.	32	4.7	4.5					
2 The Honours Programme gives students the chance to get in touch with the scientific community in their field of research.	32	4.4	4.3					
3 The Honours Programme is a useful preparation for their planned career after graduation.	32	4.7	4.4					
4 Overall, I am satisfied with the Honours Programme.	33	4.4	4.4					

Legend: 2021: Supervisors 2021; 2020 : Supervisors 2020

# Honours Programme for future Researchers: Feedback



Image: privat

## Dongik Chang

"Thanks to the Honours Programme, I became more confident that I can become a better prepared and competent researcher after graduation. The Honours Mentoring and various workshops allowed me to discuss not only what is good scientific practice, writing, and presentations, but also other essential skills such as time- and self-management, and being an active bystander. Thanks to the Honours Funds, I could buy costly and newly published academic books and attend international conferences."





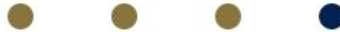
# Honours Programme for future Researchers: Feedback



Image: privat

## Leon Biela

"The Honours Programme has given me the extraordinary opportunity to work on a first research project over the period of two years already during my Bachelor's studies. This allowed me not only to gain valuable experience in research, but also to achieve initial visibility in the academic world, which both are of great benefit for a successful start to an academic career. The programme offered this opportunity through inspiring workshops, financial support, advice and support from the programme's team members, and above all, through the academic advice of the mentoring. Without the programme, this early insight into research would not have been possible for me"



# Honours Programme for future Researchers: Feedback



Image: privat

## Alexia Daski

"The Honours Programme provides a unique opportunity to engage in research activities as a student and therefore can lay the groundwork for a successful career in academia. The Programme provided me with the necessary social, structural, and economical resources to conduct and improve my own research, and brought me a huge step closer to my goal of becoming a scientist. One of the best parts is that I got access to a large variety of workshops that cover multiple areas relevant in academia. What I also found very beneficial is that I was able to connect with other young researchers from different disciplines who support and inspire each other."



**Further information:**  
**[www.uni-jena.de/en/honours-programm](http://www.uni-jena.de/en/honours-programm)**

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## Honours Programme for Future Researchers

Students in Jena city  
Image: Christoph Worsch (University of Jena)