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## Press Release

### University of Mannheim Increases Number of Women Professors

In 2024, the University of Mannheim was granted EUR 712,000 for measures to promote equal opportunity and to partially fund three permanent W3 professorships as part of the competitive “Professorinnenprogramm 2030” (program for women professors 2030). Thanks to this decision, the university could appoint three additional women professors: German Studies expert Marie-Luis Merten, mathematician Simone Rademacher, and computer scientist Pooja Rani.

The funds are used for various measures to promote equal opportunity. Some of the initiatives included are the [FAiR@UMA](#) program, which supports female researchers with family commitments by providing unbureaucratic ways of obtaining research assistant funds, the resumption of the [Program for Female Doctoral Students](#) as well as counseling and support services provided by the [family services](#).

In addition, the funding enabled the university to newly appoint three women as professors: German Studies professor Dr. Marie-Luis Merten took over the Chair of Germanic Linguistics in August 2025. Mathematician Dr. Simone Rademacher and computer scientist Dr. Pooja Rani will take up their professorships in April 2026.

“Equal opportunity is an essential part of our strategic orientation. The Professorinnenprogramm 2030 helps us to further reduce structural hurdles and make top positions in science more appealing to women,” explains President Professor Thomas Fetzer.

Two of the professorships funded are anticipatory appointments at the School of Business Informatics and Mathematics specifically intended to increase the number of women professors. In the case of anticipatory professorships, a new professor is already appointed before the corresponding regular position becomes vacant.

#### Research focus areas

**Prof. Dr. Marie-Luis Merten** has held the Chair of Germanic Linguistics since August 2025, succeeding Professor Angelika Storrer. Her research primarily focuses on language in digital communication spaces, particularly on recurring forms, structures, and patterns. The linguist's work lies at the intersection between media and sociolinguistics and increasingly also at that between language and politics. In a new project, for example, she analyzes hashtag discourses such as #WirSindDasStadtbild, where political statements are taken up, ironized, and developed further linguistically.

**Dr. Simone Rademacher** is a renowned researcher in the field of mathematical physics. Her research combines state-of-the-art methods of analysis, stochastics, and quantum mechanics. She will be transferring from the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München and is currently focusing, among other things, on questions in connection with the mathematical description of Bose-Einstein condensates and effective equations. Rademacher has, inter alia, received funding through an ISTplus Postdoctoral Fellowship, which is supported by the European Union (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Program), as well as a scholarship from the German Academic Scholarship Foundation.

**Dr. Pooja Rani's** research lies at the intersection of software engineering, sustainability, and artificial intelligence – aiming to design technologies that empower people to act responsibly. One of the aspects she investigates is how software systems and user interfaces can be designed to make the energy consumption of codebases and AI-driven processes transparent, enabling informed and sustainability-aware decisions.

Rani worked for four years as a software engineer in industry before starting her doctoral studies at the University of Bern in 2018. Since 2022, she has been working as a senior researcher at the University of Zurich.

In total, the federal government and the Länder provide funding in the amount of EUR 320 million for the Professorinnenprogramm 2030. The highest possible funding amount is EUR 165,000 per professorship per annum for a maximum period of five years.

See here for the press release by the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Science, Research and Arts (in German only): <https://mwk.baden-wuerttemberg.de/de/service/presse/pressemitteilung/pid/erfolg-beim-professorinnenprogramm-2030>

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