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Press Release

University of Mannheim Receives EUR 2 Million to Expand Collaborative Research

In a fundraising campaign launched in late 2025, the University of Mannheim has to date raised around EUR 2 million to strengthen collaborative research. Using these funds, the university is specifically expanding structures intended to bring researchers from different fields together and promote collaborative projects.

Major donors having participated in the campaign, which will continue to run in 2026, include Dr. Hans-Peter Wild, Freudenberg SE, PERI SE, FUCHS SE, SAP SE, SNP Schneider-Neureither & Partner SE, Dr. Lorenz Näger, and cbs Corporate Business Solutions GmbH.

“We are incredibly grateful for the generous donations and the great amount of trust our donors put in the University of Mannheim,” says Professor Thomas Fetzer, President of the University of Mannheim. “Nowadays, top-level international research is usually conducted by large teams and research networks. If we want to further strengthen our research and continue to stand out from international competition, we have to specifically invest in structures that promote interdisciplinary collaboration,” Fetzer adds. “Our donors’ support gives us room to do just that.”

One of the central components of this strategy is the Center for Advanced Studies (CAS), which was officially opened in February 2026. The CAS offers professors at the university the opportunity to work together on innovative research ideas as part of a six-month fellowship. “With the Center for Advanced Studies, we are creating open spaces for intensive collaboration across disciplines,” Fetzer states. “This is where new collaborations and research ideas potentially resulting in larger collaborative projects, such as collaborative research centers or clusters of excellence, are born.” Up to ten fellowships are awarded each year, divided into two cohorts. The first cohort has started its work in the spring semester 2026. As for financing these fellowships, the university is supported by significant contributions from Dr. Hans-Peter Wild.

Another component of the strategy for strengthening collaborative research are incubators that will be created as part of the new UMAXplore funding program and financed through donations to the fundraising campaign. UMAXplore is intended to enable researchers at the university to carry out concrete preparatory work for large joint projects that are funded externally. The support they receive includes, among other things, funds for academic staff members or incubation managers. The program scheduled to start in November 2026 is designed for longer-term funding with funds being granted for a period of up to four years.

In 2025, the University of Mannheim also conducted a participatory strategy process initiated and supervised by the President's Office to redefine its research focus areas. Going forward, four areas will bring together the university's research strengths across disciplines, providing a starting point for new collaborations. Together, scientists from various departments are conducting research into how modern societies can be understood and adapted to the challenges arising from profound societal transformations. The four new research focus areas are: "Markets and Businesses in Transformation," "Inequality, Democracy, and Public Interest," "Learning Individuals, Organizations, Societies, and Cultures," and "Models, Methods, and Data."

"With our new research focus areas, the Center for Advanced Studies, and programs such as UMAXplore, we are gradually creating the conditions for even closer interdisciplinary collaboration," Fetzer says. "Further developing our research structures, we are creating the basis for even more outstanding research at the University of Mannheim in the future."

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