



Business School Pforzheim Insights

The background image shows the exterior of the Business School Pforzheim building. It features a modern design with a large glass entrance area and a prominent staircase on the left side. The building is partially obscured by green foliage in the foreground. A semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'EFMD reaccredited'.

EFMD reaccredited

Introduction



Dear reader,

In the first issue of our newly designed online magazine “[Business School Pforzheim – Insights](#),” we look back on the 2025 summer semester. To provide a structured overview of everything that happened, we have based our approach on the values of the Business School: #international, #practical, #sustainable, #interdisciplinary, and #personal.

The main topic of this issue, “EFMD reaccredited,” takes a close look at the international orientation associated with accreditation and its close connection to practical application. You will also gain valuable insights into research and teaching and learn about the impact our alumni are making – both on campus and in business and society.

The next issue of “Business School Pforzheim – Insights” will be published in spring 2026 and will cover the highlights and developments of the 2025/26 winter semester.

If you would like to stay informed about current topics and news from the Business School at shorter intervals, please register for our new newsletter format “Business School Pforzheim – Up to Date”: ➔ [Stay up to Date](#)

Enjoy reading.

Your Dean's Office Thomas Cleff, Claudius Eisenberg,
Nadine Lindstädt-Dreusicke und Harald Strotmann

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Undergraduate Program in Business with 13 specializations has renewed EFMD seal of quality

The Business School at Pforzheim University is delighted to announce the reaccreditation of its Undergraduate Program in Business with 13 specializations. This means that it will be able to carry the international seal of quality from the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) again for the next five years.

Highest quality standards in management study programs

The “EFMD-accredited” seal confirms the excellence of teaching in the business administration bachelor's programs in an international comparison. In 2022, the Business School at Pforzheim University received this second international accreditation for the first time and was the first and only bachelor's program in the German-speaking world to receive both an EFMD program accreditation and an AACSB accreditation. The EFMD seal stands for the highest quality standards in management study programs, which are characterized by a strong international orientation, high academic standards, close links to practice, and a clear focus on ethics and sustainability.

Maximum possible accreditation period of five years emphasizes the quality of teaching

“In recent years, our university has achieved top results in all major rankings. The successful reaccreditation by EFMD confirms the excellent study conditions and high quality of our education. We are very proud that our Business School ranks among the best business schools worldwide,” says Rector Professor Dr. Ulrich Jautz. “We are delighted to have been successfully re-

accredited by the EFMD,” emphasizes Professor Dr. Thomas Cleff, Dean of Business School Pforzheim. “It impressively highlights our international orientation and our sustained commitment to excellence in academic management education.” He adds that the school is particularly proud of the trust that EFMD has placed in it by awarding the maximum possible accreditation period of five years.

The recognition by EFMD is an incentive to further develop the range of courses offered

“The EFMD reaccreditation has also helped us greatly in recent years, particularly with regard to the further internationalization of our business school and the courses offered, and has provided important impetus for this,” said Vice Dean Professor Dr. Harald Strotmann, who was in charge of both the accreditation three years ago as well as the current reaccreditation. He is delighted that EFMD has confirmed the excellent work being done at the business school by reaccrediting it for the maximum period of five years: “A big thank you to everyone whose work and commitment has contributed significantly to the outstanding quality of teaching and research here in Pforzheim, and to all the professors, students, staff, alumni, corporate partners, and the many others who have



once again actively supported us in the reaccreditation process!” The recognition by EFMD is both confirmation and incentive for the business school to continue developing its range of courses in the coming years, while ensuring excellent and modern academic education “that places particular emphasis on practical relevance, internationalization, and aspects of ethics and sustainability,” says Professor Strotmann.

Voluntary international accreditations by EFMD and AACSB

EFMD and AACSB are among the most globally recognized accreditations that universities can voluntarily obtain in addition to mandatory national recognition. While the EFMD program accreditation, as a European seal of quality, evaluates the excellence of individual degree programs in particular, AACSB International, based in the USA, assesses business schools on a global level.

EFMD Global

The EFMD program accreditation is the most comprehensive accreditation system for business and management programs. It represents a benchmark for internationally recognized programs that have been reviewed by peers. The EFMD label confirms the quality of the programs, particularly with regard to their design and quality assurance processes. The accreditation places particular emphasis on academic rigor, practical relevance, internationalization, ethics, and sustainability. In addition, the EFMD program accreditation supports universities and degree programs in their efforts to continuously improve their programs after each accreditation or reaccreditation process. The EFMD program accreditation is based on the EFMD Quality Framework, which is a set of standards and criteria developed by the EFMD. These standards and criteria are applied in the accreditation process to assess the quality of the degree program.

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➤ EFMD Global

#international

International Advisory Board of the Business School

The International Advisory Board of the Business School Pforzheim is an independent and internationally composed council of experts with management experience in leading and global acting institutions of higher education. It advises and supports the Business School in all strategic decisions with the goal to enhance engagement, innovation and impact according to the applied mission of the Business School.

The International Advisory Board of the Business School Pforzheim was founded in 2022 to strengthen the school's international orientation, innovative strength, and impact.

Members of the International Advisory Board

The composition of the Board reflects the diversity of internationally acting business schools. Members are familiar with the distinctive strategic challenges of a business school pursuing an applied mission and global ambitions. The Board consists of 5 members, representing the regional diversity of the Triad (Europe, America and Asia/Middle East) as well as the diversity of comparable and aspirant schools sharing experiences of international accreditations. Please find below a short introduction of the current members of the advisory board

Thami Ghorfi

Thami Ghorfi is Dean of ESCA École de Management in Casablanca, a leading African business school, and an expert in entrepreneurship and change management in Morocco and the MENA region. He is a member of several national and

international institutions, including the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE), the Higher Council for Education (CSEFRS) and the Board of Directors of AACSB. As an author and committed member of numerous academic and philanthropic organizations, he is dedicated to management education, entrepreneurship, and social inclusion.



Thami Ghorfi

Washika Haak-Saheem

Washika Haak-Saheem is Professor of Management and Dean of the Dubai Business School at the University of Dubai. She combines many years of experience in international human resource manage-

ment with academic excellence, thereby promoting exchange between business and education. As a recognized researcher and academic leader, she has made significant contributions to topics such as global mobility, migration, and knowledge management.



Washika Haak-Saheem

Wei Shen

Wei Shen is Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for International Relations at Deakin University in Melbourne and holds the Jean Monnet Chair in EU-China Relations. Previously, he was Professor of International Business and Director of the Confucius Institute at Lancaster University, as well as

Associate Dean at ESSCA School of Management in France. As co-founder and co-chair of the Alliance of Chinese and European Business Schools and vice president of the EU-Asia Centre, he has an extensive international network



Wei Shen

Benjamin Stévenin

Benjamin Stévenin is a leader in higher education with proven expertise in accreditation, rankings, and data management. As the founder of ACADEM by RimaOne and current Director of Business School Solutions and Partnerships at Times Higher Education and Poets & Quants, he has supported over 150 institutions worldwide with innovative, data-driven solutions. In addition to his leadership roles, he is involved in numerous boards and initiatives for quality development and international cooperation in the education sector.



Benjamin Stévenin

Metka Tekavčič

Metka Tekavčič is a professor at the School of Economics and Business at the University of Ljubljana and was its Dean from 2013 to 2023. She is a recognized expert in cost and performance management, public management, forensic accounting, and sustainability management, and teaches in renowned international master's and MBA programs. In addition to her research, she is involved in numerous international committees, accreditation commissions, and supervisory boards to advance economic education globally.



Metka Tekavčič

In 2022, the newly formed International Advisory Board included the members presented here, who remain active, as well as Wei Shen, Benjamin Stévenin, and Metka Tekavčič, who are still active, the newly formed International Advisory Board also included Linda Hadley, former Dean of the Turner College of Business at Columbus State University, and Bruno Neil, CEO of Excelia, a French non-profit higher education institution with triple accreditation (EQUIS, AACSB, AMBA).

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ExperienceAbroad – Students abroad

International study abroad programs are much more than just a section of the curriculum. They broaden horizons, promote intercultural competence, and open up new ways for personal growth and future career prospects. In the section ExperienceAbroad, we present our students' experiences abroad in the magazine "Business School Pforzheim – Insights." Whether in Ireland, France, Georgia, or Peru, our students' reports show that every country, every university, and every personal contact contributes to individual development and cultural understanding. In this issue, we begin with reports from the Business Administration / International Business (B.Sc.) program.

Carina Berkholz spent a semester abroad at the **University of Limerick**, which she describes as a very formative experience. Her stay in Ireland enabled her to learn in an international environment, gain new perspectives, and grow both academically and personally. The modern, green campus with a wide range of courses and excellent academic support created the ideal conditions for this. She particularly appreciated the intercultural exchange and the openness of the people in Ireland.

Moritz Provoznik describes his semester abroad at **Toulouse Business School** as an extremely enriching and well-organized experience. Studying in France gave him the opportunity to improve his French and English language skills and to study in a modern, interactive learning environment. He parti-

cularly appreciated the practical teaching with lots of group work and the close interaction with professors. He also fondly remembers the lively student life in Toulouse with numerous events, excursions, and encounters with students from all over the world.

Ilona Splet describes her semester abroad at **Caucasus University** in Tbilisi as an experience that exceeded all her expectations. Her stay in Georgia not only gave her insights into a fascinating culture, but also enabled her to study in a completely new learning environment. She was particularly impressed by the helpfulness of the Georgian people, the modern campus with its friendly atmosphere, and the practical study structure. Even though she sometimes faced organizational challenges, Ilona Splet remembers it above

all as an enriching experience—combined with new friendships, cultural insights, and personal growth.

Lisa Braun describes her double degree at **Universidad ESAN** in Lima as an unforgettable and formative stage in her life. Studying in Peru not only enabled her to improve her language skills and specialize in international marketing, but also to experience Peruvian culture firsthand. She particularly highlights the excellent organization, the close support provided by the buddy program, and the modern campus with its diverse student life. Despite the high demands of her studies, she still had enough time to get to know the country and its people..

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International students at ESAN in Peru (photo: Lisa Braun)

Welcome to BusinessPF: Students from all over the world at the ISP

The International Study Program (ISP) at Pforzheim University offers over 60 business administration courses in English for exchange students from partner universities and for German students. Every year, around 200 students from over 30 countries take part, creating an international, interactive learning environment. Most of the courses are taken from the Business School's lecture program, supplemented by courses from the School of Engineering's industrial engineering department. The ISP offers an interdisciplinary, practical study experience that focuses on cultural exchange and cosmopolitanism.



Sevdnur, Turkey

„Joining the International Study Program at Pforzheim University was one of the best decisions I've made. The diverse courses, interactive teaching, and international environment made learning inspiring. From day one, the ISP team made sure every student felt welcomed and supported. With exciting events, excursions, and a strong community, I never felt alone. ISP also helped me build valuable connections, opening doors to real-world experiences early on. Pforzheim University became my home away from home, and I'm grateful to be part of such a vibrant and welcoming community “



Christopher, United Kingdom

„My time in Pforzheim has presented me with numerous experiences and opportunities from university organized trips around Germany to offering a diverse range of courses; which were not only interesting but allowed me to converse with and learn from experienced professors. I met many interesting people from around the world who I would consider to be life-long friends and have shared many great memories with. I would definitely recommend studying abroad to anyone, especially at Business School Pforzheim.“



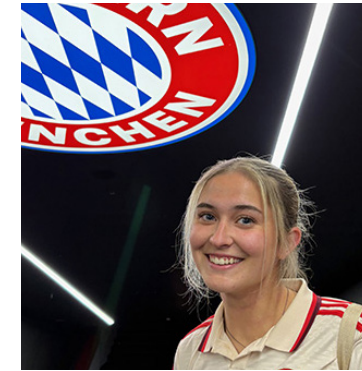
Elyse & Trevor, USA

„Our time at Pforzheim University was an unforgettable experience and one of the highlights of our academic career. We found the professors to be extremely competent and made life-long friendships with both German and international students. We especially enjoyed Europe and Friends Day where we got to experience cultures from around the world as well as share some of our own unique culture. Outside of school, we had an amazing experience exploring Germany and surrounding countries. We can't recommend the ISP program enough and would do it again in a heartbeat!“



Marcin, Poland

„Choosing Business School Pforzheim as a destination for my study abroad period was a great decision. I'm really happy to have the possibility to enjoy studying in a real international environment and get to know so much about different cultures. Professors provide very interesting and interactive lectures with strong impact on solving practical examples. Student's life at the university is very well developed. Events and field trips for international students are organized every single month. I really recommend studying at Business School Pforzheim.“



Emily, Ireland

„My time at Hochschule Pforzheim as an exchange student was both enriching and unforgettable. The International Study Program offered a great balance of engaging coursework and practical learning. From day one, I felt welcomed by the faculty and students, and I really appreciated the opportunity to work on real-world projects alongside people from all over the world. Studying at Pforzheim not only broadened my academic knowledge but also gave me valuable cross-cultural experiences that will stay with me long after my time here.“

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Professor Dr. Véronique Goehlich (front, second from right) together with Professor Ahmed Iraqi (front, third from right) and IB students

Guest professor Ahmed Iraqi offers IB students exciting insights

International perspectives enrich the lecture hall: In April 2025, Professor Ahmed Iraqi from the partner university ESCA École de Management in Casablanca, Morocco, was a guest at the Business School Pforzheim.

Together with Professor Dr.-Ing. Véronique Goehlich, Ahmed Iraqi offered students of the French-language track in the Business Administration/International Business (IB) program exciting insights into global economic and geopolitical issues from an African perspective. His analyses and ideas stimulated a lively

exchange on international interrelationships. The partnership with ESCA also provides valuable academic and cultural experiences for teachers and students at Business School Pforzheim as part of their semester abroad.

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REFILL 2025 – The Taste of Creativity

48 hours full of ideas, energy, and creative excellence: At the annual edition of “REFILL – The Brand Event” at Business School Pforzheim, students, agency professionals, and international brand manufacturer Ferrero came together to develop innovative communication concepts for the Maxi King brand.

Organized by the student initiative Werbeliebe e.V., the event in early April 2025 offered a unique platform for interdisciplinary collaboration. In just two days, teams of students and creatives from five renowned agencies—Philipp und Keuntje, Accenture Song, DDB, Thjnk, and Serviceplan—developed compelling campaign ideas. In the final pitch round, the teams presented their concepts to a jury of industry experts, the audience, and representatives from Ferrero. The team from Philipp und Keuntje came out on top, developing a creative and strategically strong concept together with students and winning the REFILL Brand Event Award 2025.

The organizing team led by Marsha Schön, Kiara Kühl-Müller, Elisa Dürbler, and Elisa Brix was thrilled: “In just 48 hours, incredible creative energy is generated here – REFILL remains a place where practice meets creativity and students surpass themselves.” With its combination of teamwork, brand experience, and real agency practice, REFILL 2025 proved once again how successful the connection between universities and business can be. The next edition of the event is already being planned for 2026.

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The winning team of the REFILL Brand Event Awards 2025

MMI students discover the potential of generative AI in e-commerce



Professor Matthias Handrich (left) with MMI students participating in the practical project on generative AI (photo: Kevin Schulz)

In the summer semester of 2025, master's students in the Marketing Intelligence program worked on a practical project with Bosch Power Tools.

Under the leadership of Professor Matthias Handrich, two teams developed solutions for using generative AI in Amazon e-commerce. The goal was to increase efficiency and data-driven processes in online retail. The “genAIrated by Bosch” team analyzed tools to determine whether GenAI could replace marketing agencies and created a roadmap with recommendations for action. “AI'm the Bosch” designed an early war-

ning system for KPI monitoring and developed prototypes for dashboards and automated alerts. Both teams worked closely with Bosch's Amazon team and gained insights into real business processes. At the final pitch on July 7, 2025, the students impressed everyone with their in-depth analyses, practical concepts, and innovative AI applications.

Bosch particularly praised the professionalism and business impact of the results. Due to their great success, the projects were presented again to over 30 participants from the Bosch Power Tools Community. The project impressively demonstrated how practical and innovative academic training in the field of generative AI can be.

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Students develop creative advertising concepts for MINI

As part of a practice-oriented management seminar in cooperation with the BMW Group, students at Business School Pforzheim impressively demonstrated their skills in the field of brand communication.

The seminar was led by Daniel Fritz, an alumnus of the Marketing program and long-time lecturer at Business School Pforzheim, who is now Head of Marketing at Alphartis SE.

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Professor Robert Nothelfer (left) and Daniel Fritz (right) with the students involved in the MINI project

Innovation Lab project in cooperation with Wildpark Pforzheim



MCCM student Sunchai Kongtangjitt after the pitch presentation of his Innovation Lab project

Sunchai Kongtangjitt, a student in the English-language Master's program in Corporate Communication Management at Business School Pforzheim, has developed a campaign concept in collaboration with Wildpark Pforzheim.

The particular challenge of this concept, which was part of an Innovation Lab project, was that Sunchai Kongtangjitt had to design all project steps himself, from idea development to graphic design, data collection, and the pitch presentation.

➤ LinkedIn

Logistics students develop innovative scanning process with karldischinger

Logistics students at Business School Pforzheim have successfully completed a practical project in collaboration with logistics service provider karldischinger.

The project focused on developing a scanning process in the cross-dock area that could be implemented with existing resources and would further promote transparency and digitization in logistics. Together with the

karldischinger team, a practical concept was developed that will increase efficiency and traceability in the future.

➤ Instagram

Pforzheim HR talents gaining practical experience

In the teaching project “Applications of Human Resources Management,” students in the Bachelor's program in Human Resources Management worked on practical issues for Lechler GmbH in Metzingen—from compensation issues and target group-oriented recruiting to dealing with departing employees.

Based on analyses and scientific principles, the students developed specific recommendations for action, which they presented to the company and discussed with HR mana-

gers. A highlight was the tour of the company, which offered exciting insights into the innovative strength of Lechler GmbH.bH bot.

➤ Instagram

Business law students develop training course on new AI regulation

In the subject “Law and Digitalization,” seventh-semester business law students under the guidance of Professor Dr. Kerstin Schweizer developed innovative training materials on the EU's new AI Regulation.



Seventh-semester business law students with Professor Dr. Kerstin Schweizer (back row, second from right)

The aim was to provide companies and employees with practical and understandable information about the new regulations. Using interactive online formats, videos, podcasts, and intranet posts, the teams impressively demonstrated how creative legal design can make complex topics tangible. The result: three outstanding training concepts that combine theory, technology, and communication in an inspiring way.

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Successful thesis collaboration strengthens fight against illegal gambling

The publication of Melanie Mitschke's bachelor thesis, Business Law program, in the vunk Institute's series of publications marks the successful conclusion of an intensive collaboration between the Office of Public Order of the City of Pforzheim and Pforzheim University.

The thesis, entitled “Confiscation of illegal gambling items pursuant to Section 148c of the German Trade Regulation Act (GewO),” examines the legal basis and practical implications of the regulation. Since 2023, gambling establishments that do not comply with the law can be confiscated by the trade authority and be permanently removed from circulation on this basis.

During her thesis, Melanie Mitschke benefited from valuable practical insights and a broad survey of authorities. Representatives of both the city and the vunk Institute emphasize the great value of the work for the administration, experts, and the industry

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MDBM students explore the digital future on an excursion to Munich



The students gained valuable practical insights during their week-long excursion to Munich.

In May 2025, students from the Master's program in Digital Business Management (MDBM) at Business School Pforzheim went on a compact, practice-oriented week-long excursion to Munich, gaining insights into AI, digital transformation, and sustainable business models.

The excursion directly linked key aspects of the MDBM program with practical examples from leading companies and institutions, showing students concrete career paths at the intersection of business, technology, and sustainability. The following overview highlights key take-aways from this inspiring journey across five innovation leaders:

Accenture Innovation Hub

Guided tour of the Gen AI Studio with applications such as AI product configurators, computer vision quality control, and digital twins; workshop on developing your own GenAI business models.

BSH Hausgeräte

Presentation of the circular business model "Blue Movement" and practical insights into agile project management and data-driven innovation in a sustainable business context.

Philip Morris Germany

Strategies for business transformation and data-driven customer engagement; teamwork on marketing ideas for a new digital product.

it@M

IT Department Munich: Projects on digitalization and AI in the public sector, including the chatbot "MUCGPT" and AI-supported citizen services.

Nokia Germany

The future of mobile connectivity from 5G to 6G—ANNA; live demonstrations of AI-powered network automation and digital infrastructure solutions.

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VIA Impulses with Annette Schwarz

"Love what you do. Always."



Annette Schwarz

At the start of the 2025 summer semester, alumna Annette Schwarz, Chief Human Resources Officer and Labor Director at Stuttgarter Straßenbahnen AG, was a guest speaker at the VIA Impulses event series in the main lecture hall at Pforzheim University.

Annette Schwarz gave the new students at Business School Pforzheim insights into her career in the energy industry and professional soccer, encouraging them to try out lots of different things during their studies and to remain open to new experiences. She talked about her time at EnBW, VfB Stuttgart, the German Football Association (DFB), and UEFA, where she held positions of responsibility in human resour-

ces management. She gave a particularly impressive account of how important it is to stay in touch with former employers and build long-term relationships.

Annette Schwarz answered questions from the “newbies” about careers, personal development, and leadership responsibilities with humor and openness. In order to assert herself as a woman in male-dominated environments, for example, it is important to recognize and accept that the rules of the game are different there than in female-dominated structures. Hard work, perseverance, and a clear attitude were indispensable for her to follow her path. At the same time, Annette Schwarz emphasized that longterm success is only possible if you enjoy your work. Her conclusion: “Nothing happens without hard work—but certainly not without fun.”

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MBA alumni meet students from their former degree program at Business School Pforzheim

„Alumni Meet Current Students“: Leadership, learning, and life paths across borders

At the MBA event “Alumni Meet Current Students” at Pforzheim University, students met successful graduates who provided insights into their career paths and leadership experiences.

Seven alumni from various industries and countries demonstrated how passion, adaptability, and strategic thinking pave the way to international success.

Jun Li, Daimler Truck AG, explained the importance of intercultural competence and the role of AI in corporate communication.

Sibi Othaloor, SEG Automotive, emphasized how practical projects and teamwork during the MBA promote the transition to leadership responsibilities.

Jessica Schröder, DAWG GmbH, explained that even small companies offer great development opportunities also if you show initiative.

Adrita Chakraborty, Texas Instruments, emphasized how curiosity and flexibility make it easier to switch industries.

Oliver Gaess, entrepreneur, called on students to develop courage, perseverance, and the ability to get things done.

Adriana Rotaru, SAP, advised to constantly question plans and see change as an opportunity to learn.

Adela Maria Jiva, Microsoft, emphasized the importance of holistic thinking and data-driven decisions.

The meeting made it clear that lifelong learning, openness, and authenticity characterize strong leaders—and connect Pforzheim alumni across generations.

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Marketing Toolbox @ Lidl: Alumna Hanna Ziegler at MMI



MMI Alumna Hanna Ziegler

In the summer semester of 2025, the Master's program in Marketing Intelligence (MMI) welcomed back alumna Hanna Ziegler and her colleague Josephine Schmitting, who work as junior consultants in the Data & AI department at Lidl International.

In their guest lecture, Hanna Ziegler and Josephine Schmitting provided exciting insights into the data-driven marketing strategy of the international retail company Lidl. Students were particularly interested in the

prospect of diverse career opportunities in the field of data and AI in a dynamic, international environment.

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➤ [Instagram](#)

Data Science Workshop: Alumnus Kai Sternad at MIS

In May 2025, alumnus Kai Sternad conducted a data science workshop in his former master's program in Information Systems (MIS).

As a speaker, he also noticed how much the technological environment has changed since his last workshop two years ago: "While ChatGPT was still a new phenomenon in 2023, AI literacy is now a key skill," said Kai Sternad. New tools and frameworks have further simplified access to machine learning (ML) and AI, while at the same time increasing the demands on data quality and model understanding.

In addition to theoretical basics, the workshop also covered practical

applications with Jupyter Notebooks as well as deep learning, transformers, and LLMs (large language models). Despite rapid developments, good data, solid ML foundations, and implementation skills remain crucial, Sternad explained. The exchange with the enthusiastic students showed how important continuous learning is in a changing technological landscape.

➤ [LinkedIn](#)

#sustainable

Experiencing sustainability in a playful way : BNRE students test "The World's Future"



BNRE students explore "The World's Future"

As part of the lecture “Climate and Environmental Protection” by Professor Dr. Claus Lang-Koetz, students of the Business Administration/ Sustainability and Resource Efficiency (BNRE) program experienced a special teaching event: the social simulation The World’s Future.

The students assumed leadership roles in a fictional, realistic world scenario and experienced firsthand how complex and interdependent sustainability goals are. Through their decisions in energy policy, industry, and social progress, conflicts of objectives and the consequences of their actions became directly tangible. The simulation-like format was moderated by

Dr. Laura Oberle, an alumna of the university, and Ronja Baginski. The interactive experience impressively demonstrated that sustainable action requires cooperation, innovation, and long-term thinking.

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BNRE students visit a combined heat and power plant with hydrogen-capable gas turbines

Students of the Business Administration/ Sustainability and Resource Efficiency (BNRE) degree program visited the EnBW combined heat and power plant in Stuttgart-Münster with its new, hydrogen-capable gas turbines during the summer semester of 2025.

The excursion offered participants the opportunity to experience theoretical concepts from environmental and energy technology directly in practice. The modern power plant, which serves as a backup during periods of low wind and solar power, is technologically ready to operate with green hydrogen – a significant step towards a climate-neutral energy supply. In addition, the students learned how the neighboring waste incineration plant uses trash to generate energy and integrates it into the

region's electricity and heat supply. The direct insight into how thermodynamic principles and technical systems are implemented in real-world applications was particularly fascinating. The excursion clearly demonstrated how closely technical expertise, ecological objectives, and economic perspectives are intertwined in sustainable energy supply.

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Excursion of BNRE students to the power plant of the future

INEC: Results from the “Circular E-Transition” research project presented



The German Engineering Federation (VDMA) was given a presentation on the "Circular Electricity Transition" project.

The research project “Kreislauf-E-Wende”, funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Protection (BMWK), came to a successful conclusion with a conference in Frankfurt.

Around 50 representatives from member companies of the German Engineering Federation (VDMA) learned about the results of the joint project between TU Darmstadt, Siemens Energy, the Research Center for Energy Economics (FfE), and the Institute for Industrial Ecology (INEC) at Pforzheim University. The focus was on how circular economy and climate protection strategies can be effectively combined in energy technology

plants. Doctoral candidate Pia Heidak and Professor Dr. Mario Schmidt from INEC presented findings on prospective life cycle assessments (LCA) and demonstrated how temporal aspects can be given greater consideration in future life cycle assessments.

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INEC: Young researchers in dialog at the 20th Life Cycle Assessment Workshop

The 20th Life Cycle Assessment Workshop took place on September 25 and 26, 2025, at the Institute for Industrial Ecology (INEC) of Pforzheim University. Around forty early-career researchers and doctoral candidates from across the German-speaking world engaged in intensive discussions on their research questions, which ranged from the evaluation of solar power plants and green digital twins to integrated life cycle sustainability assessments.

To mark the anniversary, Professor Dr. Mario Schmidt and Professor Dr. Liselotte Schebek, participants in the first Life Cycle Assessment Workshop in 2005, presented keynote speeches on current challenges in life cycle assessment within the context of the circular economy and sustainability. The multi-faceted program included presentations, posters, bar-

camps, and the collaborative creation of a map of stakeholders, standards, and tools for life cycle analysis. The event provided valuable insights and fostered intensive professional exchange for the practical and scientifically sound further development of the methodology.

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Young researchers at the 20th Life Cycle Assessment Workshop at Pforzheim University



INEC employees Annika Pruhs and Anina Kusch at the Circular Design Summit 2025 in Stuttgart

INEC: Project ZIRU at the Circular Design Summit 2025 in Stuttgart

At the Circular Design Summit on March 11, 2025 in Stuttgart, the research team of the ZIRU project presented its approaches to optimizing circular product development processes in companies in Baden-Württemberg.

The focus was on the further developed "Circularity Navigator," a decision-making tool that supports companies in integrating circular economy principles into product development and was tested in a practical workshop format. The tool combines scientifically sound methods with the analysis of product life cycles, business models, and de-

sign strategies to promote resource-efficient and circular products. The exchange with experts from companies such as Google, hansgrohe, and BMW provided INEC employees Annika Pruhs and Anina Kusch with important impetus for the further development of their approach.

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Successful dissertations: Patrik Schmidt, Pia Szichta and Anna Sander-Titgemeyer

Two alumnae of the Master's program Life Cycle & Sustainability (MLiCS) and a former assistant at the Institute for Consumer Research and Sustainable Consumption (vunk) successfully completed their dissertations in the summer semester of 2025.



Patrik Schmidt's dissertation was written as part of the "Information Participation" project, funded by the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The former assistant at vunk analyzes the complex legal framework surrounding rating portals, fake reviews, and influencer marketing, and identifies existing legal gaps. Patrik Schmidt's work provides important insights for legislators and offers new approaches to how customer reviews can become a tool for information participation.



MLiCS alumna **Pia Szichta** successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on the potential and environmental impacts of the cascade use of wood at the Technical University of Munich. The oral examination was awarded the distinction summa cum laude. Her dissertation, supervised by Professor Dr. Ingela Tietze, addresses a highly relevant social topic at the intersection of sustainability, resource efficiency, and climate protection. Pia Szichta completed her Master's degree in Life Cycle & Sustainability at the Business School Pforzheim in 2020.



Anna Sander-Titgemeyer also completed her M.Sc. in Life Cycle & Sustainability at the Business School Pforzheim in 2020 and was supervised by Professor Dr. Ingela Tietze during her doctoral studies. Anna Sander-Titgemeyer successfully defended her doctoral dissertation at the School of Life Sciences of the Technical University of Munich. Her oral examination was graded "very good." In her dissertation, she investigates the potential future environmental impacts of harvesting more hardwood and using it in innovative product applications.

#interdisciplinary

Ingenuity, dedication and excellence: Pforzheim University honors outstanding students

Fourteen students and graduates from the three schools of Pforzheim University were honored on Tuesday, June 3, 2025, for their exceptional commitment to their studies and for outstanding theses. Eleven donors from the region recognized this achievement with awards to highlight both academic excellence as well as initiative and social relevance. In his address, Rector Professor Dr. Ulrich Jautz emphasized the importance of academic freedom and creativity.

The sponsorship awards of the sponsors and donors with the laureates 2025:

Lisa Bertsch, Bachelor in Human Resource Management, received the **B&F Förderpreis** for her work on Future Skills in companies.

Lena Klittich was honored by **Ernst & Young** for her bachelor thesis on risk management at Witzemann GmbH.

The **FAV – Förderer und Alumni der Hochschule Pforzheim e.V.** praised **Marleen Schenk and Viktor Wohlfahrt** from the Rennschmiede for their outstanding commitment in international competitions.

Leon Dammert received the **PSD Bank Förderpreis** for his work on solar-hydrogen storage systems.

Natalie Maltaric was awarded by **Richard Wolf GmbH** for her excellent medical-technical research.

The **Rotary Club Pforzheim-Schlossberg** prize went to **Erika Schewtschenko**, whose master thesis highlighted creative parallels between freestyle street dance and corporate leadership.

Adrian Schindler received the **Witzenmann Prize** for his innovative vehicle concept "Volvo Zone."

The **Theo-Münch-Stiftung** awarded **Soraya Koch, Jeremia Hinsberger, and Nick Griesheimer** for linguistically and technically outstanding theses.

The **WSP Förderpreis** went to **Ahmet Mehadzic** for his project "PFIN – Barrier-free inner-city navigation for Pforzheim," which was also honored with



Outstanding students with the prize sponsors at the 2025 sponsorship award ceremony

a special prize from the Rolf Scheuermann Foundation.

The main prize of the **Rolf Scheuermann Foundation** went to **Eva Grünebaum** for her inclusion project "Blackbox," a game that promotes tactile sense and linguistic creativity.

The **ZONTA Club Pforzheim** recognized **Alisa Bay** for her commitment in digital transformation and voluntary social engagement.

The festive award ceremony once again highlighted that Hochschule Pforzheim is a place of living academic freedom, interdisciplinary thinking, and social responsibility — carried by outstanding young talents who look to the future with curiosity and courage.

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Preiszeit and Beta Gamma Sigma introduction ceremony



Preiszeit at the Business School Pforzheim

On June 5th, 2025 the Business School of Pforzheim University hosted its annual awards ceremony. Each year, students are recognized for excellent academic achievements and special engagement with sponsorship awards from companies. Dean Professor Dr. Thomas Cleff opened the event with an appreciative speech. He emphasized how much the students enrich Pforzheim University through curiosity, outstanding performance, rational thinking, and commitment. Another highlight of the evening was the induction of the best Bachelor's and Master's students of a cohort into the international honor society Beta Gamma Sigma.

Numerous awards from companies and organizations highlighted the close connection between science and practice:

Jeffrey Feufel received the award for the best thesis in the field of Information and Communication Systems in the Business Administration/ Purchasing & Logistics program. The prize was presented by Dr. Torsten Mallée, Vice President and Director of International Business Development at **AEB**. Jeffrey Feufel's thesis focused on developing a set of rules for automated traffic planning for AGV systems. Another award from AEB went to **Josias Kinzel**, **Carsten Schmid**, and **Kay Stindl** for the best project in the same program.

Odette Abou Mrad was awarded the sponsorship prize from **attempto GmbH** Karlsruhe for excellent academic performance in the Business Administration/Digital Enterprise Management program (now BBA/Digital Business Management) and for her outstanding engagement in innovation and sustainability. Laura Sanz-Rodriguez, the new site manager of attempto Karlsruhe, presented the award.

The **Robert Bosch GmbH** also recognized two students this year: **Maren Barth** from the BBA/ Digital Business Management program and **Andrei Albu** from the Master's program in Information Systems, each receiving a sponsorship award. The prizes were handed over by Gregor Schrott, Vice President of Bosch Digital Innovation.

The auditing firm **EY** also honored three students for their top performance in the first semester. **Marcello Musa** from Business Administration/Taxation and Auditing, as well as **Carina Arnold** and **Joshua Wiedmann** from Business Administration/Controlling, Finance, and Accounting, each received an award. The

prizes were presented by Peter Werling, Partner and Head of Assurance Southwest Germany, and Steffen Maurer, Auditor at EY.

The **Joachim-Paul Prize**, named after the late Professor Joachim Paul of Pforzheim University (who passed away in 2017), was awarded by Professor Dr. Matthias Handrich to **Daniel Steppat** for his excellent academic achievements in the Business Administration/International Business program.

Julian Arzt from the Bachelor's program in Business Law (LL.B.) impressed with his thesis on (Product) Liability for damages caused by AI systems. The award was presented by Henning von Restorff, former lecturer in IT law and practicing attorney for Intellectual Property and Information Technology Law at **Ladenburger Rechtsanwälte**.

In the second part of the event, the focus was on inducting outstanding students into the international honor society **Beta Gamma Sigma**. Professor Dr. Dirk Wentzel, Chapter Advisor of Beta Gamma Sigma, conducted the ceremony. This year, 68 students from the Business School were inducted — 33 Master's students and 35 Bachelor's students. This recognition is closely linked to the values of Beta Gamma Sigma, which these students have demonstrated: "Beta" stands for honor, "Gamma" for wisdom, "Sigma" for seriousness, and enthusiasm.

Beta Gamma Sigma is a global network that only admits the most high-achieving students of each cohort. Since 2014, Pforzheim University has been represented by its own chapter of Beta Gamma Sigma after the successful accreditation by the renowned international organization "Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business" (AACSB).

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Awards for outstanding teaching and practice

At the ceremonial inaugural lecture of Professor Dr. Svenja Buckstegge on the topic of "Legal Design" on June 25, 2025, the teaching and practice prizes were awarded at the Business School.

This year, the teaching award was given to an entire team instead of to an individual: the BNRE/MLICS team, namely the team from the Bachelor's programs in Business Administration/Sustainability and Resource Efficiency and Life Cycle & Sustainability (M.Sc.). In his laudatory speech, Professor Dr. Jürgen Volkert praised the team's various contributions to sustainability, including the symposium "Sustainability and Resource Efficiency," close alumni collaborations, and high-ranking publications.

The practical award went to Professor Dr. Kerstin Schweizer, who has been at the university since 2005. Her colleagues, Professors Dr. Simone Harriehausen and Dr. Barbara Lorinser, highlighted her insightful thinking, forward-looking perspective, and the successful implementation of innovative pilot projects. With topics such as "Digitalization and Law", "Legal Tech" and "Legal Design", she is a driving force who inspires and motivates students.

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The BNRE/MLICS team receives the 2025 Teaching Award



The practical prize went to Professor Dr. Kerstin Schweizer.



Professor Dr. Svenja Buckstegge gave her inaugural lecture.

Dean's Award for Distinguished Lecturers goes to guest professor Tracy Maylett



Guest professor Tracy Maylett (3rd from right) received the Dean's Award for Distinguished Lecturers

In May 2025, Tracy Maylett was awarded the Dean's Award for Distinguished Lecturers of the Business School Pforzheim.

Professor Maylett possesses the exceptional ability to guide students in shaping their futures consciously by combining his insightful mentorship with opportunities for independent reflection. Professor Tracy Maylett's interactive approach actively engages everyone and fosters a cooperative environment

where participants learn from shared experiences — a quality highlighted by Professor Dr. Harald Strotmann and one of the reasons students nominated Prof. Maylett for the Dean's Award. Strotmann also highlighted the extraordinary teaching concept that enables Maylett to motivate and inspire students through case studies and their critical analysis and discussion.

For more than 20 years, Tracy Maylett has served as president of DecisionWise, a global consulting firm focused on evaluating the employee experience through coaching, training, and feedback programs. He holds a

Doctorate in Organizational Change from Pepperdine University in California and has been teaching since 2012 at the Marriott School of Business of Brigham Young University, a partner university of Pforzheim University. Additionally, Tracy Maylett has been a valued visiting professor in the MBA program at Pforzheim University since 2015 and since 2021 in the MCCM program. For his outstanding teaching in the areas of leadership and organizational effectiveness, he consistently receives excellent evaluations from students at the Business School.

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Sustainability, resource conservation and innovative product development: Students present practical solutions

In the summer semester of 2025, bachelor students from the Business School and the School of Engineering jointly developed practical solutions for companies.

Under the guidance of Professors Dr. Claus Lang-Koetz and Dr. Jörg Woidasky, they worked on real-world problems, such as developing a zero-waste concept, analyzing disinfection processes, implementing circular economy principles in healthcare, calculating CO2 footprints, and optimizing intralogistics for an organic food retailer. The students in the Business Administration/Sustainabi-

lity and Resource Efficiency and Industrial Engineering programs were able to combine business knowledge with technical expertise and sustainability skills through their sound academic training, impressing their industry partners with practical results.

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Students are working on sustainable product ideas for practical application

From racing simulators to bee magic: Comeback of the University for Kids

After a break due to the coronavirus pandemic, the University for Kids of Pforzheim University celebrated its comeback this summer – and around 50 participants from grades 5 to 7 were enthusiastically involved.

For a week, participants crafted, researched, discussed, and experimented: from building a paper computer and designing creative lamps to role-playing games on fair trade and climate issues, 20 program items offered exciting insights into

science, technology, art, and society. The playful approach to teaching, in particular, ensured full classes and beaming faces.

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Photos: Anouk Widmann / Susanne Materac



Pin Luarn

Guest Professor Pin Luarn:

„For me, teaching is about guiding students to discover and maximize their potential, a process that brings me great joy and fulfillment”

Professor Pin Luarn from Taiwan Tech's School of Management has dedicated 31 years to teaching and global work. He has received multiple Taiwan Tech excellent teaching awards and was ranked among the top 2% of scientists globally in the 2022 Stanford University Scientific Influence Rankings. This year, he was honored with the National Excellent Teaching Award.

Professor Luarn specializes in e-commerce, online marketing, and artificial intelligence, and has published numerous highly-cited papers. He has mentored over 200 master's and doctoral students and played a key role in helping several companies go public, including Taiwan's first listed e-commerce company, significantly advancing the e-commerce sector in Taiwan. As a former Dean and EMBA Executive Director, Professor Luarn has guided students to multiple national championships in case competitions. Professor Luarn's teaching philosophy centers on fostering innovative thinking and global flexibility in students, aiming to shape socially responsible global citizens.

Thank you for taking the time for this interview. I understand this isn't your first visit to our campus in Pforzheim. It's great to have you back here.

Thank you! That's correct – this isn't my first time in Pforzheim, and I'm delighted to be back.

Since you are already familiar with our campus and its atmosphere, can you think of three words that come to mind when teaching at our university?

The first word is friendly. Everyone here – both students and staff – is so welcoming and kind.

The second is hard-working. The students are very eager to learn, and they work diligently during class.

The third word would be cold. I arrived at the end of October, and while the first few days were sunny, it was already quite chilly. The sunsets over the river, however, are stunning. After classes, I often take walks with my wife, who is here with me. The town and its surroundings are beautiful. We even visited Strasbourg – the old town, the cathedral, and the Christmas decorations there were truly impressive.

What were you most looking forward to experiencing again when you returned to Pforzheim?

I'm very familiar with the environment here and simply enjoy teaching. The students are very attentive, and I can see in their eyes that they're genuinely trying to learn from me. Teaching such motivated students is a real pleasure.

In your opinion, what are the main differences between Pforzheim University and your university at home?

Pforzheim University is relatively small, which gives it a close-knit, family-like atmosphere where everyone seems to know each other. It's very warm and friendly. The university I work at is a bit larger but also highly international. Here in Pforzheim, there is a wonderful mix of students from Asia, India, China, Taiwan, and European countries, creating a rich environment for cultural exchange.

One small cultural difference I noticed is that students in Taiwan applaud after class, while here they knock on the tables. The first time I experienced that, I didn't know what was going on and thought they might not be happy with my teaching! I eventually learned that knocking on the table is the students' way of expressing their appreciation for my class. It's little things like this that stand out when you teach in a different country.

You are teaching a course on “Introduction to Artificial Intelligence” here in Pforzheim. What sparked your interest in this field?

My interest in AI started about 35 years ago when I was a PhD student in Wisconsin, USA. I first learned about artificial neural networks back then. However, computing power at the time was very limited, so it took an eternity to model decisions. Around ten years ago, with more powerful computers, these models became practical for real-world applications. Six years ago, I began using

them to solve marketing questions, such as analyzing consumer behavior.

Today, we use tools like cameras and internet data to understand customer feedback and emotions. In my class here in Pforzheim, I teach 28 students how to work with large language models. MBA students, in particular, need to know how to use these tools and where to find resources to conduct analyses effectively.

How do you view the impact of AI on human productivity?

AI doesn't make people lazy; it boosts productivity. It doesn't take jobs away—it elevates them to a new level. AI is a powerful tool, much like the tools humans have been using throughout history to enhance their capabilities. However, if used mindlessly, it can lead to complacency. When used thoughtfully, it empowers you to achieve more, freeing up time for critical thinking and analysis.

The results AI generates can range from remarkable to nonsensical. It's up to the user to refine inputs, guide the model, and ensure it meets their needs. Large language models, for instance, are designed to predict the next word—they don't inherently understand logic. As a user, you need to clarify your objectives and fine-tune the output. While these tools are constantly improving and becoming more powerful, they don't replace human thought—they require it.

Users must be cautious, outsmarting the model and leveraging it strategically. This approach encourages

ongoing critical thinking and innovation. However, privacy concerns are another issue to consider, taking into account how these models are trained and the data they rely on. That's a broader, important conversation.

In your opinion, how is AI transforming the role of managers and leaders in today's world and why is responsible regulation important for its use?

AI is still in its infant stage, especially considering how recently tools like ChatGPT have gained widespread popularity. Its impact will be profound, influencing nearly every aspect of life and work. We need clear rules and regulations to harness its potential responsibly. Like any powerful tool, AI can be both incredibly beneficial and potentially dangerous.

For example, we have extensive regulations for operating cars safely, and similar rules are essential for AI. If used within a framework of well-thought-out regulations, AI can become a highly effective tool. Right now, global efforts are underway to develop better ways to govern and limit AI's use, which is both essential and timely. Without these safeguards, AI could become uncontrollable—much like an untamed animal or a car with a dangerously powerful engine. Establishing and following clear

rules is crucial to ensuring its safe and productive use. The key is to use AI wisely. AI can take over certain tasks, but the critical thinking must always come from humans.

What do you love most about your job?

I'm fortunate to teach a diverse range of students, from 18-year-old undergraduates to 50-year-old executive MBA participants. Each group has its own needs, and adapting my teaching methods to suit them is both challenging and rewarding. I also attended teaching workshops at Harvard University, which helped me refine my techniques. After 31 years of teaching, I feel I can understand students' needs well, and that makes every day in the classroom enjoyable.

Do you have a final piece of advice for students aspiring to work in AI or management?

As Steve Jobs once said, "Stay hungry." Always be curious and learn something new every day. Absorb knowledge like a sponge, but also learn how to process and apply it. Not everything you learn will be useful, but keeping an open mind is essential. This mindset keeps you energized and ready to embrace new challenges.

The National Taiwan University of Science and Technology was founded on August 1, 1974, as the National Taiwan Institute of Technology (NTIT). It was the first higher education institution of its kind within Taiwan's technical and vocational education system. It is now a leading academic institution focused on providing high-quality education in business and management. It offers a wide range of programs, including undergraduate, graduate, and executive education, with a strong emphasis on practical skills, innovation, and global mobility. The school is known for its outstanding faculty, research contributions, and close ties to industry, preparing students to become responsible, effective leaders in the business world. It has a reputation for excellence in e-commerce, online marketing, and business technology.

Thank you so much for the interview! Is there anything else you'd like to add?

I'd like to thank everyone who made my teaching experience here possible – especially the ISP team, Jochen, Uta, and Rebecca. Their support has been amazing, and I'm impressed by how efficient and welcoming everyone is.

I would also like to thank Professor Dr. Thomas Cleff. We have been friends for nine years now. We've connected through AACSB and EFMD accreditation events, attending the same annual conferences. We'd meet two or three times a year and developed a strong friendship. Thomas kindly invited me to teach in Pforzheim, and it's been a pleasure to be here. Thank you!

Alumni Interview:

Luca Kainhofer



Luca Kainhofer

Luca Kainhofer completed his Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a focus on Purchasing, Logistics, and Supply Chain Management in 2023. After graduating, he joined Karlsruher SC GmbH & Co. KGaA as an E-Commerce Manager, and since March 2024, he has been working there as a Digital Sales Manager. He finds balance to his professional work in the soccer industry through other sports: golf and running marathons.

My best memory of Pforzheim University is definitely...

...the semester opening and closing parties.

What was particularly exciting about the degree program?

The practical focus, which was consistently emphasized throughout the program. Applying what you learned not only in theory, but also through practical case studies, greatly helps to absorb material.

What I enjoy most about my job as Digital Sales Manager at Karlsruher SC is...

...the variety of tasks. Working for a soccer club means facing new challenges every day that need to be overcome. I also enjoy taking on responsibility. This is part of my role, as I'm responsible for all online sales channels (ticketing, merchandising, membership, etc.).

The young team and the sporting focus of the work are a particular draw for me.

Furthermore, I see the direct impact of my work and can actively contribute to shaping the future of the organization/club.

What are – from your perspective – the most important milestones in your career path?

My self-employment alongside my studies, which ultimately paved the way for me to join Karlsruher SC. Generally speaking, I would consider experiences like practical semesters and working student positions to be very important. Only through these professional experiences does it become clear what you want in the future, or indeed, what you don't. I wouldn't want to have missed out on these experiences.

What always distracted you from studying?

Any sporting events made it difficult to put studying on the back burner. Bundesliga conferences or Champions League evenings made it hard for me to use the weekends or evenings effectively for studying.

Alumni Interview:

Selin Erkovan



Selin Erkovan

After graduating with a Master's degree in Marketing Intelligence in 2020, Selin Erkovan's passion for the beauty industry led her to L'Oréal's DACH headquarters in Düsseldorf, where she began as a management trainee. She was able to fully utilize her enthusiasm for e-commerce and marketing during various placements in e-key account management, e-activation management, and product marketing. She then took on responsibility for e-commerce content management in the Luxe Division. Currently, Selin Erkovan is a product manager for the Lancôme fragrance category. "What continues to inspire me is the unique spirit at L'Oréal: creativity, agility, and a strong team spirit with which we bring brand experiences to life," she says.

My most valuable professional experience was...

...the trainee program in the Luxe Division at L'Oréal. The opportunity to rotate through several job roles in Sales, Activation, and Marketing within a single year was incredibly valuable. I not only gained comprehensive knowledge of our brands and processes, but also made important contacts and built a network that continues to benefit me today.

When I'm not working, I'm...

...exploring! Whether it's discovering new cafes and restaurants with friends, dancing at concerts, or traveling the world – I love combining all of these!

What was particularly exciting about the degree program?

What made my Master's program special were the practical projects. They were not only exciting and educational, but also a lot of fun! I was able to gain such valuable experience that I could later apply in my career. Through the projects, I learned relevant tools and practical skills that have really helped me.

My advice for students:

Use your time at university to explore different things! Gain practical experience to discover your passion and acquire broad knowledge. Also: If you have the opportunity, spend time abroad, let yourself be inspired by new experiences, and discover new perspectives.

New at the Business School: Professor Dr. Katharina Werner



Professor Dr. Katharina Werner

Professor Dr. Katharina Werner has been enriching the team at the Business School Pforzheim since the summer semester 2025.

Katharina Werner holds a professorship in economics at the Business School. She completed her studies in economics at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, the University of Cambridge, and as a visiting researcher at the Kennedy School of Harvard University. Her research focuses on issues related to the design of the education system, particularly with regard to educational choices, educational inequality, and education policy. Prior to her appointment, Katharina Werner worked at the ifo Institute in Munich, where she held the position of Deputy Head of the Center for the Economics of Education.

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Farewell to the Business School: Professor Gabriele Naderer is retiring



Professor Gabriele Naderer

At the end of the summer semester 2025, Gabriele Naderer, Professor of Market Psychology and Buyer Behavior in the Bachelor's program in Market Research and Consumer Psychology, retired.

After studying psychology at Heidelberg University, Gabriele Naderer worked for many years in market psychology research at the Institute for Market Psychology in Mannheim, first as a project manager and later as managing partner. In 2001, Gabriele Naderer was appointed to Pforzheim University. At the Business School, she taught market and advertising psychology as well as empirical methods, with a focus on psychological-qualitative and instrumental processes. In research and practical projects, she focused on, among other things, the development of implicit methods, the evaluation of services at universities (quality management of BAföG offices and cafeterias of German student unions), research into the origins of white-collar crime, sustainable consumer behavior, and the social acceptance of autonomous driving. In 2019, Gabriele Naderer was awarded the Teaching Prize of the Faculty of Business and Law.

New places of work: Professor Dr. Anja Schmitz and Professor Dr. Kai Alexander Saldsieder

Anja Schmitz has been enriching the Business Department at Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences since the winter semester of 2025/2026, specializing in Human Resource Management and Organization. At Business School Pforzheim, she was Professor of Human Resource Management in the Bachelor's and Master's programs in Human Resource Management and a member of the Human Resources Competence Center.

Kai Alexander Saldsieder moved to the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW) in the winter semester of 2025/2026, joining the Department of Management, Governance and Media, where he holds a professorship in Strategic Management and International Marketing. At Business School Pforzheim, he was Professor of General Management and International Business. He taught international aspects of business administration, including in the International Study Program (ISP).

Obituaries

Professor Dr. Dieter Dahl

Professor Dr. Dieter Dahl passed away on March 14, 2025, at the age of 95. Professor Dahl joined the State Higher School of Economics in Pforzheim in April 1963. As a founding member, he took over the leadership of the Department of Economics from the outset and later of the corresponding school. Dieter Dahl taught economic theory and economic policy and was a passionate teacher and researcher. For decades, he shaped both the organizational and substantive orientation of economics in Pforzheim, including at the Business School. He retired for health reasons after the summer semester of 1987.

Professor Adolf Kreuz

Professor Adolf Kreuz passed away on March 21, 2025, at the age of 84. Since April 1974, Professor Kreuz was active in the field of Marketing at the Business School. From the very beginning, he was involved in self-administration. He served as a member and deputy member of the Study and Examination Committee and held the position of head of the Marketing department for many years. He cared deeply about the exchange with the study programs and maintaining constant contact with companies. He consistently used insights from advanced training semesters in his teaching. In 2003, Professor Kreuz took early retirement for health reasons.

Patrick Kloz

Patrick Kloz passed away suddenly on April 12, 2025, at the age of 58. Patrick Kloz was a homegrown talent of the university, where he studied Industrial Engineering from 1992 to 1995. He began working at the university immediately after his graduation, on November 1, 1995, as an assistant in the then Department 10 (programs in Business Organization and Business Informatics). In 2002, he transferred to the computing center, where since 2018 he was part of the collective leadership team of today's Campus IT. We have lost a wonderful colleague in Patrick Kloz, who was a friendly companion to many at the university. His constant helpfulness makes him unforgettable.

Professor Dr. Hartmut Löffler

Professor Dr. Hartmut Löffler passed away on May 10, 2025, at the age of 83. Professor Löffler joined the Department of Economics at the University of Applied Sciences for Business in October 1974. The development and shaping of his department and the entire university were always particularly important to him. As Vice-Rector, founding member of the first Senate, and later member of the first University Council, he left a lasting impact on the university. With his friendly and constructive manner, he made a significant contribution to the advancement of our university over many years. He cared deeply about his students and saw himself not only as a teacher but also as a guide and reliable advisor—shaping several generations of students over more than 65 semesters. Professor Löffler retired in 2007.

Professor Dr. Mario Schmidt among the "World's Top 2% Scientists"

Professor and Director of the INEC Institute, Mario Schmidt, has once again made the prestigious Stanford University list of the world's top 2% scientists.



Professor Dr. Mario Schmidt

Already in 2022, Mario Schmidt was included in the "Stanford List" – and in 2025 he ranks among the most-cited researchers worldwide again. This designation is based on an analysis of the Scopus database, the largest abstract and citation database for peer-reviewed literature. Thus, Mario Schmidt is among the scientists whose research is particularly visible and internationally influential.

Pforzheim HR expert among the '40 leading minds in human resources'

The magazine Personalmagazin has recognized Professor Dr. Anja Schmitz as one of the 40 leading figures in German human resources in 2025.



Professor Dr. Anja Schmitz (photo: Dawin Meckel)

The professor of Human Resource Management was recognized in the Consulting category for her academic expertise and her influence on the HR community. 'The world of work is undergoing fundamental changes that require significant adaptation from both individuals and organizations. These transformations can only succeed if we promote learning within organizations holistically, in the interplay between people and technology (...),' said Schmitz



Gulshan Mandal (4th from right) received the Research Excellence Award 2025 in the Student category

Gulshan Mandal receives the Research Excellence Award for an innovative AI solution

Gulshan Mandal from the Bachelor's program in Digital Enterprise Management was honored with the Research Excellence Award 2025 in the Student category

Gulshan Mandal was awarded for his research work on the "AI BPMN Generator," which was developed during his bachelor's degree program in Digital Enterprise Management under the supervision of Professor Dr. Frank Morelli. With his approach of AI Syntax Mapping, Mandal enables fast and

intuitive process digitization, which is already successfully implemented in a company. The award recognizes not only his outstanding research achievement but also his innovative spirit and the practical connection between science and entrepreneurship.

MCCM alumna Helena Sicko is one of the „Top 30 under 30“

The top talents of the PR Report 2025 have been announced – and Helena Sicko, a graduate of Business School Pforzheim, is among the award-winning young professionals.



Helena Sicko

Helena Sicko completed her master's degree in Corporate Communication Management in 2022 and now works as IT Communication Manager at EnBW AG.

With this award, she ranks among the “Top 30 under 30” in the communications industry and is recognized for her promising potential.

➤ LinkedIn

Top 3 in Young Researchers Award: MMI alumna Julia Krömker

Julia Krömker's master's thesis has earned her a place among the top three finalists for the 2025 Young Researcher Award presented by the Professional Association of German Market and Social Researchers (BVM).

In her work on data-driven determination of the optimal voucher value, Julia Krömker from the Marketing Intelligence (M.Sc.) program shows how companies can use Causal Machine Learning to determine personalized voucher values for customers, in order to design incentives more efficiently.

For the award, Julia Krömker was nominated by the program director, Professor Dr. Elke Theobald, who

accompanied her during her master's studies.

The award “Emerging Researcher of the Year” recognizes outstanding research in the fields of market, media, and social research. The accolade was presented in June 2025 at the German Market Research Congress.

➤ LinkedIn



Julia Krömker

Yesterday, today, tomorrow

Long Night of Term Papers

On Wednesday, May 21, 2025, the Business School Pforzheim invited all students to a long night of term papers in the library and on campus.



From 5:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., students had the opportunity to devote themselves to academic work in a focused and supportive atmosphere. They used the time to write productively, learn new writing strategies, or conduct targeted research. In addition to individual support, practical workshops, helpful tips on academic writing, and a

motivating learning environment were offered.

Following the pilot event in the summer semester, the Business School is looking forward to hosting the second edition of the Long Night of Term Papers on November 26, 2025.

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Business School Advisory Board: Focus on future topics and AI

The Advisory Board of Business School Pforzheim met with the Dean's Office of the Business School at ARENA2036 in Stuttgart at the end of the summer semester 2025.

Following an update from the Business School, members discussed practical issues relating to the topic of "AI requirements from a practical perspective" in a World Café. The innovative environment of ARENA2036, where the mobility and production of the future can be experienced, provided the ideal setting for an intensive and enriching exchange.

The Advisory Board of the Business School Pforzheim advises the Dean's Office on strategic issues related to research and teaching and is composed of successful alumni from business and society who support the school with their expertise on a voluntary basis.

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Full to capacity: Prof. Dr. Hanno Beck's lecture was entitled "Success – The secret forces that determine our lives" (photo: Cornelia Kamper)

6th Long Night of Science shows campus full of ideas

With a multi-faceted program of lectures, workshops, exhibitions, and shows, the 6th Long Night of Science on May 30, 2025, attracted around 1,000 visitors to the campus of Pforzheim University. Under the motto "Experience science up close," the campus was transformed into a lively stage for ideas, experiments, and exchange.

One highlight of the evening was the Science Slam, in which five researchers presented their topics in an entertaining way—from eddy currents to artificial intelligence in disaster management. Professor Carlo Burkhardt won with his presentation on the importance of permanent magnets, closely followed by Professor Rainer Drath, who showed how AI can revolutionize exam preparation.

The workshops for children and adults were also very popular – whether it was the LEGO stop-motion course or the experiment on "matching markets." With a total of nine workshops, 17 lectures, an exhibition opening, and lab tours,

the event invited visitors to participate and marvel.

Musical and visual highlights were provided by the university orchestra, spontaneous pop-up performances, exhibitions by the School of Design, and the spectacular "Drum and Fire" show, which fascinated the audience with light, music, and flames.

With the sixth edition, Pforzheim University once again sent a strong signal for dialogue between science and society – practical, inspiring, and full of creative energy.

➤ Website HSPF

Studium Generale: 4th Campus Classic Concert brings the summer semester 2025 to a musical end

The Studium Generale at Pforzheim University concluded the 2025 summer semester on Wednesday, June 4, 2025, with a journey through emotional soundscapes. For the fourth time now, the Campus Classic Concert transformed the university's main lecture hall into a concert hall. Under the title “Of Joy and Sorrow – Musical Worlds of Emotion,” the Southwest German Chamber Orchestra Pforzheim, conducted by Professor Sebastian Tewinkel, performed works that touched, moved, and captivated the audience.



(Photo: Jean Laffitau)

The audience enjoyed an impressive mix of works by Grieg, Tchaikovsky, Barber, Kreisler, and Mozart. Samuel Barber's “Adagio for Strings” in particular provided an emotional highlight and left the hall in tense silence. Concertmaster Pawel Zalejski shone with charming interpretations of Fritz Kreisler's “Liebesleid” and “Liebesfreud” before Mozart's lively Divertimento KV 136 brought the evening to a cheerful end.

The SWDKO, one of the few full-time chamber orchestras in Europe, impressed with its precision,

enthusiasm, and international lineup. Professor Tewinkel guided the audience through the evening with wit, knowledge, and palpable enthusiasm. To conclude the evening, the academic directors of the Studium Generale, Professors Dr. Frauke Sander and Dr. Nadine Walter, invited guests to the foyer for stimulating conversation and refreshments. The atmospheric evening not only left the audience wanting more music, but also looking forward to the Studium Generale's high-caliber program for the 2025/26 winter semester.



The two organizers of the Studium Generale, Prof. Dr. Nadine Walter (left) and Prof. Dr. Frauke Sander, together with Düzen Tekkal (center). (Photo: Cornelia Kamper)

Highly relevant lecture topics in the winter semester

Düzen Tekkal kicked off the lecture series for the winter semester 2025/2026 on October 15 with the topic “Values in Danger – How Extremist Thinking Threatens Our Democracy.” This was followed on November 12 by a lecture by Senior Public Prosecutor Peter Holzwarth on organized crime. Dr. Christoph Heusgen, former head of the Munich Security Conference, has shed light on new

directions in German foreign policy on November 19, before Professor Mario Schmidt rounds off the semester on December 3 with a lecture on climate policy and the consequences of missing the 1.5-degree target.

All interested parties are cordially invited to come and gain exciting insights into current social and political issues.

➤ Website Studium Generale

Graduation ceremony **Laudatio**: Bachelor's and Master's students celebrate graduation



((Photo Fotostudio Keller))

On March 28, 2025, Pforzheim University celebrated the achievements of its graduates in a festive atmosphere filled with emotional moments and loud applause. Around 550 students from the Business School as well as the School of Engineering joined approximately 1,200 guests—relatives, friends, and family—in the Great Hall of the Congress-Centrum Pforzheim to take part in the festive ceremony.

In his opening speech, Rector Professor Ulrich Jautz emphasized the importance of professional competence and social responsibility: in addition to knowledge and professional skills, he said, it is equally important to live by values such as justice, participation, and commitment. Democracy thrives on participation and involvement. Speak up, stand up for your convictions, and get involved in society," he encouraged the graduates.

The keynote address by Professor Roland Wahl from the School of Engineering was entitled "On Career, Social Skills, and Family." He emphasized that professional success is not based solely on analytical and organizational skills, but above all on social competence and treating others with respect.

Professor Markus-Oliver Schwaab and Professor Viola Galler led the program, while the band "Miss Kavila" provided the musical accompaniment.

During the personal congratulations by the deans Professor Dr. Ingolf Müller (Engineering) and Professor Dr. Thomas Cleff (Business and Law), all graduates received an exclusive pin with the university logo.

The graduation ceremony ended with a champagne reception, where family, friends, and lecturers toasted the graduates' achievements together.

➤ The next graduation ceremony will take place on November 28, 2025.



MBA alumni visit the campus of Business School Pforzheim

Joyful reunion of MBA alumni in Pforzheim

At this year's alumni meeting, graduates of the MBA International Management program enjoyed a warm reunion on the campus of Business School Pforzheim—with familiar faces, shared memories, and lively conversation.

The day was all about community, inspiration, and mutual appreciation. Professional insights, personal milestones, and the joy of reuniting made the meeting a special experience. Once again, it became clear that the MBA alumni's connection to their alma mater continues long after their time as students.

➤ Website BusinessPF

Back on campus 50 years after graduation



On Saturday, May 10, 2025, a group of alumni who had graduated in 1975 with degrees in taxation, controlling, and advertising from what was then the University of Applied Sciences in Pforzheim visited the campus on Tiefenbronner Straße together with their partners.

After a tour of the library, the group took a tour of the university grounds and learned about studying at the Business School today and the facilities at their alma mater.

Keep on gaining insights!

We look forward to receiving your **feedback** on this first issue of “**Business School Pforzheim – Insights**,” which focused on the summer semester 2025!

“Business School Pforzheim – Insights” will be published twice a year in the future. As an online magazine, it will look back on the previous semester. The next issue of “Business School Pforzheim – Insights” will be published in **spring 2026** and will take a closer look at the 2025/2026 winter semester. We welcome your suggestions for topics and contributions!

Business School Pforzheim – Insights is sent to colleagues internally, students, alumni, the advisory board, retirees, and international partners of Business School Pforzheim.

In addition to our semester review, which we conduct with “Business School Pforzheim – Insights,” we will use our new newsletter format “**Business School Pforzheim – Up to Date**” to provide information about the latest news from the Business School at shorter intervals. If you would like to stay up to date, please register here: **Up to Date**