

Gaining Knowledge

What can we know and how can we be sure?

5th Interdisciplinary Summer Academy August 6 - 10, 2025
Ottobeuren Abbey



From 6 to 10 August 2025, the Interdisciplinary Summer Academy fideliter intellegens invites Catholic doctoral students and postgraduates from all university disciplines to a five-day academy at Ottobeuren Monastery for the fifth time. The participants will present their respective research approaches and discuss them on an interdisciplinary platform. This academic exchange is complemented by spiritual impulses which, based on the Rule of St Benedict, offer guidance specifically for the life and work situation of academics. Doctoral candidates from all academic disciplines are most welcome to apply for participation.

To be eligible to apply, you must have started, be in the process of writing, or have recently completed your doctoral studies. In special cases, applications from Master's students who intend to pursue a PhD may also be considered. Abstracts (max. 300 words) and a curriculum vitae in tabular form, as well as a short covering letter explaining your personal connection to the Catholic faith, should be sent to thomas.kieslinger@fideliter-intellegens.de by 12 May 2025. The possible languages are German and English, and the discussions can also be held in English.

We will let you know if you have been accepted as one of the eight participants after the application deadline.

In addition to two excellent external speakers (tba), the scientific part of the Academy will be based on the presentations and discussions of the research of the eight selected participants, which means that the participants will also be speakers at the Academy and will play a key role in shaping the programme.

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Call for Papers

Gaining Knowledge

What can we know and how can we be sure?

The question of reliable knowledge, of knowledge that cannot be relativised, is as old as wonder and research-based thinking itself and is still a constant companion of scientific research today. In everyday academic life, this question is concretised in the problem of methodology, with which every doctoral student is confronted in the course of his or her research.

This year's Doctoral Academy will address precisely these questions. Young scholars from all disciplines are invited to present and discuss their research and research methods with an interdisciplinary audience. The range of different approaches, which is particularly evident in the distinction between the humanities and the natural sciences, between idiographic and nomothetic work, can shed new light on the question of whether and how we as researchers are able to gain 'reliable' knowledge about an object or phenomenon. It is by no means only epistemological or methodological problems that play a role here. Sociological and economic factors, such as the sovereignty of scientists as 'meaning and world-interpreting elites' or the funding and promotion of research, can also be taken into account.

The Summer Academy 2025 moves in the field of tension between the scepticism of (de)constructivist provenance popular in the humanities and the naive positivism of the natural sciences in order to question the plurality of scientific knowledge with regard to the question of 'certain' knowledge. Interdisciplinarity is therefore a central component of the Summer Academy, in order to discuss the question of the breadth and limits of methods and knowledge in an interdisciplinary way.

Methodically acquired knowledge is contrasted with faith – or so it is commonly thought. But what is the real relationship between knowledge and faith? And how is this relationship defined in the tradition and teaching of the Catholic Church? There is no better place to explore this question than in the realm of 'methodological faith'! The monastic tradition in which the Ottobeuren Academy is embedded is perhaps the most culturally significant home in Europe for the coming together of faith and knowledge, method and insight. How faith and knowledge, Christianity and science relate to each other will be the central theme of our spiritual part.

We look forward to receiving your applications: Abstract (max. 300 words) by 12 May to thomas.kieslinger@fideliter-intellegens.de. The topic presented does not necessarily have to be directly related to the annual topic; this can also be achieved in the subsequent discussion.