

**Institute for Interdisciplinary Legal Studies – lucernaiuris**  
**VISITING FELLOWS PROGRAMME 2026**  
**Guidelines for Applicants**

## **1. The Institute for Interdisciplinary Legal Studies – lucernaiuris**

The Institute for Interdisciplinary Legal Studies – *lucernaiuris* is a hub for leading-edge teaching and research that crosses traditional boundaries between law, the humanities and the social sciences. It holds a distinctive position within the national and international academic landscape as a vibrant site for critical and creative thinking.

The institute's main priorities are to:

- provide a rallying point for inter- and transdisciplinary work on the foundations of law and justice
- foster intellectual and methodological innovation in teaching and research
- promote the training of early career researchers in interdisciplinary legal studies
- stimulate collaborative activities with national and international partners

To borrow a distinction from the late legal historian Marie Theres Fögen, the institute has long seen its role as more that of 'troublemaker' than 'troubleshooter'. A consistent priority has been to undertake work that critiques and unsettles accepted categories and concepts, norms and discourses, practices and methods. This impulse continues to shape the identity of the institute today. Faced with the urgency of our present moment, however, we also turn our attentions increasingly to the future – to pursuing new forms of future-oriented critical thinking; to imagining future alternatives or alternative futures; to asking not just what is happening now, but what happens next.

## **2. Our Teaching & Research**

### Teaching

At the core of our teaching philosophy lies a firm conviction of the importance of what in German are usually referred to as the 'foundational subjects' (*juristische Grundlagenfächer*) for the discipline of legal studies. Our courses encourage students to engage with the historical, philosophical, economic, social and cultural dimensions of law, in the belief that such an approach is vital in (i) strengthening contextual and foundational knowledge; (ii) enhancing methodological competence in understanding structural and systemic connections; (iii) promoting critical reflection on the meaning and validity of positive law; and (iv) boosting the skills needed for practice as a lawyer, including analysis, evaluation and communication.

Two further principles are also central to our teaching programme. The first is the view that legal education in Switzerland should strive for a more intensive exchange with neighbouring disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Thus alongside conventional lectures in legal history, legal philosophy and legal sociology, we also offer a set of supplementary modules that pursue new and innovative interdisciplinary directions. The second is the belief that the study of law should also become more international in content and outlook. To this end, we aim to help familiarize students with other legal cultures and orders by opening up teaching to international guest lecturers, developing collaborative projects with partner universities, and nurturing student exchange relationships.

## Research

The institute is committed to advancing pioneering research and projects. We pride ourselves on being a hub of contact and exchange – an open laboratory for the discussion of issues and ideas, methods and theories. This openness is reflected in the work of our members, a great deal of which is based on innovative, often cross-disciplinary, collaborations with colleagues in Lucerne or at other institutions at home and abroad.

Each year, we run a varied programme of lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences. These activities enable us to not only foster a vibrant research community that brings together established and emerging academics, but to also consolidate existing national and international networks, and support new collaborations.

The institute's activities currently focus on the following main themes:

- Law and New Technologies
- Law and the Life Sciences
- Theories of Justice
- Histories of the Judiciary
- Law, Art and Politics
- Law and the Visual
- Legal Gender Studies

## **3. Visiting Fellows**

The visiting fellows programme is designed to facilitate intellectual exchange between our members and the wider academic community. The scheme accommodates junior scholars who wish to spend a period of time in Lucerne pursuing work that overlaps with or otherwise complements scholarly activities currently being pursued at the institute. During their stay, fellows enjoy access to our specialist resources, and are invited to share and develop their ideas under the supervision of one or more of our faculty.

Tailored to PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers, the programme is open to all working critically, theoretically and innovatively at the intersections between law, the humanities and the social sciences. A leading aim of the scheme is to foster conversations that cut across borders both geographic and disciplinary. We strongly believe that the academic and international diversity of our fellows greatly enriches the intellectual life of the institute.

## Fellowships at a Glance

Visiting fellows are provided with workspace at the university, some administrative support, a fixed stipend for accommodation and living costs, and economy travel to and from Lucerne.

During the period of their visit, fellows are invited to contribute fully to the intellectual life of the institute by participating in our programme of workshops, seminars, reading groups and colloquia. They are encouraged to interact with all our members, including our own PhD and postdoctoral researchers, and are invited to take advantage of activities on offer across the university.

It is expected that fellows are resident in Lucerne for the duration of their stay. Upon completion of their visit, fellows are requested to submit a short report of their experiences.

## Eligibility

The scheme is open to PhD and postdoctoral researchers.

There are no restrictions on nationality or country of residence.<sup>1</sup>

The standard term limit for postdocs is up to five years after the completion of the PhD, whereby the reference date is 1 January (i.e. applicants should not have defended before **1 January 2020**).

Exceptions to the above are possible. They must, however, be well founded and are made at the discretion of the assessment committee.

## Duration of Fellowship

The standard period of tenure of a fellowship is between thirty and sixty days.

Exceptions to the above are possible. They must, however, be well founded and are made at the discretion of the assessment committee.

## Requirements & Commitment

During their stay, fellows are generally expected to:

- participate in the institute's activities (workshops, seminars, lectures, conferences);
- meet regularly with our members and other fellows;
- avail themselves of further opportunities for exchange;
- be in residence in Lucerne.

Agreements on specific work tasks are made prior to commencement of the fellowship in liaison with the Head of Institute, Associate Director and/or designated academic mentor. These will be tailored to the needs, expectations and experience of individual fellows. Options might include:

- presentation of a paper at a research seminar/colloquium;
- delivery of a guest lecture as part of a teaching module;
- (co-)organisation of a seminar or workshop

Upon completion of their stay, fellows are requested to write a brief feedback report (ca. 500 words).

## Benefits

In return for the above, fellows are provided with:

- workspace at the university;
- borrowing privileges for both the Lucerne central library and the institute's own reference collection;
- a varied calendar of lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences;
- a friendly and stimulating environment for discussion and reflection.

## Funding

Fellowship grants are comprised of two components:

- A fixed stipend of **2'000 CHF** to cover accommodation and living costs.<sup>2</sup> Note that it is the responsibility of fellows to arrange their own accommodation.
- Reimbursement of return travel costs from country of residence to Lucerne (economy class, up to a maximum of **1'500 CHF**).

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<sup>1</sup> Please be advised, however, that it is the responsibility of the applicant to check necessary visa requirements for visiting Switzerland. The University's Welcome Centre may be able to assist in this regard ([welcome-centre@unilu.ch](mailto:welcome-centre@unilu.ch)).

<sup>2</sup> Please note that these contributions do not represent a salary replacement.

### Application Procedures

Applications are submitted in response to an annual call.

All candidates should submit:

- a completed application form;
- an up-to-date academic CV (including a list of publications, if applicable).

Application forms can be downloaded from our website ([www.lucernaiuris.ch](http://www.lucernaiuris.ch)).

The deadline for submission for the 2026 scheme is **Tuesday 30 September 2025**.

Decisions on the allocation of fellowships will be made by a selection panel comprising members of the institute. Applicants can expect to hear back by mid-November 2025.

### **4. Contact**

Enquiries should be made to Dr. Steven Howe ([steven.howe@unilu.ch](mailto:steven.howe@unilu.ch)).