

Interdisciplinary Cooperation *and* Profile Building

BLE & HESCOR Workshop
November 28th, 2025



UNIVERSITY
OF COLOGNE



RWTH AACHEN
UNIVERSITY

BACKGROUND

PROFILE BUILDING

As part of the "Profilbildung 2022" initiative, the North Rhine-Westphalian Ministry of Culture and Science (MKW – NRW) is funding several projects at different universities with the aim to sharpening their scientific focus and strengthen their structural development. Against this background, the MKW-funded projects Built & Lived Environment (BLE) at RWTH Aachen University and Human & Earth System Coupled Research (HESCOR) at the University of Cologne have agreed to come together for a joint workshop. The goal of the event is to exchange experiences and perspectives on interdisciplinary research and structural profile-building in higher education institutions.

The workshop is aimed at postdoctoral researchers and the coordination teams of the respective projects, including spokespersons and project management.

Guest speaker Prof. Dr. Jan C. Schmidt is a renowned expert in the philosophy of science and technology. In his impulse talk, "Types of Interdisciplinarity", he examines the intricate relationships between academic disciplines and the challenges of interdisciplinary collaboration.

MORNING

10:00–10:10	Welcome
10:10–10:30	Presentation of MKW Project HESCOR
10:30–10:50	Presentation of MKW Project BLE
10:50–11:20	Group exercise
11:20–11:30	Dr. Johanna Hilpert & Dr. Shumon Hussain: Examples of interdisciplinary research in practice HESCOR
11:30–11:40	Dr. Nina Berding & Dr. Jan-Frieder Harmsen: Examples of interdisciplinary research in practice BLE
11:40–12:00	Discussion
12:00–12:30	Lunch break

AFTERNOON

12:30–13:00	Keynote „Types of Interdisciplinarity“ <i>Prof. Dr. Jan C. Schmidt</i>
13:00–14:00	Discussion
Afterwards:	Visit to the Weihnachtsmarkt

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The exchange will provide an opportunity to reflect on and further develop experiences and strategies for university profile-building. Both projects face similar challenges – from structural anchoring within the university and long-term funding to visibility and positioning in the academic landscape. The dialogue will allow identifying good practices and avoiding potential pitfalls, enriched by different perspectives on profile development. While BLE and HESCOR have different priorities in terms of content, there are many parallels at the organisational and strategic level. The exchange can provide valuable input for optimising management and funding strategies, interdisciplinary cooperation and the promotion of young talents. We hope to promote an open discourse on challenges and best practices.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The meeting offers participating **postdocs** the opportunity to gain insights into different formats and methods of **interdisciplinary collaboration**. The focus will be on exchanging proven strategies for knowledge integration and discussing how interdisciplinary research can be effectively designed and integrated into university structures. In dialogue with other postdocs and our invited speaker, the challenges that arise from collaboration between different disciplines – such as divergent technical languages, methodologies, practice and publication cultures – will be stressed. The aim is to share experiences and receive new impulses for the development of innovative, interdisciplinary exchange formats and identify practical solutions.

Workshop: "Interdisciplinary Cooperation and Profile-Building"

Meeting of the MKW profile-building projects

Built & Lived Environment (RWTH Aachen) & Human & Earth System Coupled Research (Univ. of Cologne)

Location: Lecture Hall Stadtpalais, Theaterstraße 75, Aachen (ca. 3 min. walk from Aachen Hbf)

Contact/Organisers:

Julia Backhaus: julia.backhaus@humtec.rwth-aachen.de

Isabell Schmidt: isabell.schmidt@uni-koeln.de

Registration: Please register via mail before November 14th, 2025.



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funded by:

Ministry of Culture and Science
of the State of
North Rhine-Westphalia

