The M.A. Transcultural Studies is located at the Karl Jaspers Centre for Advanced Transcultural Studies at Heidelberg University. It was founded in 2007 as part of the Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” that was established within the Excellence Initiative of the German state and its federal governments.

Today, the Karl Jaspers Centre has about 200 affiliated researchers, who examine the processes of cultural exchanges between Asia and Europe. They analyse the transformatory processes within these exchanges which shape all cultures involved. Their work probes issues relevant to contemporary concerns about globalisation by investigating the cultural transfer of ideas, knowledge and commodities.

Among the partners of the Karl Jaspers Centre and the Cluster are Harvard University (United States) and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (India).
The M.A. Transcultural Studies is an interdisciplinary programme with a transregional focus. Cultures are not seen as ethnically closed, linguistically homogenous, and territorially bounded spheres. Rather, they are understood as being constituted through transformations and entanglements with one another. These forms of mobility and interconnectivity have been characteristic of cultures long before the emergence of modern communication technologies and global capital.

The programme introduces students to theories and methods which enable them to understand complex changes of cultural entanglements from the past to the present. While studying the dynamics of transcultural exchanges, they analyse the agency of the participants, as well as the shifting asymmetries in cultural flows. The students’ focus on Asia and Europe is substantiated by a wide range of primary and secondary textual, visual, aural, and digital source materials.

The programme is divided into four terms. During the first term, major texts and ideas of transcultural studies are introduced. In the second term, students deepen their knowledge in their chosen field of study. They are encouraged to study abroad and commence research on their Master’s thesis during the third term. The last term is reserved for the writing of their thesis.

The core courses are taught in English by the Chairs of Buddhist Studies, Cultural Economic History, Global Art History, Intellectual History, and Visual and Media Anthropology of the Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context”.

The M.A. Transcultural Studies starts every winter semester and covers two years. Students wishing to enroll in the programme must have a B.A. or equivalent in the humanities or social sciences with above average grades. Furthermore, they are required to prove very good proficiency in English and good knowledge of two other languages.

International students are asked to send their formal application to the International Relations Office of Heidelberg University. The deadline for submitting the application is June 15th. Students from Germany need to obtain a confirmation of complying with the requirements by submitting their documents directly to the programme coordinator. For interested Bachelor degree holders from Germany, the University of Heidelberg’s general admission deadlines for the winter semester apply.