

University

Explain how Europe benefited from [cultural diffusion](#) during the period c. A.D. 1000 - 1500.



Of all the institutions to which Medieval Europe gave rise, the university is the one that remains most visible and vibrant today - the university can be found throughout the world. The first European universities emerged around the year 1200 in Paris and Bologna. By 1300, some 20 universities existed in Europe.

In many respects, the medieval university was quite unlike its modern descendent. They were groups of people, rather than physical places. The University of Paris had no campus and no buildings; it was simply a collection of students and teachers who held classes wherever they could.

Universities were created, in response to the needs of students and teachers, who banded together to gain a stronger bargaining position with the towns in which they lived. As a university, students and teachers demanded concessions from local towns - and if the concessions were not granted, they simply went on strike and left the town, sometimes for years on end.

The University of Paris, known for its theology, was run by the teachers, or masters (*magistri*). The students ran the University of Bologna, known for its law. At the University of Paris, most teachers were paid through church salaries, known as benefices.

This arrangement made the teachers relatively independent of student control. At the University of Bologna, teachers were paid directly by students, which made the faculty beholden to students.

Latin was the common language of instruction. Courses were taught on specific specific books (such as Aristotle's *Physics*), rather than on topics or problems. All students followed the same course of study in the seven liberal arts, although students sometimes had a choice about the teacher from whom they would take the course. Students took much more time to earn their degrees in the Middle Ages than is required today, approximately six years for a bachelor's degree and 12 years for a doctorate.

European universities consisted of four faculties: the faculty of arts and the faculties of law, medicine, and theology. One had to pass through the faculty of arts before entering one of the three higher faculties. In the faculty of arts, one studied the quadrivium, which dealt with the content of knowledge, and the trivium, which dealt with the expression of knowledge.

The quadrivium consisted of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music theory; the trivium consisted of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. In fact, the vast majority of the students' time was spent on the trivium, especially on logic.

Although many aspects of the medieval university, such as the curriculum and the special legal status granted to students and teachers, have largely or entirely disappeared, other aspects, such as the system of degrees granted (Bachelor of Arts; Master of Arts; and Doctor of Law, Medicine, or Theology), remain recognizable.