

Oberlandesgericht  
Düsseldorf



# HIGHER REGIONAL COURT

OF DÜSSELDORF

# IN THE NAME OF THE PEOPLE

The jurisprudence, like all state authority, derives its legitimacy from the people according to Article 20, paragraph 2, sentence 1 of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz).

Therefore, judgments are pronounced in the name of the people.

## Editorial

Dear visitors,

**In the name of the people** – you may ask yourself: What does this time-honoured formula, which we judges use when announcing verdicts, have to do with the introduction of our Higher Regional Court? I would like to answer: Everything – as it is the short version of what we stand for, what our duties are and what our purpose is.

The jurisprudence is independent and subject only to the law. Judges serve the truth and justice and come to decisions based on their best knowledge and belief, without distinction of person or origin. According to our constitution, the judicial power is vested in the judges. We all take this great responsibility to heart. With our decisions, we fulfil the duties given to us in the Basic Law (Grundgesetz) and are thus an essential part of our democratic constitutional state.

With this in mind, we would like to introduce the Higher Regional Court of Düsseldorf and its district. We appreciate your interest.

On the following pages, you will find out more about the duties we fulfil, what we focus on and which special characteristics our court provides. We look back on over 100 years of history and take a look into the future. We believe it is part of our mandate to stay in contact with the people. Our regular events provide information on legal issues that are relevant to many people. We would like to present some of these events here.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.



Dr. Werner Richter

President of the Higher Regional Court

Düsseldorf

## The Higher Regional Court of Düsseldorf

The Higher Regional Court of Düsseldorf is one of the three highest courts of civil and criminal jurisdiction, i.e. "ordinary jurisdiction" in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Approximately 180 judges and 350 other employees are involved in the court's jurisprudence and administration.

### Jurisprudence

We have jurisdiction over civil law, family law and criminal proceedings, as well as for the area of voluntary jurisdiction (Freiwillige Gerichtsbarkeit). Our judges review the decisions of the local and regional courts in our district.

### Special jurisdictions

We are also assigned numerous special jurisdictions by law, which we handle for the entire state of North Rhine-Westphalia. We gladly present a selection here.

#### State security cases

Until 1969, state security cases were handled solely by the Federal Court of Justice and have since been heard at first instance by the higher regional courts in whose districts the state governments are based. This means that our criminal senates are responsible in particular for cases of espionage, high treason, threats to external security, terrorist attacks and attacks against constitutional bodies. Examples from over 50 years of state protection include proceedings against those involved in and supporting state security of the German Democratic Republic (so called Stasi), the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Islamic State.

#### Patent disputes

Since the first half of the 20th century Düsseldorf's courts have been competent for patent disputes. Over many decades, Düsseldorf has made itself a name worldwide and has persuaded numerous globally active companies to file legal disputes concerning patent infringements before the Regional and Higher Regional Courts of Düsseldorf. In a Germany-wide comparison, Düsseldorf is ahead of Munich, Mannheim and Hamburg in terms of the number of patent disputes.



#### Antitrust cases

Antitrust law protects free competition for the benefit of consumers. Our antitrust senates review measures taken by the Federal Cartel Office (Bundeskartellamt) and the North Rhine-Westphalia state antitrust authority (Landeskartellbehörde). Antitrust regulators can impose millions of Euros in fines or requirements on companies. Due to the jurisdiction of the Higher Regional Court in the first instance for most of the Federal Cartel Office's orders, the Düsseldorf antitrust senates decide nationwide on prohibited price agreements or the prohibited exchange of information between competitors, on the permissibility of company mergers and the abuse of market power of large companies. In addition, the antitrust senates of the Higher Regional Court decide in the second instance on antitrust law judgments and decisions of the Regional Courts of Dortmund, Düsseldorf and Cologne, for example when victims of cartels claim damages from cartel participants due to excessive prices caused by the cartel. In addition, two antitrust senates of the Higher Regional Court review decisions of the Federal Network Agency and the Regulatory Chamber of North Rhine-Westphalia in energy law proceedings. One focus is on orders relating to gas and electricity grids, in particular the determination of the costs for their use. These decisions are also important for consumers: transmission costs for gas and electricity are a significant component of energy costs.

### Public Procurement procedures

The Public Procurement Senate at the Higher Regional Court of Düsseldorf reviews the decisions of the North Rhine-Westphalian Public Procurement Chambers and - with exclusive jurisdiction - those of the Public Procurement Chambers at the Federal Cartel Office (Bundeskartellamt). This makes it the only public procurement senate in Germany that deals with federal procurements and by far the most frequently involved. Public procurement law is a particularly dynamic area of law with enormous economic significance. In Germany, public contracts worth hundreds of billions are procured every year.

### Administration

In addition to our jurisprudence, we also fulfill court administration tasks for the entire district of the Düsseldorf Higher Regional Court: For example, we are responsible for the recruitment of judges and public officials and organize ongoing training measures. We are also responsible for the supervision of notaries and the processing and recognition of foreign divorces. The Judicial Examination Office, which is affiliated to our court, conducts the compulsory state examination as part of the first examination at the end of legal studies. We also train trainee lawyers and employees for the intermediate and higher judicial service every year.

### Unified Patent Court

The Düsseldorf local division of the Unified Patent Court - a European court - is based in our office. The Unified Patent Court is a joint court of currently 18 member states. The court of first instance is made up of local chambers, with one of them located in Düsseldorf.

Further details about our senates and our administrative departments can be found here:



### Düsseldorf table

Our family senates have been issuing the Düsseldorf Table since January 1, 1979. It is created in collaboration and in coordination with all Higher Regional Courts and the Maintenance Commission of the German Family Court Conference e.V. (Deutscher Familiengerichtstag e. V.). It is a widely recognized tool for determining appropriate child support.

OUR  
JUDICIAL  
DISTRICT

#### Regional Court Düsseldorf

Local Court of Langenfeld  
Local Court of Neuss  
Local Court of Ratingen

#### Local Court of Düsseldorf

#### Regional Court of Duisburg

Local Court of Dinslaken  
Local Court of Duisburg  
Local Court of Duisburg-Hamborn  
Local Court of Duisburg-Ruhrort  
Local Court of Mülheim an der Ruhr  
Local Court of Oberhausen  
Local Court of Wesel

#### Regional Court of Wuppertal

Local Court of Mettmann  
Local Court of Remscheid  
Local Court of Solingen  
Local Court of Velbert  
Local Court of Wuppertal

#### Regional Court of Mönchengladbach

Local Court of Erkelenz  
Local Court of Grevenbroich  
Local Court of Mönchengladbach  
Local Court of Mönchengladbach-Rheydt  
Local Court of Viersen

#### Regional Court of Krefeld

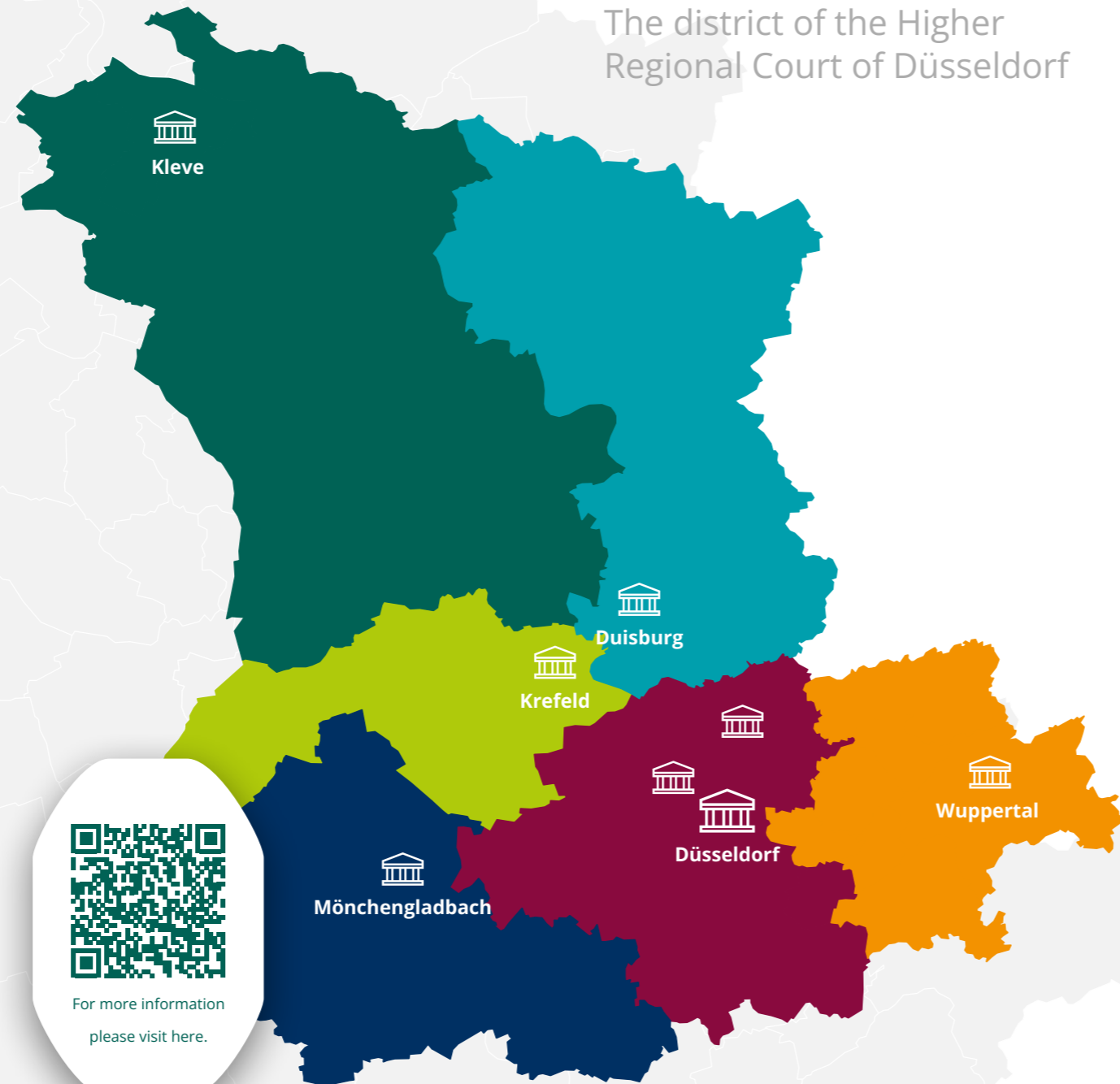
Local Court of Krefeld  
Local Court of Kempen  
Local Court of Nettetal

#### Regional Court of Kleve

Local Court of Kleve  
Local Court of Emmerich am Rhein  
Local Court of Geldern  
Local Court of Moers  
Local Court of Rheinberg

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The district of the Higher  
Regional Court of Düsseldorf



# FACTS AND FIGURES



Approx. 5 million people live in our district.



Area of approx. 5,000 km<sup>2</sup>



1 Higher Regional Court  
6 Regional Courts  
1 Presidential Local Court  
28 Local Courts



Approx. 5,000 employees, including about 1,300 judges

## Commercial Court

The Higher Regional Court of Düsseldorf enjoys an excellent reputation in the field of commercial law. Companies can now bring certain legal disputes, e.g. from corporate transactions (M&A), construction and architectural contracts or insurance matters with a value in dispute of 500,000 euros or more, before our newly established Commercial Court in the first instance.

Under the leadership of the presiding judges of the Higher Regional Court, Dr. Robert Papst, Dr. Tobias Rodemann and Dr. Arnd Weishaupt, three highly specialized senates hear cases in courtrooms equipped with the latest technology. The members of the senates have many years of experience in their areas of expertise. The parties may consult with their legal representatives in a meeting room specially reserved for them. Our Commercial Court ensures a structured and efficient proceeding from the first organizational meeting to the verdict.

At the request of the parties, the senates can also hear cases in English. Trade secrets can be dealt with in the absence of the public. It is further possible to request a verbatim record.

The decisions of the Commercial Court Senates may be appealed to the Federal Supreme Court.



Further information  
can be found here.



Dr. Tobias  
Rodemann

After practicing in a law firm specializing in private construction law for two years, Dr. Tobias Rodemann became a judge in 2002 and came to the Higher Regional Court in 2013. He is also an arbitrator, speaker and board member of the German Construction Court Conference Association (Deutscher Baugerichtstag e.V.) as well as author and co-editor of the journal NZBau. Since April 2025, he has been the presiding judge of the Commercial Court senate for construction and architect matters



Dr. Arnd  
Weishaupt

After beginning his judicial career in 2001, Dr. Arnd Weishaupt has been serving as a judge at the Higher Regional Court since 2009 and has been the presiding judge of an insurance senate since 2023. He is now also the presiding judge of the Commercial Court senate for insurance law. In addition to his expertise in insurance law, he is distinguished by an 18-month international assignment in Lithuania, his long-standing work as an advisor for the German Foundation for International Legal Cooperation (Deutsche Stiftung für Internationale Rechtliche Zusammenarbeit), and his extensive language skills, which include English and seven other languages.



Dr. Robert  
Papst

Dr. Robert Papst joined the jurisprudence after working for five years as a lawyer at an international law firm in Düsseldorf and London, specializing in Corporate/M&A. In 2015, he took over as presiding judge a chamber at the Regional Court of Düsseldorf specialized in capital investment, banking, and insolvency cases. From 2022, he led the M&A chamber there. In April 2025, he became the presiding judge of the Commercial Court Senate for corporate law and post-M&A disputes.

PAST  
PRESENT  
FUTURE

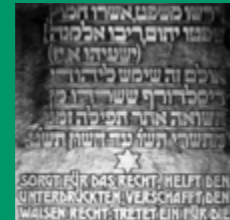
**1906**  
Establishment of the 'Royal Prussian Higher Regional Court of Düsseldorf' with 3 senates at Königsplatz



**1931**  
The Higher Regional Court has 11 civil senates and 1 criminal senate.



**1945 – 1948**  
The plenary hall serves as a place of prayer and assembly for the Jewish community.



**1956 – 1958**  
The ten-storey high-rise building is erected.



**1969**  
Assumption of first-instance jurisdiction in state security

**1979**  
First publication of the Düsseldorf table.

**1989 – 1994**  
Criminal trial against members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)



**1910**  
Initiation of the building at Cecilienallee 3

**1933 – 1945**  
After the National Socialists seize power, democracy and the constitutional state are abolished in Germany. An unjust state arises. The Higher Regional Court becomes part of it and thus loses its function as an independent institution of the third branch of government.

**1947**  
The Higher Regional Court has 8 civil senates and 1 criminal senate.

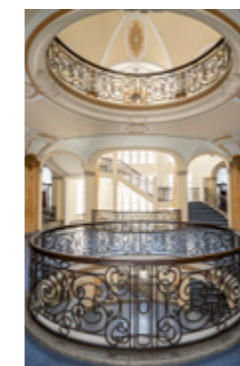
**1965**  
The Higher Regional Court has 21 civil senates and 3 criminal senates.



**1975**  
Criminal trial against the GDR-spy Günter Guillaume

**1981**  
The Higher Regional Court has 23 civil senates, 7 family senates and 6 criminal senates.

**1993**  
**1996 – 1997**  
Criminal trial against Markus Wolf - Head of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the GDR



**2001**  
Restoration of the Higher Regional Court.

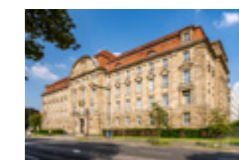


**2004**  
Start of operations at high security trial building for state security proceedings on Kapellweg

**2006**  
Establishment of the 3rd Antitrust Senate for Energy Law



**2019**  
4 criminal senates are responsible for state security matters.



**2024**  
The Higher Regional Court has 28 civil senates, 7 criminal senates, 6 antitrust senates, 1 public procurement senate, 7 family senates and 1 patent senate.

**1999 – 2000**  
Criminal trial against the self-proclaimed 'Caliph of Cologne'.

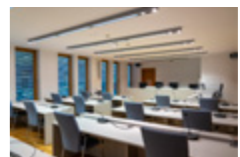
**2003**  
Criminal trial against members of an Arab terrorist organisation (Al Tawhid) after 9/11, the terrorist attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001

**2005**  
Construction of the extension building



**2016**  
Criminal trial on the assassination attempt on the Mayor of Cologne, Henriette Reker

**2023**  
Launch of the Unified Patent Court with the establishment of a local division of this European court in Düsseldorf



**2025**  
The Commercial Court is established



## The Higher Regional Court as part of society

“Our constitutional state guarantees high-quality decisions by independent judges in legal disputes. We maintain a regular dialogue with citizens about these and other duties of the judiciary. We want to strengthen trust in the judiciary by staying in touch with the public.”

Dr. Werner Richter, President of the Higher Regional Court of Düsseldorf

In this manner, local courts, regional courts and the Higher Regional Court offer information events and cultural programs.

### Public information events

Information events are held at regular intervals at all regional courts in the district and at Düsseldorf Local Court. We organize these events together with our cooperation partners, such as lawyers, notaries, employees of the chambers and authorities and regional newspapers. They are aimed at interested people and address issues of general interest:

‘How to leave an inheritance correctly?’, ‘Care and health care proxy’, ‘Family law: Things to know before, during and after marriage’, ‘Current issues and pitfalls in tenancy law’ and much more.

Due to the great demand, these events have established themselves as a regular forum for dialogue.

### School education

In order to give pupils a basic understanding of democracy and the constitutional state at an early age, we not only take part in legal classes in schools, but also welcome school classes to our courts.

Here, pupils experience justice at first hand: they get

answers to their questions, are given an insight into the premises of the court building and explanations of the duties and requirements of the judiciary.

If you are interested, please contact us to arrange a visit for your school class.

Association for the Promotion of Art and Culture at the Higher Regional Court of Düsseldorf (Verein zur Förderung von Kunst und Kultur im Oberlandesgericht Düsseldorf e.V.)

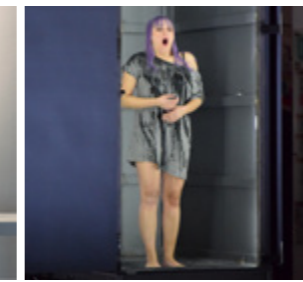
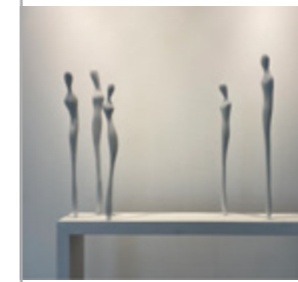
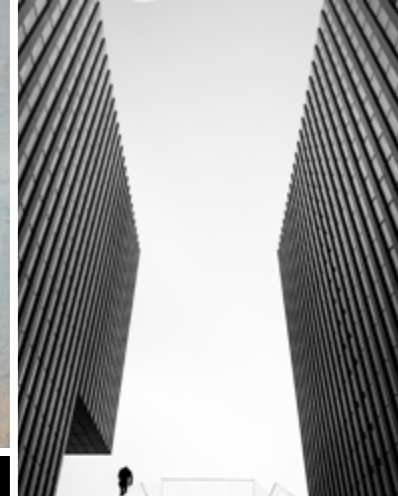
Four times a year, concerts, exhibitions, theatre and cabaret performances by young, up-and-coming as well as established artists take place at the Higher Regional Court of Düsseldorf.

Guests at these extraordinary events are the members of the Association for the Promotion of Art and Culture, which was founded in 2001 by committed judges and lawyers.

The ball was set rolling by the extensive renovation work carried out between 1999 and 2001, which allowed the Higher Regional Court to shine in new splendour. The joy and pride in this successful restoration and the desire to make the building accessible to the public were the guiding principles behind the establishment of the association. New members are very welcome.



For further information please visit here.



## The Higher Regional Court as an Employer and Trainer

### Judges

Judges undertake a responsible and demanding role across the diverse fields of civil and criminal law. In all areas, they impartially regulate conflicts between people or decide on guilt and punishment. This fundamental function in our democratic rule of law is entrusted to them from the very first day of their careers.

Judges work independently and autonomously, as they are solely committed to the law, truth, and justice. They collaborate closely with their colleagues in consultations and hearings. Their tasks include carefully examining facts from various areas of life, conducting hearings, and issuing judgments or decisions. In civil and family proceedings, they can also mediate between parties to find an amicable solution. Throughout their careers, they have the opportunity to work in many legal fields or to specialize. In addition to their judicial duties, they can take on further responsibilities in judicial administration or switch to other national or international authorities.



### Legal Clerks ("Rechtspfleger")

Legal Clerks are highly qualified civil servants and direct points of contact in many matters at courts or public prosecutors' offices. Their broad and responsible range of duties includes decisions in estate and insolvency proceedings, entries in land or commercial registers, supervision of court-appointed guardians for those in need, or ensuring the surrender of convicted persons at public prosecutors' offices. In their decisions, court officials (similar to judges) are not bound by instructions.

A three-year dual study program at the North Rhine-Westphalia College of Legal Administration (Fachhochschule für Rechtspflege Nordrhein-Westfalen), combined with practical training at various courts and public prosecutors' offices, prepares them for their future careers using real cases.

### Court Clerks and Court Administrative Officers ("Justizfachangestellte sowie Justizfachwirte")

Court clerks and court administrative officers are the central procedural managers at courts and public prosecutors' offices, maintaining contact with citizens, parties, and their lawyers in legal proceedings. They work closely with judges, prosecutors, and legal clerks. Their work significantly contributes to the functioning of the justice system.

The two-and-a-half-year training for court clerks and the two-year preparatory service for court administrative officers, which leads to civil servant status, provide a broad knowledge base: from information processing and office organization to communication in typical professional situations. They also learn about applying the law in civil, criminal, and administrative offense proceedings, as well as in other legal areas.

To fulfill our daily tasks, we need staff who share our values.

INDEPENDENCE Security  
JUSTICE Responsibility  
FAIRNESS Diversity Reliability

### Court Officers

Court officers ensure safety and order within the justice system. They exercise official authority within the scope of their duties. For example, they guard individuals in custody and escort them to hearings or appointments. Additionally, they may be entrusted with other tasks related to the organization of the judiciary, such as providing information at the courts' public information desks, which are important for citizens.

### Court bailiffs

Court bailiffs are responsible for enforcing the law, especially by enforcing monetary claims. Their tasks include executing court-ordered actions, such as investigating the assets of debtors, arranging instalment payments, or, if necessary, seizing and auctioning items. Court bailiffs generally organize their work independently in offices outside the court premises.

### Specialists in Social Services

At every regional court in North Rhine-Westphalia, there is a social service. Professionals in this field have completed studies in social work or social pedagogy and possess relevant professional experience. They support individuals who have committed offenses for the duration of an ordered probation period. They also assist clients with issues such as unemployment, over-indebtedness, or addiction, and monitor compliance with court-imposed conditions. As part of psychosocial case management, they help victims of crimes.

### Legal Trainees

After completing legal studies and passing the first state examination, prospective fully qualified legal professionals undergo a legal clerkship to prepare for the second state examination. Passing this exam is a fundamental requirement for practicing professions such as judge, prosecutor, notary, or lawyer. Upon entering the legal trainee program within the district of the Düsseldorf Higher Regional Court, trainees receive comprehensive training tailored to the demands and tasks of legal professional life. The two-year program aims to prepare legal professionals both academically and personally – particularly by imparting methodological skills – to meet the diverse challenges of legal practice. The development of social, economic, and legal-political understanding, as well as fostering an independent, purposeful, and self-critical working style in accordance with the principles of a democratic and social rule of law, is central to their training.

For more information and other exciting ca-reer options, please find details here:



### Judicial Examination Office

Students of legal studies who have studied law for at least two semesters at a university in North Rhine-Westphalia or who belong to the district through longer residence or other close connections can take the state compulsory examination at our Judicial Examination Office. This examination, along with the university's specialized area examination, is part of the first legal examination that concludes the legal studies at a university. Since January 1, 2024, students in North Rhine-Westphalia can submit their exams electronically. The vast majority of students are taking advantage of this option.



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City archives of Düsseldorf

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The current figures, data and facts  
reflect the status at the beginning of 2025.

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The shape of our beautifully preserved  
tiles from 1910, which adorn our foyer,  
have been used as a model for the design  
of the graphic elements in this brochure.

[olg-duesseldorf.nrw.de](http://olg-duesseldorf.nrw.de)