



# Overview

Quality Assurance System  
in Higher Education

# Germany

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## Introduction

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In addition to its core activities of university evaluation, awarding of degrees and research activities, the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE) is working closely with overseas quality assurance organizations, particularly those having advanced higher education systems and close ties with Japan, to gain the trust of the international community in Japanese higher education and promote international collaboration among higher education institutions (HEIs).

As each country possesses different political, societal, cultural and language element, the structure of its quality assurance system for higher education also differs. In building relationships and realizing effective cooperation that transcend these barriers, ‘mutual understanding’ must first be enhanced among cooperating organizations by exchanging accurate information on their respective quality assurance systems and the higher education systems that underlie them. Amidst growing globalization of higher education and increase of educational collaboration in the international dimension, it has also become important for HEIs to share information on their activities of quality assurance with their partners in order to provide an effective and quality-assured collaborative program.

In this context, NIAD-UE has developed the ‘Information Package’ as a means for publishing basic information on higher education and its quality assurance system in Japan as well as some other countries. In addition to these of Japan, U.S., U.K., Australia, Netherlands, France, Korea and China, we have presently produced an “**Overview of the Quality Assurance System in Higher Education: Germany**” in both English and Japanese. We hope that these information would help for development of cooperation between Germany and Japan.

In Germany, higher education legislation and administration has been developed in remit of each state (Länder) with a principle of autonomy of HEIs. There are multiple quality assurance organizations for higher education with an overarching principle of external quality assurance across the nation and own evaluation programs provided by organizations. German relevant organizations are also taking active initiatives in the field of internationalization of quality assurance particularly in German-cultural and European areas.

This ‘Overview’ document is produced based on public information concerning German higher education system and quality assurance system in Germany. We have also collected updated information by visiting the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Japan, organizations which responsible for the higher education policy, quality assurance (accreditation) agencies, and university in Germany. A desk research were mainly made during 2013 and this document is compiled with collected information by study visits to those German authorities. We would like to thank the people who gave us useful comments and suggestions to produce the document. We would also like to express our special thanks to Dr. Christian Tauch of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) and Dr. Jürgen Petersen of the Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency Hannover (ZEvA), for their contributions to the production of this document.

This ‘Overview’ document is also available from our website.

[http://www.niad.ac.jp/english/unive/publications/information\\_package.htm](http://www.niad.ac.jp/english/unive/publications/information_package.htm).

# Index

I. Basic information on the country .....	1
II. The higher education system .....	2
1. Education system .....	2
1-1) History .....	2
1-2) Specific legislative framework .....	3
1-2-1) Legislation .....	4
1-3) Responsibilities of the Federal Government .....	4
1-4) Higher education institutions governing structure .....	4
1-5) Higher education institutions funding .....	5
1-6) Bologna Process .....	5
2. German education system .....	7
3. Higher education institutions .....	8
3-1) Types of higher education institutions .....	8
3-2) State-recognized institutions in the tertiary sector .....	8
3-3) Statistics .....	9
4. Enrollment .....	11
4-1) Admission requirements to University .....	11
4-1-1) <i>Abitur</i> examination .....	11
4-1-2) Admission restrictions .....	12
4-2) Admission requirements for international students .....	13
5. Courses and qualifications .....	13
5-1) Award of credits .....	13
5-2) Curriculum .....	14
5-3) Student assessment .....	15
5-4) Certification .....	15
5-4-1) Qualifications framework .....	17
5-4-2) Degrees .....	18
5-4-3) State examination ( <i>Staatsprüfung</i> ) .....	19
6. Responsible authorities and higher education related bodies .....	20
7. Student organizations .....	23
8. Tuition fees and student aid .....	24
8-1) Tuition fees .....	24
8-2) Student finance .....	24
9. Information for students .....	26
10. Ongoing debates in German higher education .....	27

III. The quality assurance system .....	29
1. Summary of the German quality assurance system .....	29
2. Development of the German quality assurance system .....	30
3. Quality assurance system in German higher education .....	31
3-1) Accreditation .....	31
3-1-1) Program accreditation .....	31
3-1-2) System accreditation .....	34
3-1-3) Accreditation of private higher education institutions .....	36
3-2) Evaluation .....	36
3-2-1) Internal quality assurance .....	37
3-2-2) External quality assurance framework .....	37
3-3) Internationalization and Quality assurance .....	38
3-3-1) HRK-Audit “Internationalization of Universities” .....	38
3-3-2) Recognition of qualifications .....	40
4. Specific legislative framework for quality assurance .....	41
5. Other issues about quality assurance .....	41
5-1) Ranking .....	41
IV. An introduction to a quality assurance organization .....	43
1. Accreditation Council .....	43
1-1) Overview of the organization .....	43
1-2) Mission and role .....	44
1-3) The legal framework .....	44
1-4) Main area of activity .....	45
1-4-1) Accreditation of Agencies .....	45
1-4-2) Accreditation Agencies .....	47
Appendix: Abbreviations .....	50
Sources and references .....	52

Map



Source: [http://www.freemap.jp/download.php?a=europe&c=euro\\_germany\\_kouiki\\_1](http://www.freemap.jp/download.php?a=europe&c=euro_germany_kouiki_1)

## I. Basic information on the country

Name of country	Federal Republic of Germany	
Capital city	Berlin	
Seats of government	Berlin	
National language	German	
Population*	81,844,000 (2011)	
Nominal GDP**	3,713,000 million USD (2010)	
Nominal GDP per capita**	37,567USD (2010)	
Public spending on education as a percentage of the total government spending***	All levels of education 10.5% (OECD average 13.0%)	HE level 2.8% (OECD average 3.1%) (2009)
Public spending on education as a percentage of GDP***	All levels of education 4.5% (OECD average 5.4%)	HE level 1.1% (OECD average 1.1%) (2009)
Annual expenditure per student by educational institutions at higher education level***	15,711USD (2009)	
Annual public expenditure per student at higher education level***	--	
Higher education entry rates***	42% (2010)	
Organisation of education system	Please refer to II-2. German education system, page 9.	
Language of instruction****	As a rule, the language of instruction in higher education is German.	
Cycle of academic year*****	The winter semester is from October to February. The summer semester is from March to August.	

### Source:

\* The Federal Statistical Office (2013) *Statistisches Jahrbuch (Statistical Yearbook)*.

\*\* OECD *Country statistical profile: Germany 2011-2012*.

\*\*\* OECD *Education at a Glance 2012*.

\*\*\*\* The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) *The Education System in Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011*.

\*\*\*\*\* European Commission *Eurydice - The Organisation of the Academic Year in Higher Education 2011/12*.

## II. The higher education system

### 1. Education system

#### 1-1) History

German universities have their roots in the development of the European university during the medieval ages. The oldest German university is Heidelberg University, which was founded in the late 14th century.

The tradition of higher education in Germany today is marked by a number of basic principles that date back to the university reform of the early 19th century, particularly to the efforts of Wilhelm von Humboldt. These principles include the internal autonomy of institutions of higher education despite their being maintained by the state, freedom of teaching and research, and the unity of teaching and research. These principles were abrogated during the National Socialist era, but reinstated during the reconstruction of higher education in the Federal Republic of Germany founded in 1949.

As a result of World War II, the separation of East and West Germany led to the development of two markedly different systems of higher education. In the West German *Länder* (States), there was a growing need for an overall coordination of the educational policy. For this reason, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Culture<sup>1</sup> in the Western Allied zones of Germany had been established in 1948. A federal ministry for educational and science was established in 1955, but with limited competency in education. Its task was to assure a certain degree of homogeneity in the West German system of education, including higher education. The Council of Science and Humanities<sup>2</sup>, an intermediary body between the federal government and universities, was established in 1957 to advise and recommended on the quantitative, structural and functional development of the West German higher education system. By amendment to the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany<sup>3</sup> in 1969, the Federal Government was empowered to enact framework legislation concerning the general principles of higher education. This led to the passing of the Framework Act for Higher Education (HRG)<sup>4</sup> in 1976. For the first time, a uniform nationwide legal framework had been created for higher education, which the *Länder* (States) subsequently fleshed out with their own legislation.

Higher education in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) evolved under completely different conditions. It was based on a unitary and centrally controlled concept in the service of Marxist-Leninist party ideology. Marxism-Leninism became an obligatory part of all degree programs in higher education. Responsibility for higher education planning as well as the leadership of all higher education institutions became part of the State Secretariat. Higher Education institutions lost their traditional institutional autonomy in all academic matters.

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<sup>1</sup> The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Culture: *Konferenz der deutschen Erziehungsminister*

<sup>2</sup> Council of Science and Humanities: *Wissenschaftsrat (WR)*

<sup>3</sup> Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany: *Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*

<sup>4</sup> Framework Act for Higher Education: *Hochschulrahmengesetz (HRG)*

As a result of German Unification in 1990, political, economic and social conditions in the five new federal states of East Germany were adapted to West German conditions. The West German higher education framework act served as the legal basis for the restructuring and transforming of the East German system. Within higher education institutions, academic self-governance in internal affairs and freedom of teaching and research were reinstated.

## 1-2) Specific legislative framework

In the Federal Republic of Germany, responsibility for the education system is determined by the federal structure of the state. According to the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*), educational legislation and administration are primarily the responsibility of the *Länder*. Approval of the establishment of a higher education institution is determined by the *Länder*. Detailed regulations are laid down in the constitutions of the *Länder* and especially in separate laws of the *Länder* on higher education. The *Länder* cooperate with each other within the framework of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK)<sup>5</sup> on matters of importance for all *Länder*.

The legal basis of higher education in Germany is provided by the Framework Act for Higher Education (HRG) of the Federation and the legislation on higher education of the *Länder* (*Hochschulgesetze*), as well as the legislation regarding colleges of art and music and the legislation regarding universities of applied sciences<sup>6</sup> of the *Länder*. In accordance with its purpose, the HRG describes the general objectives of higher education institutions as well as the general principles underlying the system of higher education, study, teaching and research, admission and membership, as well as the staff of institutions of higher education. Based on the general provisions of the HRG, the laws on higher education passed by the *Länder* cover the above-mentioned areas in detail. As a rule, the regulations apply to all institutions of higher education, including privately-maintained establishments, and provide a systematic foundation for the higher education system.

In the course of the 2006 reform for the modernization of the federal system (*Föderalismusreform I*), the relationships between the Federation and the *Länder* as regards legislation in the field of education have changed as well. Amongst other things, the Federation's framework responsibility in the field of higher education has ceased to exist. As part of concurrent legislation (Article 72 of the Basic Law - R1), the Federation is still responsible for the fields of admission to higher education institutions and degrees from higher education institutions. However, the *Länder* have been granted the power to enact their own provisions in deviation from the relevant federal laws.

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<sup>5</sup> Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany: *Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (KMK)*

<sup>6</sup> Universities of applied sciences: *Fachhochschulen*

### 1-2-1) Legislation

- Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany (*Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*)  
Under the Basic Law, the freedom of art and scholarship, research and teaching is guaranteed (Article 5, Paragraph 3). The entire school system is under the supervision of the state (Article 7, Paragraph 1).
- Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz :HRG*)  
The general principles of higher education as defined by the Federation in 1976. After the new federal system was established in 2006, the Act has virtually lost its effect.
- Higher education acts of the *Länder* (*Hochschulgesetze*)

### 1-3) Responsibilities of the Federal Government

The scope of the Federal Government's responsibilities in the field of education is defined in the Basic Law, according to which the Federation bears responsibility particularly for the regulations governing the following domains of education, science and research:

- In-company vocational training and vocational further education;
- Admission to higher education institutions and higher education degrees (here the *Länder* may enact laws at variance with the legislation of the Federation);
- Financial assistance for pupils and students;
- Promotion of scientific and academic research and technological development, including the promotion of up-and-coming academics;
- Youth welfare;
- Legal protection of participants of correspondence courses;
- Regulations on entry to the legal profession;
- Regulations on entry to medical and paramedical professions;
- Employment promotion measures; occupational and labour market research.

### 1-4) Higher education institutions governing structure

Institutions of higher education have the status of a public-law corporation and they are public institutions under the authority of the *Länder*. Basically, higher education institutions are organized and administered as follows:

Higher education institutions are governed either by a rector (or rector's body) or else by a president (or presidential body). The rector is elected from among the group of professors belonging to that institution, or selected from among external applicants.

To support the governing board of the higher education institutions with external expertise, councils<sup>7</sup> or boards of trustees<sup>8</sup> have been established in almost all of the *Länder*; these include personalities from industry or academics from other institutions. Depending on the law of the

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<sup>7</sup> Council: *Hochschulrat*

<sup>8</sup> Boards of trustees: *Kuratorium*

respective Land, these bodies can exercise a right of veto or participation in, for example, basic budgetary issues or decisions regarding the development plans of the higher education institution. As a rule, they also have an advisory function and make recommendations.

The basic organizational unit at higher education institutions is the department or faculty<sup>9</sup>. It performs the duties of the higher education institution that fall within its remit. The department/faculty is responsible for ensuring that its members and scientific establishments are able to carry out the functions entrusted to them. This covers aspects like applications for third-party funding, organization of teaching and learning, internal cooperation of member institutes etc. – and increasingly budgetary discretion within given limits.

### 1-5) Higher education institutions funding

Public higher education institutions are maintained by the *Länder*, and therefore receive the majority of their financial backing from the Land concerned, which essentially also decides on the allocation of resources. The *Länder* supply these institutions with the funds they need to carry out their work from the budget of the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs or the Ministry of Science and Research. However, members of the institutions engaged in research are also entitled to carry out research projects which are not financed through the Land budget, but by third parties, e.g. organizations concerned with the promotion of research. The most important institution involved in promoting research in higher education, particularly in the basic research, is the German Research Foundation (DFG)<sup>10</sup>. It promotes research by, for example, providing individuals or institutions with financial assistance. Other important third-party funding's come from the government, private endowments like the *Volkswagen-Stiftung* or – increasingly – from EU funds.

As part of the Excellence Initiative of the Federation and the *Länder* for the Promotion of Science and Research in German Higher Education Institutions adopted in 2005, the Federation and the *Länder* support scientific activities of universities and their cooperation partners in the higher education sector.

### 1-6) Bologna Process

The Bologna Process was introduced in 1999 with the aim of creating a European Higher Education Area by 2010, characterized by a free mobility to be achieved through the transparency and compatibility of consecutive study structures, networked quality assurance systems and the mutual recognition of academic achievements and qualifications. In implementing the requirements of the Bologna Process, Germany's Federal Government, *Länder*, and institutions of higher education are conducting the largest higher education reform in decades. In Germany, the legal framework for Bachelor's and Master's degree was first introduced by an amendment to the Framework Act for Higher Education (HRG) in 1998. The transition to the two-tier structure of Bachelor's and Master's qualifications is well under way. By winter semester 2011/2012, 85% of all German study programs

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<sup>9</sup> Department or Faculty: *Fachbereich, Fakultät*

<sup>10</sup> The German Research Foundation: *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)*

led to a Bachelor's or a Master's degree. The universities of applied sciences in particular have virtually completed the reform. On the other hand, there remains some fields like law and medicine which still require the traditional type of degree (5 to 6 years), i.e. the state examination<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, the reforms have clearly enhanced the international mobility of German students and the attractiveness of German institutions of higher education for students and young researchers from abroad. In 2010 almost one third of the Master's degrees were awarded to foreign students.

The implementation of the reform in Germany is supported by Federal Government and *Länder*. The German Bologna Follow-Up Group which consists of representatives of the Federation, the *Länder*, the German Rectors' Conference (HRK)<sup>12</sup>, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)<sup>13</sup>, students, the Accreditation Council<sup>14</sup>, the social partners and the German National Association for Student Affairs (DSW)<sup>15</sup>, advises on the current developments and practical problems associated with the implementation of the Bologna Process.

*Source:*

Barbara M. Kehm (University of Kassel) (2006) *International Handbook of Higher Education*.

European Commission *Eurydice -Organisation of the education system in Germany 2009/10*.

European Commission *Eurydice -National system overview on education systems in Europe and ongoing reforms 2011 Edition*.

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011*.

HRK Website <http://www.hrk.de/activities/bologna-process/>

BMBF Website <http://www.bmbf.de/en/3336.php>

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<sup>11</sup> State examination: *Staatsprüfung*

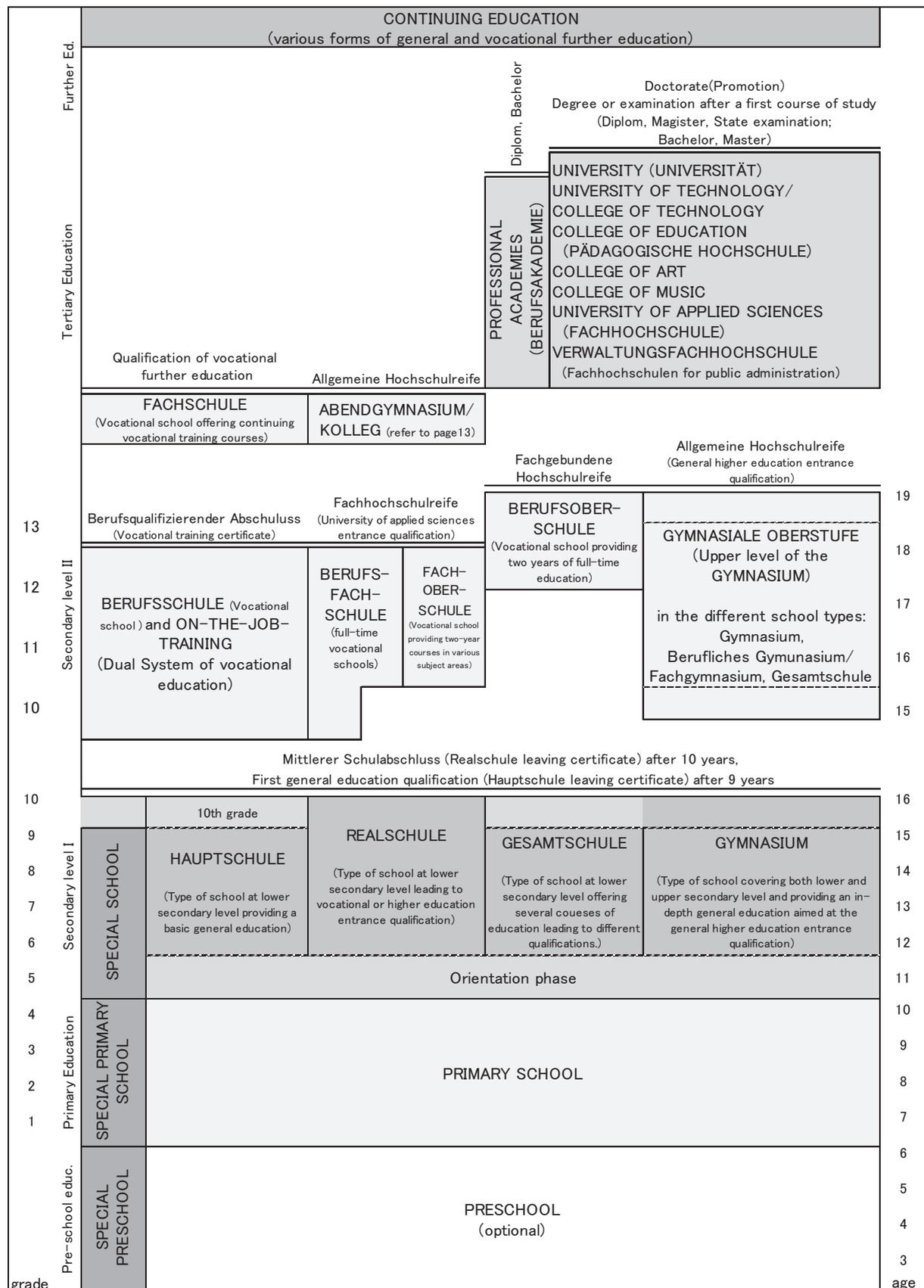
<sup>12</sup> German Rectors' Conference: *Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK)*

<sup>13</sup> German Academic Exchange Service: *Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD)*

<sup>14</sup> Accreditation Council: *Akkreditierungsrat*

<sup>15</sup> German Student Services Association: *Deutsches Studentenwerk (DSW)*

## 2. German education system



Source: KMK (2012) *Basic Structure of the Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany*.

### 3. Higher education institutions

#### 3-1) Types of higher education institutions

The Federal Republic of Germany has the following types of higher education institutions. The overwhelming majority of higher education institutions are state-run institutions maintained by the *Länder*.

#### **Universities (*Universität*) and equivalent institutions of higher education**

- University (*Universität*)
- University of Technology/College of Technology (*Technische Universität/Technische Hochschule*): Type of higher education institution equivalent in status to university. Focus traditionally lies in natural science and engineering.
- College of education (*Pädagogische Hochschule*): exist only in Baden-Württemberg
- Theological colleges (*Theologische Hochschulen*)

Universities and equivalent institutions of higher education hold the right to award Doctorates. Academic and scientific research - particularly basic research - and the training of the next generation of academics are also distinctive features of universities and equivalent institutions of higher education.

#### **Colleges of art and music (*Kunsthochschule/Musikhochschule*)**

Colleges of art and music offer courses of studies in the visual, design and performing arts as well as in the area of film, television and media, and in various music subjects. They teach the entire gamut of artistic subjects or only certain branches of study, in some cases also the pertaining theoretical disciplines.

#### **Universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*)**

Universities of applied sciences were introduced in 1970/71 as a new type of institution in the system of higher education in the Federal Republic of Germany. They have the particular function of providing application-oriented teaching and research, particularly in engineering, business, administration, social services and design. It is not possible to obtain a doctoral degree from a *Fachhochschule*.

A *Fachhochschule* for public administration (*Verwaltungsfachhochschule*) is a *Fachhochschule* maintained by the Federation or a Land which trains civil servants in a particular sector of public administration for careers in the so-called higher level of the civil service.

#### 3-2) State-recognized institutions in the tertiary sector

The Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) does not expressly regulate the establishment of non-public higher education institutions. However, their establishment is permitted in principle pursuant to the general guarantee of the freedom of art and scholarship, research and teaching enshrined in the Basic Law (Art. 5, Paragraph 3). The *Länder* alone are responsible for awarding recognition to

non-public institutions. The Framework Act for Higher Education (HRG) of the Federation and the *Länder* laws governing higher education stipulate what minimum requirements have to be satisfied if non-public institutions are to be recognized as institutions of higher education by the state. Official recognition by the respective Land is dependent on proof of that the non-public higher education institution is of equivalent status (not identical in form) to state higher education institutions. Therefore there is a whole list of points where a non-public institution must prove that it satisfies the demands, the standards and the performance of a comparable state institution. Furthermore, it must also be ensured that those belonging to the institution of higher education have at least a minimum level of co-determination in teaching and research matters. Recognition involves establishing the designation and organization of the higher education institution, as well as the courses of study and examinations it plans to offer and the award of higher education degrees.

The Federation and the *Länder* have agreed that non-public institutions are to be accredited by the Council of Science and Humanities (WR) (please see page 20). This institutional accreditation is a procedure of quality assurance which is to determine whether an institution is capable of providing study courses which according to legislation belong to the sector of higher education. Within the framework of the accreditation procedure, thus is to be examined and established whether standards of quality are fulfilled and if the institution fulfills basic norms of corporate governance, independence of teaching and research etc.

*Source:*

European Commission *Eurydice - Organisation of the education system in Germany 2009/10.*

KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011.*

KMK (2012) *Basic Structure of the Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany.*

TU9 Website <http://www.tu9.de/studies/>

### 3-3) Statistics

#### Number of institutions (as per the 2009/2010 winter semester)

Universities and equivalent institutions	127
Colleges of art and music	51
Universities of applied sciences (including <i>Verwaltungsfachhochschulen</i> )	232
Total	410

#### Number of students (as per the 2009/2010 winter semester)

Universities and equivalent institutions	1,415,503
Colleges of art and music	32,296
Universities of applied sciences (including <i>Verwaltungsfachhochschulen</i> )	671,686
Total	2,119,485

Number of students by subject (as per the 2009/2010 winter semester)

Language, the humanities	415,534
Sport	26,679
Law, Economics and Social sciences	679,478
Mathematics, Natural sciences	373,306
Human medicine/Health science	118,675
Veterinary medicine	8,046
Agronomy, Forestry, Nutritional science	41,992
Engineering sciences	369,548
Fine arts, Art studies	81,325
Other subjects and unclear	4,902
Total	2,119,485

Source: The Federal Statistical Office *Statistical Yearbook 2010*.

Number of international students by countries of origin (as per the 2011)

China	22,828
Russia	10,077
Bulgaria	7,537
Poland	7,463
Austria	7,072
Turkey	6,575

Source:

DAAD and HIS-Institute for Higher Education Research (HIS-HF) *Facts and Figures on the International Nature of Studies and Research in Germany 2012*.

Final examinations (as per the 2009)

<i>Diplom</i> [Univ.] and corresponding final examinations	111,853
Teaching examinations	36,120
Bachelor's degree	71,989
Master's degree	20,802
Degree at Universities of applied sciences	72,808
Doctoral degree	25,084

Source: KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011*.

## 4. Enrollment

### 4-1) Admission requirements to University

Admission to any course of study at universities and equivalent higher education institutions as a rule requires the general higher education entrance qualification (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*) or the higher education entrance qualification restricted to a specified field of study (*Fachgebundene Hochschulreife*).

#### ***Allgemeine Hochschulreife***

The general higher education entrance qualification entitles its holder to admission to all subjects at all higher education institutions and is usually obtained at *Gymnasiale Oberstufe\** (upper Gymnasium level) by passing the *Abitur* examination. The certificate of *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* incorporates examination marks as well as continuous assessment of pupil's performance in the last two years of upper Gymnasium level (*Qualifikationsphase*). The *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* can also be acquired at *Abendgymnasien\**, i.e. evening schools for working people, and *Kollegs\**, i.e. full-time schools for those who have completed vocational training.

#### ***Fachgebundene Hochschulreife***

Qualification entitling holder to study particular subjects at a higher education institution. May be obtained through certain courses of vocational education at upper secondary level.

#### ***\*Gymnasium***

Type of school covering both lower and upper secondary level (grades 5-13 or 5-12) and providing an in-depth general education aimed at the general higher education entrance qualification. At present, in almost all *Länder*, there is a change from the nine-year to the eight-year Gymnasium in which the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* is acquired after grade 12.

#### ***\*Gymnasiale Oberstufe***

The upper level of the Gymnasium, which can however be established at other types of school such as the *Gesamtschule*. It comprises grades 11-13 (or 10-12, 11-12, depending on the Land). Course of general education concluded by the *Abitur* examination, which leads to the general higher education entrance qualification (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*).

#### ***\*Abendgymnasium***

Establishment of the so-called continuation education (*Zweiter Bildungsweg*) at which adults can attend evening classes to obtain the general higher education entrance qualification.

#### ***\*Kolleg***

Establishment of the so-called continuation education (*Zweiter Bildungsweg*) where adults attend full-time classes to obtain the general higher education entrance qualification.

### 4-1-1) *Abitur* examination

The *Abitur* examination covers four or five examination subjects, which must include at least two subjects at a level of increased academic standards and two of the following three subjects: German,

foreign language and mathematics. Additionally, all three subject areas (languages, literature and the arts; social sciences; mathematics, natural sciences and technology) must be included in the examination.

The required minimum three written examinations must cover at least two subjects at an increased level of academic standards, which must include at least one of the following subjects: German, foreign language, mathematics or a natural science. The oral Abitur examination is taken in a subject which has not been examined in written form. The general higher education entrance qualification entitle, *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*, is awarded if the total marks attained are at least a minimum of 300 points. The *Länder* have to ensure teaching of a total of at least 265 weekly periods in the *Gymnasiale oberstufe*.

The questions are either set on a uniform basis by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of a Land or drawn up by the teachers of the individual schools and approved by the responsible school supervisory authority. In the future, there will be central *Abitur* examinations at Land level in almost all *Länder*. The comparability of the examination procedures and examination requirements is guaranteed for all *Länder* by the Uniform Examination Standards in the *Abitur* Examination.

#### 4-1-2) Admission restrictions

In some courses, in which the total number of applicants exceeds the number of places available at all higher education institutions, there are nationwide quotas. In the 2010/2011 winter semester these are medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry and pharmacy. Places on these courses are awarded by the Foundation for Higher Education Admission<sup>16</sup> and higher education institutions on the basis of a central allocation procedure. The legal basis for this procedure is the State Treaty of the *Länder* on the establishment of a joint Foundation for Higher Education Admission of June 2008. The State Treaty entered into force on 1 May 2010 following ratification by all *Länder*.

Up to 20 per cent of the available places are awarded beforehand (e.g. to foreigners from countries outside the European Union, applicants for an additional course of study, hardship cases). The criteria for the selection of applicants for the remaining places are the applicant's degree of qualification for the chosen course of study (as a rule the applicant's average mark in the *Abitur*, school-leaving examination constituting higher education entrance qualification - 20 per cent), the waiting period between acquiring the entrance qualification for the chosen course of study and applying (20 per cent) and the result of a selection procedure carried out by the institution of higher education itself (60 per cent).

In selection procedures carried out by the institution of higher education, places are awarded especially on the basis of either the applicant's degree of qualification, weighted individual marks in the entrance qualification for the chosen course of study which provide information on the applicant's capability to study a specific subject, the result of a test to determine the applicant's

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<sup>16</sup> Foundation for Higher Education Admission: *Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung*

capability to study a specific subject, the type of vocational training or occupation or the result of an selection interview regarding the motivation for the chosen course of study, or a combination of these five criteria. In the selection decision, the degree of qualification for the course of study in question is of overriding importance. Details of the procedure and the applicable content criteria are laid down by the *Länder* in ordinances.

*Source:*

European Commission *Eurydice - Organisation of the education system in Germany 2009/10.*

KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011.*

KMK (2012) *Basic Structure of the Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany.*

#### 4-2) Admission requirements for international students

Applicants who do not have German higher education entrance qualifications have to submit a secondary school certificate that qualifies them to attend higher education in their country of origin. If necessary, they also have to provide proof that they have passed an entrance examination at a university in their native country or proof of enrolment at the university.

Foreign applicants for study places must prove that they have a sufficient command of the German language. This can be done, for example, by taking the German Language Proficiency Examination for Admission to Higher Education for Foreign Applicants (DSH)<sup>17</sup>, which is taken at the institution of higher education in Germany itself, by taking an equivalent examination (e.g. Test of German as a Foreign Language for foreign applicants (TestDaF)<sup>18</sup>).

*Source:* KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011.*

## 5. Courses and qualifications

### 5-1) Award of credits

Credits are a quantitative measure of student workloads. They cover instruction itself, the time required for preparation and follow-up, (i.e. class time and private study), examinations and preparation for examinations, including final and other papers, and in some cases practical work placements.

As a rule 60 credits are awarded per academic year, or 30 per semester. One credit assumes an average workload (class time and private study) of 25 to 30 hours maximum, giving full-time students a total workload at lectures and outside class of 750 – 900 hours per semester. This equates to 32 – 39 hours per week for 46 weeks of the year. Bachelor's and Master's study courses are provided with a credit point system which is based upon the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

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<sup>17</sup> German Language Proficiency Examination for Admission to Higher Education for Foreign Applicants: *Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang ausländischer Studienbewerber (DSH)*

<sup>18</sup> Test of German as a Foreign Language for foreign applicants: *Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache für ausländische Studienbewerber (TestDaF)*

## 5-2) Curriculum

The structure and contents of the courses of studies are specified in the study regulations (*Studienordnungen*) or study plans (*Studienplänen*) and examination regulations (*Prüfungsordnungen*). As a rule, the study regulations list the individual module and its classes – including the number of hours – required for successful completion of a course of study, and show which subjects are compulsory, elective and optional. The regulations, on the other hand, specify the standard period of study, requirements for entry to examinations, crediting of specific courses and examinations taken, time allowed for completion of a dissertation, examination standards, procedures and examination subjects.

### Standard period of education

The standard period of study for full-time study amounts to six, seven or eight semesters for Bachelor's study courses and four, three or two semesters respectively for Master's study courses. For consecutive study courses the total standard period of full-time study comprises five years (ten semesters).

### Profile of the study courses

Bachelor's study courses lay academic foundations, provide methodological skills and lead to qualifications related to the professional field corresponding to the profile of the higher education institution and the study course. This ensures a broad academic qualification in Bachelor's study courses.

Master's study courses serve subject and academic specialization and may be differentiated by the profile types "practice-oriented" and "research-oriented."

### Teaching Methods

Classes take the form of lectures, seminars, practical exercises, work placements and study trips. The main function of the lectures is to impart general and basic knowledge about the various fields of study. The seminars afford an opportunity to deal in depth with a more narrowly defined topic; students often give presentations and students and lecturer discuss topics, texts or presentations. Practical exercises, meanwhile, provide the opportunity to develop the theoretical knowledge gained in a practical manner.

The Federation and *Länder* are promoting the use of new media (multimedia and teleteaching) in the teaching offered. From 2000 to 2004, as part of the New Media in Education program, the Federation promoted joint projects for the development and improvement of the use of new media in teaching at higher education institutions. From 2005 to 2008, the Federation promoted eLearning Services for Science, which should give the institutions of higher education the opportunity to make greater and more professional use of new media for teaching, learning and examinations.

### 5-3) Student assessment

[University]

As a rule, depending on the standard period of study, 180-240 ECTS credits must be submitted for a Bachelor's degree. A Master's degree requires normally 300 ECTS credits, including the preceding course of study for the first qualification for entry into a profession. For quality assurance, both Bachelor's and Master's study courses require a thesis (Bachelor's/Master's thesis). The scope of the work for the Bachelor's thesis comprises a minimum of 6 ECTS credits and must not exceed 12 ECTS credits; for the Master's dissertation it should range from 15 - 30 ECTS credits. A doctorate is conferred on the strength of a doctoral thesis, which must be based on independent research, and oral examinations called *Rigorosum*.

*Source:*

Resolution of KMK (2010) *Common structural guidelines of the Länder for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses*.

KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011*.

European Commission *Eurydice - Organisation of the education system in Germany 2009/10*.

### 5-4) Certification

With regard to higher education degrees, a distinction is drawn between academic, state and ecclesiastical examinations. As a rule, a higher education qualification for a profession is conferred on the basis of these examinations. Higher education degrees are not awarded on the basis of intermediate examinations in Germany.

Institutions of higher education are authorized by law to administer academic examinations (*Hochschulprüfungen*). A first academic degree is conferred on the basis of the following kinds of academic examinations:

- *Bachelorprüfung* (leading to the award of the Bachelorgrad),
- *Diplomprüfung* (leading to the award of the Diplomgrad) and
- *Magisterprüfung* (leading to the award of the Magistergrad).<sup>19</sup> (Please refer to page 18.)

In the course of the Bologna Process to establish a European Higher Education Area, the transition to the consecutive structure of study with Bachelor's and Master's qualifications is advanced.

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<sup>19</sup> By the progress of the Bologna process, there are few courses left that lead to a *Magister*, mostly in theology.

### Designation of qualifications/degrees

The following designations will be used for Bachelor's and consecutive Master's degrees:

Subject groups	Designation of qualifications
Language and cultural studies Sport, sport science Social sciences Fine arts	Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Master of Arts (M.A.)
Mathematics, Natural sciences Medicine* Agriculture, forestry and food sciences*	Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) Master of Science (M.Sc.)
Engineering	Depending on the content of the study course: Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) Master of Science (M.Sc.) or Bachelor of Engineering (B.Eng.) Master of Engineering (M.Eng.)
Economics	Depending on the content of the study course: Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Master of Arts (M.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) Master of Science (M.Sc.)
Law*	Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) Master of Laws (LL.M.)

\*Does not apply to state-regulated study courses.

*Source:*

Resolution of KMK (2010) *Common structural guidelines of the Länder for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses.*

In interdisciplinary study courses, the designation of the final qualification is determined by the subject area which is the major subject in the study course; in engineering and economics it is determined by the content of the study course. Subject additions to the final qualification are excluded. For the designation of final qualifications the German language may also be used (e.g. *Bakkalaureus der Wissenschaften*). Designations comprising more than one language (e.g. *Bachelor der Wissenschaften*) may not be used.

Detailed information about the studies underlying the qualification is contained in each case in the "Diploma Supplement", which is part of each degree certificate.

The conversion of degree designations will be effected as part of accreditation and re-accreditation.

## 5-4-1) Qualifications framework

Degree levels	Formal aspects	Qualifications conferred by higher education institutions, Higher education degrees and State examinations ( <i>Staatsprüfungen</i> ) <sup>1</sup>
1st level: Bachelor's level	Degrees at Bachelor's level: 3, 3.5 or 4 years' full-time study or 180, 210 or 240 ECTS credits; All degrees qualify graduates to apply for Master's degrees	B.A.; B.Sc.; B.Eng.; B.F.A., B.Mus, LLB  <i>Diplom</i> (FH) [ <i>Diplom</i> degree awarded by a university of applied sciences], State examination ( <i>Staatsprüfung</i> )
2nd level: Master's level	Degrees at Master's level: normally 5 years' full-time study or 300 ECTS credits; in multi-cycle degree programs 1, 1.5 or 2 years or 60, 90 or 120 ECTS credits at Master's level; types of Master's degrees: more practice-oriented, more research-oriented, artistic profile, teaching career profile; all degrees qualify graduates to apply for a doctorate <sup>2</sup>	M.A., M.Sc., M.Eng., M.F.A., M.Mus., LL.M, etc.  <i>Diplom</i> (Univ.) [ <i>Diplom</i> degree awarded by a university], <i>Magister</i> , State examination ( <i>Staatsprüfung</i> )  Non-consecutive Master's and Master's programs which are designed for continuing education <sup>3</sup>
3rd level: Doctoral level	(Degrees generally build on a Master's-level degree, i.e. 300 ECTS credits or more) <sup>4</sup>	Dr., Ph.D.

Source:

Produced by the German Rectors' Conference, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, and adopted by the Standing Conference (2005) *Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education Qualifications*.

- 1 State examinations [*Staatsprüfungen*] are as a rule assigned to the second level of study; however the following special rules apply: degree programs leading to a *Staatsprüfung* cover a standard study period of 3 years (primary school or primary level and lower secondary level teaching careers, which may be assigned to the 1st level of study) to 6.5 years (medicine); this is equivalent to 180 - 390 ECTS credits.
- 2 For artistic degree programs at Universities of Art/Music (*Kunst- und Musikhochschulen*) this entitlement applies only under certain conditions.
- 3 The degree designations for non-consecutive Master's and Master's programs which are designed for continuing education are not prescribed and are not limited to the given degree designations, e.g. MBA.
- 4 Particularly qualified holders of a Bachelor's degree or a *Diplom* (FH) degree [*Diplom* degree awarded by a university of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*)] may also be admitted directly to doctoral studies.

## 5-4-2) Degrees

### Diplom, Magister

The **Diplom degree** as a higher education qualification provides qualification for a profession. It may be obtained either at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education (particularly in social or economic sciences and in natural and engineering sciences), at colleges of art and music, and at *Fachhochschulen* (in all subjects, with the specification *Fachhochschule* or FH added to the degree title).

The **Magister degree** as a higher education qualification providing qualification for a profession may be obtained at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education (particularly in arts subjects and theology).

### Bachelor, Master

The **Bachelor's degree** as a first higher education degree provides basic qualification in a given discipline and should make the graduate employable, i.e. prepared for the labour market. It can be obtained after a standard period of study of at least three and at most four years at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education, at colleges of art and music, and at *Fachhochschulen*. Together with the Master's degree, the Bachelor's degree is part of a graduation system of consecutive degrees (two-cycle degree system). The Bachelor's degree provides the same rights as *Diplom* qualifications obtained at a *Fachhochschule*. The Bachelor's degree may also be obtained as a tertiary education qualification providing qualification for a profession at *Berufsakademien*<sup>20</sup>.

The **Master's degree** as a further higher education degree provides an advanced qualification for a profession and can be obtained after a standard period of study of one to two years at a university or equivalent institution of higher education, at colleges of art and music, as well as at *Fachhochschulen*. Master's study courses can be differentiated by the profile types "more practice-oriented" and "more research-oriented." They require a first degree (Bachelor, *Diplom*[FH]) for entry. Consecutive Master's study courses build on a preceding Bachelor's study course in terms of content and are part of a graduation system of consecutive degrees (two-cycle degree system). Master's qualifications provide the same rights as *Diplom* and *Magister* qualifications of universities and equivalent higher education institutions. Non-consecutive Master's study courses and Master's courses providing further education correspond to the requirements of consecutive Master's study courses and lead to the same level of qualifications and the same rights as consecutive Master's study courses, but require at least one year of working experience.

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<sup>20</sup> *Berufsakademien*: Tertiary education institution in some *Länder*, offering courses of academic training at a study institution combined with practical in-company professional training in keeping with the principle of the dual system.

## Doctor

A **doctoral degree** is awarded on the basis of a doctoral thesis and an oral examination or thesis defense. As a rule, the doctorate is embarked on after obtaining a Master's qualification<sup>21</sup>, and the promotion serves as proof of ability to undertake in-depth and independent academic research.

### 5-4-3) State examination (*Staatsprüfung*)

State examination (*Staatsprüfung*) concludes a course of study in certain subjects (e.g. medical subjects, teaching, law). It also refers to examination taken by law students and teaching students at the end of their preparatory service (known as the Second State Examination). The examinations are administered by examination committees staffed not only by professors from the institutions of higher education but also by representatives of the state examination offices of the *Länder*.

Study courses	Standard period
Primary school or primary level teaching careers	(6-7 semesters)
General teaching careers at primary level and at all or individual lower secondary level school types	(7-9 semesters)
Teaching careers at all or individual lower secondary level school types	(7-9 semesters)
Upper secondary level (general education subjects) or Gymnasium teaching careers	(9 semesters)
Upper secondary level (vocational subjects) or vocational school teaching careers	(9 semesters)
Special educational teaching careers	(8-9 semesters)
Law	(9 semesters)
Medicine	(13 semesters)
Dentistry	(11 semesters)
Veterinary medicine	(11 semesters)
Pharmacy	(8 (-) 9 semesters)
Food chemistry	((8-) 9 semesters)

Source:

KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011*

Resolution of KMK (2010) *Common structural guidelines of the Länder for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses*.

Produced by the German Rectors' Conference, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, and adopted by the Standing Conference (2005) *Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education Qualifications*.

KMK (2012) *Basic Structure of the Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany*.

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<sup>21</sup> There are few courses left that lead to a *Magister*, *Diplom* or *Staatsprüfung*. A Master's qualification is a general progression route to a doctoral program except a few areas which requires State examinations.

## 6. Responsible authorities and higher education related bodies

### Government departments

#### § **Federal Ministry of Education and Research**

*(Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung: BMBF)* <http://www.bmbf.de/>

This ministry was created as the Federal Ministry of Education and Science in 1969. It was then merged in 1994 with the Federal Ministry of Research and Technology.

The BMBF performs a variety of tasks within the scope of its constitutional responsibilities:

- Legislation governing non-school vocational training and continuing education
- Research funding in all fields of science
- Support for young researchers
- Promotion of international exchanges in initial and continuing training, in higher education and in research
- Legislation governing training assistance and its funding (together with the *Länder*)
- Promotion of the gifted and talented

#### § **The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs**

*(Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: KMK)*

<http://www.kmk.org/home.html>

Under the Basic Law and the constitutions of the *Länder*, the entire school system is under the supervision of the state. Every state has its Ministry of education, and each Ministry has education policies according to the situation of each state. However, as there was a basic public need for education to be coordinated and harmonized throughout the country, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany was founded in 1948.

The Standing Conference unites the ministers and senators of the *Länder* responsible for education, higher education and research, as well as cultural affairs. The Standing Conference deals with "issues relating to educational policy at school and university level and research policy, as well as cultural policy of superregional importance, with the aim of achieving joint opinion and decision-making and of representing joint concerns".

#### § **The Council of Science and Humanities (*Wissenschaftsrat: WR*)**

<http://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/home.html>

Under an administrative agreement between the Federation and the *Länder*, the Council of Science and Humanities (*Wissenschaftsrat: WR*) was established in 1957. The WR is made up of scientists, recognized public figures and representatives from the Federal and *Länder* governments. Its tasks include the drawing up of recommendations on the content and structural development of higher education, science and research for the Federal Government and the governments of the *Länder*, as well as the joint promotion of the construction of facilities at

institutions of higher education, including large scientific installations. Furthermore, the WR implements the institutional accreditation of private institutions of higher education.

§ **Joint Science Conference (*Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz : GWK*)**

<http://www.gwk-bonn.de/>

In June 2007 the Federal Government and the Heads of Government of the *Länder* agreed on the Establishment of a Joint Science Conference (*Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz : GWK*). Members of the GWK are the Ministers and Senators of the Federation and *Länder* responsible for science and research as well as for finance. The GWK deals with all questions of research funding, science and research policy strategies and the science system which jointly affect the Federal Government and the *Länder*. Whilst preserving their own competences, the members of the GWK strive for close coordination on questions of common interest in the field of national, European and international science and research policy with the aim of strengthening Germany's position as a location for science and research in the international competition.

Representative organisations

§ **German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz: HRK*)**

<http://www.hrk.de/startseite/>

The German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz: HRK*) is a voluntary association of government-funded or -accredited universities and higher education institutions in Germany. It currently has 267 member institutions.

The HRK is the political and public voice of universities and other higher education institutions and provides a forum for the process of forming joint policies and practices. The HRK addresses all manner of topics related to higher education institutions: research, teaching and learning, continuing professional education for academics, knowledge and technology transfer, international cooperation, and administrative self-management.

The HRK also manages a database regarding information on all educational programs called "HECompass (Higher Education Compass)". The HECompass provides extensive information on Germany's higher education institutions, on the range of studies and programs that they offer, on who to contact locally, and on who the higher education institutions cooperate with around the world.

§ **German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst: DAAD*)**

<http://www.daad.de/de/index.html>

The German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst: DAAD*) is the funding organization supporting the international exchange of students and scholars. It is a registered association and its members are German institutions of higher education and student bodies. It has the task of promoting international exchange, especially through the exchange of

students and scholars. DAAD's funding programs are open to scholars from all disciplines and countries in the world for either visits to or from Germany.

### Research funding organizations

#### § **German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft: DFG*)**

<http://www.dfg.de/index.jsp>

The German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft: DFG*) is the largest research funding organization in Germany. It is a central self-governing body that brings together higher education institutions and research organizations. It provides financial support for research in higher education and public research institutions. The DFG funds research in all disciplines using a bottom-up approach. That means any researcher can submit an application without any subject restrictions.

#### § **Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (*Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung*)**

<http://www.humboldt-foundation.de/web/start.html>

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation promote academic cooperation between excellent scientists and scholars from abroad and from Germany. Its research scholarships and prizes enable outstanding researchers from abroad to complete long-term research stays in Germany. There are no quotas for specific countries or subjects; only personal academic achievement counts.

### Research councils

#### § **Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft: FhG** <http://www.fraunhofer.de/>

The *Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft* is the largest organisation for applied research in Europe. The *Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft* conduct research for the general benefit of the public: health, security, communication, energy and the environment.

#### § **Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres (*Helmholtz-Gemeinschaft*)**

<http://www.helmholtz.de/>

The Helmholtz Association integrates 18 scientific-technical and biological-medical research centers. The Helmholtz Association carries out top-level research to identify and explore the major challenges facing society, science and the economy. Its work is divided into six strategic research fields: Energy; Earth and Environment; Health; Key Technologies; Structure of Matter; and Aeronautics, Space and Transport.

#### § **Max Planck Society (*Max-Planck-Gesellschaft*)** <http://www.mpg.de/de>

The Max Planck Society is an independent, non-profit research organization. Members of the Max Planck Society include 80 research institutes. The fields of research are natural sciences,

life sciences, social sciences and the humanities. Max Planck Institutes focus on research fields that are particularly innovative, or that are especially demanding in terms of funding or time requirements.

§ **Leibniz Association (*Leibniz-Gemeinschaft*)** <http://www.wgl.de/>

Leibniz Association is the umbrella organization for 87 research institutions which address scientific issues of importance to society as a whole. The research centers focus on the humanities and social sciences, economics, spatial and life sciences, mathematics, natural sciences, engineering and environmental research.

*Source:*

KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011.*

German Research and Innovation Forum Tokyo (DWIH Tokyo) <http://www.dwih-tokyo.jp/ja/research-germany/>

## 7. Student organizations

§ **Freier Zusammenschluss von StudentInnenschaften (fzs)**

The *Freier Zusammenschluss von StudentInnenschaften (fzs)* is the non-partisan federation of student councils in Germany. The fzs has approximately 80 member institutions, and represents around one million students in Germany. The fzs represents nationwide social, cultural, political and economic interests of students towards higher education, politics and the public.

The activities of the fzs concern the following:

- a legally- and financially- secured student representation in higher education
- a student participation in all higher education policy decisions in higher education institutions, at the state and the federal level
- free access to education
- a needs-covering protection of students regardless of parental income
- the abolition of discrimination in education and society
- exchange of critical views on science and society
- cooperation with national/international students' union networks

The fzs is the main organization of the student accreditation pool. The office of the pool is located within the fzs and the fzs is responsible for training and sending members of the pools to accreditation processes.

§ **German National Association for Student Affairs (*Deutsches Studentenwerk: DSW*)**

The German National Association for Student Affairs (DSW) is the umbrella organization of the 58 local student service organizations (*Studentenwerke*) in Germany. The *Studentenwerke* are partner organizations of the universities and support the ca. two million students with help and services around their studies.

Source:

fzs Website [http://www.fzs.de/en/ueber\\_uns/geschaeftsstelle/index](http://www.fzs.de/en/ueber_uns/geschaeftsstelle/index)

DSW Website <http://www.internationale-studierende.de/en/home/>

## 8. Tuition fees and student aid

### 8-1) Tuition fees

The *Länder* may, at their own discretion, impose study fees on students. In recent years, some *Länder* have experimented with fees, charging up to Euro 500 per semester, but currently all of them have abolished fees again. In most *Länder*, however, fees for long-term students and for an additional course of study, occasionally also for non-EU students, are now being charged.

### 8-2) Student finance

#### **Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz: BAföG*)**

The purpose of the Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG) is to provide training assistance and the establishment of equal opportunities in education. Students have received grants and loans in accordance with the Act. BAföG is dependent on family circumstances; the incomes of the student, his/her spouse, and his/her parents are all taken into consideration. The budget split between the Federal Government (65%) and the *Länder* (35%) in 2010.

#### § Eligibility

German nationals and students from EU or EEA Member States may be eligible for training assistance if they meet certain conditions: generally, applicants must live in Germany, and EU/EEA citizens must either as children have freedom of movement within the EU, or have themselves been gainfully employed in Germany. Other foreign nationals with certain legal statuses (for example, a permanent residency status) may also be eligible. Overseas students coming to study in Germany and not meeting any of the above criteria are generally not entitled to BAföG support. In principle, a student can receive financial assistance for a specific program if he or she begins that program prior to turning 30 years of age, or 35 years of age for a master program.

#### § Duration and calculation of amount

As a rule, BAföG grants and loans are awarded for a period of one year at a time (paid out on a monthly basis). The duration for which such assistance is payable largely depends on the course of study chosen.

The amount of training assistance awarded to students is calculated according to basic needs, which include general living expenses and training costs. The maximum rate of financial assistance for a student living away from home is currently €670 per month. The exact amount depends on various factors including the housing and health insurance situation of the applicant, as well as the income, savings, and assets of the applicant, and those of his/her spouse or parents. Students at institutes of higher education receive 50 per cent in the form of a grant and 50 per cent in the form of a loan.

## § Repayment

The obligation to repay begins five years after the standard period of study in the first training program financed by loan. BAföG loans are interest-free. At the moment, the minimum monthly rate for repayment amounts to €105 and they are repayable within 20 years.

## **Other financial support for students**

### § **German Income Tax and Child Benefit Acts:**

All students under the age of 25 benefit through the tax allowances to which their families are entitled and which are laid down in the Acts.

### § **Educational Credit Program (*Bildungskreditprogramm*):**

It was introduced in 2001. With a maximum credit amount of Euro 7,200 per training segment, trainees can choose up to 24 equal monthly payments of Euro 100, 200 or 300 per month. It helps students who are not in receipt of Federal Training Assistance (BAföG).

### § **Student loan program of the Reconstruction Loan Corporation**

*(Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau: KfW):*

Since 2006, students of any study course are offered a loan in order to finance cost of living to the amount of Euro 100 up to 650 per month, irrespective of their income or assets.

### § **DAAD scholarships:**

General individual scholarships for German students, student trainees and interns, (post)graduates, researchers, artists and administrators

### § **National scholarship program (*Deutschlandstipendium*):**

In July 2010 the Federal Government adopted the scholarship program for particularly gifted students at German higher education institutions. The funding is Euro 300 per month and is provided by private sponsors (companies, foundations, private individuals, etc.) and by the Federation together.

Particularly gifted students may also receive a grant from several relevant foundations. The German National Scholarship Foundation<sup>22</sup> is Germany's largest foundation of its kind. The Federation supports the work of these foundations by providing substantial funding. The *Länder* contribute to the funding of the German National Scholarship Foundation.

*Source:*

KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011.*

BMBF Website <http://www.bmbf.de/en/18228.php>

DAAD Website <http://www.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/en/>

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<sup>22</sup> German National Scholarship Foundation: *Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes*

## 9. Information for students

### Study

[Higher education-related website]

§ **Higher Education Compass (HECompass)** <http://www.hochschulkompass.de/> (English and German)

The website provides extensive information on Germany's higher education institutions, offered by German Rectors' Conference (HRK). You can search higher education institutions, degree programs, doctoral studies and international partnerships.

§ **Research Map** <http://www.hrk.de/activities/research-map/> (English and German)

The 'Research Map' enables you to search for the 'institutional research priorities' of German universities. A certain field of research is considered an 'institutional research priority' if at least 25 professors collaborate closely in a specific field of research which constitutes a distinctive part of the respective university's institutional profile. Each university can enter up to eight main areas of research into the database. Eligibility for inclusion in the database is restricted to the HRK member institutions. A similar research map for the *Fachhochschulen* is underway.

§ **German Education server** <http://www.eduserver.de/> (English and German)

Web portal to the education system in Germany.

§ **uni-assist** <http://www.uni-assist.de/> (English, German, Spanish, French and Russian)

University application service for international students

[Higher education-related body]

§ **Goethe-Institut** <http://www.goethe.de/enindex.htm> (English and German)

The Goethe-Institut is the Federal Republic of Germany's cultural institution. They promote the study of German abroad and encourage international cultural exchange. They provide information on its culture, society and politics.

§ **German Research and Innovation Forum Tokyo**

*(Deutsche Wissenschafts- und Innovationshaus Tokyo: DWIH Tokyo)*

<http://www.dwih-tokyo.jp/de/home/> (English, German and Japanese)

The website provide information related to the research (research organizations, research funding etc.)

### Life and practical matters

§ **Facts about Germany** <http://www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de/de/> (Japanese, English, German and others)

Handbook which gives various information about Germany

§ **Deutschland.de** <https://www.deutschland.de/de> (English, German and others)

Deutschland.de is the web portal of “DE magazine Deutschland.” The portal is a service provided in cooperation with the Federal Foreign Office. The portal offer Information on politics, economics, culture, environment, knowledge and life.

§ **Study in Germany** <http://www.study-in.de/de/> (English and German)

Informative website about study and life in Germany

§ **Studienwahl.de** <http://www.studienwahl.de/de/index.htm> (English, German, Spanish and French)

Website which is operated jointly by KMK and the Federal Employment Agency. This website provides comprehensive information in order to prepare for studying at higher education institutions in Germany.

§ **Young Germany** <http://www.young-germany.de/> (English)

The website provides information on trends and lifestyle in Germany, vocational training and career development, innovation and design.

## 10. Ongoing debates in German higher education

§ Higher Education Pact 2020 (*Hochschulpakt 2020*)

In 2007, in order to enable institutions of higher education to cope with an increasing number of new entrants and to maintain the efficiency of research at higher education institutions, the Federation and the *Länder* adopted the Higher Education Pact 2020 (*Hochschulpakt 2020*). The main aim of the Pact is to distribute funds to institutions so that they can improve their learning environment.

### **First program phase 2007 to 2010:**

On 14 June 2007, the Federal Government and the *Länder* concluded the administrative agreement on the Higher Education Pact 2020. The first phase of the Higher Education Pact 2020 aimed to admit a total of 91,370 additional new university entrants in universities by 2010 (compared to the number in 2005). It clearly surpassed the goal of creating 91,370 additional study opportunities at German universities, reaching a total of 185,024. In addition, one-off payments were provided to support research at universities.

### **Second program phase from 2011 to 2015:**

On 4 June 2009, in order to maintain the performance of institutions of higher education and give more new entrants access to university, the Federal Government and the *Länder* agreed on a continuation of the Higher Education Pact. The Pact is being extended for a second phase until the end of 2015. It includes a program for the admission of new university entrants and a program for the provision of one-off payments for research projects supported by the DFG (overhead).

For the expansion of study opportunities during the second program phase, the Federal Government is investing around 5 billion euros.

#### § Excellence Initiative (*Exzellenzinitiative*)

The German federal and state governments passed the Excellence Initiative on 23 June 2005. They support scientific activities of universities and their cooperation partners in the higher education sector, in non-university research as well as in the economy. The DFG has responsibility for running the initiative together with the Council of Science and Humanities (WR).

The funding period is five years (First phase from 2006 to 2011). The precise conditions for receiving funding were defined in accordance with the criteria specified by the federal and state governments.

In June 2009 the federal and state governments approved continuing the Excellence Initiative for another five years (2012 through 2017), allocating 2.7 billion euros in funding.

#### § Quality Pact for Teaching (*Qualitätspakt Lehre*)

The Quality Pact for Teaching offers institutions of higher education a broad spectrum of effective support in improving the conditions of study and teaching quality which is tailored to specific local needs. The basis for the Quality Pact for Teaching is a joint agreement between the heads of government of the Federal Government and the *Länder*, which was adopted on 10 June 2010. The Federal Government has earmarked about 2 billion euros for this campaign from 2011 to 2020 for better study conditions at German institutions of higher education. Funding is limited to a maximum of five years.

Since the 2011-2012 winter semester, there are now 111 institutions of higher education receiving federal support to improve conditions for study - from the research-intensive university that offers a full range of subjects to the university of applied sciences with a regional focus.

A second round of selection allocated funding to many additional institutions of higher education as of the summer semester 2012. The Quality Pact for Teaching is providing funding to a total of 186 institutions of higher education in all 16 *Länder*, or 77 per cent of all public institutions of higher education. This figure includes 78 universities, 78 universities of applied sciences, and 30 colleges of art and music.

*Source:*

European Commission *Eurydice - Organisation of the education system in Germany 2009/10.*

BMBF Website <http://www.bmbf.de/en/1321.php>  
<http://www.bmbf.de/en/6142.php>  
<http://www.bmbf.de/en/15375.php>

DFG Website [http://www.dfg.de/en/research\\_funding/programmes/excellence\\_initiative/general\\_information/index.html](http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/programmes/excellence_initiative/general_information/index.html)

### III. The quality assurance system

#### 1. Summary of the German quality assurance system

Under Section 59 of the Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*) and the higher education legislation in place in the *Länder* higher education institutions are subject to state supervision which is exercised by the *Länder*. Responsibility for the contents and organization of studies and examinations as well as for the quality of higher education lies with the *Länder*. However, the systematic assessment of organizational structures, teaching and learning processes and performance criteria with a view to improving quality, did not start in Germany until the end of the 1980s. Although the actual concept of evaluation may not yet have been institutionalized, this does not mean that no control mechanisms existed.

Traditionally the establishment of new degree programs at German higher education institutions, including their study and examination regulations, needed the approval of the responsible Ministry of the respective State. This has been finally implemented by a system of approving programs and defining exam requirements. These were made for a long time through framework regulations on studies and examinations (*Rahmenprüfungsordnungen*), which had to be jointly adopted by the *Länder* and the HRK. This was typically a long and extraordinarily ponderous process which lasted two and often more years.

Whereas quality assurance in teaching in Germany was primarily carried out through such ex-ante control, other countries increasingly pursued it as ex-post control on the basis of evaluation results. Following the international development (Bologna reforms) and with growing quality assurance awareness, evaluation procedures and accreditation procedures were introduced in Germany. Currently, the German quality assurance system concerns only the teaching and learning at higher education institutions. As for research part, the assessment for competitive third-party funding by funding organizations, such as DFG, takes a role of quality assurance.

#### Accreditation

The objective of the accreditation is to guarantee (minimal) standards in terms of academic goals and content, the adherence to structural guidelines, and to determine the professional relevance of the degrees and the feasibility of study programs. Individual *Länder* legislation determines to which extent accreditation is a pre-requisite for the state approval of a new study course.

The structure of the German accreditation system consists of two levels: an Accreditation Council and several Accreditation Agencies. The Accreditation Council defines standards, procedures, and criteria for the accreditation, partly by adopting regulations from the KMK. The Council also accredits individual accreditation agencies, which perform the accreditation in higher education institutions. Only agencies accredited by the Accreditation Council are allowed to accredit degree programs. There are currently altogether ten accredited agencies for Germany (situated in Germany, Austria and Switzerland), partly specialized either by geographical regions or by disciplines.

## Evaluation

The aim of the evaluation procedures is to highlight the particular strengths and weaknesses of the evaluated institutions and thus lead to more systematic strategies of quality assurance and quality improvement. Evaluation as a general task of higher education institutions has been introduced by higher education laws in all the *Länder*, mostly before accreditation was introduced as another instrument of external quality assurance. The results of the evaluation are increasingly being taken into account in the *Länder* as a basis for allocating resources to higher education institutions.

In Germany a two-tiered system of evaluation is widely applied which combines internal and external evaluation. The internal evaluation consists of a systematic inventory and analysis of teaching and studying, taking account of research, performed by the individual department or the faculty. External evaluations take the form of peer reviews. There is no national institution to co-ordinate evaluation activities. But various structures have been established for supporting both internal and external evaluation and these now cover the institutions of higher education in all sixteen *Länder*.

*Source:*

KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011*.

Kulwer Academic Publishers (2004) *Accreditation and Evaluation in the European Higher Education Area*.

Barbara M. Kehm (2004) *The German System of Accreditation*.

## **2. Development of the German quality assurance system**

### Mid-nineties

Obligation for internal quality assurance in teaching and learning in most of the 16 higher education acts (also stipulations regarding research and other action field of HEI).

- 1995 The first evaluation agency was founded
- 1997 HRK and KMK decide to stop the system of subject-specific common framework regulations
- 1998 HRK and KMK decisions: Introduction of an accreditation procedure for Bachelor's and Master's degree courses
- 1999 Beginning of the three year pilot period of the Accreditation Council
- 2000 Accreditations of the first agencies and Bachelor's and Master's degree courses
- 2001 Evaluation of the Accreditation Council by an international group of experts
- 2002 KMK resolution: statute concerning the further accreditation procedure in Germany  
The system of accreditation is to be extended to all courses of study.
- 2004 Consecutive study courses at colleges of art and music, Bachelor's study courses at *Berufsakademien* and Bachelor's and Master's study courses conveying the educational prerequisites for a teaching position were included in the accreditation system.
- 2005 KMK passed a comprehensive quality assurance framework concept for teaching.  
Accreditation Council as a Foundation under public law

2007 KMK resolved to enhance the accreditation of study programs through the implementation of a system accreditation scheme by which the internal quality assurance system of an entire higher education institution is assessed for the quality of its learning and teaching. Accreditation Council decided on Criteria for System Accreditation and General Rules for carrying out System Accreditation Procedures.

2008 Implementation of System Accreditation

*Source:*

Accreditation Council *The German Accreditation System. Presentation material, 29th March 2012, Bonn, Germany.*

KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011.*

Andrea Bernhard (2011) *Quality Assurance in an International Higher Education Area - A Case Study Approach and Comparative Analysis.*

### **3. Quality assurance system in German higher education**

#### **3-1) Accreditation**

In the accreditation system, the state is assuming its responsibility for higher education studies through structural requirements for study offers, which guarantee the equivalence of qualifications and the possibility of changing to another higher education institution. Observance of the structural requirements is a pre-requisite for the accreditation of a study course. Land legislation determines to which extent accreditation is a pre-requisite for the state approval of a new study course.

Accreditation is performed by external peer review. Periodically, the study courses are re-accredited. There are program accreditation and system accreditation in Germany and each institution can choose between these two types of accreditation.

The legal basis of the accreditation system is set out in the Law for the establishment of the Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany.

*Source:*

Accreditation Council website <http://www.akkreditierungsrat.de/>

KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011.*

Andrea Bernhard (2011) *Quality Assurance in an International Higher Education Area - A Case Study Approach and Comparative Analysis.*

#### **3-1-1) Program accreditation**

The objects of the Accreditation process are study programs for Bachelor and Master Degrees from state, or state recognized, Higher Education Institutions in Germany. If a study program has successfully undergone an accreditation process, then it is awarded accreditation for a limited period, with or without conditions, and carries the Quality Seal of the Foundation for the duration of this period.

## **Process**

The accreditation process is made up of several stages and is based on an independent the peer review principle.

### **I. Application:**

- A higher education institution contacts one or several accreditation agencies.
- The agency then estimates the costs for the accreditation and proposes a schedule for the accreditation procedure. The institution and agency conclude a contract (the costs are generally a matter of negotiation, but as agencies are established as endowments or non-profit associations, they are obliged to work cost-covering).
- The higher education institution submits a self-report and associated material for the accreditation of a study program to the agency that they have chosen.

### **II. Evaluation Procedure:**

- The Agency appoints an expert group (representatives of higher education in the specific academic field, students and practitioners from the profession).
- The expert panel analyses the self-report and prepares - with the help of agency staff - for the site visit.
- During a one- or two-day on-site visit, panels members have talks with several stakeholder groups from the HEI, including the management of the Higher Education Institution, program heads, teaching staff and students.

### **III. Decision:**

- Supported by the agency, the expert group prepares an evaluation report, which documents the assessment of the study program(s) under consideration of the “Criteria for the Accreditation of Study Programmes”.
- Before the decision, the Higher Education Institution receives the evaluation report without the experts’ recommendation for the decision for comment.
- The Accreditation Agency takes a decision on the basis of the evaluation report, the recommendations of the expert panel and the comment of the Higher Education Institution. It denies or gives the accreditation, the latter with or without conditions and most of the time with additional recommendations. For the most part, the agency/its commission follows the conclusions of the expert panel.
- The accreditation shall be granted with conditions if there are defects, which can most likely be remedied within nine months. The accreditation shall be rejected if there are defects, which most likely cannot be remedied within nine months.
- A one-time suspension of the procedure is possible for 18 months. The HEI then has to hand in a revised self-report to take up the procedure again.
- Following the procedure the Agency publishes the decision, the expert report and the names of the experts. In case of negative decisions instead of a publication according information is sent to the Accreditation Council.

- The Agency always has to substantiate its accreditation decisions. This includes also accreditation decisions limited by conditions or negative decisions, decisions on the suspension of a procedure and accreditation decisions differing from the experts' assessment.

### **Criteria for the Accreditation of Study Programmes**

- Established qualification objectives of the study program
- Conceptual Integration of the study program in the systemic structures.
  - The study program hereby has to comply with:
    - (1) the requirements of the Framework of Qualification for German Degrees (*Qualifikationsrahmen*)
    - (2) the requirements of the Common Structural Guidelines of the *Länder* (KMK) for the Accreditation of Bachelor and Master's Study Programs
    - (3) *Länder*-specific structural guidelines for the accreditation for Bachelor's and Master's study programs
    - (4) the binding interpretation and summary of (1) to (3) by the Accreditation Council.
- Quality of the study program concept
- Academic feasibility
- Examination system
- Program-related co-operations
- Infrastructure and academic staff
- Transparency and documentation
- Quality assurance and further development
- Special profile of the study program (e-learning, distance learning, part-time, extra-occupational etc.)
- Gender justice and equal opportunities

### **Time Limitation**

- The accreditation has to be limited to a duration of seven years, five years in case of a first accreditation. The period starts with the day of the accreditation decision.
- Should an accreditation be granted with conditions, then the accreditation period can be limited to a shorter period.
- A study program which has been awarded accreditation carries the Quality Seal of the Foundation for the duration of this period.

#### *Source:*

Resolution of the Accreditation Council (2013) *Rules for the Accreditation of Study Programmes and for System Accreditation*.

Accreditation Council *The German Accreditation System. Presentation material, 29th March 2012, Bonn, Germany*.

Accreditation Council website <http://www.akkreditierungsrat.de/>

Barbara M. Kehm (2004) *The German System of Accreditation*.

### 3-1-2) System accreditation

System Accreditation was introduced in 2008 as an alternative to mandatory program accreditation. The System Accreditation is not intended to assess a HEI in all its aspects, but assesses the reliability of internal quality assurance processes of a HEI regarding the study programs offered. Key objectives of System Accreditation are to support the further development of the internal quality assurance of a Higher Education Institution (HEI), while reducing cost and effort for the accreditation of individual study programs.

An awarded System Accreditation leads to the accreditation of all Bachelor's-/Master's degree programs on offer or introduced by the HEI / the faculty during the accreditation period. No further individual accreditation of the each study program is required.

Before being allowed into a System Accreditation process, HEIs have to show that they meet the following requirements:

- The Higher Education Institution demonstrates plausibly that it is using a quality assurance system covering the whole Higher Education Institution, and can prove that at least one study program has already been the subject matter of the system.
- No negative decision has been filed against the Higher Education Institution in a system accreditation procedure during the last two years.

#### **Process for System Accreditation**

##### **I. Application:**

- The Accreditation Agency conducts a preparatory conversation with the applying Higher Education Institution and informs it about essential contents, steps and criteria of the procedure.
- The Higher Education Institution submits an application, including brief descriptions of the institution and its internal management and quality assurance systems in the field of teaching and learning.
- The Agency conducts a preliminary assessment whether the prerequisites for Higher Education Institutions for the admittance to system accreditation are met.
- The Higher Education Institution submits a documentation to the Agency which particularly specifies internal management and decision making structures, the Higher Education Institution's overall mission and profile, its offer of study programs, defined quality objectives and the system of internal quality assurance in the field of teaching and learning.

##### **II. Assessment Procedure:**

- For the assessment procedure, the Accreditation Agency appoints an expert group, consisting of at least the following persons:
  - three members having experience in the fields of managing Higher Education Institutions,
  - and of internal quality assurance of Higher Education Institutions,
  - a student member having experience in the fields of self-administration of Higher Education Institutions and of accreditation,
  - one practitioner from the profession.

- 1<sup>st</sup> on-site visit (collecting information, checking completeness of documents)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> on-site visit (critical analysis, conversations with the presidency of the Higher Education Institution, the administrative staff, the equal opportunity commissioners, the persons in charge of quality assurance as well as professor and student representatives)
- Assessment of relevant features of the design of study programs, the conduct of study programs and quality assurance on a sample basis (samples)\*. The accreditation agency defines the number of programs and criteria which are checked in the sample.

\*Assessment on a sample basis

In the samples it is by means of relevant features of the design of study programs, the conduct of study programs and quality assurance examined, whether the effects strived for by the quality assurance system are actually given at the level of the study programs, which hence comply with the criteria for the accreditation of study programs, and with the guidelines specified by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) as well as state-specific guidelines.

### **III. Decision:**

- The expert group for system accreditation prepares a final report.
- The Accreditation Agency forwards the experts' report to the Higher Education Institution without their decision recommendation for comment.
- The Accreditation Agency's decision is based on the experts' report and the decision recommendation, taking into account the Higher Education Institution's comment. The Agency either grants accreditation with or without conditions or denies accreditation. The accreditation shall be granted with conditions if there are defects, which can most likely be remedied within nine months. The accreditation shall be rejected if there are defects, which most likely cannot be remedied within nine months.
- A one-time suspension of the procedure by the Agency for normally 12 months, but no longer than 24 months is possible.
- The Accreditation Agency publishes the decision, the experts' report and the names of the experts involved.

### **IV. Follow up:**

After expiry of half of the accreditation term, the Higher Education Institution submits a self-evaluation report to the Agency (midterm evaluation). This self-evaluation report basically covers an overview of the quality assurance procedures conducted during the accreditation period so far. The Agency prepares a report on the results of the midterm evaluation, which, where appropriate, contains recommendations regarding the remedy of deficiencies, makes it available to the Higher Education Institution and publishes it.

## **Criteria**

- Qualification Objectives
- Internal Management System in Teaching and Learning
- Internal Quality Assurance
- Reporting System and Data Collection
- Responsibilities
- Documentation
- Cooperation

## **Time Limitation**

- System accreditation shall be limited to a period of eight years, six years in case of a first accreditation. The period starts with the day of coming into effect of the accreditation decision.
- As a system, when an approval is refused by an accreditation agency, institution cannot re-apply to other accreditation agency. It is necessary to receive accreditation from the same agency.

*Source:*

Resolution of the Accreditation Council (2013) *Rules for the Accreditation of Study Programmes and for System Accreditation*.

KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011*.

Accreditation Council *The German Accreditation System. Presentation material, 29th March 2012, Bonn, Germany*.

Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) *The Quality Seal for Higher Education Institutions. Presentation material, 30th March 2012, Bonn, German*.

### **3-1-3) Accreditation of private higher education institutions**

State approval of private higher education institutions is based on a review (institutional accreditation) carried out by the Council of Science and Humanities (WR). Institutional accreditation refers to institutional aspects (resources, management sustainability) and research not to teaching and learning.

In addition to this, private higher education institutions are subject to compulsory accreditation according to regulations of the Accreditation Council, either in the form of program or of system accreditation.

*Source:*

Accreditation Council *The German Accreditation System. Presentation material, 29th March 2012, Bonn, Germany*.

### **3-2) Evaluation**

Based on recommendations of the HRK and Council of Science and Humanities (WR), evaluation procedures for teaching were introduced in the mid-1990s. The aim of the evaluation procedures

is to highlight the particular strengths and weaknesses of the evaluated institutions and thus lead to more systematic strategies of quality assurance and quality improvement. Evaluation as a general task of higher education institutions has meanwhile been introduced by higher education laws in all the *Länder*, but has become less prominent due to the rise of obligatory accreditation.

In Germany a two-tiered system of evaluation is widely applied which combines internal and external evaluation. The main elements of the evaluation procedures (a cycle of five to eight years) are internal self-evaluation, external peer review and follow up.

The findings can then be used to identify possible measures for improving courses and teaching. Furthermore, it is also necessary for higher education institutions to account to the public for their achievements in teaching and research. The results of the evaluation are increasingly being taken into account in the *Länder* as a basis for allocating resources to higher education institutions.

### 3-2-1) Internal quality assurance

The internal evaluation consists of a systematic inventory and analysis of teaching and studying, taking account of research, performed by the individual department or the faculty and concludes with a written report. On this foundation, an assessment by external experts takes place who also lay down their findings and recommendations in a written final report.

Content and focus on self-evaluation are primarily in the following fields:

- structure and organization of the respective department,
- teaching and learning objectives,
- programs of study,
- academic staff and resources,
- students and course of study,
- teaching and learning,
- opinion of staff and students on teaching and learning, and
- situation in the job market and graduate employment.

Student criticism of classes, in some cases involving graduates, has now also become a widespread method of evaluating teaching in the sector of higher education. The aim is for higher education teaching staff to listen to criticism so that they can assess themselves better and rectify shortcomings.

### 3-2-2) External quality assurance framework

External evaluation is performed by regional evaluation agencies at Land level or by networks or associations of higher education institutions covering all *Länder*. But there is no national institution to co-ordinate evaluation activities.

External evaluations generally take the form of peer reviews, i.e. they are performed by competent experts from other institutions of higher education, research establishments or from the business

community.

The regional agencies are responsible for the preparation and administration of the entire evaluation procedure, including keeping of the time schedules and checking completeness of data provided by the departments under review, organization of site visits, publication of final reports, etc. At first, the higher education institution must carry out a self-evaluation and write a corresponding self-report. The agency then distributes this report to the peer group members. The site visit by the peers that follows includes interviews with different status groups in the institution. The report written by the peers includes a critical review of the internal evaluation, a definition of problems and an outline of possible solutions.

Agencies and networks are for example:

- Association of Northern German Universities
- Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (*Zentrale Evaluations- und Akkreditierungsagentur Hannover :ZEVA*)
- Evaluation Office of the Universities Applied Sciences in North Rhine - Westphalia
- Evaluation Office of the Universities in North Rhine - Westphalia
- Evaluation Network of the Universities of Darmstadt, Kaiserslautern and Karlsruhe, with the ETH Zurich acting as an external moderator
- Evaluation Network of the Universities of Halle, Jena, Leipzig
- Evaluation agency Baden-Württemberg (*Evaluationsagentur Baden-Württemberg :evalag*)

*Source:*

KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011.*

Kulwer Academic Publishers (2004) *Accreditation and Evaluation in the European Higher Education Area.*

### 3-3) Internationalization and Quality assurance

#### 3-3-1) HRK-Audit “Internationalization of Universities”

In its internationalization strategy, the HRK has stated its conviction that only an internationalized university can actively shape the globalization process and guarantee its own competitiveness. On the basis of this conviction, the HRK launched the HRK-Audit “Internationalization of Universities” in 2009 to help German universities — according to their own self-defined needs — to approach the internationalization process strategically and anchor it firmly within the institution. The Audit offers advisory services that are independent, comprehensive, and tailored to the profile of each respective university. The HRK-Audit “Internationalization of Universities” is funded by the BMBF and is available at no cost to HRK member institutions. Since its beginning, the HRK-Audit “Internationalization of Universities” has aroused great interest among German universities. Over 120 universities applied to participate in the project.

Including the six completed during the pilot phase (2009-2010), a total of 42 Audits will have taken place by the end of 2013.

The Audit offers universities the following benefits:

- assessment of the university's current degree of internationalism,
- identification or definition of the university's internationalization goals,
- (further) development of an institutional internationalization strategy, and
- recommendations for concrete measures in defined areas of internationalization.

### **Audit process**

Each university participating in the Audit enters into a process of approximately 12 months. The key milestones of this process are the university's self-evaluation and, based on this report, the visit to the university by a group of consultants.

**The Audit "Internationalization of Universities" comprises the following stages:**

#### **Start: Receipt of HRK-Audit documents**

At the beginning of the Audit, the university receives general guidelines for the process and a template for the self-evaluation report. The university's first task is to appoint an internal project group responsible for carrying out the Audit.

#### **Month 2: Preparatory meeting**

During the second month, two HRK members attend a one-day meeting at the university in order to discuss the process with the project group members and to clarify any questions.

#### **Up to Month 4: Production of self-evaluation report**

The report includes information about the university's unique institutional characteristics and the status quo of various aspects of their internationalization process. Furthermore, it seeks to define the institution's motives and goals for internationalization, identify the university's strengths and weaknesses in terms of internationalization, and assess the university's potential for internationalization.

#### **Month 5: Preparation for the Audit visit**

In preparation for the Audit visit, the university sends their completed self-evaluation to the HRK, from where it is forwarded to the consultants. The consultants analyze the report and identify the individuals they would like to speak with during the visit. The university and HRK organize appointments for the individual and group discussions to be held during the visit.

#### **Month 6: Audit visit**

Alongside the self-evaluation report, the three-day Audit visit is one of the most important steps in the process. The university's internal project group and the Audit team (consisting of three external consultants and two HRK members) meet and, based on the self-evaluation, develop recommendations for the university's further internationalization.

#### **Months 9: Receipt of final report and recommendations**

Following the visit to the university, recommendations from the consultants are compiled in a detailed report. This report takes into consideration the data submitted in the self-evaluation

report, and presents recommendations in a structured way that they can be easily used to optimize the university's internationalization processes. The finished report is sent to the university.

#### **Up to Month 12: Development of implementation strategy**

Upon receipt of the final report, the university's internal project group discusses an implementation strategy for the various recommendations. In order to support the development of a strategy that works with the specific goals of the respective university the Audit team also offers a workshop for the institution. Following the Audit workshop, the project group sends the HRK an implementation plan that has been approved by the university management.

#### **The "Re-Audit"**

The HRK plans to further develop the concept of the Audit by offering a "Re-Audit" to universities that have already undergone through the Audit process. This Re-Audit is intended to supplement the initial process and help ensure the sustainability of results. Two to three years after the original Audit, universities will be able to get an outside perspective on the effectiveness of the internationalization structures and initiatives that were put into place as an outcome of the Audit.

*Source:*

HRK Website <http://www.hrk.de/hrk-international/audit-internationalisation/>

### **3-3-2) Recognition of qualifications**

Germany ratified the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Convention) on 1 October 2007. Pursuant to this Convention holders of foreign higher education qualifications can apply to the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB)<sup>23</sup>, based in the Secretariat of the KMK, for an assessment of their degree.

The ZAB is the information and expert body for the rating and ranking of foreign school and university certificates in the Federal Republic of Germany. On an international level the ZAB cooperates closely with the national centers of equivalence in the countries of the European Union (NARICs), the European Council and UNESCO (ENIC) and is the national information point designated by the Federation for questions of recognition.

Through the *Anabin* database the ZAB provides information on the education systems of around 180 countries. The data ranks almost 25,000 foreign education certificates and is open to the public.

ZAB website: <http://www.kmk.org/zab.html> (German only)

*Source:*

KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011*

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<sup>23</sup> Central Office for Foreign Education: *Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen (ZAB)*

## 4. Specific legislative framework for quality assurance

- Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz :HRG*), Article 9 Clause 2
- individual State Higher Education Acts
- Rules for the Accreditation of Study Programmes and for System Accreditation (Resolution of the Accreditation Council (2009), as amended in 2013)
- Common structural guidelines of the *Länder* for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses (Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (2003), as amended in 2010)
- Rules of the Accreditation Council for the Accreditation of Agencies (Resolution of the Accreditation Council, 2009, as amended in 2010)

## 5. Other issues about quality assurance

### 5-1) Ranking

In Germany, university rankings came to be taken up in the paper since the early 1990s. In these circumstances, in 1998, the CHE\* published its first ranking. In addition to facts about study programs, teaching, equipment, and research, the ranking also includes the assessments of 250,000 students on the study conditions at their HEI as well as an evaluation of the reputation of the departments by professors of the individual subjects.

Since 2005 it has been published by the German weekly newspaper DIE ZEIT. The CHE's is responsible for conception, data collection and analysis. The co-operation partner DIE ZEIT is in charge of publication, sales and marketing.

#### \* Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung: CHE (Center for Higher Education)

The CHE was founded by the Bertelsmann Foundation and the HRK as a non-profit limited company in 1994.

The CHE Ranking brand covers the various rankings initiatives of the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHE). Each initiative has a different focus:

#### § **The CHE University Ranking**

It is a comprehensive and detailed ranking of higher education institutions (HEIs) in German-speaking countries. It was designed primarily to address the needs of first-year students.

#### § **The CHE Research Ranking**

It analyses HEIs in Germany on the basis of their research performance.

#### § **The CHE Excellence Ranking**

It identifies outstanding academic departments across Europe and presents detailed information about program offerings and academic qualities to assist prospective graduate students in their

search for the most suitable institution to pursue a Master's or doctorate degree.

§ **The CHE/dapm Employability Rating**

It assesses bachelor programs in Germany on the basis of how well they promote qualifications and competencies that contribute to the professional capability of their graduates. To evaluate programs, four competency areas were assessed: methodological skills, soft skills, practical experience, and internationality.

*Source:*

CHE website <http://www.che-ranking.de/cms/?getObject=613&getLang=en>

## IV. An introduction to a quality assurance organization

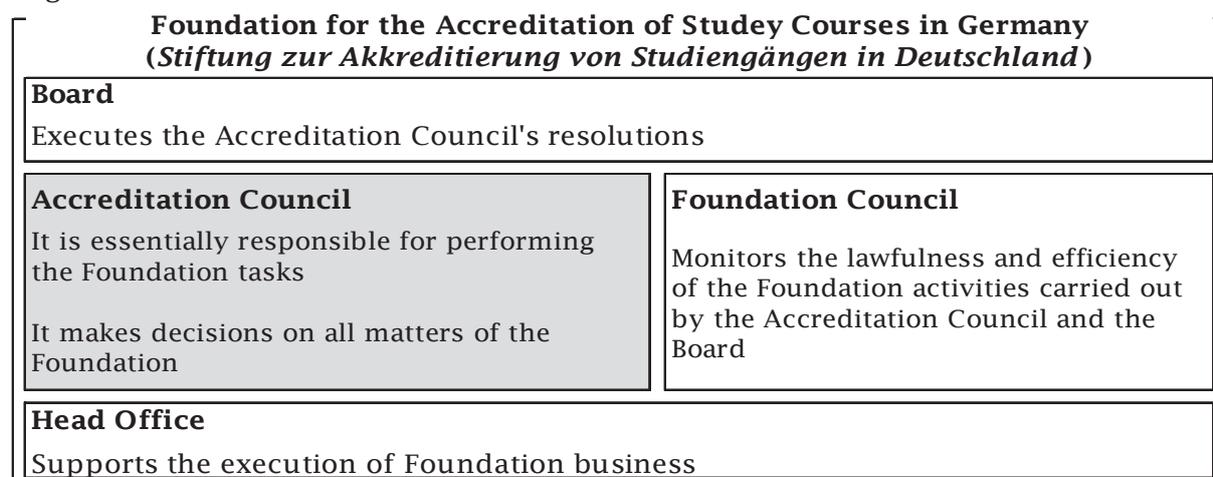
### 1. Accreditation Council

#### 1-1) Overview of the organization

Name of the organization	Accreditation Council ( <i>Akkreditierungsrat</i> ) Official name "Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany ( <i>Stiftung zur Akkreditierung von Studiengängen in Deutschland</i> )"
Character of the organization	Foundation under public law
Year of establishment	The Accreditation Council was first established as pilot organization in 1999. In 2005, Accreditation Council was established as Foundation under public law.
Location	Adenauerallee 73, 53113 Bonn, Germany
Representative	Dr. Olaf Bartz (Managing Director)
Finance	An annual budget of 480,000 euros The Foundation will receive an annual subsidy from the <i>Länder</i> .
Organization	[Accreditation Council] Representatives from Higher Education Institutions (4) Representatives from the <i>Länder</i> (4) Representatives from among professional practitioners (5) Representatives from student bodies (2) Foreign representatives with accreditation experience (2) Representative from the Agencies in a consultative capacity (1)

(As of December 2012)

#### Organization chart



Source:

Accreditation Council *The German Accreditation System. Presentation material, 29th March 2012, Bonn, Germany.*

*Law establishing a foundation "Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Courses in Germany".*

## 1-2) Mission and role

### Mission

The Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany has the statutory mission to organize the quality assurance system for study programs and teaching by accrediting study programs.

The Foundation sees itself as an organization that - by carrying out these tasks - makes a key contribution to ensuring and developing the quality of study programs and teaching at German Higher Education Institutions, and that documents this quality, thereby ensuring and improving the reputation of German study programs in Germany and abroad.

### Role

The Foundation performs its mission, by:

- certifying accreditation agencies and establishing procedural rules and criteria for accreditation,
- informing all those interested at Higher Education Institutions and within the society about the objectives and results of accreditation procedures,
- refining the accreditation system such that Higher Education Institutions can better assume their responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning,
- representing the German accreditation system in the international context and participating in the development of the European Higher Education Area,
- trustingly cooperating with accreditation agencies and other - also foreign - partners from Higher Education Institutions and the student community, government and the profession.

## 1-3) The legal framework

The Accreditation Council was first established for a test period of three years and, following assessment by an international group of experts, was given permanence through the 'organization statute' adopted by the KMK in 2002.

On the basis of the "Key points for the further development of accreditation in Germany" agreed at the KMK on 15 October 2004, *Länder* conclude the agreement on the "Foundation: Accreditation of Study Courses in Germany" on 16 December 2004.

The tasks of the Accreditation Council were transferred to a foundation under public law, the foundation having legal capacity and to be established in accordance with the law of the Land of North-Rhine/Westphalia. On entry into force of the law of establishing a "Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Courses in Germany" on 26 February 2005, the statute for an accreditation procedure across the *Länder* and across higher education institutions (resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of 24 May 2002 in the version of 15 October 2004) was rescinded.

### *Source:*

Kulwer Academic Publishers (2004) *Accreditation and Evaluation in the European higher education area*.

Resolution of the KMK (2004) *Agreement on the Foundation "Foundation: Accreditation of Study Courses in Germany"*.

## 1-4) Main area of activity

- Accreditation and re-accreditation of accreditation agencies by time-limited granting of the entitlement to accredit study courses.
- Compilation of common and specific structural guidelines of the *Länder* into binding guidelines for the Agencies.
- Regulation of minimum requirements for accreditation procedures including the prerequisites and limits of bundled accreditations.
- Monitoring of accreditations undertaken by the Agencies.

The Foundation Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany also intends to ensure fair competition among the accreditation agencies. Furthermore, taking account of the development in Europe, the Foundation determines the pre-requisites for the recognition of accreditations by foreign institutions. It promotes international cooperation in the field of accreditation and quality assurance and report regularly to the *Länder* about developments regarding the conversion of the system of study into a consecutive study structure and on quality development in the context of accreditation. The Accreditation council makes decisions on all matters of the Foundation. The Foundation also acts a central documentation service for the accreditation system and administrates the data base of the study courses accredited in Germany.

The Accreditation Council has established a public database of accreditation results. Each accreditation agency is obliged to report accreditation results to the Accreditation Council. If a higher education institution is denied systemic accreditation by an accreditation agency, that institution cannot apply to another agency within two years. If a program accreditation has been denied, the HEI cannot apply with the same program at another agency. Negative results should be reported to the Accreditation Council, though they are not made public .

*Source:*

KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011.*

*Law establishing a foundation "Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Courses in Germany".*

### 1-4-1) Accreditation of Agencies

The accreditation of Agencies is carried out in accordance with the Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies drawn up by the Accreditation Council.

#### **Process**

##### **I. Application:**

The agency submits an application and a rationale. The rationale contains a self-description of the agency and documents the compliance with the criteria for the accreditation of accreditation agencies.

##### **II. Evaluation Procedure:**

- The Accreditation Council appoints an expert group, which ensures the assessment of all areas relevant for the inspection procedure. The expert group as a rule consists of five members: a member of the Accreditation Council as well as representatives of the relevant interest groups. These include particularly the sciences, the students and practitioners from the profession. Two members should be from abroad.
  - the analysis of the application rationale
  - an on-site visit at the agency
- It includes the participation in a meeting of the decision-making committee that is responsible the final decision on accreditation applications, as well as separate discussions with the management of the agency, the employees, experts.
- On application of the agency and based on a separate agreement, the Accreditation Council also assesses whether the agency meets the membership criteria of the ENQA and applies the “Guidelines for national reviews of ENQA member agencies” for this.

### **III. Decision:**

On the basis of the assessment report drawn up by the evaluation group, the Accreditation Council decides either to grant an accreditation of the relevant Agency, to grant an accreditation with conditions, to abandon the process or to reject the accreditation.

Accreditation should be granted conditionally, if there are defects, which can most likely be rectified within six months.

Accreditation should be denied, if there are defects, which most likely cannot be rectified within six months. If it can be expected that the applying agency can rectify the shortcomings, then the accreditation procedure can be suspended, after hearing the agency, for a period to be set by the Accreditation Council, but for not more than twelve months.

### **Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies**

- Self-Image and Understanding of the Accreditation Task
- Structures and Procedures
- Independence
- Facilities
- Internal Quality Management
- Internal Complaints Procedure
- Reporting

### **Time Limitation**

The accreditation has to be limited to five years. If an accreditation is granted conditionally, the accreditation period can be reduced.

*Source:*

Resolution of the Accreditation Council (2010) *Rules of the Accreditation Council for the Accreditation of Agencies*.  
 KMK *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2010/2011*.

## 1-4-2) Accreditation Agencies

### Discipline-oriented Accreditation Agencies

AHPGS	Official name	Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Health and Social Sciences <i>(Akkreditierungsagentur im Bereich Gesundheit und Soziales)</i>
	Ownership	Independent and non-profit accreditation agency
	Founding year	2001
	Location	Freiburg, Germany
	Web site	<a href="http://ahpgs.de/">http://ahpgs.de/</a> (Only German)
AKAST	Official name	Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Programmes of Studies in Germany <i>(Agentur für Qualitätssicherung und Akkreditierung kanonischer Studiengänge in Deutschland e.V.)</i> *accredited only for programme accreditation
	Ownership	Non-profit association
	Founding year	2008
	Location	Eichstätt, Germany
	Web site	<a href="http://www.akast.info/">http://www.akast.info/</a>
ASIIN	Official name	Accreditation Agency for Degree Programmes in Engineering, Informatics/Computer Science, the Natural Sciences and Mathematics <i>(Akkreditierungsagentur für Studiengänge der Ingenieurwissenschaften, der Informatik, der Naturwissenschaften und der Mathematik)</i>
	Ownership	Non-profit association
	Founding year	2002
	Location	Düsseldorf, Germany
	Web site	<a href="http://www.asiin-ev.de/pages/de/asiin-e.-v.php">http://www.asiin-ev.de/pages/de/asiin-e.-v.php</a>
FIBAA	Official name	Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation
	Ownership	Swiss-German non-profit foundation
	Founding year	1994
	Location	Bonn, Germany
	Web site	<a href="http://www.fibaa.org/de/startseite.html">http://www.fibaa.org/de/startseite.html</a>

### Not-specialised Accreditation Agencies

ACQUIN	Official name	Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute ( <i>Das Akkreditierungs-, Zertifizierungs- und Qualitätssicherungs-Institut</i> )
	Ownership	Member-based, non-profit organization
	Founding year	2001
	Location	Bayreuth, Germany
	Web site	<a href="http://www.acquin.org/index.php">http://www.acquin.org/index.php</a>
AQA*	Official name	Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance ( <i>Österreichische Qualitätssicherungsagentur</i> )
	Ownership	Independent institution
	Founding year	2004
	Location	Vienna, Austria
	Web site	<a href="http://www.aqa.ac.at/">http://www.aqa.ac.at/</a>
AQAS	Official name	Agency for Quality Assurance by Accreditation of Study Programmes ( <i>Agentur für Qualitätssicherung durch Akkreditierung von Studiengängen</i> )
	Ownership	Member-based, non-profit organization
	Founding year	2002
	Location	Köln, Germany
	Web site	<a href="http://www.aqas.de/">http://www.aqas.de/</a> (Only German)
evalag	Official name	evaluation agency Baden-Württemberg ( <i>Evaluationsagentur Baden-Württemberg</i> )
	Ownership	Foundation of the state of Baden-Württemberg
	Founding year	2000 (Accreditation section: 2009)
	Location	Mannheim, Germany
	Web site	<a href="http://www.evalag.de/dedievl/projekt01/index.php">http://www.evalag.de/dedievl/projekt01/index.php</a>
OAQ	Official name	Swiss Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education ( <i>Organ für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung der Schweizerischen Hochschulen</i> )
	Ownership	Independent organization
	Founding year	2001
	Location	Bern, Switzerland
	Web site	<a href="http://www.oaq.ch/pub/de/01_00_00_home.php">http://www.oaq.ch/pub/de/01_00_00_home.php</a>
ZEVA	Official name	Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency Hannover ( <i>Zentrale Evaluations- und Akkreditierungsagentur Hannover</i> )
	Ownership	Common foundation of all Lower Saxon HEIs
	Founding year	1995
	Location	Hannover, Germany
	Web site	<a href="http://www.zeva.org/">http://www.zeva.org/</a>

- \* Through the new Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education, enforced on 1 March 2012, the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria) has been established as the single body for external quality assurance. This new agency includes the competences and activities of the three existing organizations, namely the Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance (AQA), the Austrian Accreditation Council (ÖAR) and the FH Council (FHR). AQA will complete ongoing evaluations and therefore keep its functions until mid-2013 and gradually transfer its activities.

*Source:*

Accreditation Council *The German Accreditation System. Presentation material, 29th March 2012, Bonn, Germany.*

ENQA website <http://www.enqa.eu/allagencies.lasso>

## Appendix: Abbreviations

Explained here are abbreviations which appeared in the text, in alphabetical order. In abbreviation, next to the abbreviation comes the full title in German (*Italic*), after which is indicated the full title in English.

### **ACQUIN**

*Akkreditierungs-, Zertifizierungs- und Qualitätssicherungs-Institut*, Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute

### **AHPGS**

*Akkreditierungsagentur im Bereich Gesundheit und Soziales*, Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Health and Social Sciences

### **AKAST**

*Agentur für Qualitätssicherung und Akkreditierung kanonischer Studiengänge in Deutschland*, Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Programmes of Studies in Germany

### **AQA**

*Österreichische Qualitätssicherungsagentur*, Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance

### **AQAS**

*Agentur für Qualitätssicherung durch Akkreditierung von Studiengängen*, Agency for Quality Assurance by Accreditation of Study Programmes

### **AQ Austria**

*Agentur für Qualitätssicherung und Akkreditierung Austria*, Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria

### **ASIIN**

*Akkreditierungsagentur für Studiengänge der Ingenieurwissenschaften, der Informatik, der Naturwissenschaften und der Mathematik*, Accreditation Agency for Degree Programmes in Engineering, Informatics/Computer Science, the Natural Sciences and Mathematics

### **Bafög**

*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz*, Federal Training Assistance Act

### **BMBF**

*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung*, Federal Ministry of Education and Research

### **CHE**

*Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung*, Center for Higher Education

### **DAAD**

*Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst*, German Academic Exchange Service

### **DDR**

*Deutsche Demokratische Republik*, German Democratic Republic

### **DFG**

*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*, German Research Foundation

### **DSH**

*Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang ausländischer Studienbewerber*, German Language Proficiency Examination for Admission to Higher Education for Foreign Applicants

### **DSW**

*Deutsches Studentenwerk*, German National Association for Student Affairs

**EEA**

European Economic Area

**ENIC**

European Network of Information Centres

**ENQA**

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

**evalag**

*evaluation agency Baden-Württemberg*

**FH**

*Fachhochschulen*, University of applied science

**FHR**

*Fachhochschulrat*, FH Council

**FIBAA**

Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation

**fzs**

*freier Zusammenschluss von studentInnenschaften*

**GWK**

*Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz*, Joint Science Conference

**HRG**

*Hochschulrahmengesetz*, Framework Act for Higher Education

**HRK**

*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*, German Rectors' Conference

**KfW**

*Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau*, Student loan programme of the Reconstruction Loan Corporation

**KMK**

*Die Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Kultusministerkonferenz*, Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany

**NARIC**

National Academic Recognition Information Centres

**OAQ**

*Organ für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung der Schweizerischen Hochschulen*, Swiss Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education

**ÖAR**

*Österreichischer Akkreditierungsrat*, Austrian Accreditation Council

**TestDaF**

*Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache für ausländische Studienbewerber*, Test of German as a Foreign Language for foreign applicants

**WR**

*Wissenschaftsrat*, The Council of Science and Humanities

**ZAB**

*Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen*, Central Office for Foreign Education

**Zeva**

*Zentrale Evaluations- und Akkreditierungsagentur Hannover*, Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency Hannover

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- Akkreditierungs-, Zertifizierungs- und Qualitätssicherungs-Institut (ACQUIN): <http://www.acquin.org/index.php>
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- Akkreditierungsagentur für Studiengänge der Ingenieurwissenschaften, der Informatik, der Naturwissenschaften und der Mathematik (ASIIN): <http://www.asiin-ev.de/pages/de/asiin-e.-v.php>
- Alexander von Humboldt Foundation: <http://www.humboldt-foundation.de/web/start.html>
- Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance (AQA): <http://www.aqa.ac.at/>
- Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF): <http://www.bmbf.de/>
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- Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft (FhG): <http://www.fraunhofer.de/>
- freier Zusammenschluss von studentInnenschaften (fzs): <http://www.fzs.de/>
- Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz (GWK): <http://www.gwk-bonn.de/>
- German Education server: <http://www.eduserver.de/>
- German National Tourist Board: <http://www.germany.travel/de/index.html>
- German Research and Innovation Forum Tokyo: <http://www.dwih-tokyo.jp/de/home/>
- Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres: <http://www.helmholtz.de>
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- Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Bonn Office: <http://www.jsps-bonn.de/>
- Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK): <http://www.kmk.org/home.html>
- Leibniz Association: <http://www.wgl.de/>
- Max Planck Society: <http://www.mpg.de/de>
- Organ für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung der Schweizerischen Hochschulen (OAQ): [http://www.oaq.ch/pub/de/01\\_00\\_00\\_home.php](http://www.oaq.ch/pub/de/01_00_00_home.php)
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# **Overview of the Quality Assurance System in Higher Education**

## **Germany**

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