

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

**A description of the responsibilities, structures and  
developments in education policy for the exchange of information in Europe**

**- EXCERPT -**



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## 7. HIGHER EDUCATION

### 7.1. Introduction

The tertiary sector includes, first and foremost, the various different types of institution of higher education and, to a limited extent, establishments outside the higher education system. Thus, in addition to institutions of higher education, some Länder also have *Berufsakademien*, which offer an alternative to higher education in the form of courses qualifying to practise a profession for those who have completed the upper level of secondary education and gained a higher education entrance qualification. According to the International Standard Classification of Education [ISCED], the *Fachschulen*, the *Fachakademien* in Bayern and the two- and three-year schools in the health sector are also part of the tertiary sector.

#### General objectives

General objectives – universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

The purpose of study at institutions of higher education is described in the Framework Act for Higher Education [*Hochschulrahmengesetz* - HRG - R121] as follows:

Teaching and study are to prepare students for a profession in a certain sphere of activity, imparting to them the particular knowledge, skills and methods required in a way appropriate to each course so as to enable them to perform scientific or artistic work and to act responsibly in a free, democratic and social state governed by the rule of law [HRG - Section 7]. These purposes of study are common to all types of higher education institution.

Thus, the mandate bestowed by the legislator, in line with the traditional principle of the unity of teaching and research, is to provide professional training to students in a way that directly involves scientific and academic research and artistic development. Whilst the unity of teaching and research applies to all institutions of higher education, a distinction may be drawn between the functions of universities and other types of institutions of higher education in that university education is traditionally closely linked to basic and theoretical research.

General objectives – colleges of art and music

Colleges of art and music prepare students for artistic professions and teaching of music and art. Teaching and studying are closely related to the other functions of the colleges, i.e. to promote art through the development of artistic forms and means of expression and through the free pursuit of art.

General objectives – *Fachhochschulen*

The characteristic features of the design of the courses of study and the organisation of teaching and studying at *Fachhochschulen* are the particular emphasis on practical application and the closer links with the requirements of the professional world. The semesters spent outside the institutions to gain practical experience, known as *Praxissemester*, are a vital feature. The teaching staff and course contents at *Fachhochschulen* are linked with applied research and development projects, which are characteristic of this type of institution.

General objectives – establishments outside the higher education system –  
*Berufsakademien, Fachschulen*

As part of training at state or state-recognised *Berufsakademien* [professional academies] students receive academic training at *Studienakademien* [study institutions] and, at the same time, practical career training in a training establishment.

The aim of the continuing vocational training provided at *Fachschulen* is to enable skilled workers usually with job experience to take on management functions in firms, enterprises, administrations and institutions, or to independently perform responsible tasks.

### **Specific legislative framework**

The legal basis of higher education in Germany is provided by the Framework Act for Higher Education [*Hochschulrahmengesetz* – R121] of the Federation and the legislation on higher education of the Länder [*Hochschulgesetze* – R126, R128, R131, R133, R135-136, R139, R141, R143, R145-146, R148, R149-152, R154, R157, R162], as well as the legislation regarding colleges of art and music [R146, R150-151] and the legislation regarding *Fachhochschulen* [R152] of the Länder as far as these types of institution are not included in the general Higher Education Acts.

In accordance with its purpose, the Framework Act for Higher Education 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, membership and participation, as well as the staff of institutions of higher education. Based on the general provisions of the Framework Act, 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, which currently comprises more than 400 institutions. The Land legislation can allow exceptions for privately-maintained institutions of higher education.

In the course of the 2006 reform for the modernisation 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 [Art. 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.

The field of joint tasks [Art. 91b of the Basic Law] has also been modified. In cases of supra-regional importance, the Federation and the Länder may cooperate in the promotion of:

- scientific research institutions and projects outside of institutions of higher education
- scientific and research projects at institutions of higher education [agreements require the consent of all Länder]
- research buildings at institutions of higher education, including major equipment.

The functional and organisational design of the new joint task is regulated in an administrative agreement between the Federation and the Länder of September 2007, the central point of which is the establishment of a Joint Science Conference [*Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz* – GWK]. For more detailed information on the cooperation between the Federation and the Länder in the GWK, see chapter 2.7.

Training at *Berufsakademien* is governed by the *Berufsakademie* laws [R126, R138, R140, R144, R153, R156, R161, R164] in force in the individual Länder and by the *Ausbildungsordnungen* [training regulations] and *Prüfungsordnungen* [examination regulations] of the relevant Ministry of Science.

Continuing vocational education at *Fachschulen* is regulated by education legislation [R85, R87, R89, R91, R93, R96, R98, R100, R102–103, R105, R107, R113, R115–117] and by the training regulations and examination regulations of the individual Länder in particular. For training in some occupations in the field of health at schools within the health sector, regulations under federal law apply in accordance with the Vocational Training Act [*Berufsbildungsgesetz* – R80]. The training regulations and examination regulations for most occupations in the health sector, however, fall under the area of responsibility of the relevant ministries in the Länder competent for health or education.

## 7.2. Types of Higher Education Institutions

As per the winter semester 2009/2010, Germany had a total of 409 state-maintained and state-recognised institutions of higher education, which are of the following types:

- Universities and equivalent institutions of higher education  
[*Technische Hochschulen/ Technische Universitäten, Pädagogische Hochschulen*, theological colleges et al]
- Colleges of art and music
- *Fachhochschulen* [incl. *Verwaltungsfachhochschulen*]

For statistical information on institutions of higher education by type and Länder see chapter 2.9.

In addition, Germany's tertiary sector also includes either state-run or state-recognised *Berufsakademien* in some Länder. According to the International Standard Classification of Education [ISCED], the *Fachschulen*, the *Fachakademien* in Bayern and the two- and three-year schools in the health sector are also part of the tertiary sector.

### Universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

In addition to the traditional universities, the *Technische Hochschulen* or *Technische Universitäten*, that specialise in natural and engineering sciences also enjoy university status. Also equivalent to universities are establishments that only offer a limited range of courses of study, such as theological colleges and *Pädagogische Hochschulen*. The latter, which still exist only in Baden-Württemberg, have been incorporated into universities in the other Länder or expanded into institutions offering a wider range of courses.

What these institutions have in common, as a rule, is the traditional right to award the *Doktorgrad* [*Promotionsrecht*]. Academic and scientific research – particularly basic re-

search – 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**

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; both, in some cases, also teach the appertaining theoretical disciplines [fine arts, art history and art pedagogy, musicology, history and teaching of music, media and communication studies as well as, more recently, the area of the new media]. Some colleges teach the entire gamut of artistic subjects, others only certain branches of study.

### **Fachhochschulen**

*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 fulfil their own specific educational function, characterised by a practice-oriented bias in the teaching, a usually integrated semester of practical training, and professors, who have, in addition to their academic qualifications, gained professional experience outside the field of higher education.

A relatively high proportion of them, more than 50 per cent of some 230 *Fachhochschulen* including *Verwaltungsfachhochschulen*, are not state-maintained, but are to a large extent subject to the same legal provisions as state *Fachhochschulen*. They vary considerably in terms of size, number of students and number of courses of studies, and consequently the individual *Fachhochschulen* have a specific regional character or particular area of specialisation. A special role is played by the 29 *Verwaltungsfachhochschulen* [*Fachhochschulen* for public administration], which train civil servants for careers in the so-called higher level of the civil service. They are maintained by the Federation or by a Land. Their students have revocable civil servant status.

### **Establishments outside the higher education system – Berufsakademien, Fachschulen**

*Berufsakademien* [professional academies] form part of the tertiary sector and combine academic training at a *Studienakademie* [study institution] with practical professional training in a training establishment, thus constituting a *duales System* [dual system]. The companies bear the costs of on-the-job training and pay the students a wage, which is also received during the theoretical part of the training at the study institution. *Berufsakademien* were first set up in 1974 in Baden-Württemberg as part of a pilot project and are now to be found in some Länder as either state-run or state-recognised institutions.

As an alternative to the dual courses of the *Berufsakademien*, several *Fachhochschulen* have developed so-called dual courses of study.

*Fachschulen* are institutions of continuing vocational education and upgrading training in the tertiary sector that, as a rule, require the completion of relevant vocational training in a recognised occupation requiring formal training and subsequent employment. *Fachschulen* exist in the following fields:

- agricultural economy

- design
- technology
- business
- social work

Whether on a full or part-time basis, they lead to a professional continuing education qualification in accordance with Land legislation. In addition, *Fachschulen* can offer follow-up and further courses, as well as career development programmes. Those who complete training at the *Fachschulen* act as intermediaries between the functional sphere of graduates and that of skilled workers in a recognised occupation requiring formal training.

Schools in the health sector offer training for occupations in the health sector, e.g. nurse or physiotherapist. Many of these schools have a physical and organisational link with hospitals where both theoretical and practical training is provided.

### **7.3. First Cycle Programmes**

#### **7.3.1. Bachelor**

##### **Branches of Study**

Branches of study, specialisation at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

##### **Range of subjects**

Universities and equivalent institutions of higher education usually offer a range of subjects including languages, the humanities and sport, law, economics and social sciences, natural sciences, medicine, agronomy, forestry and nutritional science and engineering sciences. The figures vary from institution to institution, but these subject categories offer a total of just less than 6,000 different courses which lead to a first degree qualifying for an entry into a profession, which cannot all be listed here. An overview of the courses that lead to a first qualification for entry into a profession is provided in publications such as *Studien- und Berufswahl* [Choice of Studies and Profession, published annually by the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany as represented by the Land Hessen and the Federal Employment Agency]. The publication is available on the Internet at [www.studienwahl.de/en/index.htm](http://www.studienwahl.de/en/index.htm). An overview of the range of courses on offer provided by the German Rectors' Conference [*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* - HRK] is available on the Internet at [www.higher-education-compass.de](http://www.higher-education-compass.de).

The most common branches of study in the named subject categories are:

##### **Languages and the humanities, sport**

Philosophy  
 Theology  
 Archaeology and study of antiquity  
 History  
 Art studies/art history  
 Musicology/music history  
 Theatre studies/dramatic art

European and non-European languages and literature  
Education  
Psychology  
Library science/documentation science/media studies  
Sport

**Law, economics and social sciences**

Law  
Social sciences  
Administrative sciences  
Economics  
Political science

**Mathematics, natural sciences**

Mathematics  
Physics  
Computer science  
Chemistry  
Biochemistry  
Biology  
Earth science  
Pharmacy

**Medicine**

Human medicine  
Dentistry  
Veterinary medicine

**Agronomy, forestry, nutritional science**

Agronomy  
Forestry  
Nutritional science

**Engineering sciences**

Architecture  
Civil engineering  
Geodesy  
Electrical engineering  
Mechanical engineering  
Chemical engineering  
Traffic and transport studies  
Environmental technology  
Mining

International study courses, which have a special foreign focus, are also on offer within the named branches of study. The main subject focus in these courses of study at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education lies in the area of language and the humanities, followed by law, economics, social sciences and engineering sciences. More detailed information on international study courses is available in chapter 13.5.

**Standard period of study for courses leading to a first degree and consecutive courses of study**

A *Regelstudienzeit* [standard period of study] is fixed in the *Prüfungsordnungen* [examination regulations] for each course of study. The regulations state the time in which a course of study with the intended examination can be completed. The total standard

period of study for consecutive study courses leading to a Bachelor's or Master's degree is a maximum of five years. The standard period of study for Bachelor's study courses can be a six, seven or eight semesters. At universities and equivalent institutions of higher education, the standard period of study for Bachelor's study courses is generally six semesters. Initial experiences with the new study structures show that the average standard period of study in Bachelor's study courses is generally only exceeded by half a semester, so that in future it can be expected that the actual periods of study will in fact decrease.

#### Branches of study, specialisation at colleges of art and music

The courses of studies vary widely from college to college. In general, they may be divided up along the following lines:

- music with such studies as training for solo or orchestra musicians in various instruments, training in singing, conducting, composition or church music, music teaching at general education schools, music education and technical musical professions [e.g. sound engineering];
- visual arts with such studies as art, design, photography;
- performing arts with such studies as drama, opera, musicals, dancing, directing and film-making;
- applied art with courses of studies in architecture, design or the media;
- art education and art therapy as well as courses in art teaching for school teachers;
- the media with such courses as film, television, media studies, media art, animation and media management.

In core arts subjects at colleges of art and music consecutive Bachelor's and Master's study courses may also be developed with a total standard study period of six years.

#### Branches of study, specialisation at *Fachhochschulen*

Above all, study courses in the following areas of study are taught in the *Fachhochschulen*:

- Agronomy, forestry, nutritional science
- Engineering sciences
- Economics/economic law
- Social work
- Public administration, administration of justice
- Information technology, computer science, mathematics
- Natural sciences
- Design
- Information and communication studies
- Nursing and management in the public health system

There are also international study courses [cf. also chapter 13.5.] within the named areas of study. Most of these courses of study at *Fachhochschulen* are based in the area of law, economics and social sciences, followed by engineering sciences.

## **Standard period of study for courses leading to a first degree and consecutive courses of study**

A *Regelstudienzeit* [standard period of study] is fixed in the *Prüfungsordnung* [examination regulations] for each course of study. The regulations state the time within which a course of study with the intended examination can be completed. For the total standard period of study in consecutive Bachelor's and Master's courses of study at *Fachhochschulen*, the description of the standard period of study at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education applies. At *Fachhochschulen* the standard period of study for Bachelor's study courses is generally six or seven semesters including semesters of practical training. Initial experiences with the new study structures show that the average standard period of study in Bachelor's study courses is generally only exceeded by half a semester.

## **Branches of study and specialisation at establishments outside the higher education system – *Berufsakademien, Fachschulen***

Courses offered at the *Berufsakademien* include, in particular, business, technology and social work. The length of study at the BERUFSAKADEMIEN is generally stipulated by the respective Land law as three years. As far as state-run *Berufsakademien* are concerned, it is the relevant Land ministry that determines the number of hours of attendance during the semester, adopting study and examination regulations for each course. Courses at *Berufsakademien* leading to the Bachelor's degree are to be accredited. The length of study is a minimum of three years.

*Fachschulen* offering two-year courses are available in about 160 different specialisations in the fields of agricultural economy, design, technology, business and social work and lead up to a state-administered examination. The most strongly represented subjects include electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, construction engineering, chemical engineering and business management. There are also other two-year *Fachschulen* for domestic science, *Fachschulen* for care, assistance and education for the handicapped [*Heilerziehungspflege*], as well as one-year *Fachschulen* [e.g. state-certified managers for the subject area agriculture]. State-certified youth and child care workers, *Erzieher*, are trained over a two to three-year period at *Fachschulen* for youth and community work to enter the socio-educational field of child and youth welfare services, i.e. *Kindergarten, Horte* and youth welfare organisations.

## **Admission requirements**

Admission requirements to universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

### **Higher education entrance qualification**

Admission to any course of study at universities and equivalent higher education institutions requires the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* or the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife*. The former entitles school-leavers to study at any institution of higher education in any subject or field, while the latter permits entry only into specified courses of studies.

The *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* or *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* is obtained after 12 or 13 ascending school years on completion of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* [see chapter 6.7.] or certain courses of vocational education at upper secondary level [see chapter 6.10.].

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. Other options are the *Abitur* examination for non-pupils, persons who are recognised as having a right to asylum or employed persons of particular intellectual ability.

In addition to the *Hochschulreife*, in certain subjects the applicant's aptitude is determined through a subject-specific test procedure. This applies particularly to sport and the arts.

In March 2009, the Länder resolved standard preconditions under which vocationally qualified applicants without a higher education entrance qualification obtained at school are granted the right of entry to higher education [*Hochschulzugang für beruflich qualifizierte Bewerber ohne schulische Hochschulzugangsberechtigung*]. The resolution opens admission to general higher education to master craftsmen, technicians, people with vocational qualifications in a commercial or financial occupation and people with similar qualifications, and defines the conditions under which vocationally qualified applicants without career advancement training are eligible to enter higher education restricted to a specified field of study following the successful completion of vocational training and three years of experience in their occupation.

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. Applicants from some countries of origin must, moreover, provide proof that they have successfully completed some course modules at a higher education institution in the country of origin or, following attendance at a one-year core course, must take an assessment test at a *Studienkolleg*. Also, 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 [*Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang ausländischer Studienbewerber* - DSH], 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 - *Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache für ausländische Studienbewerber* - TestDaF] or by taking the German language examination as part of the *Feststellungsprüfung* [assessment test] at a *Studienkolleg*.

Foreign applicants for study places from countries where there is an *Akademische Prüf-stelle* [APS] will only be admitted to a German institution of higher education if they can submit a certificate of the *Akademische Prüf-stelle*. The certificate of the *Akademische Prüf-stelle* certifies

- the authenticity and plausibility of the documents submitted
- fulfilment of the criteria for the commencement of a first study course as set forth in the assessment proposals of the Standing Conference,
- the required German language proficiency, where appropriate.

## Admission to higher education institutions

In study courses without restrictions on the number of applicants who can be admitted, all applicants who meet the above-mentioned entrance requirements are registered at the higher education institution for the course of study of their choice without having to go through any special admission procedures.

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 [*Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung*] 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 [*Staatsvertrag der Länder über die Einrichtung einer gemeinsamen Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung - R125*] of June 2008. The State Treaty entered into force on 1 May 2010 following ratification by all Länder.

Which courses are subject to the central allocation procedure may vary from semester to semester. Moreover, it is quite possible that all the applicants for a restricted course will be accepted because there are fewer applicants than places available.

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 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.

There are local restrictions on admission to over 50 per cent of all study courses. Each higher education institution decides whether to admit applicants in accordance with Land law. Around 10 per cent of the available study places are awarded in advance. 10 to 15 per cent of the remaining study places are awarded after the waiting period and the rest in accordance with internal selection procedure criteria. The selection criteria comprise e.g. the average mark in the *Abitur*, the waiting period, the result of a subject-specific aptitude test or a selection interview and the vocational training or occupation of the applicant. The higher education institutions can commission the Foundation for Higher Education Admission to operate a service for the relevant courses of study.

With the entry into force of the State Treaty on 1 May 2010 the Central Office for the Allocation of Study Places [*Zentralstelle für die Vergabe von Studienplätzen - ZVS*] became the Foundation for Higher Education Admission [*Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung*]. The Foundation for Higher Education Admission is a service facility for admission to higher education institutions that can be used by the institutions of higher education and applicants alike. It supports applicants in their choice of study place and higher education institutions with the admissions procedure. The Foundation is to develop an online application portal to provide information and advice to applicants, prepare applicant data, compare multiple admissions and allocate remaining free study places, in order to simplify and speed up the applications and admissions procedure. The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs [*Kultusministerkonferenz - KMK*] and the German Rectors' Conference [*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz - HRK*] are eager to work to ensure that all higher education institutions participate in the so-called dialogue-oriented service procedure, in which study places are allocated in study courses with local admissions restrictions..

From the 2009/2010 winter semester study places in study courses with local admission restrictions are being allocated in a transitional procedure which contains key elements of the final system. The Standing Conference has recommended that higher education institutions make use of this transitional procedure.

#### Admission requirements to colleges of art and music

Colleges of art and music require proof of the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* or the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* [higher education entrance qualification] and artistic aptitude. In most Länder, purely artistic courses, i.e. not for prospective teachers, also admit applicants without proof of higher education entrance qualification if they show unusual artistic talent.

#### Admission requirements to *Fachhochschulen*

##### Higher education entrance qualification

The prerequisite for admission to a *Fachhochschule* is either the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* [general higher education entrance qualification] or *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* [higher education entrance qualification restricted to a specified field of study] on the one hand or the *Fachhochschulreife* on the other, which as a rule is acquired after twelve ascending grades at a *Fachoberschule* [see chapter 6.10.]. However, the *Fachhochschulreife* can also be obtained by taking additional classes at vocational schools, e.g. *Berufsfachschulen* and *Fachschulen*. In addition, previous related practical experience is required for admission to certain courses of study. In 2004, more than half of those entering *Fachhochschulen* have a higher education entrance qualification which also entitles them to study at university.

In certain subjects [e.g. design] proof of artistic ability is required in addition to a higher education entrance qualification.

##### Admission to higher education institutions

Almost all *Fachhochschulen* restrict the number of students admitted to various subjects due to capacity constraints. As a rule, the *Fachhochschulen* decide on the allocation of study places on the basis of the average mark and waiting time, the result of an aptitude

test or interview, the vocational training or occupation of the applicant. For some study courses, the Foundation for Higher Education Admission [*Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung*] runs a service on behalf of the *Fachhochschulen*.

Admission requirements to establishments outside the higher education system – *Berufsakademien, Fachschulen*

Applicants for courses at the *Berufsakademien* require a *Hochschulreife* or a *Fachhochschulreife* [general or subject-restricted higher education entrance qualification], depending on the regulations in force in the particular Land, and a training contract with a suitable training establishment. Depending on the Land legislation, applicants with professional qualifications but without the higher education entrance qualification can take an entrance examination or the regulations governing admission to higher education institutions for employed persons will apply. Once the training contract has been concluded, applicants are registered at the study institution by the company responsible for training them.

Admission requirements for the *Fachschule* vary, depending on the department. Admission to a *Fachschule* for agricultural economy, design, technology and business generally requires

- either a qualification in a recognised occupation requiring formal training that is relevant to the objective of the respective discipline and at least one year's experience in a relevant occupation, as well as, if necessary, a qualification from the *Berufsschule*
- or a qualification from the *Berufsschule* and at least five years' experience in a relevant occupation.

Admission requirements for a *Fachschule* for social professions are generally the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* and successful completion of relevant vocational training.

Admission requirements for schools in the health sector are a school-leaving certificate and a certain minimum age [generally 17 or 18 years], as well as relevant vocational experience or successful completion of at least two years' vocational training.

## Curriculum

Curriculum at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

The structure and contents of the courses of studies are specified in the *Studienordnungen* [study regulations] or *Studienplänen* [study plans] and *Prüfungsordnungen* [examination regulations]. As a rule, the study regulations list the individual 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 study regulations also indicate which form of certificates are to be earned in which specific classes. Study regulations furnish guidance to the students, on the one hand, while serving as the basis for the planning of the curriculum in each department, on the other.

The *Prüfungsordnungen* [examination regulations], on the other hand, specify the *Regelstudienzeit* [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. In some Länder

the examination regulations also lay down the volume of compulsory and elective courses and the necessary attendance and performance records.

### **Accreditation of study courses**

With the introduction of the Bachelor's and Master's study courses from 1998, work has started on the development of an independent accreditation system for these courses. According to the resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of March 2002, a system of accreditation [accreditation of study programmes] is replacing the former system of coordination of study and examination regulations. Accreditation certifies in a formalised and objectively verifiable process that a course of study fulfils minimum standards in terms of structure, subject and content, as well as in terms of its professional relevance. For accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses the Standing Conference has set up an independent Accreditation Council [*Akkreditierungsrat*] acting on behalf of all Länder which, since 2005, operates as a foundation under public law [see also chapter 11.3].

The structural guidelines valid for all Länder adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in October 2003 form the basis for the accreditation. These serve as a framework for the planning and conception of study courses. The structural guidelines of October 2003, most recently amended in February 2010, refer, amongst others, to the structure and length of study. They stipulate that Bachelor's study courses, as study courses which lead to a first degree qualifying for entry into a profession, must provide the academic foundation, methodological skills and qualifications related to the professional field corresponding to the profile of the higher education institution and the study course. Bachelor's and Master's study courses are provided with a credit point system which is based upon the European Credit Transfer System [ECTS].

### **Foreign language teaching**

To do justice to the importance of foreign language teaching in higher education, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in 1991 issued directives on attainment of a *technical language* certificate. Foreign language training is optional; as a rule, this certificate can be obtained after four semesters' training for a total of 12 to 16 hours of attendance per week during a semester [a workload of 170 to 200 hours in total] and after a final examination. German universities traditionally offer a wide range of foreign language courses, both general and technical in orientation. Classes are given in many European and non-European languages.

### **Curriculum at colleges of art and music**

The observations on regulations governing studies and examinations at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education essentially apply to colleges of art and music as well. In a number of resolutions, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder has given recommendations on the organisation of artistic courses of studies to ensure the comparability of degrees awarded throughout the country. In December 2004, the Standing Conference passed a resolution that study courses at colleges of art and music should also in principle be included in the consecutive structure of study courses leading to Bachelor's and Master's degrees. The Education Ministers of the individual Länder decide whether to include the liberal arts study

courses in cooperation with the particular higher education institution. For arts Bachelor courses at colleges of art and music the structural guidelines valid for all Länder provide for the promotion and development of artistic abilities, the teaching of basic scientific principles as well as methodical and professional skills.

#### Curriculum at *Fachhochschulen*

The observations on regulations governing studies and examinations at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education essentially apply to *Fachhochschulen* as well.

#### Accreditation of study courses

The structural guidelines for all Länder and the specifications for programme and system accreditation passed by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs apply to both *Fachhochschulen* and to universities.

#### Foreign Language Teaching

Against the background of growing internationalisation, the teaching of foreign languages is becoming increasingly important. Numerous courses of studies at *Fachhochschulen* include foreign language classes either as a compulsory subject or an elective within the framework of general education subjects. Furthermore, many *Fachhochschulen* offer optional foreign language courses for students in all departments. The observations on the acquisition of the *technical language* certificate at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education apply to *Fachhochschulen* as well.

#### Dual Study-Courses

Study courses at *Fachhochschulen* are highly application-oriented and of great practical relevance. Against this background, *Fachhochschulen*, especially in the fields of engineering and business administration, also offer so-called dual courses of study [*duale Studiengänge*] in the form of study courses which integrate vocational training and practical placements. To this end the higher education institutions conclude cooperation agreements with companies which provide training or traineeships. The study courses which integrate vocational training link the study course with in-company training or with an occupation. The periods of study and work experience are distributed according to various models [sandwich or consecutive model] and subject to the *Studienordnung* [study regulations]. Dual study courses at *Fachhochschulen* lead to two qualifications for entry into a profession: graduates are awarded a *Diplomgrad*, to which the word *Fachhochschule* is added, or the Bachelor's degree and, at the same time, they obtain the vocational training leaving certificate. In study courses which integrate practical placements, the students do more practical placements on a bigger scale, in addition to the practical semesters required in study courses at a *Fachhochschule*.

*Fachhochschulen* also organise study courses which can be carried out alongside work or integrated with work and allow a Bachelor's or Master's degree to be completed alongside a professional activity.

Curriculum at establishments outside the higher education system – *Berufsakademien*, *Fachschulen*

### **Berufsakademien**

The students at the *Berufsakademien* complete parallel training with a company in trade and industry, with comparable establishments in other sectors – particularly in the case of the liberal professions – or at institutions maintained by social services. During the training, periods of study at the study institution [*Studienakademie*] alternate with periods of on-the-job training in the training establishments. Training is given on the basis of two kinds of study and training plans. Firstly, these are drawn up by the *Berufsakademien* together with participating companies and social services, and adopted by the ministries responsible in the form of ordinances. Secondly, these are also according to *Ausbildungsordnungen* [training regulations] and *Prüfungsordnungen* [examination regulations] of the *Berufsakademien* in accordance with general regulations of the responsible ministries.

In October 2004, the Standing Conference passed the resolution that Bachelor's training courses at *Berufsakademien* should be accredited. With the fulfilment of certain requirements, Bachelor's degrees obtained at *Berufsakademien* are thus equivalent to Bachelor's degrees obtained at institutions of higher education and thus provide access to Master's study courses. The requirements for the *Berufsakademien* apply in particular to teaching staff and to the scope of both theoretical and practical training components.

### **Fachschulen**

The requirements for admission to continuing vocational training courses and upgrading training at *Fachschulen* are appropriate vocational training in conjunction with the relevant vocational experience. The compulsory component in the two-year *Fachschulen* comprises the multi-disciplinary and subject-specific areas in the five subject areas, as well as a practical in youth and community work or in healthcare support for the social services area. Instruction in the multi-disciplinary area serves primarily the acquisition of extended general knowledge, skills and competences. Instruction in the subject-specific areas serves the acquisition of extended vocational knowledge, skills and competences in one of the five subject areas.

### **Employability**

Measures to facilitate the transition from university to working life

The universities' student counselling offices and the employment agencies' career guidance services furnish information and guidance to help graduates move from higher education into the professional world. Their prospects on the employment market may be improved by specialising in appropriate fields of study and enrolling in appropriate *weiterführende Studiengänge* [further study, supplementary and follow-up courses]. Work placements afford an opportunity to gain an insight into the working world and establish contact with prospective employers. Proof of work experience [for four to six months, in some cases up to a year] acquired before or while studying is demanded in a number of fields, especially in natural and engineering sciences. To improve the employment prospects of arts and social science graduates, some higher education institu-

tions have set up programmes in collaboration with employment agencies to place them in industry and equip them with key skills [e.g. a grounding in computing, elementary business skills].

The connections between higher education institutions and their former students [Alumni] can also facilitate the entry of their graduates into professional life.

Many institutions of higher education offer measures designed to prepare for self-employment and to encourage students to set up their own businesses.

#### Measures to facilitate the transition from colleges of art and music to working life

Many of those who complete artistic studies have difficulty finding suitable employment or earning an adequate livelihood from their own artistic endeavours. To improve their prospects, subjects have therefore been added to the curricula that qualify them for practical work [teaching, management in the cultural sector]. The transition to working life can be eased by a suitable choice of courses and extra qualifications.

#### Measures to facilitate the transition from *Fachhochschulen* to working life

Student counselling offices at *Fachhochschulen* and the career guidance services of the employment agencies furnish information and guidance to help graduates move from higher education into the professional world. Their prospects on the employment market may be improved by specialising in appropriate fields of study.

The declared aim of a *Fachhochschule* education is that it should be closely related to professional practice. This purpose is served chiefly by incorporating one or two *Praxissemester* [semesters of work experience] into the course of study. In many cases the topics of *Diplomarbeiten* or *Bachelorarbeiten* [dissertations] derive from problems that students have encountered in the practical semesters. In some cases, they are prepared in collaboration with industry and trade. In this way, students can gain an insight into the working world and establish contact with prospective employers before graduating. The offices for practical training [*Praktikantenämter*] at the institutions of higher education and the careers advice service of the employment agencies provide help finding placements. In addition, it is also possible to look for placements in Internet market-places for practical training [*Praktikantenbörsen*].

In dual study courses vocational training or a vocational traineeship is already integrated into the study at the *Fachhochschule* and is carried out in cooperation with suitable companies.

*Fachhochschulen* can also facilitate the entry of their graduates into professional life through connections with their former students [Alumni].

#### Measures to facilitate the transition from *Berufsakademien* to working life

Thanks to the combination of theoretical and practical training, graduates of the professional training courses based on a dual system offered by the *Berufsakademien* are prepared for working life during their actual studies. It is often the case that students are even taken on after obtaining their qualification for entry into a profession at the *Berufsakademie* by the very company that trained them.

## Teaching Methods

### Teaching methods at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

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. Practical exercises and practicals, 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 tele-teaching] in the teaching offered. From 2000 to 2004, as part of the New Media in Education [*Neue Medien in der Bildung*] programme, 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 [*eLearning-Dienste für die Wissenschaft*], 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. Pursuant to the Federalism Reform I the projects were completed from 2007 onwards under the responsibility of the Länder. The institutions of higher education have developed, generally within the scope of three-year projects, multimedia teaching and learning forms for on-site learning and self-study, as well as distance study offers or new combinations of on-site teaching with self-study and distance-study components.

The classes are normally designed for students of a specific degree course and at a particular stage in their studies. However, interdisciplinary classes have been gaining in significance, especially in the more advanced stages. So-called *Graduiertenkollegs* [providing university graduate training programmes] for the promotion of young scholars, for instance, are also frequently organised along interdisciplinary lines.

### Teaching methods at colleges of art and music

One distinctive feature of studying at a college of art or music is that artistic instruction is given one on one or in small groups closely supervised by a member of the teaching staff.

### Teaching methods at *Fachhochschulen*

Particular characteristics of courses of study at *Fachhochschulen* include practice-oriented training and a variety of teaching forms including lectures, seminars, practical exercises, work placements and study trips in small groups. The seminars afford an opportunity to deal in depth with a more narrowly defined topic, whilst practical classes and work placements enable the theoretical knowledge to be consolidated in a practical context. A further special feature of courses of studies at *Fachhochschulen* is the integration into the course of one or two *Praxissemester* [semesters of work experience]. The *Fachhochschule* lays down the rules for and content of these training periods, supervises them and provides parallel classes. They are spent in a company or in another place of work for a duration of at least 20 weeks. *Fachhochschulen* also offer dual study courses which integrate vocational training or a vocational traineeship into the course of study.

The principle of teaching small groups creates close contacts between teaching staff and students and enables students to interact in the class. For the promotion of numerous

projects involving new media [multimedia and teleteaching] in the teaching offered by higher education institutions, the observations on universities and equivalent institutions of higher education apply.

Teaching methods at establishments outside the higher education system –  
*Berufsakademien, Fachschulen*

A characteristic feature of training at a *Berufsakademie* is the division of each semester into on-the-job training and a theoretical part of the course at the study institution that lasts between ten and 12 weeks. During the theoretical part of the course, as a rule, students are taught in small groups. In addition to lectures and seminars, active teaching methods like role play, experimental games or case studies are applied.

See chapter 6.g. for teaching methods in continuing vocational training and upgrading training at *Fachschulen*.

### **Progression of Students**

Progression of students at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

University students are not classified in terms of year groups, but only according to the courses they are required to attend for the basic or advanced studies sections. If a student fails in a course, he must repeat that course only, without falling a semester behind his fellow students. In modularised study courses, the respective module must be repeated. In practice, however, failing courses usually prolongs a student's stay at university. *Studienordnungen* [study regulations] and *Prüfungsordnungen* [examination regulations] lay down the requirements for entry to a certain stage of studies. Ordinarily, intermediate and final examinations may be retaken once. In order to shorten study times in practice, this provision has been partly amended, so that failed attempts at the final examination within the *Regelstudienzeit* [standard period of study] are disregarded [so-called free attempts – *Freiversuch*].

It is generally possible to change one's course of study even in later semesters. If it is a course of study with nationwide restrictions on admission, the proviso is that the student in question obtains a study place for the subject of his choice. Years already spent in higher education and the courses and examinations that have been passed will be credited towards a different course of study, provided they are deemed equivalent.

Progression of students at colleges of art and music

If a student does not gain a particular certificate which is compulsory for a given course of study the first time around, he must repeat that course only, but not the whole semester. Intermediate and final examinations may usually be retaken once. In order to shorten study times in practice, this provision has been partly amended, so that failed attempts at the final examination within the *Regelstudienzeit* [standard period of study] are disregarded [so-called free attempts – *Freiversuch*].

For the possibility of changing one's course of study, cf. the information provided on universities and equivalent institutions of higher education.

### Progression of students at *Fachhochschulen*

If a student does not complete a given course of study the first time around, in order to obtain the relevant certificate, he must repeat that course/certificate only, but not the whole semester. In modularised study courses, the respective module must be repeated. *Studienordnungen* [study regulations] and *Prüfungsordnungen* [examination regulations] lay down the requirements for entry to a certain stage of studies. Intermediate and final examinations may usually be retaken once. In order to shorten study times in practice, this provision has been partly amended, so that failed attempts at the final examination within the *Regelstudienzeit* [standard period of study] are disregarded [so-called free attempts - *Freiversuch*].

For the possibility of changing one's course of study, cf. the information provided on universities and equivalent institutions of higher education.

### Progression of students at establishments outside the higher education system – Berufsakademien, Fachschulen

For admission to the final examination at *Berufsakademien* it is required, as a rule, that students submit the certificates they have obtained throughout their studies, and that they have undergone practical training in the training establishment in accordance with the training plan. The final examination may be retaken once or twice, failed attempts at the dissertation may be repeated only once. The regulations of the Länder apply for the retake of the examination and the dissertation.

The information given in chapter 6.10. essentially applies for progression at *Fachschulen*.

## **Student assessment**

### Student assessment at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

Bachelor's and Master's study courses are subject to quality assurance through accreditation. For the accreditation of a study course, it is to be established that the course is modularised; the examinations are in general performed as an accompaniment to studies. In addition, the study courses are provided with a credit point system. The credit points are related to instruction as such, as well as to the time needed to prepare and go over the taught subject-matter, preparation for examinations and the examinations themselves and, if applicable, to internships. For a Bachelor's degree, no less than 180 ECTS points must be submitted. A written dissertation [Bachelor's thesis/ Master's thesis] is obligatory for both Bachelor's and Master's study courses. Students are to demonstrate the ability to independently address a problem from their subject within a specified period of time using academic methods. The scope of the work for the Bachelor's dissertation comprises a minimum of 6 ECTS credits and must not exceed 12 ECTS credits.

The *Prüfungsordnungen* [examination regulations] prescribe the objectives of and subject-matter on the examinations, the required standards and the examining procedures for each study course. In modularised courses of study, the individual modules are to be determined, inter alia, with regard to course contents and objectives, the workload, the credit points to be awarded and the examination requirements.

## Student assessment at colleges of art and music

Certificates are issued for classes successfully completed at art colleges, too. In addition to written and oral examinations, it is above all artistic abilities that are tested.

In December 2004, the Standing Conference passed a resolution to introduce Bachelor's and Master's study courses at colleges of art and music. Bachelor's and Master's study courses are subject to quality assurance through accreditation. For the accreditation of a study course, it is to be established that the course is modularised and provided with a credit point system; the examinations are in general performed as an accompaniment to studies.

For consecutive Bachelor's and Master's study courses with a total standard study period of six years in one of the core arts subjects a Master's degree requires 360 ECTS points in principle including the previous course of study.

## Student assessment at *Fachhochschulen*

For student assessment in Bachelor's and Master's study courses at *Fachhochschulen*, the observations on student assessment at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education apply.

## Student assessment at establishments outside the higher education system – *Berufsakademien, Fachschulen*

In October 2004, the Standing Conference passed a resolution to introduce Bachelor's training courses at *Berufsakademien*. Bachelor's and Master's training courses are subject to quality assurance through accreditation. For the accreditation of a training course, it is to be established that the course is modularised and provided with a credit point system; the examinations are in general performed as an accompaniment to studies. The general information on assessment of performance in Bachelor's and Master's degree courses at universities and equivalent higher education institutions also apply to Bachelor's degree courses at *Berufsakademien* [professional academies]. In the theoretical section of the training course, intermediate examinations consist amongst others of written examinations, seminar papers, oral examinations, presentations and scientific papers. In practical professional training, intermediate examinations for the most part consist of project papers.

For student assessment in continuing vocational training at *Fachschulen*, see chapter 6.10., which explains the basic principles for performance assessment and the awarding of marks.

## **Certification**

### Certification at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

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 authorised by law to administer *Hochschulprüfungen* [academic examinations]. 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*, bestowing such titles as, for example, *Diplom-Psychologe* – graduate psychologist] and
- *Magisterprüfung* [leading to the award of the *Magistergrad*, bestowing the title of *Magister Artium* – M.A.].

Whereas courses of studies that culminate in a *Diplom* concentrate on a single subject, those that lead to a *Magister*, Bachelor's or Master's degree admit a combination of several subjects [usually one major subject and two minor subjects, or two equally weighted major subjects], particularly in arts subjects.

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 under way. In the 2009/2010 winter semester, 79 per cent of all study offers at German institutions of higher education are Bachelor's and Master's 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. The Bachelor's degree provides the same rights as *Diplom* qualifications obtained at a *Fachhochschule*.

The following designations are used for Bachelor's degrees at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education:

- Bachelor of Arts [B.A.]
- Bachelor of Science [B.Sc.]
- Bachelor of Engineering [B.Eng.]
- Bachelor of Laws [LL.B.]

Universities and equivalent institutions of higher education should add a diploma supplement to the leaving certificate, that describes, usually in English, the progress of the studies and the performance of the graduate. As a rule, degree holders are to receive the *Diploma Supplement* at no extra charge.

A state examination or *Staatsprüfung* has to be taken in some courses of studies that prepare students for professions of particular importance to the public interest. This is the case in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, pharmaceuticals, food chemistry, law and to some extent the teaching profession. The standards of performance on state examinations correspond to those on academic examinations. Hence, the difference between state and academic examinations is essentially of a formal nature. In the case of state examinations, representatives of the state examination bodies act as examiners along with university professors. After the First State Examination, prospective lawyers and teachers, in particular, undergo a second phase of training called *Vorbereitungsdienst* or preparatory service, which is concluded by another state examination. Only this Second State Examination entitles them to practise their profession. Information on teacher training courses conveying the educational prerequisites for teaching positions are available in chapter 9.1.

In December 2007 the Standing Conference adopted the guidelines developed in conjunction with the Protestant Church in Germany and the German Bishops' Conference [*Deutsche Bischofskonferenz*] on the structure of study courses in Roman Catholic or Protestant Theology/Religion [*Eckpunkte für die Studienstruktur in Studiengängen mit Katholischer oder Evangelischer Theologie/Religion*]. For theological courses of study which qualify students for the ministry, priesthood or the profession of a pastoral assistant [*theologisches Vollstudium* – full theological course of study] the guidelines provide, until further notice, for courses which conclude – after a standard study period of five years in total – with an academic and a Church examination. There are no plans at present to introduce a consecutive study structure pursuant to the Bologna Process within the *theologisches Vollstudium*. The courses of study are, nonetheless, modularised and provided with a credit point system. For Bachelor's and Master's degree courses which provide the prerequisites for a teaching career in the Roman Catholic or Protestant religion, the common structural guidelines of the Länder for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses [*Ländergemeinsame Strukturvorgaben für die Akkreditierung von Bachelor- und Masterstudiengängen*] and the guidelines for the mutual recognition of Bachelor's and Master's degrees in teacher training courses conveying the educational prerequisites for teaching positions [*Eckpunkte für die gegenseitige Anerkennung von Bachelor- und Masterabschlüssen in Studiengängen, mit denen die Bildungsvoraussetzungen für ein Lehramt vermittelt werden*] apply. For all other Bachelor's and Master's study courses in Roman Catholic or Protestant Theology/Religion the common structural guidelines which apply to all Länder for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses are valid. Except where otherwise stipulated, these study courses lead to the degree titles Bachelor of Arts [B.A.] and Master of Arts [M.A.]. For the accreditation of these courses, alongside the relevant state rules the Church rules are also to be taken as a basis.

In addition to consecutive Master's study courses, there are other *weiterführende Studiengänge* [special graduate study courses] which may be taken after the completion of a first degree. These special graduate courses of two to four semesters' duration lead to the awarding of a certificate stipulating the level achieved or to a further higher education degree [*Diplom, Magister, Master*].

On the basis of agreements with a foreign institution of higher education, some universities also award a foreign degree [double degree] or a joint degree in addition to the German degree.

### Certification at colleges of art and music

The artistic qualification awarded on completion of a first degree course of study is the *Diplom* or the Bachelor. Apart from artistic training, art colleges also provide courses of teacher training, which entitle students to teach art or music at schools after passing their *Staatsprüfung* [state examination] and undergoing *Vorbereitungsdienst* [preparatory service]. In 2003 and 2004, the Standing Conference adopted general guidelines for training in the subjects art and music for all teaching careers.

Colleges of art and music as well already offer teacher study courses which lead to a higher education examination within the framework of the consecutive study structure. Information on teacher training courses conveying the educational prerequisites for teaching positions are available in chapter 9.1.

In December 2004, as part of the structural requirements that are binding for all Länder, the Standing Conference passed a resolution for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses at colleges of art and music. The following designations are used for Bachelor's degrees at colleges of art and music:

- Bachelor of Fine Arts [B.F.A.]
- Bachelor of Arts [B.A.]
- Bachelor of Music [B.Mus.]

The number of Bachelor's and Master's degree courses at *Kunsthochschulen* and *Musikhochschulen* [colleges of art and music] has rapidly increased over the past few years. Just under 50 per cent of all study courses on offer at German colleges of art and music are Bachelor's and Master's degree courses.

#### Certification at *Fachhochschulen*

*Fachhochschulen* award the Bachelor's degree and the Master's degree as a final qualification at the end of the degree course; the *Diplomgrad* is also still awarded at present to a lesser extent. On the basis of agreements with a foreign institution of higher education, some *Fachhochschulen*, confer a foreign degree [double degree] or a joint degree in addition to the German *Diplom*.

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 and lead to the Bachelor's degree. The Bachelor's degree generally provides the same rights as *Diplom* qualifications acquired at a *Fachhochschule*.

The following designations are used for Bachelor's degrees at *Fachhochschulen*:

- Bachelor of Arts [B.A.]
- Bachelor of Science [B.Sc.]
- Bachelor of Engineering [B.Eng.]
- Bachelor of Laws [LL.B.]

The *Fachhochschulen* should add a diploma supplement to the leaving certificate of the *Diplom* and *Magister* study courses, as well as to the Bachelor/Master study courses, that describes, usually in English, the study course, the progress of the studies and the performance of the graduate. As a rule, degree holders are to receive the *Diploma Supplement* at no extra charge.

Certification at establishments outside the higher education system – *Berufsakademien*, *Fachschulen*

#### **Berufsakademien**

In October 2004, the Standing Conference has passed criteria for the accreditation of Bachelor's training courses at *Berufsakademien*. The state-recognised Bachelor's degrees obtained after the completion of training courses which have been accredited on this basis are equivalent to Bachelor's degrees obtained at institutions of higher education. The academic equivalence of the Bachelor's degrees is linked to their equivalence

with regard to the right to practise certain professions. However, the designation does not refer to a higher education degree but to a state-recognised degree.

The degrees awarded by *Berufsakademien* based on the Baden-Württemberg model are amongst the degrees in tertiary education. Provided that they satisfy certain criteria, they are covered by the EU directive on a general system for the recognition of higher-education diplomas. These criteria include, above all, entrance requirements and the qualifications of the teaching staff, as well as certain institutional requirements in terms of the range of training on offer and cooperation between the *Studienakademie* [study institution] and training company. The degrees awarded by the *Berufsakademien* in Sachsen and the degrees awarded by the *Berufsakademie* integrated into the *Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Recht Berlin* also meet these criteria.

### **Fachschulen**

Depending on the discipline, successful completion of the two-year FACHSCHULE entitles graduates to use the occupational titles state-certified agricultural economist [*Staatlich geprüfter Agrarbetriebswirt*], state-certified technician [*Staatlich geprüfter Techniker*], state-certified business economist [*Staatlicher geprüfter Betriebswirt*] and state-certified designer [*Staatlich geprüfter Gestalter*], as well as other occupational titles in the social professions, e.g. state-recognised or state-certified youth or child-care workers [*Staatlich anerkannter/geprüfter Erzieher*]. It is also possible to obtain the *Fachhochschulreife* at the *Fachschule*.

### **7.3.2. Short-Cycle Higher Education**

Short-cycle study programmes are not offered in the Federal Republic of Germany.

### **7.4. Second Cycle Programmes**

#### **Branches of study**

For a detailed discussion of the branches of study offered at institutions of the tertiary sector, see chapter 7.3.1.

The standard period of study for Master's study courses can be two, three or four semesters. At universities and equivalent institutions of higher education, the standard period of study for Bachelor's study courses is generally four semesters.

At *Fachhochschulen* the standard period of study for Master's study courses is generally three to four semesters

#### **Admission requirements**

The admission requirement for a Master's study course is, as a rule, a higher education degree qualifying for entry into a profession. Under Land higher education laws, in clearly defined exceptional cases for Master's study courses providing further education and for artistic Master's study courses, an entrance examination may take the place of the requirement for a higher education degree qualifying for a profession. For quality assurance purposes or on grounds of capacity, additional admission requirements may be laid down for Master's study courses. Admission requirements are subject to accreditation. The Länder may reserve the right to approve admission requirements.

For admission to artistic Master's study courses, the special artistic aptitude required for this must be demonstrated in addition to the Bachelor's qualification. This can also be done by a special aptitude examination.

### **Curriculum**

The common structural guidelines of the Länder for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses [*Ländergemeinsame Strukturvorgaben für die Akkreditierung von Bachelor- und Masterstudiengängen*] distinguish between research-oriented Master's study courses and practice-oriented ones.

Master's degree courses at colleges of art and music should have a special artistic profile which must be laid down in the accreditation and set out in the *Diploma Supplement*. More detailed information on the *Diploma Supplement* is available in chapter 7.3.1.

### **Employability**

For a detailed discussion of measures to facilitate the transition from institutions of the tertiary sector to working life, see chapter 7.3.1.

### **Teaching methods**

For a detailed discussion of teaching methods at institutions of the tertiary sector, see chapter 7.3.1.

### **Progression of students**

For a detailed discussion of the progression of students at institutions of the tertiary sector, see chapter 7.3.1.

### **Student assessment**

A Master's degree requires 300 ECTS points, including the preceding course of study for the first qualification for entry into a profession. This requirement can be waived in special cases where students can demonstrate that they are suitably qualified.

The scope of the work for the Master's dissertation should range from 15–30 ECTS credits.

For consecutive Bachelor's and Master's study courses with a total standard study period of six years in one of the core arts subjects a Master's degree requires 360 ECTS points in principle including the previous course of study.

### **Certification**

Master's study courses are differentiated by the profile types “practice-oriented” and “research-oriented”. They require a first degree qualifying for entry into a profession and lead to the Master's degree. In designating Master's degrees, no distinction is made between the profile types “practice-oriented” and “research-oriented”. The Master's degree provides the same rights as *Diplom* and *Magister* qualifications of universities and equivalent higher education institutions.

The following designations are used for Master's degrees at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education:

- Master of Arts [M.A.]
- Master of Science [M.Sc.]
- Master of Engineering [M.Eng.]
- Master of Laws [LL.M.]

The following designations are used for Master's degrees at colleges of art and music:

- Master of Fine Arts [M.F.A.]
- Master of Arts [M.A.]
- Master of Music [M.Mus.]

The Master's degree provides the same rights as *Diplom* and *Magister* qualifications of universities and equivalent higher education institutions. The following designations are used for Master's degrees at *Fachhochschulen*:

- Master of Arts [M.A.]
- Master of Science [M.Sc.]
- Master of Engineering [M.Eng.]
- Master of Laws [LL.M.]

## 7.5. Programmes Outside the Bachelor and Master Structure

In addition to the courses leading to a first degree, besides consecutive master study courses, there are other *weiterführende Studiengänge* [further study, supplementary and follow-up courses] of two to four semesters' duration that either build on the first degree, providing further vocational skills, increased specialisation and reinforcement, or are taken in parallel with a different course of study. Unlike continuing academic education, they are usually taken immediately after or during the first degree course of study. An overview of the range of special graduate courses on offer provided by the German Rectors' Conference [*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* - HRK] is available on the Internet at [www.higher-education-compass.de](http://www.higher-education-compass.de).

Other special graduate study courses at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education lead to the awarding of a certificate stipulating the level achieved or to a further higher education degree [*Diplom, Magister, Master*].

At colleges of art and music, special graduate study courses culminate in a *Abschlussprüfung* [final examination], the *Konzertexamen* [concert examination] or a further *Diplom* or Master's degree.

At *Fachhochschulen*, special graduate study courses culminate in the award of a second *Diplom* degree, the Master's degree, or proof of academic achievement [certificate].

## 7.6. Third Cycle (PhD) Programmes

Particularly well-qualified students may also choose to complete a doctorate. The disciplines in which it is possible to obtain a doctorate at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education are listed under [www.higher-education-compass.de](http://www.higher-education-compass.de).

## Organisation of doctoral studies

The paths to a doctorate in Germany are varied. The leading model in Germany is the individual, supervised doctorate. Doctoral studies are completed at universities, around a third of them in cooperation with non-university research institutes. There is also the option of cooperative doctoral studies programmes between universities and *Fachhochschulen*. At present, there are just less than 100,000 doctoral students in Germany. More than 25,000 obtained their doctorate in 2009.

In order to support the up-and-coming academics, just less than 260 *Graduiertenkollegs*, financed by the German Research Foundation [*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* – DFG], have been set up at institutions of higher education since 1990 to provide students with the opportunity to prepare their doctorate within the framework of a systematic study programme. Since 1998, there has been a larger number of other structured cooperative forms of training for doctoral students. These include international doctoral programmes, International Max-Planck Research Schools, Graduate Schools and graduate schools [*Graduiertenschulen*] promoted within the framework of the Excellence Initiative of the Federation and the Länder for the Promotion of Science and Research in German Higher Education Institutions [*Exzellenzinitiative des Bundes und der Länder zur Förderung von Wissenschaft und Forschung an deutschen Hochschulen*]. Around 15 per cent of doctoral students follow structured doctoral programmes.

## Admission requirements

Admittance to doctoral studies is regulated in the doctoral regulations [*Promotionsordnungen*] of the universities and equivalent higher education institutions. Master's degrees obtained at universities and equivalent higher education institutions, or at *Fachhochschulen*, always provide entitlement to doctoral studies.

Particularly well-qualified holders of a Bachelor's degree may also be admitted directly to doctoral studies without first acquiring a further degree by means of a procedure to determine aptitude. The universities will regulate admission as well as the organisation of the procedure to determine aptitude and, if applicable, any cooperation with *Fachhochschulen*, in their doctoral regulations. In addition to their respective qualification, students are required to complete preparatory academic studies in the subjects to be studied at doctorate level and/or a supplementary period of study at the university in question or have to sit an aptitude test [*Promotionseignungsprüfung*].

Master's degrees obtained at colleges of art and music entitle graduates to embark on a doctoral studies only if the Master's study course provided a sufficient qualification.

It is not possible to obtain a doctoral degree from a *Fachhochschule*, given that only universities and equivalent institutions of higher education are entitled to award doctorates. Increasingly, however, use is being made of the option of cooperative doctoral studies programmes between universities and *Fachhochschulen*.

## Status of doctoral students/candidates

Some doctoral students are employed, while others are funded by grants or finance their own doctoral studies. Grants and funding programmes are provided by the Federation, Länder, research and funding organisations, organisations for the promotion of young talent and political foundations. The rate of funding varies.

### **Supervision arrangements**

The leading model in Germany is the individual, supervised doctorate.

### **Assessment**

A doctorate is conferred on the strength of a doctoral thesis, which must be based on independent research, and oral examinations called *Rigorosum*. Oral examinations may be replaced by a defence of the student's thesis [*Disputation*] or a comparable achievement. With the exception of structured programmes for doctoral students, a doctoral thesis need not be written within any prescribed length of time.

### **Certification**

The doctorate entitles a graduate to bear the *Doktorgrad* [title of *Doktor*].

### **Organisational Variation**

The potential organisational formats of doctoral degree programmes are set out above.