

Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the  
Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the  
Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany

Documentation and Education Information Service



German Eurydice Unit of the Länder

## **GLOSSARY ON EDUCATION**

**Institutions, Examinations, Qualifications, Titles  
and other Specialist Terms**

**Abendgymnasium**

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

**Abendhauptschule**

Establishment of the so-called →Zweiter Bildungsweg at which adults can attend evening classes to obtain the →Hauptschulabschluss [school leaving qualification of the →Hauptschule].

**Abendrealschule**

Establishment of the so-called →Zweiter Bildungsweg at which adults can attend evening classes to obtain the →Mittlerer Schulabschluss [school leaving qualification of the →Realschule].

**Abitur**

Secondary school qualification, obtained at the upper →Gymnasium level [→gymnasiale Oberstufe] after 12 or 13 years of school education which constitutes a general higher education entrance qualification permitting the holder to study any subject at any higher education institution.

**Abiturprüfung**

Examination leading to the →Allgemeine Hochschulreife usually taken upon conclusion of the upper Gymnasium level [→gymnasiale Oberstufe]. In the Abitur examination, candidates are examined in four subjects. In some →Länder, candidates are examined in a fifth subject or a particular achievement [*besondere Lernleistung*] is incorporated in the examination. Each of the following three subject areas must be represented: languages, literature and the arts; social sciences; mathematics, natural sciences and technology.

**Akkreditierung**

The accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses is aimed at ensuring standards in terms of academic content and professional relevance that include checking the study course concept, whether the content is suitable for study, the quality of the teaching and the professional relevance. Accreditation is performed by decentral accreditation agencies. A central Accreditation Council [*Akkreditierungsrat*] ensures that accreditation follows reliable and transparent standards and also that, as part of accreditation, the concerns of the system as a whole, which are the responsibility of all Länder, are taken into account.

**Allgemeine Hochschulreife**

General higher education entrance qualification. Entitles holder to admission to all subjects at all higher education institutions and is usually obtained at upper →Gymnasium level [→gymnasiale Oberstufe] by passing the →Abitur examination.

**Anerkannter Ausbildungsberuf**

Recognised occupation requiring formal training. Occupation regulated at the federal level by legal ordinance for which training is received within the dual system at two different places of learning, i.e. at the workplace and through part-time attendance of a vocational school [→Berufsschule].

**Arbeitslehre**

Pre-vocational studies - introduction to the professional and working world covering the topics of technology, economics, home and work. It is taught - whether under this name or another - at →Hauptschulen as a compulsory subject and at other lower secondary level schools either as a subject in its own right or as an integral part of other subjects.

**Ausbildungsordnung**

Training regulations. Legal ordinance governing the in-company training section of vocational training within the dual system. Training regulations also exist in other areas [e.g. for careers in the Civil Service].

**Bachelor**

As a first higher education qualification, the Bachelor's degree provides qualification for a profession. It can be obtained after a standard period of study [→Regelstudienzeit] of six, seven or eight semesters 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 which is to replace the traditional system of higher education qualifications [→Diplom and →Magister]. Bachelor's qualifications provide the same rights as Diplom qualifications obtained at a Fachhochschule. The Bachelor may also be obtained as a tertiary education qualification providing qualification for a profession at →Berufsakademien.

**Bachelorarbeit**

Written dissertation to be prepared at the end of a →Bachelor's course of study, the purpose of which is to demonstrate the ability to deal independently with a problem in the relevant subject area on the basis of academic methods within a set period of time.

**Bachelorgrad**

Academic degree awarded on the basis of an examination administered by a higher education institution [unlike the state examination] in a specific subject group, for example Bachelor of Arts [B.A.], Bachelor of Science [B.Sc.], Bachelor of Engineering [B.Eng.] The Bachelor's degree is awarded by universities and equivalent institutions of higher education, colleges of art and music and →Fachhochschulen.

**Bachelorprüfung**

Final examination leading to the award of the Bachelor at universities and equivalent higher education institutions, colleges of art and music, →Fachhochschulen and →Berufsakademien.

**Berufliches Gymnasium**

Type of school at upper secondary level offering a three-year course of education which includes both the general education subjects taught at upper →Gymnasium level [→gymnasiale Oberstufe] and career-oriented subjects, such as business and technology, but which also leads to the general higher education entrance qualification.

**Berufsakademie**

Tertiary education institution in some Länder, offering courses of academic training at a *Studienakademie* [study institution] combined with practical in-company professional training in keeping with the principle of the dual system.

**Berufsfachschule**

Vocational school at upper secondary level offering a wide range of branches and courses of varying duration. A full-time school, it prepares or trains students for a specific occupation at different levels of qualification.

**Berufsoberschule**

Vocational school at upper secondary level existing in a few →Länder. Offers those who have completed vocational training in the dual system the opportunity to obtain a higher education entrance qualification. Providing two years of full-time education or correspondingly longer part-

time education, the Berufsoberschule leads to the →Fachgebundene Hochschulreife and, with a second foreign language, to the →Allgemeine Hochschulreife.

**Berufsschule**

Vocational school at upper secondary level generally providing part-time instruction in general and vocational subjects to trainees receiving vocational education and training within the dual system.

**Berufsvorbereitungsjahr**

Preparation for those young people who do not have a training contract, helping them to choose a career and providing them with vocational training in the form of full-time instruction designed to provide an introduction to one or two occupational fields.

**Bezirksregierung**

The middle level in the three-tier system of →Land administration, responsible for a particular area [administrative district] of a Land [below the supreme authorities of the Land but above the lower authorities at local level].

**Bildungsstandards**

The educational standards of the Standing Conference take up general educational objectives and specify which competences with regard to key content pupils should have acquired by a certain grade. The educational standards refer to the average expected performance level of pupils at the end of grade 4 for the →Hauptschulabschluss and the →Mittlerer Schulabschluss.

**Dienstaufsicht**

The authority of a superior authority to supervise and instruct a subordinate authority. Also the authority of a superior to supervise and instruct subordinate civil servants or other public administration employees.

**Diplom**

As a first higher education qualification, the Diplom degree provides qualification for a profession. It can be obtained either at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education as well as at colleges of art and music [particularly in social or economic sciences and in natural and engineering sciences] or likewise at →Fachhochschulen [in all subjects, with the specification *Fachhochschule* or *FH* added to the degree title]. The Diplom may also be obtained as a tertiary education qualification providing qualification for a profession at →Berufsakademien [with the specification *Berufsakademie* or *BA* added to the qualification title].

**Diplomarbeit**

Written dissertation to be prepared at the end of a →Diplom course of study. The dissertation must investigate, independently, a subject using academic methods and be submitted within a specified period of time.

**Diplomgrad**

Academic degree awarded on the basis of an examination administered by a higher education institution [unlike the state examination]. The title awarded combines the name of the degree with the subject in which it has been obtained, e.g. *Diplom-Ingenieur* [graduate engineer], *Diplom-Psychologe* [graduate psychologist], *Diplom-Kaufmann* [graduate in commerce]. This degree is awarded by universities and equivalent higher education institutions, as well as by →Fachhochschulen [with the word *Fachhochschule* or *FH* added to the degree title] and by colleges of art and music.

**Diplomprüfung**

Final examination leading to the award of the Diplom at universities and equivalent higher education institutions, colleges of art and music, →Fachhochschulen and →Berufsakademien.

**Doktorgrad**

Academic degree awarded following the doctoral procedure, which consists of a written thesis and either an oral examination or a defence of the thesis.

**Drittmittel**

Funding provided for an individual academic or scientist or for a research institution other than that from the standard budget [funds of the higher education institution and the →Land] and which is received on application to third parties [e.g. foundations, industry].

**Duales System**

Training carried out at two places of learning, i.e. at upper secondary education establishments [→Berufsschulen] or tertiary education institutions [→Berufsakademien, →Fachhochschulen] and in companies. Trainees either attend the two places of learning alternately or simultaneously.

**Ergänzungsschule**

Privately-maintained school providing courses of education not normally available at public-sector schools, particularly in the vocational sector.

**Ersatzschule**

Privately-maintained school which provides an equivalent education to public-sector schools in terms of organisational structure, functions and curriculum and at which pupils can complete their compulsory schooling.

**Erweiterte Realschule**

Type of school at lower secondary level in Saarland providing the courses of education otherwise offered by the →Hauptschule and the →Realschule.

**Erzieher**

Youth or child care worker who has completed a course at a →Fachschule for social work [4 to 5 years' training at a vocational school at upper secondary level including work experience]. Qualified to work in pre-school establishments and in areas of youth services.

**Fachaufsicht**

State supervision of the manner in which public functions are being discharged. Unlike legal supervision it extends beyond examining the legality of measures to examining how effective and appropriate actions are. In the school sector it involves, among other things, supervising educational work and advising teachers.

**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.

**\*\*\*Fachgymnasium**

→Berufliches Gymnasium

**Fachhochschule**

University of applied sciences. Type of higher education institution established in the 1970s, which has the particular function of providing application-oriented teaching and research, particularly in engineering, business, administration, social services and design.

**Fachhochschulreife**

Qualification entitling holder to study at a →Fachhochschule. May usually be obtained after 12 years of schooling at a →Fachoberschule or – under certain conditions – at other vocational schools.

**Fachoberschule**

Vocational school at upper secondary level providing two-year courses in various subject areas leading to the qualification of →Fachhochschulreife. The first year consists of both practical training in the workplace and lessons, whilst the second year covers general and subject-specific lessons.

**Fachschule**

Vocational school offering continuing vocational training courses of between one and three years which build on initial vocational training and subsequent employment and lead to a further qualification in a profession.

**Fernuniversität**

State higher education institution based in Hagen offering courses of study by distance learning only. Courses offered include those leading to a first qualification for entry into a profession [→Bachelor, →Diplom, →Magister] and further study, supplementary and follow-up courses.

**Förderschule**

Special school – school establishment for pupils whose development cannot be adequately assisted at mainstream schools on account of disability. Also known as *Sonderschule*, *Schule für Behinderte* or *Förderzentrum*.

**Freie Waldorfschule**

Privately-maintained primary and secondary schools, which base their work on the ideological and educational ideas of Rudolf Steiner.

**Ganztagschule**

All-day schools – primary and secondary schools which, in addition to timetabled lessons in the morning, offer an all-day programme comprising at least seven hours per day on at least three days per week. Activities offered in the afternoon are to be organised under the supervision and responsibility of the head staff and to be carried out in cooperation with the head staff. The activities are to have a conceptual relationship with the lessons in the morning. All-day schools, which are far less common in Germany than the traditional →Halbtagschule, provide a midday meal on the days on which they offer all-day supervision.

**Gemeinschaftsschule**

Type of school at lower secondary level in Schleswig-Holstein offering several courses of education leading to different qualifications [→Hauptschulabschluss, →Mittlerer Schulabschluss, entitlement to proceed to the →gymnasiale Oberstufe]. Gemeinschaftsschulen can also encompass the upper secondary level in the form of the →gymnasiale Oberstufe.

**Gesamtschule**

Type of school at lower secondary level offering several courses of education leading to different qualifications [→Hauptschulabschluss, →Mittlerer Schulabschluss, entitlement to proceed to the →gymnasiale Oberstufe]. It either takes the form of a cooperative Gesamtschule or an integrated Gesamtschule. In the cooperative type, pupils are taught in classes grouped according to the different qualifications available, whilst in the integrated type, pupils are set in courses grouped according to level of proficiency for a number of core subjects, but taught together as a year group for all other subjects. Gesamtschulen can also encompass the upper secondary level in the form of the →gymnasiale Oberstufe.

**Graduierertenkolleg**

Establishment at higher education institutions aiming at the promotion of young graduated academics, enabling doctoral candidates to prepare their doctoral thesis within a thematically-oriented research group.

**Grundordnung**

The basic constitution of a higher education institution, especially regulating matters of academic self-administration; it must be confirmed by the Ministry of Science of the →Land concerned.

**Grundschule**

Compulsory school for all children of the age of 6 onwards. It comprises four grades, except in Berlin and Brandenburg where it covers six grades.

**Gymnasiale Oberstufe**

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

**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. Currently, in most Länder the gradual conversion from a 9-year to an 8-year Gymnasium course of education is under way. Some Länder have already introduced the 8-year Gymnasium course, in which the →Allgemeine Hochschulreife is obtained after grade 12.

**Habilitation**

Post-doctoral qualification proving ability to teach and engage in research in an academic subject [lecturing qualification]. Additional academic achievements may replace the procedure of *Habilitation*. See also →Juniorprofessor.

**Habilitationsrecht**

Higher education institution's right to award lecturing qualification. The right is normally accorded to universities and equivalent institutions of higher education, though also, under certain conditions, to colleges of art and music.

**Halbtagschule**

Half-day school as opposed to all-day school – the most common way of organising lessons. At these schools lessons are only given in the mornings. In the primary sector there are so-called full half-day schools and at lower secondary level so-called extended half-day schools. Here pupils are provided with care and supervision outside of lessons.

**Hauptschulabschluss**

General education school leaving certificate obtained on completion of grade 9 at the →Hauptschule or any other lower secondary level school. This first general qualification is generally used to enter a course of vocational training within the dual system. In some →Länder pupils who have achieved a particular level of performance may be awarded a so-called qualifying Hauptschulabschluss at the end of grade 9 and in some Länder it is possible to obtain what is known as an extended Hauptschulabschluss on completion of grade 10.

**Hauptschule**

Type of school at lower secondary level providing a basic general education. Compulsory school, unless pupil is attending a different type of secondary school, usually comprising grades 5-9.

**Hochschulprüfung**

Examination concluding a course of study. Unlike state examinations, it is administered solely by the higher education institution itself. See also →Bachelorprüfung, →Diplomprüfung, →Magisterprüfung, →Masterprüfung, →Staatsprüfung, →Doktorgrad.

**Hochschulreife**

Higher education entrance qualification obtained as a school leaving qualification at upper secondary level on completion of grade 12 or 13. See also →Allgemeine Hochschulreife, →Fachgebundene Hochschulreife.

**Hort**

Establishment run by youth welfare services offering care and supervision of schoolchildren outside of lessons.

**Integrierte Haupt- und Realschule**

Type of school at lower secondary level in Hamburg providing the courses of education otherwise offered by the →Hauptschule and the →Realschule.

**Juniorprofessor**

Teacher at higher education institutions who is appointed as civil servant or as salaried employee for a limited period of three years. The period of appointment can be extended by another three years. The requirements for an appointment as Juniorprofessor are a degree from an institution of higher education, teaching ability and particular aptitude for academic work which is usually demonstrated by the quality of a doctorate. Depending on the Land legislation, the *Juniorprofessur* may replace the →Habilitation as a prerequisite for the appointment as professor with unlimited tenure at an institution of higher education.

**Kindergarten**

Pre-school establishment for children aged between three and six as part of child and youth welfare services - may be either publicly or privately maintained [not part of the school system].

**Kinderkrippe**

Day-care establishment for children under the age of three. Comes under the category of child and youth welfare services and may either be publicly or privately maintained.

**Kolleg**

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

**Kommune**

Local authority with the right of self-government in certain areas of jurisdiction. The term covers the *Gemeinden* [municipalities], the *Kreise* [districts] and the *kreisfreie Städte* [municipalities with the status of a district] and, in some →Länder, the *Bezirke* [regional authorities]; Kommunen are entitled to deal independently with all affairs relating to the local community in the framework of the law.

**Kultusministerium**

The ministries of education and cultural affairs are the supreme authorities at →Land level with respect to education, science and culture. Their work includes, above all, schools, higher education



and adult education, the general preservation of art and culture, and relations between the state and religious communities [known as *Kultusangelegenheiten*]. The majority of the Länder, in addition to a ministry for schools, also have separate ministries to cover science and research.

**Land**

Constituent state of the Federal Republic of Germany [16 in all] which, like the Federation, has original state authority. However, responsibility for the execution of state powers and the fulfilment of state tasks is divided by the German constitution, the Basic Law, between the Federation and its constituent states. Of the 16 Länder, the five Länder in the area of the former GDR are known as the Länder in eastern Germany, whereas the other 11 constituent states of the original Federal Republic of Germany are known as the Länder in western Germany.

**Magister**

The Magister as a first higher education qualification provides qualification for a profession. It can be obtained at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education [particularly in arts subjects]. The course of study comprises either two equally weighted major subjects or a combination of one major subject and two minor subjects.

**Magisterarbeit**

Written dissertation to be prepared at the end of a →Magister course of study. The dissertation must investigate, independently, a subject using academic methods and be submitted within a specified period of time.

**Magistergrad**

Academic degree awarded by universities and equivalent institutions of higher education on the basis of an examination administered by a higher education institution [unlike the state examination].

**Magisterprüfung**

Higher education examination leading to the award of the →Magistergrad.

**Master**

The Master's degree as a further higher education degree provides an advanced qualification for a profession. The entry requirement for a Master's study course is a first higher education degree qualifying for a profession. The Master's degree can be obtained after a standard period of study [→Regelstudienzeit] of two, three or four semesters at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education, colleges of art and music and →Fachhochschulen. As a rule, the entry requirement for a Master's study course is a first higher education degree qualifying for a profession. Consecutive Master's study courses are part of the graduation system of consecutive degrees which is to replace the traditional system of higher education qualifications [→Diplom and →Magister]. Master's study courses providing further education correspond to the requirements for consecutive Master's study courses and lead to the same level of qualification and to the same rights. Master's qualifications provide the same rights as Diplom and Magister qualifications of universities and equivalent institutions of higher education.

**Masterarbeit**

Written dissertation to be prepared at the end of a →Master's course of study, the purpose of which is to demonstrate the ability to deal independently with a problem in the relevant subject area on the basis of academic methods within a set period of time.

**Mastergrad**

Academic degree awarded on the basis of an examination administered by a higher education institution [unlike the state examination] in a specific subject group, for example Master of Arts [M.A.], Master of Science [M.Sc.], Master of Engineering [M.Eng.]. The Master's degree is awarded by universities and equivalent institutions of higher education, colleges of art and music, and →Fachhochschulen.

**Masterprüfung**

Final examination leading to the award of the →Master at universities and equivalent higher education institutions, colleges of art and music and →Fachhochschulen.

**Mittelschule**

Type of school at lower secondary level in Sachsen providing the courses of education otherwise offered by the →Hauptschule and the →Realschule.

**Mittlerer Schulabschluss**

General education school leaving certificate obtained on completion of grade 10 at →Realschulen or, under certain circumstances, at other lower secondary level school types. It can also be obtained at a later stage during vocational training at upper secondary level. In some Länder called *Realschulabschluss*.

**Oberschulamt**

Independent middle-level authority within the framework of the school supervisory system operated by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of the →Land. In the majority of the Länder, however, its tasks are performed by the school department of the →Bezirksregierung.

**Oberschule**

Type of school at lower secondary level in Brandenburg providing the courses of education otherwise offered by the →Hauptschule and the →Realschule.

**\*\*\*Oberstudienrat**

→Studienrat

**Orientierungsstufe**

Orientation stage – either grades 5 and 6 at the individual lower secondary school types or, in some →Länder, an independent school stage not attached to any school type. The orientation stage helps to decide on a pupil's future school career.

**Pädagogische Hochschule**

Type of higher education institution in Baden-Württemberg, equivalent in status to the universities, offering courses of study for teaching careers at primary level and certain teaching careers at lower secondary level. In specific cases, the colleges of education also offer study courses leading to professions in the area of education and pedagogy outside the school sector.

**Praxissemester**

Semester of work experience undertaken as part of a course of study at →Fachhochschulen. Responsibility lies with the higher education institution.

**Promotion**

Award of a doctoral degree on the basis of a doctoral thesis and either an oral examination or a defence of the student's thesis. As a rule, the doctorate is embarked on after the completion of a first degree course of studies concluding in the →Magister, →Diplom or →Staatsprüfung, as well as

following the award of a Master's degree. The doctorate serves as proof of ability to undertake in-depth academic work.

**Promotionsrecht**

Higher education institution's right to award doctorates. The right is normally accorded to universities and equivalent institutions, though also, under certain conditions, to colleges of art and music.

**Prüfungsordnung**

Examination regulations - legal regulations of different types in school and higher education governing examination prerequisites, content and procedures. Depending on the type of examination, the regulations are issued by the ministries responsible or, where higher education examinations are concerned, they are issued by the higher education institutions and, as a rule, approved by the Ministry of Science of the →Land concerned.

**Rahmenlehrplan**

Framework curriculum for vocational subjects at the →Berufsschule within the framework of vocational training in the dual system. Framework curricula are decided on by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the →Länder once they have been coordinated with the training regulations for the in-company part of training within the dual system and are implemented by the Länder in specific curricula for each Land.

**\*\*\* Realschulabschluss**

→Mittlerer Schulabschluss

**Realschule**

Type of school at lower secondary level, usually comprising grades 5-10. Provides pupils with a more extensive general education and the opportunity to go on to courses of education at upper secondary level that lead to vocational or higher education entrance qualifications.

**Realschule plus**

Type of school at lower secondary level in Rheinland-Pfalz providing the courses of education otherwise offered by the →Hauptschule and the →Realschule.

**Rechtsaufsicht**

Legal supervision - state supervision of the legality of actions taken by public law bodies, including schools and higher education institutions.

**Regelschule**

Type of school at lower secondary level in Thüringen providing the courses of education otherwise offered by the →Hauptschule and the →Realschule.

**Regelstudienzeit**

Standard period of study - length of time in which it is possible to obtain a first qualification for entry into a profession at higher education institutions and at →Berufsakademien. It is defined in the examination regulations. The Regelstudienzeit for →Bachelor's courses of study six, seven or eight semesters, for →Master's courses two, three or four semesters.

**Regionale Schule**

Type of school at lower secondary level in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern providing the courses of education otherwise offered by the →Hauptschule and the →Realschule.

**Regionalschule**

Type of school at lower secondary level in Schleswig-Holstein providing the courses of education otherwise offered by the →Hauptschule and the →Realschule.

**Sachunterricht**

Subject taught at primary school familiarising pupils with scientific and technical phenomena and with social, economic and historical aspects of their own area.

**Schulamt**

Lower-level authority within Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs' two or three-tier school supervisory system. The Schulamt is either responsible for all schools in a local authority or for particular types of school.

**Schularten mit mehreren Bildungsgängen**

Schools with several courses of education – a category used in school statistics which applies to types of school providing the courses of education otherwise offered by the →Hauptschule and →Realschule [→Mittelschule, →Regelschule, →Sekundarschule, →Erweiterte Realschule, →Integrierte Haupt- und Realschule, →Verbundene Haupt- und Realschule, →Regionale Schule, →Regionalschule, →Oberschule, →Realschule plus]. Outside statistics, Schularten mit mehreren Bildungsgängen also include →Gesamtschulen which additionally offer the →Gymnasium course of education.

**Schulkindergarten**

School establishment for children who, although they have reached the compulsory school age, have not yet attained an adequate level of development to start school.

**Schulkonferenz**

School conference – body of participation in the school sector, made up of teachers', parents' and pupils' representatives.

**Schulordnung**

School regulations – ordinance enacted by the individual →Länder governing the legal relationship between the pupils and the school [e.g. entrance, promotion to next grade, examination procedures, assessment of performance] and matters concerning school organisation and participation.

**Schulprogramm**

Schedule of the main focuses and objectives of the work of schools on the basis of Land regulations regarding the content and qualifications obtained after completing the courses. As a rule, the school-specific programmes also determine evaluation methods and criteria.

**Schulträger**

School maintaining body. For public-sector schools, usually a local authority [commune/district] or, less commonly, the →Land. Private schools are maintained by a non-profit-making body [especially churches and non-denominational backers] or private individuals. The maintaining body is responsible for the establishment, maintenance and administration of the school and normally bears the material costs [whilst the staff costs for teachers at public-sector schools are borne by the Land].

**Sekundarschule**

Type of school at lower secondary level in Bremen and Sachsen-Anhalt providing the courses of education otherwise offered by the →Hauptschule and the →Realschule.

**Sonderkindergarten**

Pre-school establishment for children with disabilities - also known as a *Förderkindergarten*.

**Sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf**

Special educational needs - individually tailored measures covering education, lessons, therapy and care for children or young people with physical and sensory impairments and/or psychosocial disturbances.

**\*\*\*Sonderschule**

→Förderschule

**Sonderschullehrer**

Special education teacher who has completed a specific teacher training course of study followed by a preparatory service [→Vorbereitungsdienst] for work at special schools.

**Sozialpädagoge**

Graduate who has completed a course of study in social education at a university, →Fachhochschule or →Berufsakademie and who is qualified to work in such areas as youth welfare services, social work or health assistance.

**Staatsprüfung**

State examination concluding a course of study in certain subjects [e.g. medical subjects, teaching, law]. 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.

**Studierendenschaft**

All matriculated students at a higher education institution. Under the legal supervision of the higher education institution's governing board, the students elect self-governing bodies to represent the students' interests in matters of higher education policy and also social and cultural matters.

**\*\*\*Studiendirektor**

→Studienrat

**Studienordnung**

Study regulations - regulations on the content and structure of a course of study, based on the examination regulations.

**Studienrat**

Title of teaching post [entry office] for teachers in the senior civil service grade [teachers at →Gymnasien and vocational schools]. Senior positions are *Oberstudienrat* and *Studiendirektor*.

**Studierendenschaft**

All matriculated students at a higher education institution. Under the legal supervision of the higher education institution's governing board, the students elect self-governing bodies to represent the students' interests in matters of higher education policy and also social and cultural matters.

**Technische Hochschule**

Type of higher education institution equivalent in status to university. Focus traditionally lies in natural science and engineering.

**\*\*\*Technische Universität**

→Technische Hochschule

**Verbundene oder Zusammengefasste Haupt- und Realschule**

Type of school at lower secondary level in Berlin, Hessen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern und Niedersachsen providing the courses of education otherwise offered by the →Hauptschule and →Realschule.

**Verwaltungsfachhochschule**

→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.

**Volkshochschule**

Adult education establishment, usually publicly maintained, offering a wide range of continuing education courses in general and vocational subjects.

**Volksschule**

Former name for compulsory school [today known as →Grundschule and →Hauptschule].

**Vorbereitungsdienst**

Preparatory service – practical training phase completed after the First State Examination and concluded by the Second State Examination. Particularly for teaching careers but also for other civil service careers.

**Vorklasse**

School establishment in some →Länder for children who have reached compulsory school age but have not yet attained an adequate level of development to start school and, in some cases, for children aged over five.

**Weiterführende Studiengänge**

Graduate study courses that are based on a first higher education degree or that supplement this [further study, supplementary and follow-up courses]. At the end of graduate study courses, participants obtain a certificate or further higher education degree [→Diplom, →Magister, →Master] but these do not lead to the Promotion.

**Werkrealschule**

Type of school at lower secondary level in Baden-Württemberg comprising grades 5-10. After successful completion of grade 10 and after passing a final examination, pupils obtain the →Mittlerer Schulabschluss. During grade 10, pupils attend →Berufsfachschule twice a week where they receive basic vocational education in preparation for vocational training. Pupils who do not aim for the Mittlerer Schulabschluss obtain a →Hauptschulabschluss as a school-leaving certificate after successful completion of grade 9 and after passing a final examination.

**Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife**

The certificate of Allgemeine Hochschulreife entitles holders to admission to all subjects at all higher education institutions. It is usually obtained by passing the →Abitur examination and incorporates examination marks as well as continuous assessment of pupil's performance in the last two years of upper →Gymnasium level [*Qualifikationsphase*].

**Zweiter Bildungsweg**

Establishments providing adults with an opportunity to obtain general education school leaving certificates later in life following completion of a first stage of education [establishments include →Abendhauptschule, →Abendrealschule, →Abendgymnasium, →Kolleg].