

Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) and the Association of German Universities and other Higher Education Institutions (HRK). In 1999, a system of accreditation for programs of study has become operational under the control of an Accreditation Council at national level. Programs and qualifications accredited under this scheme are designated accordingly in the Diploma Supplement.

## 8.4 Organization of Studies

### 8.41 Integrated "Long" Programs (One-Tier):

#### *Diplom degrees, Magister Artium, Staatsprüfung*

Studies are either mono-disciplinary (single subject, *Diplom* degrees, most programs completed by a *Staatsprüfung*) or comprise a combination of either two major or one major and two minor fields (*Magister Artium*). As common characteristics, in the absence of intermediate (first-level) degrees, studies are divided into two stages. The first stage (1.5 to 2 years) focuses - without any components of general education - on broad orientations and foundations of the field(s) of study including propaedeutical subjects. An Intermediate Examination (*Diplom-Vorprüfung* for *Diplom* degrees; *Zwischenprüfung* or credit requirements for the M.A.) is prerequisite to enter the second stage of advanced studies and specializations. Degree requirements always include submission of a thesis (up to 6 months duration) and comprehensive final written and oral examinations. Similar regulations apply to studies leading to a *Staatsprüfung*.

- Studies at *Universities* last usually 4.5 years (*Diplom* degree, *Magister Artium*) or 3.5 to 6 years (*Staatsprüfung*). The *Diplom* degree is awarded in engineering disciplines, the exact/natural and economic sciences. In the humanities, the corresponding degree is usually the *Magister Artium* (M.A.). In the social sciences, the practice varies as a matter of institutional traditions. Studies preparing for the legal, medical, pharmaceutical and teaching professions are completed by a *Staatsprüfung*.

The three qualifications are academically equivalent. As the final (and only) degrees offered in these programs at graduate-level, they qualify to apply for admission to doctoral studies, cf. Sec. 8.5.

- Studies at *Fachhochschulen (FH)* /Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) last 4 years and lead to a *Diplom (FH)* degree. While the *FH/UAS* are non-doctorate granting institutions, qualified graduates may pursue doctoral work at doctorate-granting institutions, cf. Sec. 8.5.
- Studies at *Kunst- und Musikhochschulen* (Colleges of Art/Music, etc.) are more flexible in their organization, depending on the field and individual objectives. In addition to *Diplom/Magister* degrees, awards include Certificates and Certified Examinations for specialized areas and professional purposes.

### 8.42 First/Second Degree Programs (Two-tier):

#### *Bakkalaureus/Bachelor, Magister/Master degrees*

These programs apply to all three types of institutions. Their organization makes use of credit point systems and modular components. First degree programs (3 to 4 years) lead to *Bakkalaureus/Bachelor* degrees (B.A., B.Sc.). Graduate second degree programs (1 to 2 years) lead to *Magister/Master* degrees (M.A., M.Sc.). Both may be awarded in dedicated form to indicate particular

specializations or applied/professional orientations (B./M. of ... ; B.A., B.Sc. or M.A., M.Sc. in ... ). All degrees include a thesis requirement.

## 8.5 Doctorate

Universities, most specialized institutions and some Colleges of Art/Music are doctorate-granting institutions. Formal prerequisite for admission to doctoral work is a qualified *Diplom* or *Magister/Master* degree, a *Staatsprüfung*, or a foreign equivalent. Admission further requires the acceptance of the Dissertation research project by a supervisor. Holders of a qualified *Diplom (FH)* degree or other first degrees may be admitted for doctoral studies with specified additional requirements.

## 8.6 Grading Scheme

The grading scheme usually comprises five levels (with numerical equivalents; intermediate grades may be given): "*Sehr Gut*" (1) = Very Good; "*Gut*" (2) = Good; "*Befriedigend*" (3) = Satisfactory; "*Ausreichend*" (4) = Sufficient; "*Nicht ausreichend*" (5) = Non-Sufficient/Fail. The minimum passing grade is "*Ausreichend*" (4). Verbal designations of grades may vary in some cases and for doctoral degrees. Some institutions may also use the ECTS grading scheme.

## 8.7 Access to Higher Education

The General Higher Education Entrance Qualification (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife, Abitur*) after 12 to 13 years of schooling gives access to all higher education studies. Specialized variants (*Fachgebundene Hochschulreife*) allow for admission to particular disciplines. Access to *Fachhochschulen (UAS)* is also possible after 12 years (*Fachhochschulreife*). Admission to Colleges of Art/Music may be based on other or require additional evidence demonstrating individual aptitude.

## 8.8 National Sources of Information

- *Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK)* [Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany] - Lennéstrasse 6, D-53113 Bonn; Fax: +49/[0]228/501-229; with
  - Central Office for Foreign Education (ZaB) as German NARIC and ENIC; www.kmk.org; E-Mail: zab@kmk.org
  - "Documentation and Educational Information Service" as German EURYDICE-Unit, providing the national dossier on the education system (EURYBASE, annual update, www.eurydice.org; E-Mail eurydice@kmk.org).
- *Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK)* [Association of German Universities and other Higher Education Institutions]. Its "Higher Education Compass" (www.higher-education-compass.hrk.de) features comprehensive information on institutions, programs of study, etc. Ahrstrasse 39, D-53175 Bonn; Fax: +49/[0]228 / 887-210; E-Mail: sekr@hrk.de