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STUDY ABROAD

German Education System



[Overview](#)

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This is how the German school system works

The German education system functions upon the rules and regulations of the **Basic Law "Grundgesetz"**. The Federal Ministries of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science is the main authority for making education, science and arts policy guidelines, and for adopting related laws and administrative regulations.

The ministry closely collaborates with the Federation and Länders (German states) authorities, in supervising the entire activity of the educational institutions, organizations and foundations.

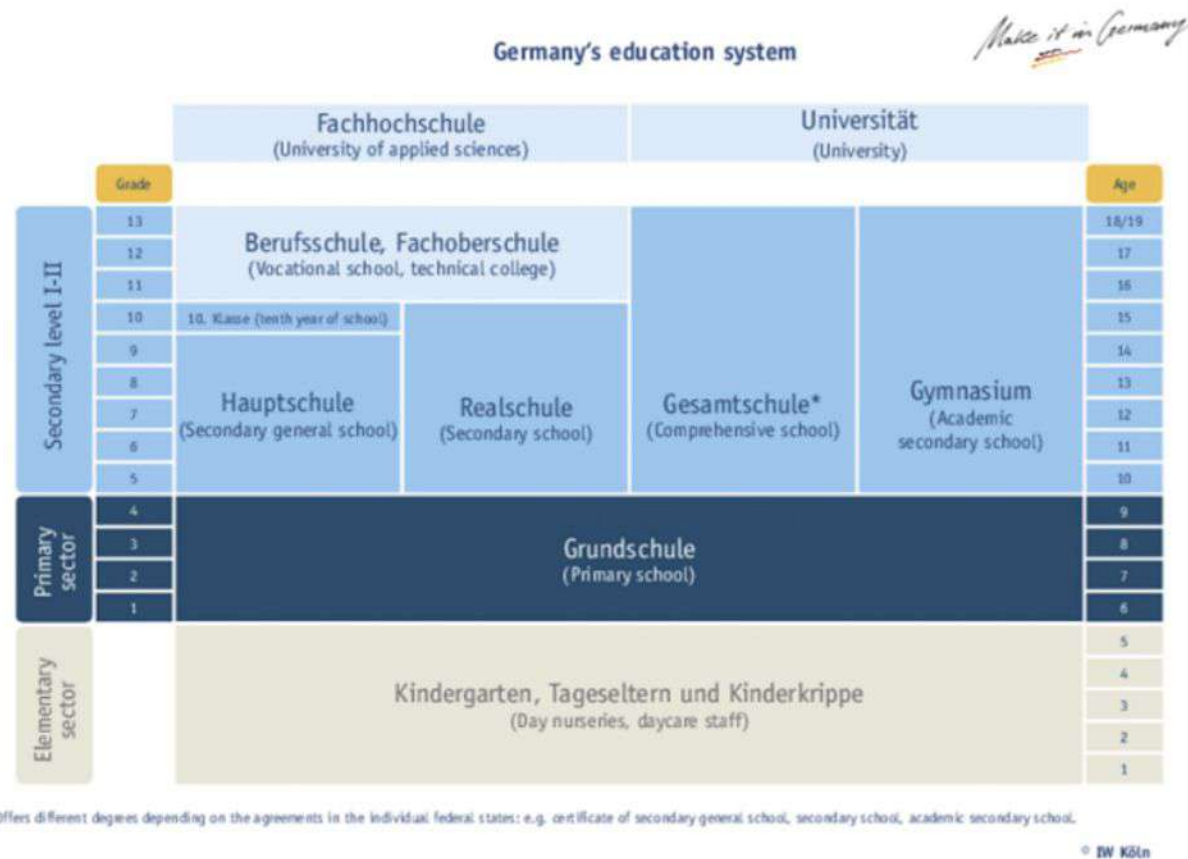
Responsibility on education issues in Germany is shared amongst Länders and the Federation (which has a minor role). Though, there are areas of cooperation in the education field for which such a distinction between both parts doesn't exist, known as "joint tasks" or "*Gemeinschaftsaufgaben*".

Länders, on the other hand, have a wide legislative power around their territory about school, academic, adult and continuing sector (except if the Basic law empowers the Federation with such a power instead).

How is the school system structured in Germany?

The German school system is divided into 5 levels:

- **Early Childhood Education.**
- **Primary Education.**
- **Secondary Education.**
- **Tertiary Education.**
- **Continuing Education.**



Early Childhood Education in Germany

What Is Considered Preschool Education in Germany?

Early childhood education is optional education and care that children between 0-6 of age receive in the Federal Territory of Germany.

Who's Responsible for the German Preschool Education?

Supervision of the German pre-school education is mainly the responsibility of the **State Youth Welfare Office** "*Landesjugendämter*" of the respective Lander. They're in charge of issuing licenses for the preschool education and care institutions.

To get such a preschool education operation license, providers have to meet the requirements. This includes having the right child/staff ratio, properly qualifications educators, adequate space, appropriate equipment and hygiene, as well as the age-appropriate education program.

Youth offices manage also the operation and investment money that Lander or "*Kommunen*" allocates for activities and advancement of German preschool education centers.

Which Are the Institutions of Preschool Education in Germany?

German pre-school education is largely offered by privately-run day-care centers and less by institutions established by local authorities. Preschool education providers are "*Kinderkrippen*" (crèches), child-minding centers, kindergarten, and day-care centers.

Priority in offering childhood education services is offered to non-public organizations, such as Churches, Welfare or Parent's Associations. Local authorities may offer preschool education services, only if there's a lack of private initiatives or poor services of the aforementioned providers.

Opening hours of the preschool education institutions are scheduled in cooperation between parents and managing staff. However, usually children get a 7-hour day childhood education and care, including lunch and sometimes a midday break.

Which Are the Teaching Methodology and Materials in Preschool Education in Germany?

For Children Under the Age of 3

The core educational mission of the German preschool education (age under 3) is the enhancement of communication skills amongst kids. Secondly, it is the development of their language skills through the social interaction with other toddlers and Communication and language skills are taught by language role model (educators), finger plays, singing, pictured books and additional teaching practices/instruments.

Furthermore, an important part in pre-educating children is given to the motor development. This includes increasing body awareness, self-acceptance, self-confidence and concentration amongst the toddlers.

Motor development is reached through physical activities, visiting public environments, rhythmic early education programs, singing and movement playing.

For the Children over the Age of 2

Core values that preschool education seeks to develop amongst children are the enhancement of their teamwork skills, along with their level of integration in daily life activities.

Key areas of German preschool education of children older than 2 are (1) language, writing, communication, (2) personal and social development, (3) development of values and religious education, (4) mathematics, natural sciences, (information) technology (5) fine arts/working with different media (6) body, movement, health and (7) nature and cultural environments.

Such values are taught through self-organized learning, creative learning, teamwork building activities, investigation and experimental activities.

Assessment of the Educational Achievements in Preschool Education in Germany

Children are not assessed regarding their educational achievement reached by participating in German preschool institutions. Instead, they're constantly supervised by their educators or trainers regarding their attainment from learning activities.

The opinion of educators is discussed with parents of the children, who together agree on further measures on development of kids' learning skills.

What If a Child Isn't yet Ready to Begin Compulsory School Studies?

There is a middle option for children having reached the compulsory school attendance age, who yet hasn't reached the needed development leading to further studies. This is relevant for children with disabilities and those in need for special education. So, they attend a special school offered by some Landers, known as School Kindergarten "*Schulkindergärten*", or a Preliminary Class "*Vorklassen*" beforehand.

Compulsory Education in Germany

What Is Considered as Compulsory Education in Germany?

All Germans are obliged to attend primary and secondary education, ever since they reach the age of 6, up until they complete a 9-year full-time schooling at *Gymnasium*, or 10 years of full-time years for other general education schools.

If youngsters fail to attend full-time classes at the general or vocational education schools, at upper secondary level, they've to attend part-time left-aside classes. This applies even if they've already passed the period of their compulsory education. Such obligation is known as compulsory attendance "*Berufsschule Berufsschulpflicht*" and lasts 3 years.

Other children who fail to attend at all such education and training, they've may be required to attend full-time classes and trainings (for vocational schools only).

Disabled youngsters have an obligation to complete compulsory education too. In dependence to their special education needs "*Sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf*" they will attend either a normal school or a special school "*Sonderpädagogische Bildungseinrichtungen*".

German compulsory education obliges pupils to regularly participate in school lessons, as well as in other formal and informal schooling activities/events/projects. Such compulsion extends also to their parents who've to regularly supervise study progress of their children and participate in school parent's meetings. This also includes training companies which are in charge of keeping the evidence of the pupils' attendance in the vocational training and children's practical commitment (for vocational schools).

German Primary Education

What Is Considered Primary Education in Germany?

Grundschule (primary school) offer mandatory education through mixed-ability classes for children of age 6 until they complete grade 4 (or 6 in Berlin and Brandenburg) of school studies.

There are two primary school education systems in Germany. In a 5-day school week pre-education system, there're 188 teaching days/annually. In a 6-day school week preschool system, there're 208 days of teaching/annually, by including also teachings during 2 Saturdays/every month.

Primary school pupils are obliged to attend 20 to 29 courses/1 week, and 20-22 /first year. Primary school courses normally last up to 45 minutes. During 1 day up to 6 courses can be taught.

Which are the Teaching Practices in Primary Schools in Germany?

The core objective of the German primary education is development of essential understanding, skills, abilities and key competences amongst pupils.

Subjects taught in German primary schools are German language, mathematics, general studies, foreign language, art, handicrafts/textile design, music, sports, and religion/ethics. They also teach intercultural, mint, media, health, musical-aesthetic, sustainable development, and values education.

Learning objectives in primary schools are attained through engagement of pupils in planning, running, analyzing study subjects (lessons) in an adapted way, which goes along with their knowledge, interest, curiosity and concerns. Students are also encouraged to take part in organizing initiatives and interdisciplinary projects of the school.

Primary school textbooks in Germany, used as study reference, have to be approved the respective Ministry.

People suffering long-term or permanent illness or physical incapacity who couldn't attend primary education lessons they may well receive such education at their homes.

Moreover Germany offers special primary education scheme for children of the professional travelers, who cannot attend regular primary education. Schools like School for Children of Professional Travelers "*Schule für die kinder beruflich Reisender*" offer separate education for such group of children, during the period they're not traveling.

There's even a School for Circus Children "*Schule für Circuskinder*".

Germany has also vocationally-oriented primary education modules. This education is offered for the children of workers in companies/institutions such as EU project BeKoSch (Development of Professional Skills for Showmen through Modules).

What's more, Germany has International Schools offering primary education through bilingual lessons in several languages, such as the European Schools.

Which Is the Grading System in German Primary Schools?

By completing lessons of the grade 1, children are automatically transferred to the grade 2, regardless level of knowledge attained during such studies.

Starting from grade 2, these children are awarded a suitable mark, in dependence to the level of knowledge they've attained during studies. If failing to pass the grade, children have to repeat the grade lessons once more.

In the Pupil's school report "Zeugnis" is issued showing all the marks achieved during a school year, and according to that is decided whether the child will pass to the next grade or has to repeat the same grade.

The progress of pupils in German primary schools is evaluated upon a 6-mark grading system as follows:

- 1 (very good).
- 2 (good).
- 3 (satisfactory).
- 4 (adequate).
- 5 (poor).
- 6 (very poor).

Does a Pupil Receive a Primary School Leaving Certificate in Germany?

There isn't any examination upon completing a German primary school. Thus, primary school-leaving certificate aren't usually issued, except for the Lander Baden-Württemberg and Rheinland-Pfalz.

Instead, when pupils leave a German primary school they must have reached "the Grundschule target outcomes". Accordingly, there are issued an annual report of their studies during 4th/6th grade.

What Is Considered Secondary Education in Germany?

What Is Considered Secondary Education in Germany?

German Secondary education takes place after the primary school, and it's separated into lower secondary level "Sekundarstufe I" and upper secondary level "Sekundarstufe II".

The lower secondary education is the education offered for pupils of age 10 – 15/16 in grades 5/7 to 9/10. Lessons in this level are of a general nature and serve as preparation for the upper level of secondary education.

The upper secondary education is the education that pupils of age 15/16 – 18/who have completed lower level of secondary school receive for the purpose of getting a university entrance qualification or a vocational qualification. This level resumes all the courses of lower secondary level which built the basis of knowledge of the participating pupils.

Germany has various secondary schools attended by children of various abilities and various prior qualifications received in primary education.

Which Are the Types of Secondary Schools in Germany?

Federal country of Germany offers secondary education in public and private schools.

Germany's publicly-funded secondary schools are:

- **German high schools issuing specialized qualifications in one study area.**
 - "**Gymnasium**". Providing intensive and in-depth general education, general knowledge for university studies, and for scientific work. It normally covers schooling years from grade 5-12 or 5-13, leading to an "*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*" known as "*Abitur*".
 - "**Hauptschule**". Teaching basic general education, leading to a vocational or university entrance qualification. Education in such school lasts from grade 5-9, and sometimes includes the grade 10 as well, leading to a "*Hauptschulabschluss*".
 - "**Realschule**". Offering more extensive education, leading to a vocational or university entrance qualification. It usually covers schooling years from grade 5 to 10, "*Realschulabschluss*".
- **German schools with more than one study course "*Schularten mit mehreren Bildungsgängen*".** They offer 2-3 different study subjects.
- **German vocational schools.** They offer lessons and practical placement, known as a dual system. These are the types of vocational schools available in Germany:
 - "**Fachoberschule**". Providing 2-year education to the holders of maturity certificate "*Mittlerer Schulabschluss*" leading to a "*Fachhochschulreife*", entitling holder to enter a university of applied sciences. If a 13 grade is held in this institution, a pupil completing it can receive a "*Fachgebundene Hochschulreife*" or an "*Abitur*".
 - "**Berufsoberschule**". Providing a 2-year general and in-depth education and training regarding initial vocational knowledge and training obtained during previous education, leading to a vocational qualification (or *Abitur* – by proving the good command in second foreign language). There is also a 3/4 year course of study which is aimed at getting a double qualification, both vocational and higher education qualification.
 - "**Berufsfachschule**". Offering education for one or few professions which require formal recognition or leading to a vocational training qualification.
 - "**Berufsschule**". Delivering practically-oriented and interdisciplinary lessons and skills, which prepare pupils for further vocational education or for a job in a profession. They do that based on the dual system, education and training combined.
 - "**Berufliches Gymnasium**". Providing a 3-year long secondary education program, leading to an *Abitur*.

Germany's private secondary schools are the following:

- **Alternative schools "*Ersatzschulen*".** Providing equal lessons and courses as public secondary schools.
- **Complementary schools "*Ergänzungsschulen*".** Teaching additional courses, despite those that are also offered

Which are the Objectives of the German Secondary Education?

Lower secondary education in Germany, as its core mission has the fundamental education, individual specialization, and identification of individual abilities amongst children.

German secondary education objectives are achieved by:

- **Engaging children intellectually, emotionally and physically.**
- **Teaching them independence, decision making, as well as personal, social and political responsibility.**
- **Assisting them in attaining their educational goals.**
- **Supporting them in advancing their specialist knowledge.**

General upper secondary schools in Germany aim to prepare youngsters with the needed understanding to obtain the Abitur or other university entrance qualification. With a university entrance qualification they can apply for further academic studies in any German higher education institution, or apply for a professional education and training study course.

Gymnasium offers youngsters with exhaustive understanding, expertise and know-hows for German and foreign language as well as Mathematics. These institutions also taught young people self-development, social responsibility, and participation in democratic society. Additionally, they're informed and guided regarding academic institutions and their admission requirements, vocational sphere and access requirements, together with the employment prospect in various professions.

Upper secondary education offered during 2 full-time years by the German vocational high-schools "*Berufliches Gymnasium*" prepares youngsters to get a vocational qualification for a skilled work as qualified staff "*Fachgebundene Hochschulreife*". Such qualification allows them to get a job in a profession requiring a formal qualification. The same time, such qualification can lead into a university entrance qualification, if the holder shows a good command on a second foreign language. Additionally, with such qualification the holder can study in a technical university, but before that, they've to study for 2 years until they get a maturity certificate "*Mittlerer Schulabschluss*".

Which is the Grading system in the German Secondary School?

The progress of pupils in the German secondary schools is evaluated upon a 6-mark grading system as follows:

- 1 (very good).
- 2 (good).
- 3 (satisfactory).
- 4 (adequate).
- 5 (poor).
- 6 (very poor).

What Makes a Tertiary Education in Germany?

German tertiary education in Germany provides higher education for qualifying individuals, who before all, have completed secondary education in Germany or abroad which entitles them to enter higher education studies.

Who's Responsible for Supervision of German Tertiary Education?

Higher education institutions under the Basic law enjoy the autonomy to independently manage the scholarship awarding, research and teaching activity.

For administrative issues, such as academic and governmental matters, these institutions have to be in accord with the Lander's ministry.

Which Are the Institutions of German Tertiary Education?

Higher education studies (tertiary education providers) in Germany are named the recognized institutions providing higher education study courses leading to a profession that addresses needs of the local and international labour market.

Germany's education providers, recognized as Higher Education Institutions are:

- Universities “*Universitäten*” and *Equal Institutions*.
- “Technische Hochschulen”/“Technische Universitäten”.
- “Pädagogische Hochschulen”.
- Theological colleges.
- Universities of Applied Sciences “*Fachhochschulen*”.
- Art and Music Colleges.
- Higher Education Institutions for Federal Armed Forces.
- Higher Education Institutions Offering Dual Studies “*Berufsakademie*” (BA).
- Institutions of Continuing Vocational Education “*Fachschulen*” And “*Fachakademien*” In Berlin. According to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), the education received from these institutions is equal to the first level of higher education.

What Are German Universities and Equal Institutions Specialized In?

German universities are higher education institutions providing wide range of study courses. Equivalent institutions to universities offer a minor number of study courses, i.e. natural and engineering, theology, pedagogy, or alike.

Despite differences between them, both of these institutions are entitled to award Ph.D. titles “*Doktorgrad*” (Promotionsrecht).

Universities and equivalent institutions also have the exclusivity to offer education and scientific research study programs for the future academics.

What Are Colleges of Art and Music in Germany Specialized In?

German colleges of art and music are higher education institutions delivering study courses for education of the future artists or musicians, including teachers of art or music. Some of these institutions teach all art subjects and some others only certain study subjects of such area.

German colleges of art and music offer the following study courses:

- Visual, design and performing arts.
- Film, television and media.
- Theoretical studies, through the following core subjects:
 - Fine arts.
 - Art history and art pedagogy.
 - History and teaching of music.
 - Media and communication.
 - Digital media.

What Are the Universities of Applied Sciences “*Fachhochschulen*” Specialized In?

German universities of applied sciences “*Fachhochschulen*” are independent higher education institutions providing practically-oriented and responsive teaching and research programs, towards labour market needs. These institutions are mainly self-sustained, and some of them are publicly funded.

The key distinction feature of German universities of applied sciences is inclusion of a paid practical training (practical job) “*Praxissemester*” in the study program. Such trainings are carried in premises of private businesses or public institutions/administrations aimed at placing the student closer to the labour market needs.

Teaching professors in *Fachhochschulen*, despite being academics, have a strong background of professional experience in the labour market, out of the academia.

German Universities of applied sciences offer the following study courses:

- Agricultural economy.
- Design.
- Technology.
- Business.
- Social work.

Along with other German universities of applied sciences, there is a "*Verwaltungsfachhochschulen*". They provide study programs especially designed for training and educating civil servants of the Federal public administration. There are about 29 such institutions in Germany, and they are sponsored and managed by the Federation or the Land.

Note: In some Landers Fachhochschulen is called "*Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften*".

What Are "Berufsakademien" Specialized For?

German professional Academies "*Berufsakademien*" are higher education institutions providing alternative education through the academic training entitling students, who have finished the upper secondary education and have a university entrance qualification, to practice a specific profession.

Qualifications of the German Higher Education System

Bachelor Degree – First German Higher Education Qualification

The first higher education qualification in Germany is the Bachelor degree. The standard period of study "*Regelstudienzeit*" in a Bachelor program is 6 semesters, or 3 full academic years. In Universities of Applied Sciences bachelor studies last 6-7 semesters, by also including the practical work. In German Colleges of Art and Music such studies last about 8 semesters or 4 academic years. In Professional Academies they last 3 academic years. In Fachschulen bachelor degree studies last 2 academic years.

Depending the type of higher education institution of higher education issuing it, there are different Bachelor titles, as follows:

- Bachelor of Arts (B.A.).
- Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.).
- Bachelor of Engineering (B. Eng.).
- Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.).
- Bachelor titles issued by the College of Arts and Music:
 - Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.).
 - Bachelor of Arts (B.A.).
 - Bachelor of Music (B. Mus.)
- Bachelor titles issued by higher education institutions offering studies in the education field:
 - Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.).

Which Are the Offered Bachelor Degree Fields of Study in Germany?

Bachelor Study Fields in German Universities and Equivalent Institutions.

German universities and equal institutions are recognized for providing the widest range of study courses compared to other institutions offering tertiary education.

Study courses offered by German universities and equivalent institutions are the following:

- Mathematics and Natural Sciences.
 - Mathematics.
 - Physics.
 - Computer science.
 - Chemistry.
 - Biochemistry.
 - Biology.
 - Earth science.
 - Pharmacy
- Medicine.
 - Human medicine.
 - Dentistry.
 - Veterinary medicine.
- Agronomy, Forestry and Nutritional Science.
 - Agronomy.
 - Forestry.
 - Nutritional science.
- Engineering Sciences.
 - Architecture.
 - Civil engineering.
 - Geodesy.
 - Electrical engineering.
 - Mechanical engineering.
 - Chemical engineering.
 - Traffic and transport studies.
 - Environmental technology.

International Bachelor study programs that German universities and equal institutions offer are:

- Languages and Humanities.
- Law, Economics and Social Sciences.
- Engineering Sciences.

Bachelor Study Fields in German Universities of Applied Sciences.

German Fachhochschulens provide the following Bachelor study courses:

- Agronomy, Forestry and Nutritional Science.
- Engineering Sciences.
- Economics/Economic Law.
- Social Work.
- Public Administration, Administration of Justice.
- Information Technology, Computer Science and Mathematics.
- Natural Sciences.
- Design.
- Information and Communication Studies.
- Nursing and Management in the Public Health System.

International Bachelor study programs that German Universities of Applied Sciences offer are:

- Law, Economics and Social Sciences.
- Engineering sciences.

Bachelor Study Fields in German Fachschulen.

Bachelor study programs that institutions of the continuing vocational training offer are:

- Agricultural economy.
- Design.
- Technology.
- Business and social work.

Core Bachelor subjects of study in these institutions are:

- Electrical, Mechanical and Construction engineering.
- Business management.

Bachelor Study Fields in German Berufsakademien.

Bachelor study programs that professional academies in Germany offer are:

- Business.
- Technology.
- Social Work.

Magister Degree – Second German Higher Education Qualification.

The second higher education qualification in Germany is the Master degree. It takes 2 -4 semesters to complete studies in a German master degree program. In universities and equal institutions as well as college of art and music, this period is mostly 4 semesters. In Fachhochschulen this period is 3-4 semesters.

To complete a Master degree, students must achieve 300 ECTS credit points also including the points received by the earlier qualification. To complete a Master degree, a student whose earlier qualification is a Bachelor degree, must achieve 360 ECTS points.

The titles that can be received by completing a German Master degree at universities or equal institutions are:

- Master of Arts (M.A.).
- Master of Science (M.Sc.).
- Master of Engineering (M. Eng.).
- Master of Laws (LL.M.).
- Master of Education (M.Ed.).

The titles that can be received by completing a German Master degree at colleges or art and music are:

- Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.).
- Master of Arts (M.A.).
- Master of Music (M.Mus.).

The titles that can be received by completing a German Master degree at universities of applied sciences are:

- Master of Arts (M.A.).
- Master of Science (M.Sc.).
- Master of Engineering (M. Eng.).
- Master of Laws (LL.M.).

There are Master degree titles that can be received by completing a continuing/specialist education such as:

- Master of Business Administration (MBA).

German Higher Education Programs Outside the Bachelor and Master Level

Diplom Examination

Some German study courses are completed by sitting a Diplom examination on a single study subject, leading to a Diplom degree, i.e. Diplom in Psychology or Engineering. If the Diplom is issued by the University Applied Sciences, usually it contains the phrasing "FH" included.

Diplom issued by the Universities of Applied Sciences is comparable to Bachelor degree.

Magister Examination

Some other German study courses are completed by sitting a Magister examination on a combined study subject leading to a Magister degree, such as "Magister of Atrium".

Magister degree issued by the University of Applied Sciences is comparable to a Master degree.

Staatsprüfung – State Examination

For some study courses, a state examination must be undertaken to prepare students for a particular profession of importance to the public interest. This takes account for medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, pharmaceuticals, food chemistry, law and teaching (education).

Such professions cannot be pursued without having to pass a 2-stage examination, carried by state examiners and academic professors.

Church and Academic Examination

For students having completed a 5-year study program in theology subject, they've to sit a Church and academic examination before landing themselves in the profession. This takes account of jobs as a priest or a pastoral assistant.

Postgraduate Study Courses – Supplementary and Follow-Up Study Courses

Meanwhile or afterward completing bachelor or master studies, there's an option of taking up additional 2-year long studies in support to the existing studies, or to specialize in a specific study field. These are known as postgraduate study courses.

Examination of Colleges of Art and Music

Some study programs offered by German colleges of art and music are completed by sitting the final examination "Abschlussprüfung" or a concert examination "Konzertexamen".

PhD Degree – Third German Higher Education Qualification

The third higher education qualification in Germany is the PHD degree. This is a program that is embraced by the most qualified students, and can be taken at German universities and equivalent institutions, in collaboration with non-university research institutes.

There is no standardized period for completing doctoral studies, as this is a more in-depth and individual specialization.

The German doctoral studies include:

- Independent research.
- Oral examination "Rigorosum"/defense of the doctorate thesis "Disputation"

There are several paths to get a PHD degree in Germany, as follows:

- Individual and supervised doctorate.
- Structural doctorate.
- Cooperative doctorate (combination between universities and universities of applied sciences).
- International doctorate.
- Special doctorate.

Title received by completing a German PhD study program is Doctor "Doktorgrad".

Admission Requirements of the German Higher Education Institutions

Admission requirements for German Bachelor Degree:

- **Higher Education Entrance Qualification.** To get admitted in any study course in any higher education institution in Germany, applicants must possess either "The Allgemeine Hochschulreife" commonly referred as "Abitur" or "Fachgebundene Hochschulreife", or a foreign school-leaving certificate comparable to any of these two. German university entrance qualifications are obtained by successfully completing 12/13 years of schooling of a German secondary school, including passing the secondary school final examination. Abitur can also be taken by sitting the Abitur examination, by non-pupils or employed people of particular intellectual ability. Internationals whose foreign secondary school-leaving certificate isn't recognized in Germany for academic studies, they've to follow a one year preparatory course and sit the examination for recognition. They have to also present their foreign secondary school-leaving certificate, proof of having passed the university entrance examination in their home country (if applicable), proof of having been enrolled in such university (if applicable), evidence of having passed certain modules (if applicable).
- **Admission Exam.** Some higher education institutions in Germany, especially arts and sport also require for their applicants to sit an admission examination, for examination of their understanding and aptitudes in the core subjects of the study field.
- **German language command (for international students only).** Most of the German higher education institutions, especially those with German-study program, require from their international applicants to have a good knowledge of the German language. **Proof of German language can be provided also during studies by any of the following ways:**
 - German Language Diploma of the Standing Conference – Level II (Deutsches Sprachdiplom der Kultusministerkonferenz – Zweite Stufe – DSD II).
 - German Language Proficiency Examination for Admission to Higher Education for Foreign Applicants (Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang ausländischer Studienbewerber – DSH).
 - Test of German as a Foreign Language for foreign applicants (Test Deutsch als Fremdsprache für ausländischer Studienbewerber – Test DAF)
 - German language examination as part of the Feststellungsprüfung (assessment test) at a Studienkolleg.
- **Certificate of the Akademische Prüfstelle (for international students only).** Foreign students who've completed an Akademische Prüfstelle (APS) in their country (if applicable).
- **Alternative proofs for refugee students.** Refugee students unable to get their foreign university entrance qualification in their home country are allowed to provide alternative documentation for university admission. One of the ways is to sit an entrance examination. Or, a German language assessment test and probably enroll in Studienkolleg before taking the assessment test for recognition.

To apply in a German college of art and music applicants have to submit both:

- Higher education entrance qualification.
- Artistic aptitude.

At times applicants may be admitted without a higher education entrance qualification following the evidence for possessing a special artistic or musical talent.

To apply in a German University of Applied Sciences applicants have to submit both:

- Higher education entrance qualification/Fachhochschulreife.
- Artistic aptitude (I.e. for design study program).

To apply in a German Berufsakademien, applicants have to submit any of the following:

- Higher education entrance qualification.
- Fachhochschulreife and entrance examination.

To apply in a German Fachschulen, applicants have to submit any of the following:

- Fachhochschulreife (for a recognized profession which needs a prior training).
- Proof of minimum 1-year work experience in the profession.
- Qualification from the Berufsschule.

Or

- Qualification from the Berufsschule/equivalent qualification.
- Proof of minimum 5-year work experience in the profession.

Or for social professions:

- Mittlerer Schulabschluss.
- Proof of relevant education and training.

Admission requirements for the German Master Degree:

- Bachelor degree related to the master studies.
- Entrance examination (for Master studies in art field).
- Special aptitude (for Master studies in art field).
- Proof of minimum 1-year work experience

Admission requirements for the German PhD Degree:

- Master's degree. Issued by universities/equivalent institutions or universities of applied sciences, or other institution (if the applicant is well-qualified).
- Bachelor's degree (in some special occasions). This applies if the applicant is well-qualified, and examination to evaluate their aptitudes "*Promotionseignungsprüfung*" has to take place. Sometimes even a preparatory course.
- Evidence of having passed the first state examination "*Erste Staatsprüfung*".

German Higher Education Study Courses with Nationwide Quotas

For some German higher education study courses there are quotas, if the number of applications exceeds the number of the offered study places. In such case the Foundation for Higher Education Admission "*Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung*" (SfH) and the respective institution together admit and disregard applicants based on a central allocation procedure.

The selection of the students in such case is based on:

- Relevance and the average grade of their earlier qualification with the study course they've applied for (20%).
- Awaiting period between taking the university entrance qualification and applying for academic studies (20%).
- Selection procedure from the higher education provider where they've applied (60%).

German Higher Education Study Courses with Local Restrictions on Admissions

For some other German higher education study courses exists a locally limited number of students for admission. This limitation is usually run by the higher education institution itself or by the SfH.

SfH possesses a joint database that easily compares student applications. If the student has been accepted in another higher education institution, the database frees a study place that can be given to another student.

German Higher Education Study Courses Without Restrictions on the Number of Applicants

For some other German higher education study courses there's no limit set on the number of students to be admitted. As such, all the applicants who can comply with the admission criteria can enroll in studies free from any pre-selection process.

These institutions, sometimes, may issue a prior notification period, to an accepted student.

What Is Considered Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Germany?

Continuing education in Germany is the education that is aimed at responding ever-changing demands of the labour market.

This education type is provided by municipal and private institutions, churches, trade unions, chambers of industry and commerce, associations, political parties, businesses, public authorities, academies, family education centers, vocational schools, Fachschulen, radio, television and other institutions.

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