



# Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe

Germany

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European Commission





# STRUCTURES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS IN EUROPE

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## GERMANY

2009/10

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If you wish to obtain more details on education systems in Europe, please consult the  
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([http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information\\_resources/NationalVetThematic/](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/NationalVetThematic/))  
and the website of the European Training Foundation (<http://www.etf.europa.eu/>)



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## INTRODUCTION: GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT

### Political system

The Basic Law states that the Federal Republic of Germany is a democratic and social federal state (Art. 20). All public authority emanates from the people. It is exercised by the people through elections and referendums and by specific legislative, executive and judicial bodies. The legislature is bound by the constitutional order, the executive and the judiciary by laws and justice. This applies both to the Federation and the *Länder*.

Except as otherwise provided or permitted by the Basic Law, the exercise of governmental powers and the discharge of governmental functions is incumbent on the *Länder* (Art. 30 of the Basic Law). Each Land has its own constitution – according with the principles of a republican, democratic and social state governed by the rule of law within the meaning of the Basic Law (Art. 28). The distribution of legislative competence between the Federation and the *Länder* is defined in the Basic Law, in that the *Länder shall have the right to legislate insofar as this Basic Law does not confer legislative power on the Federation* (Art. 70). Educational and cultural legislation is therefore primarily the responsibility of the *Länder*. The administration of these matters is almost entirely the responsibility of the *Länder*. Alongside education, science and culture there are other major fields in which the *Länder* enjoy exclusive powers; these include internal security/police, local government and regional structural policy.

At federal level, legislative functions are essentially discharged by the German *Bundestag* and executive functions are essentially executed by the Federal Government. At the level of the *Länder* they are discharged by the Land parliaments and the Land governments respectively.

Functions of the judiciary are exercised by the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* (Federal Constitutional Court), other federal courts and the courts of the *Länder* (Art. 92 of the Basic Law). The Federal Constitutional Court rules on interpretation of the Basic Law in particular.

### Territorial and administrative organisation

As of 31 December 2008, Germany has been divided regionally and for administrative purposes into 16 *Länder* (including three city states), 22 administrative regions (*Regierungsbezirke*), 413 districts (*Kreise*) comprising 112 municipalities with the status of a district (*kreisfreie Städte*) and 301 rural districts (*Landkreise*) and 12,227 municipalities (*Gemeinden*).

### Population

In 2007, approximately 82.2 million people lived in Germany. The percentage of the population aged 25 to 64 that has completed at least upper secondary education is 84 per cent. With a population density of 230 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> in 2007, Germany is one of the most densely populated nations in Europe.

### Languages

German is stipulated by law as the official language of administration and the judiciary. There are special provisions in Brandenburg and Sachsen for the use of the Sorbian (Wendish) language.

Education differs from administration and justice in that there are no legislative provisions on the language of instruction. German is the normal language of instruction and training at general education and vocational schools as well as institutions of higher education. The exceptions in the school sector include, alongside certain privately-maintained schools, all bilingual schools and classes as well as instruction and extra classes in the mother tongue for pupils whose native tongue is not German. In 1998, Germany joined the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages of the

Council of Europe and applies this agreement to those speaking Danish, Frisian, Sorbian, Romany and Low German.

The language of instruction in higher education, as a rule, is also German. Admission to specific institutions of higher education or courses may be made subject to proficiency in a foreign language. Individual classes may be conducted in a foreign language if it serves the objectives of the course of study. The institutions of higher education are making increasing use of this possibility.

### **Constitutional groundwork for the education system**

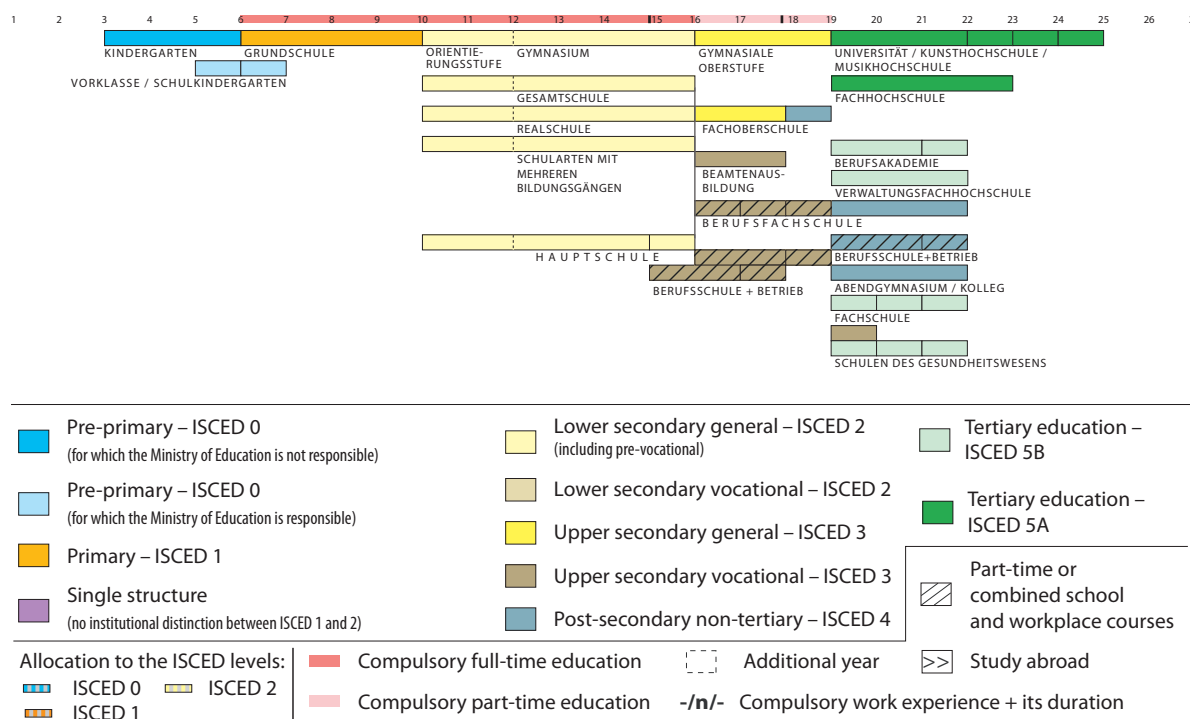
In the Federal Republic of Germany responsibility for the education system is determined by the federal structure of the state. Under the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) the exercise of governmental powers and the fulfilment of governmental responsibility is incumbent upon the individual *Länder* as far as the Basic Law does not provide for or allow for any other arrangement. This particularly applies to the school system, higher education and the sector of adult education and continuing education. Administration of the education system in these areas is almost exclusively a matter for the *Länder*. Detailed regulations are laid down in the constitutions of the *Länder* and in separate laws of the *Länder* on pre-school education, on the school system, on higher education, on adult education and on continuing education. The *Länder* cooperate with each other within the framework of The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (abbr.: *Kultusministerkonferenz* – KMK) on matters of importance for all *Länder*.

The Basic Law contains a few fundamental provisions on questions of education, culture and science: thus for example it guarantees the freedom of art and science, research and teaching (Art. 5, Paragraph 3), the freedom of faith and creed (Art. 4), free choice of profession and of the place of training (Art. 12, Paragraph 1), equality before the law (Art. 3, Paragraph 1) and the rights of parents (Art. 6, Paragraph 2). The entire school system is under the supervision of the state (Art. 7, Paragraph 1).



# 1. INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: ORGANISATION, FUNDING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

## 1.1. Organisation of the initial education and training system



Pre-school education is provided by institutions (*Kindertagesstätten*, *Kindergärten*) catering for children from a few months to six years, the age at which they usually start school. Attendance is optional. As a rule, in the year in which children reach the age of six, they are obliged to attend primary school. All pupils in Germany enter the *Grundschule* which covers grades 1 to 4. The transition from the *Grundschule* (primary school) to one of the different lower secondary school types where pupils remain at least until the completion of their full-time compulsory education is dealt with differently depending on Land legislation. Following the primary school stage at which all children attend mixed-ability classes (grades 1 to 4, in Berlin and Brandenburg grades 1 to 6) the organisation of the secondary school system (grades 5/7 to 12/13) in the *Länder* is characterised by division into the various educational paths with their respective leaving certificates and qualifications for which different school types are responsible. More detailed information is available in section 4.1.

Once pupils have completed compulsory schooling – generally when they reach the age of 15 – they move into upper secondary education. The type of school entered depends on the qualifications and entitlements obtained at the end of lower secondary education. The range of courses on offer includes full-time general education and vocational schools, as well as vocational training within the *duales System* (dual system). The courses of education provided at general education schools within the upper secondary level lead to a higher education entrance qualification. The courses of education provided at vocational schools within the upper secondary level lead to a vocational qualification for skilled work as qualified staff, e.g. in the *anerkannte Ausbildungsberufe* (recognised occupations requiring formal training) or the assistant occupations.

The post-secondary non-tertiary sector comprises, amongst others, *Abendgymnasien* and *Kollegs*, *Berufsoberschulen*, as well as courses of education at *Fachoberschulen* and *Berufsfachschulen*.

leading to the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife*, the *Fachhochschulreife*, or the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*.

The tertiary sector encompasses institutions of higher education and other establishments that offer study courses qualifying for entry into a profession to students who have completed the upper secondary level and obtained a higher education entrance qualification. Universities and equivalent higher education institutions have in common, as a rule, the traditional right to award the *Doktorgrad* (*Promotionsrecht*).

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.

## 1.2. Distribution of responsibilities

### Pre-primary sector

The education, upbringing and supervision of children from the age of a few months to school age is almost exclusively assigned to the child and youth welfare sector. On the federal level, within the framework of public welfare responsibility lies with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend* – BMFSFJ), on the level of the *Länder*, the Ministries of Youth and Social Affairs and, in part, also the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs, are the competent authorities.

### Primary and secondary sector

Supervision of the school system (general education and vocational schools) is the responsibility of the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in the *Länder* in their capacity as the highest educational authorities. The planning and organisation of the overall school system is the responsibility of the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs and the subordinate school supervisory authorities. The *Länder* are in charge of organising the school structure and determining the content of courses and teaching objectives. The supervision of schools by the *Länder* includes *Rechtsaufsicht* (legal supervision), *Fachaufsicht* (academic supervision) and *Dienstaufsicht* (supervision of the staff at public-sector schools). Schools are supervised by the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in their capacity as the highest school supervisory authorities, sometimes by the *Regierungspräsidien* or *Bezirksregierungen* (middle-level school supervisory authorities), and the *Schulämter* (lower-level school supervisory authorities).

In several *Länder*, the school supervisory authorities are legally required to respect the individual pedagogical responsibility of the schools. With increasing institutional independence of schools, the role of school supervision changes as well. In some *Länder*, the school supervision is supplemented by mandatory external evaluation (*Schulinspektion*, *Schulvisitation*) which is intended to provide the individual schools with information regarding their quality development. The state's influence on schools is increasingly exercised via the approval of *Schulprogramme* (school-specific programmes) and the determination of target agreements with the individual schools or head teachers, respectively. During this process, the personal supervision by the school supervisory authorities tends to lose importance compared to the duties of supporting and advising school development and quality management in schools. In this respect, school counselling prepares schools for new tasks and encourages them to promote the pedagogical responsibility of teachers and schools, particularly by instigating a binding agreement that governs pedagogic aims and focal points of the work involved, as well as in the development of school-specific programmes.

### In-company vocational training institutions

As regards vocational training, regulation of in-company vocational training lies within the responsibility of the Federation. Within the Federal Government, the relevant competent ministries adopt, in agreement with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* – BMBF), *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations), which are drawn up by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB) pursuant to directions from the competent ministries and under participation of representatives of employers and trade unions. Pursuant to a procedure agreed between the Federation and the *Länder* (Joint Results Protocol – *Gemeinsames Ergebnisprotokoll*), the training regulations are coordinated with the *Rahmenlehrpläne* (framework curricula) for the classes at vocational schools which have been simultaneously developed by the *Länder*.

At the level of the *Länder* vocational training committees are set up which are composed of employers', trade unions' and ministerial representatives. They advise the governments of the *Länder* on vocational training matters. Their responsibilities also include the promotion of a steady quality development in vocational education and training.

### Tertiary sector

As a rule, institutions of higher education have the status of a public-law corporation and are public institutions under the authority of the *Länder*. They can also be established with a different legal form. Under the Basic Law, the freedom of art and science, research and teaching is guaranteed (Art. 5, Paragraph 3), i.e. an autonomous sphere of academic self-administration is needed to guarantee freedom of science. In administrative matters there is a cooperative relationship between the responsible Land ministry and the higher education institution. Within a unitary administration the latter's functions include both academic matters and governmental matters such as personnel, economic, budgetary and financial administration. Independent of this, *Rechtsaufsicht* (legal supervision) and, to a certain extent, *Fachaufsicht* (academic supervision), the power of establishment and organisation and authority over financial and staffing matters all lie with the responsible Land ministry or government.

The general principles for the legal position of higher education institutions and for the academic and creative arts staff, including the participation of all members of these institutions in self-administration are laid down in the Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*). It is on the basis of these principles that the organisation and administration of higher education institutions are regulated in detail by *Länder* legislation for those higher education institutions that come within the purview of each Land. Through amendments of the Framework Act for Higher Education, the scope of the *Länder* for their own decisions in the reforming of organisation and administration has been extended considerably in recent years. Meanwhile, the *Länder* have implemented amendments of their Higher Education Acts (*Hochschulgesetze*) and, with particular emphasis on their individual priorities, carried out the appropriate reforms, or are currently in the process of preparing them. The detailed state control exercised by the *Länder* is increasingly being replaced by the autonomous action of higher education institutions.

In the course of the federalism reform in the year 2006 (*Föderalismusreform I*), the legislative competence of the Federation for the organisation and administration of higher education institutions was transferred in full to the *Länder*. The Federation has initiated legislative proceedings to annul the Framework Act for Higher Education.

Pursuant to the new Article 91b, Paragraph 1 of the Basic Law, 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.

### 1.3. Financing

The financing of education from the public purse is currently based on the following arrangements:

- Most educational institutions are maintained by public authorities.
- They receive the greater part of their funds through direct allocations from public budgets.
- Certain groups undergoing training receive financial assistance from the state to provide them with the money they need to live and study.
- The public financing arrangements for the education system are the result of decision-making processes in the political and administrative system in which the various forms of public spending on education are apportioned between Federation, *Länder* and *Kommunen* (local authorities) and according to education policy and objective requirements.

The political and administrative hierarchy in the Federal Republic of Germany is made up of three levels: 1) Federation; 2) *Länder*; and 3) local authorities (*Kommunen*), i.e. districts, municipalities with the status of a district and municipalities forming part of districts. Decisions on the financing of education are taken at all three levels, but over 90 per cent of public expenditure are provided by the *Länder* and the local authorities.

#### Pre-primary sector

Pre-school education is not a part of the state school system, and *Kindergarten* attendance is not, as a general rule, free of charge. To cover some of the costs, parental contributions are levied, the level of which depends on parents' financial circumstances, the number of children or the number of family members.

Publicly-maintained *Kindergärten* (maintained by the local authorities) are financed by the local authority (*Kommune*), by the Land (subsidies to cover personnel and material costs etc.) and through parental contributions. Meanwhile, *Kindergärten* that are privately maintained (by churches, parents' initiatives etc.) are also financed by the local authority (*Kommune*), by the Land and through parental contributions, and, in addition, by the maintaining body's own resources. The financing by the *Länder* may encompass subsidies to cover investment, personnel and material costs etc.

#### Primary and secondary sector

The public-sector school system is financed on the basis of a division of responsibilities between the *Länder* and the *Kommunen* (local authorities). While the latter bear the costs of non-teaching staff and the material costs, the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* are responsible for the teaching staff payroll. Attendance of public-sector schools is free of charge.

In order to balance out school costs between the local authorities and the *Länder*, the local authorities have certain expenses (e.g. for transporting pupils to and from school) reimbursed from the Land budget (generally by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs). The Land also supports the local authorities through one-off grants, for example, contributions to school construction costs or certain subsidies for running costs.

Where schools have catchment areas extending beyond the local area, e.g. certain *Sonderschulen* (special schools) and *Fachschulen*, the Land is usually the *Schulträger* (maintaining body) and therefore also responsible for funding the material costs and the non-teaching staff payroll.

The possibility of schools managing their own budgetary funds has increased in recent years on the basis of amendments to the school legislation. In the majority of *Länder*, schools are already able to determine their own use of resources for one or several types of expenses (e.g. learning and teaching aids) within the budget allocated by the maintaining body. Initial approaches are also in place for the autonomous use of the personnel resources allocated.

The maintaining bodies of privately-maintained schools receive some financial support from the *Länder*, in various forms. All of the *Länder* guarantee standard financial support to schools entitled to such assistance; this includes contributions to the standard staff and material costs. The *Länder* either grant a lump-sum contribution, calculated on the basis of specific statistical data and varying according to school types, or the individual school may have to set out its financial requirements and receive a percentage share in subsidies. In all cases, the reference value is the situation pertaining to costs in the public-sector schools.

### **Financing of vocational training within the dual system**

The *duales System* (dual system) of vocational training operates at two locations, namely within companies and at the *Berufsschule* (vocational school). Vocational training outside the school sector is mainly financed by companies. Vocational schools are mainly financed by the *Länder*.

### **Tertiary sector**

#### *Financing of higher education institutions by the Länder*

Public higher education institutions are maintained by the *Länder*, and therefore receive the majority of their financial backing from the Land concerned, which essentially also decides on the allocation of resources. The *Länder* supply these institutions with the funds they need to carry out their work from the budget of the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs or the Ministry of Science and Research. Financing is generally oriented in accordance with the responsibilities of and services provided by the institutions of higher education in the field of research and teaching, in the promotion of up-and-coming academics and the equality of opportunity for women in science.

The funding system of higher education in Germany is undergoing a period of change. The detailed state control exercised by the *Länder* is increasingly being replaced by the autonomous action of higher education institutions. Relations between the state and higher education institutions are more and more characterised by joint target agreements. The scope of action for higher education institutions as regards the concrete measures taken to implement the goals is being continuously extended. The initial impact of the reform approaches will primarily make itself felt in the distribution modalities. Budget funding is hence increasingly apportioned via performance-related parameters, taking into account such criteria as the number of students within the *Regelstudienzeit* (standard period of study) and the total number of graduates or the level of external funding, known as *Drittmittel*, attracted for research purposes and/or the number of doctorates. The introduction of lump-sum budgeting increases the higher education institutions' flexibility in the allocation of funds.

In addition to their basic funding, higher education institutions raise funds for the promotion of research and development as well as for the promotion of up-and-coming academics and teaching from public or private third parties. Furthermore, in about half of the *Länder*, the basic funding of higher education institutions is supplemented with study fees.

#### *Financing of higher education institutions by Federation and Länder*

The funds provided by the *Länder* from their budgets cover personnel and material costs as well as investments, in other words expenditure on property, buildings as well as for first and major equipment. As a consequence of the federalism reform of 2006 (*Föderalismusreform I*), the *Länder* now also have full legislative authority over the construction of higher education institutions.

#### *Financing of Berufsakademien*

The financing for training at state-run *Berufsakademien* is met partly by the Land and partly by the training establishments. Whilst the costs for the in-company training are met by the training establishments, the state *Studienakademien* (study institutions), where students receive the theoretical part of their training, are funded in full by the Land.

### **1.4. Quality assurance**

#### **Pre-primary sector**

In the *Länder*, there are manifold measures to ensure and develop the quality of day-care centres and day care for children. A priority with regard to the future development of day-care for children is the assurance, further development and assessment of the quality of education and care, in particular the advancement of the quality of education and care for children under the age of three. For example, the *Länder* aim to improve the training of nursery school teachers, inter alia by offering additional continuing training courses. The Federation supports the efforts of the *Länder*, the local authorities and the maintaining bodies for more quality in day-care services for children with several programmes.

#### **Primary and secondary sector**

Land authority to carry out academic supervision is derived from the state sovereignty over schools enshrined in the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*). This states that the entire school system is under the supervision of the state (Art. 7, Paragraph 1). Detailed provisions are set out in the Education Acts and regulations of the *Länder*. More detailed information is available in section 1.2.

The school legislation of most *Länder* provides for measures of external and internal evaluation beyond state supervision. the *Länder* have taken a number of evaluation measures which combine various quality assurance and quality development procedures. These measures are embedded in overall strategies of the individual *Länder* for quality evaluation and quality assurance which, amongst other measures, include the strengthening of the autonomy of the individual school, the development of school-specific profiles, the promotion of inter-school cooperation as well as the strengthening of the advisory functions of the school supervisory authority. The evaluation systems for schools in the *Länder* are in line with the educational standards for the primary sector, the *Hauptschulabschluss* and the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (see below). These *Länder*-spanning target criteria are in most *Länder* complemented by the provisions of the so-called frameworks for school quality which provide schools with indicators of school and teaching practice quality. The schools in the *Länder* are evaluated by external evaluation agencies and inspection systems in accordance with these criteria. In the *Länder* where there are legal provisions for external evaluation, as a rule, responsibility lies with the school supervisory authorities. In several *Länder*, responsibility lies with the institutes for school pedagogy (*Landesinstitute für Schulpädagogik*).



### *Bildungsstandards*

The Standing Conference has introduced national educational standards in order to thoroughly develop and assure the quality of instruction and school education on the basis of binding standards. Educational standards have been resolved

- in the subjects German and mathematics in the primary sector (grade 4),
- in the subjects German, mathematics and first foreign language (English/French) for the *Hauptschulabschluss*,
- in the subjects German, mathematics and first foreign language (English/French), biology, chemistry and physics for the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*.

In October 2007, the Standing Conference resolved to develop the Uniform Examination Standards for the *Abitur* examination (*Einheitliche Prüfungsanforderungen in der Abiturprüfung*) first in the subjects German, mathematics and first foreign language (English/French) and furthermore in the natural sciences (biology, chemistry, physics) into educational standards for the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*.

Through the implementation of educational standards, for the first time, quality development in the general education schools of all *Länder* can be measured according to jointly agreed criteria in the form of standards related to school qualifications. It is the main task of the Institute for Educational Progress (*Institut zur Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungswesen* – IQB) to review whether the educational standards have been met in the *Länder*.

### *Länder-specific and cross-Länder tests*

In addition to national and international performance comparisons, for some years the *Länder* have been conducting comparative studies for the Land-specific evaluation of school education in different grades. In future, these comparative studies in the *Länder* will relate to the educational standards of the Standing Conference. In 2009, cross-*Länder* comparative studies for the primary school and for the lower secondary level (VERA 3 and VERA 8) were conducted. The surveys on learning levels are to be conducted annually and shall regularly provide important information for the specific promotion of pupils.

### *Standards for teacher training*

In December 2004, the Standing Conference adopted Standards for Teacher Training: Educational Sciences (*Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften*). The educational sciences include the scientific disciplines concerning educational processes, education systems and their basic conditions. In October 2008, the Standing Conference resolved requirements of content for subject-related studies and subject-related didactics in teacher education and training (*Ländergemeinsame inhaltliche Anforderungen für die Fachwissenschaften und Fachdidaktiken in der Lehrerbildung*). In conjunction with the Standards for Teacher Training, the requirements of content for subject-related studies and subject-related didactics are to serve as a basis for the accreditation and regular evaluation of courses of study leading to a teaching position. At the same time, they are essential elements of the efforts for quality assurance and quality development in school education.

### **In-company vocational training**

Quality assurance in in-company vocational training is achieved mainly through laws and regulations and through the recommendations of the board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB). The Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz* – BBiG) places a high value on quality assurance and quality development. It contains a comprehensive set of instruments for assuring quality in vocational education and training which ranges from the establishment of uniform national standards for training and examinations in the training regulations

and further training regulations of the Federation to the responsibilities of the competent bodies with regard to ensuring the personal and technical aptitude of the instructors and the suitability of the training premises. The vocational training committees and the Land committees shall, within the framework of their duties, work towards a continuous improvement of the quality of vocational training. Moreover, procedures are to be drawn up for the external evaluation of quality assurance in continuing vocational training and education.

### **Tertiary sector**

Under Section 59 of the Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz* – HRG) and the higher education legislation in place in the *Länder* (*Hochschulgesetze*), higher education institutions are subject to state supervision which is exercised by the *Länder*. More detailed information on state supervision in the higher education sector is available in section 1.2.

#### *Evaluation*

The evaluation of research and teaching has been provided for in the higher education sector since the amendment to the Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*) of 1998. Meanwhile, the evaluation of study courses and subjects is also established in the higher education legislation of most *Länder*.

Since 1994, various structures have been established for supporting both internal and external evaluation and these now cover the institutions of higher education in all sixteen *Länder*. Meanwhile, in Germany a two-tiered system of evaluation is widely applied which combines internal and external evaluation. The internal evaluation consists of a systematic inventory and analysis of teaching and studying, taking account of research, performed by the individual department or the faculty and concludes with a written report. On this foundation, an assessment by external experts takes place who also lay down their findings and recommendations in a written final report.

A legal obligation to submit regular reports on teaching and study already exists in most *Länder*. These reports are usually set up by the departments within higher education institutions and published by the institution's governing body. The following factors, among others, may serve as indicators in the report on teaching: the ratio of those that start a course to those that complete it, the proportion of students within the standard period of study, the examination success rate and the whereabouts of graduates. Several *Länder* have begun to develop stipulations on the content and form of teaching reports.

External evaluation is performed by regional evaluation agencies at Land level or by networks or associations of higher education institutions covering all *Länder*. At both the level of the institutions of higher education and at ministry level, various international cooperation exist for the development and implementation of evaluation measures. External evaluations generally take the form of peer reviews, i.e. they are performed by competent experts from other institutions of higher education, research establishments or from the business community and are repeated at various intervals.

The aim of the evaluation measures is, firstly, to subject academic standards in teaching, teaching methods and the success of teaching to regular assessment. The findings can then be used to identify possible measures for improving courses and teaching. Furthermore, it is also necessary for higher education institutions to account to the public for their achievements in teaching and research. The results of the evaluation can be taken into account in some *Länder* as a basis for allocating resources to higher education institutions.

In its resolution on quality assurance in teaching at higher education institutions from September 2005, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) defined the indispensable core elements of a coherent quality management system encompassing all



aspects of higher education institutions, which combines different measures and procedures of quality assurance. Such measures and procedures also include an evaluation which refers to certain indicators and specifies individual tools (e.g., combination of internal and external evaluation, involvement of students and graduates). In October 2008, the Standing Conference and the *Stifterverband für die deutsche Wissenschaft* have jointly created a competition which is to honour and promote convincing concepts of universities and equivalent institutions of higher education as well as *Fachhochschulen* for the development of strategies in teaching and learning.

#### *Accreditation of study courses*

For the new Bachelor's and Master's study courses, as well as for study courses to be set up leading to the degrees of *Diplom* or *Magister* in branches of study for which there are no framework regulations in effect, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs has declared a functional separation between state approval and accreditation with regard to quality assurance: as with the other study courses, the state approval refers to guaranteeing the fundamental financial means for the study courses to be set up and the inclusion in the higher educational planning of the respective Land. In contrast to this, the objective of the accreditation is to guarantee minimum standards in terms of academic content, the maintenance of structural guidelines, and to determine the professional relevance of the degrees. It is to increase the diversity of the study offer, ensure quality in international competition and create transparency for international collaboration. In the accreditation system, the state is assuming its responsibility for higher education studies through structural requirements for study offers, which guarantee the equivalence of qualifications and the possibility of changing to another higher education institution. Observance of the structural requirements is a pre-requisite for the accreditation of a study course. They form the basis for the accreditation process. Accreditation is a pre-requisite for the state approval of a new study course and is essentially performed by external peer review. Periodically, the study courses are re-accredited.

In December 2007, the Standing Conference resolved to enhance the accreditation of study programmes through the implementation of a system accreditation scheme by which the internal quality assurance system of an entire higher education institution is assessed for the quality of its learning and teaching. The responsibility for quality assurance in terms of the given criteria is thus transferred to the higher education institution. The subject of assessment is whether the higher education institution provides for a quality management system ensuring the implementation of these criteria. System accreditation aims to reduce the administrative burden of higher education institutions and to accelerate certification.

The Federation and the *Länder* have agreed that non-public institutions are to be accredited by the Science Council (*Wissenschaftsrat*). Institutional accreditation is a procedure of quality assurance which is to determine whether an institution is capable of providing study courses which according to legislation belong to the sector of higher education. Within the framework of the accreditation procedure, thus is to be examined and established whether minimum standards of quality are fulfilled. These minimum standards follow the requirements laid down in the Framework Act for Higher Education of the Federation and *Länder* laws governing higher education and should be related to the individual profile of the institution to be recognised.

## 2. PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

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### General objectives

Today, day-care centres for children in the pre-school sector are regarded as an essential part of the education system. Under the Child and Youth Welfare Act (*Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz*) of 1990, day-care centres for children are called upon to encourage the child's development into a responsible and autonomous member of the community. Furthermore, the day-care centre is designed to support and supplement the child's upbringing in the family and to assist the parents in better reconciling employment and child rearing. The duties of day-care centres include instructing, educating and caring for the child and relate to the child's social, emotional, physical and mental development. They also include imparting guiding values and rules. The provision of education and care is to be adjusted to the individual child's age and its state of development, its linguistic and other capabilities, its life situation and interests, and has to take into account the child's ethnic origin. In terms of pedagogy and organisation, the range of services offered should be based on the needs of the children and their families.

### Legislation

Under the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) it is the prerogative of the Federation to enact legislation on child and youth welfare within the framework of public welfare. This also applies to the promotion of children in day-care centres (*Kindergärten, Kinderkrippen* or *Horte*). The Federation exercised its legislative authority in this field by passing the Child and Youth Welfare Act (*Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz*) in June 1990, which was amended in 2004 by the Day-Care Expansion Act (*Tagesbetreuungsausbaugesetz – TAG*) and has been revised by the Law on the Further Development of Child and Youth Welfare (*Kinder- und Jugendhilfeweiterentwicklungsgesetz – KICK*). Under this Act, the *Länder* are required to give concrete form to the general outlines of the law e.g. quality and quantity through their own legislation. The Child and Youth Welfare Act was amended in July 1992 and expanded to include the legal right, introduced on 1 January 1996 and in force without restriction since 1 January 1999, to a *Kindergarten* place for all children from the age of three years until they start school. The Child and Youth Welfare Act was last revised in December 2008 by the *Kinderförderungsgesetz* (KiföG). As a matter for local self-government, the implementation and financing of child and youth welfare legislation is the responsibility of the *Kommunen* (local authorities).

### Institutions

Pre-school education includes all institutions run by the non-public and public child and youth welfare services which cater for children until they start school. The *Kindergarten* is the traditional form of institutionalised pre-school education for three to six-year-olds in Germany. Some *Länder* have care facilities for children between the ages of four months and six or 12 years. Children under the age of three may be looked after in *Kinderkrippen* (crèches) or, in mixed-age groups, in day-care centres for children, together with children between three to six or 12 years of age. At present, day care for children under three years of age is undergoing expansion. By the year 2013, places in day-care centres or in day care for children shall be provided for an average of 35 % of all children under three years of age.

Besides the *Kindergarten* other forms of institution and care facilities (*Vorklassen, Schulkindergärten* and *Sonderkindergärten* for children with disabilities) exist in the pre-school sector. However, in terms of the number of children they cater for, these institutions are of lesser significance.

The attendance of day-care facilities for children is optional. Institutions are co-educational. For financial contributions made by parents, please see section 1.3.

Day-care facilities are not attached to primary schools. In so far as this is not already the case, the *Länder* aim to make co-operation between child day-care facilities and primary schools compulsory. The *Länder* will develop co-ordinated learning objectives for child day-care facilities and primary schools.

## Statistics

### Day-care centres for children from the age of two to eight years 2009

	Day-care centres	Children	Pedagogic staff
Public	7 879	417 482	51 226
Privately-maintained	16 261	846 534	108 570
Total	24 140	1 264 016	159 796

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Statistiken der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe 2009

## 2.1. Admission

Under the Child and Youth Welfare Act (*Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz*), all children who have reached the age of three have the legal right to be admitted to a *Kindergarten* until school entry. The Federal Government, the *Länder* and the local authorities have agreed to progressively establish quality and demand-oriented day care services for an average of 35 % of children under the age of three by 2013.

## 2.2. Organisation of time, groups and venue

The organisation of supervision in *Kindergärten* during the year corresponds with the organisation of school time. If day-care institutions close during holidays, the maintaining body of the public youth welfare has to ensure alternative supervision for children who cannot be supervised by the persons who have parental power.

In Germany, pre-school education in the *Kindergarten* is not part of the state-organised school system, but is assigned to Child and Youth Welfare, which means that the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* therefore do not adopt regulations governing the time-table in the pre-school sector.

Opening hours are largely arranged by youth welfare offices (*Jugendämter*), generally with the agreement of the maintaining bodies and in consultation with the parents. These times may vary between the different *Kindergärten* and depend to some extent on the needs of the families in their catchment areas. Many *Kindergärten* are now trying more consciously than before to adapt their opening times in line with the needs of families and, if necessary, are organising an early-morning service or lunch-time service for some children or groups of children.

Pre-school education is not organised into grades, groups usually consist of children from different age groups. As a rule, each group is looked after by at least one trained educational staff member and also at least one helper.

## 2.3. Curriculum

Subjects and weekly teaching hours are not laid down for the *Kindergarten* sector, and there are no curricula such as those in schools. The *Länder* have laid down educational objectives and areas in educational plans which are implemented in agreement with the maintaining bodies of the child-care facilities. The following areas and activities are designed to encourage the development of children between the ages of three and six years in the *Kindergarten*: development of the child's physical,

mental, emotional and social abilities. According to the joint framework of the *Länder* for early education in day-care centres for children (*Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen*) of 2004, educational areas are:

- language, writing, communication
- personal and social development, development of values and religious education
- mathematics, natural sciences, (information) technology
- fine arts/working with different media
- body, movement, health
- nature and cultural environments

The methods of educational work in day-care centres for children are determined by a holistic approach. The main emphasis is on project work, which shall communicate subject-matter of relevance to the child's own environment and interests. The forms of learning shall encourage self-organised learning, give the child the freedom for creativity, encourage team work, enable the child to learn from mistakes, as well as to investigate and experiment.

The educational work in the *Kindergarten* is essentially based on the situational approach: it is guided by the interests, needs and situations of the individual children. The pedagogical staff therefore have to keep watch over the children and monitor their development, and talk to parents regularly.

## 2.4. Assessment

Children's performance at *Kindergarten* is not assessed, as teaching does not take place in the sense of lessons at school. The educational staff monitor and document children's development and inform parents of their child's progress and of any problems he or she may experience within the group.

In the coming years, the *Länder* will establish the preconditions for compulsory language status observation and assessment procedures for all children in good time prior to their starting school and ensure needs-oriented, intensive remedial language tuition for children prior to starting school. In particular, the German language skills of children from migrant families are to be furthered by means of pre-school language tests and early promotion in day-care centres as well as by improved methods for language skill diagnosis. The Federal Government will accompany early childhood language teaching with integration courses for parents.

## 2.5. Teachers

Pedagogic staff in the German pre-school sector do not have the training and status of teachers. The pedagogic staff in the pre-school sector consists mainly of *Erzieher/Erzieherinnen* (state-recognised youth or child-care workers). As a rule, they are trained at *Fachschulen* for youth and community work that, according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), are assigned to the tertiary level. The training lasts two to three years in all, comprising classes at the *Fachschule* on a full-time basis and vocational practice at youth and community work establishments. The entry requirement for training is a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* and either a relevant vocational training qualification which took at least two years to acquire or two years of experience in a relevant occupation, thus the complete training period for pedagogic staff (*pädagogische Fachkräfte*) is four to five years. Over recent years, the number of courses of study leading to a first degree and further courses of study for pedagogic staff has increased. Particularly at the levels of administration, management and counselling in the elementary sector, further courses of study are available to qualified pedagogic staff in co-operations between *Fachschulen* and *Fachhochschulen*.

Some of the staff (especially those in senior positions) have a degree from a *Fachhochschule* as *Sozialpädagogen* (youth and community workers). This training either comprises a three-year course of study at a higher education institution and one year of practical training or a four-year course of study with two *Praxissemester* (integrated semesters of work experience).

Auxiliary staff, especially nursery assistants (*Kinderpflegerinnen*), are employed in the elementary sector alongside pedagogic staff (*pädagogische Fachkräfte*) and graduate youth and community workers. In most *Länder*, these staff attend a two-year training course at *Berufsfachschulen*, full-time vocational schools.

Staff at pre-school establishments are taken on by the relevant maintaining bodies (local authorities, church organisations and non-public bodies) as salaried employees. A wide range of further training options is also available to pedagogic staff (*pädagogische Fachkräfte*) to enable them to extend their professional skills, to master new demands in their occupations, to obtain further qualifications and to specialise in new areas.

### 3. PRIMARY EDUCATION

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#### General objectives

The tasks and objectives of the *Grundschule* (primary school) are determined by its position within the school system. The primary school's role is to lead its pupils from more play-oriented forms of learning at pre-school level to the more systematic forms of school learning, and also to adapt the form and content of teaching programmes to fit the different learning requirements and capabilities of individual pupils. The aim of the primary school is to provide its pupils with the basis for the next educational level and lifelong learning. Particular importance is attached to the general improvement of linguistic competence and to the basic understanding of mathematical and scientific concepts. The primary school should make pupils capable of grasping and structuring their experience of the world around them. At the same time, they should further develop their psychomotor skills and their patterns of social behaviour.

The primary school sees its function as the fostering of children with different individual learning backgrounds and learning abilities in such a way as to develop the basis for independent thinking, learning and working, and to provide experience of interacting with other people. Thus children acquire a solid basis which helps them find their way and act within their environment and prepares them for the process of learning in secondary schools.

#### Legislation

The Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) and the constitutions of the *Länder* include a number of fundamental provisions on schools (inspection, parents' rights, compulsory schooling, religious instruction, privately-maintained schools) which also have a bearing on primary schools. The legal basis for the *Grundschule* as the first compulsory school for all children is to be found in the Education Acts, the Compulsory Schooling Acts and the *Schulordnungen* (school regulations) for the primary school enacted by the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in the *Länder*.

#### Age groups

Primary education covers, as a rule, pupils aged six to ten (in Berlin and Brandenburg six to twelve).

#### Compulsory schooling

Compulsory schooling starts on 1 August for all children having reached their sixth birthday before a statutory qualifying date. Following the resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of October 1997 entitled *Recommendations on Starting School* (*Empfehlungen zum Schulanfang*), the *Länder* can set the qualifying date between 30 June and 30 September. They can also make provision for the possibility of starting school during the course of the school year.

In 2004, Berlin set the statutory qualifying date for compulsory schooling at 31 December; thus, compulsory schooling starts after the summer holidays for all children who reach the age of six before the end of the year. In Bayern and Nordrhein-Westfalen, from the school year 2005/06 and 2007/08 onwards, respectively, the qualifying date for starting school will be moved from 30 June to 31 December in monthly steps.

#### Types of institutions

In the primary sector, privately-maintained schools may only be established on very strict conditions (Art. 7, Paragraph 5 of the Basic Law). Their establishment is permitted only where the school authority finds that they serve a special pedagogical interest or where – at the request of parents – they are to be established as *Gemeinschaftsschulen* (non-denominational schools), denominational

schools or schools pursuing a certain ideology and no public-sector primary school of that type exists locally. Privately-maintained primary schools are therefore the exception; in almost all cases they are either denominational primary schools, *Freie Waldorfschulen* (Rudolf Steiner schools), reformist schools or primary schools with an integrated boarding facility.

Details on the financing of privately-maintained schools, which mainly are schools in the secondary sector, can be found in section 1.3.

### Financial support for pupils' families

#### *Teaching aids*

So that pupils have access to all teaching aids used in lessons regardless of their economic and social circumstances, most *Länder* have regulations on the provision of financial assistance for pupils to purchase teaching aids (*Lernmittelhilfe*), or on their provision free of charge (*Lernmittelfreiheit*); this provision is, in part, staggered according to parents' income and number of children. Under these regulations, pupils are either exempt from the costs of teaching aids or only have to pay part of the costs. The funds are provided either by the *Schulträger* (the local authority responsible for establishing and maintaining the schools), or by the Land in question.

#### *Transport to and from school*

Each of the *Länder* has arrangements as regards the transport of pupils to and from school. There are certain differences as to who is entitled to use school transport and the scope of services provided. In all cases, however, there are comprehensive provisions for the period of compulsory full-time schooling to which the following statements refer. In general, fares are reimbursed, usually for public transport, while under certain conditions a school transport service is established in its own right. The purpose is to guarantee fair opportunities for pupils from all walks of life, between urban and rural areas, non-handicapped and handicapped schoolchildren.

It is generally the responsibility of the districts and municipalities to ensure adequate provision for transporting pupils to and from the school they attend. School transport is funded by the maintaining bodies (i.e. usually the local authority). In most cases subsidies are granted by the Land in question.

#### *Accident insurance for pupils*

In the Federal Republic of Germany accident insurance does exist for all pupils and students during lessons, on the way from home to school and back and during school functions. School functions also include any programmes immediately preceding or following timetabled lessons where the school is required to provide supervision. These also include meals provided by the school, school walking excursions, study trips within and outside Germany as well as school trips. Statutory accident insurance is normally in the hands of the local authority accident insurance association.

### Statistics

#### **Grundschulen 2008/09**

Schools	Pupils	Teachers
16 391	2 997 074	92 684

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Fachserie 11, Reihe 1, 2008/2009

### 3.1. Admission

In order to complete general compulsory schooling, pupils must, in principle, attend the local *Grundschule*. In some *Länder* efforts are underway to put parents in a position to freely choose a



primary school. In Nordrhein-Westfalen, parents have the possibility to freely choose a primary school since the school year 2008/09.

### **3.2. Organisation of time, groups and venue**

#### **Organisation of groups**

Primary school pupils are normally taught in classes according to age. In grades 1 and 2, most lessons are with the same member of staff, the class teacher. The principle of class teachers is used to ensure a certain combination of education and teaching, and a consistent pedagogical approach and makes it easier to respond to pupils' individual needs. From grade 3 onwards the children increasingly encounter subject teachers, which helps them prepare for the transition to secondary school where subject teachers are the rule. In addition to lessons according to age group, individual *Länder* provide teaching for mixed age groups for the first two years of school in particular. In these cases, pupils can pass through the first two years of school in one to three years, depending on their own individual progress.

#### **Organisation of school time**

##### *Organisation of the school year*

With a five-day school week, teaching takes place on 188 days a year on average (365 days minus 75 days holiday, minus ten additional free days, minus 52 Sundays and 40 Saturdays). As a rule, in *Länder* with a six-day school week, there are two Saturdays per month on which no lessons take place. In this case, the number of days on which lessons are taught increases to 208 (365 days minus 75 days holiday, minus ten additional free days, minus 52 Sundays and 20 Saturdays). However, the total number of teaching hours per year is the same regardless of whether teaching is carried out on the basis of a five-day or six-day week, since the lessons which are held on a Saturday in the six-day week are distributed among the other weekdays in the five-day week.

In accordance with the Agreement between the *Länder* on harmonisation in the school system (*Hamburger Abkommen*), the school year begins on 1 August and ends on 31 July. The actual beginning and end depend on the dates of the summer holidays. Summer holidays have been restricted to the period between mid-June and mid-September for educational, organisational and climatic reasons. Apart from the summer holidays, there are shorter holidays which the *Länder* decide annually on the basis of certain principles and their own considerations. These minor holidays fall in October (autumn vacation), at Christmas, in February (winter vacation), at Easter and at Whitsun. The total annual duration of school holidays is 75 working days, plus an average of 10 public and religious holidays.

##### *Weekly and daily timetables*

Primary school pupils attend lessons for 19 to 29 periods a week. In most *Länder* there are 20 to 22 periods in the first year, rising to 27 in the fourth (final) year of primary education. As a rule each period lasts 45 minutes. Lessons are usually held in the morning, with up to six periods a day.

The weekly teaching periods laid down by the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* for the different types of school may be distributed over five or six days in the week. As a rule, in *Länder* with a six-day school week, there are two Saturdays per month on which no lessons take place. In most *Länder*, the responsible Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has introduced a five-day week for all schools. In some *Länder*, the *Schulkonferenz* (school conference) may decide the number of days in the school week.

In the primary sector, lesson times are laid down from 7.30/8.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. or 11.30 a.m. (Monday to Friday or Monday to Saturday).



### *Supervision of pupils outside lesson times and provision of all-day education and supervision*

Changes in children's living conditions mean that the primary school is expected to contribute to their supervision both before and after lessons and also in the afternoons. All-day supervision and care for children aged between six and ten is the concern of *Horte* (after-school centres) and also takes place at schools. In the majority of *Länder*, *Horte* are run by the public youth welfare services while all-day supervision and care at schools in many places is carried out in co-operation between schools and the public youth welfare services. Current efforts are concentrated on closer cooperation between schools and after-school centres.

## **3.3. Curriculum**

### **Development of curricula**

The material which is important to the educational process at primary school is laid down in curricula or framework plans which may be subject-related, area-related or interdisciplinary. In 2004, the Standing Conference adopted *Bildungsstandards* (educational standards) for the primary sector in the subjects German and mathematics. In order to implement these standards, the subjects now have to be adapted accordingly. The national educational standards specify the goals themselves, whilst the curricula describe and structure the way in which to achieve these goals.

Curricula for the primary school as well as for other types of school are the responsibility of the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in the *Länder*. The curricula are published as regulations of the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. They take the form of instructions from a higher authority and, as such, are binding on teachers. It is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that the current curricula are taught at his/her school. At the same time, curricula are formulated in such a general way as to leave the teachers the freedom of teaching methods in practice. Nevertheless all the teachers of a specific subject at one school hold conferences to reach a degree of consensus on methods and assessment criteria.

### **Subjects**

Lessons at the primary school initially focus on reading, writing and arithmetic. Teaching takes place both in lessons concentrating on a specific subject or area and in cross-disciplinary classes. As a rule subjects include German, mathematics, *Sachunterricht*, art, music, sport and in most *Länder* religious instruction. Several areas, especially e.g. German, *Sachunterricht*, drama, music, art and handicrafts are often brought together to produce lively and varied work on topic focuses or lesson units. As for a first encounter with foreign languages at primary school age the *Länder* have developed various approaches. Currently, in all *Länder* foreign language teaching in the primary sector is being extended. This concerns mainly grades 3 and 4, in some *Länder*, grades 1 and 2 as well.

In addition to the subjects mentioned, the following areas are to be increasingly included as constant principles in the programme of education at the *Grundschule*: linguistic education (encouragement of linguistic development), mathematical education (promoting lifelong involvement with mathematical demands, logical thinking and problem solving), media education (using media in a critical way), aesthetic education (creative activities and sensory experiences), using technology, movement education, encounter with foreign languages, environment and health (treating nature and one's own body in a responsible way), attachment to one's home country or region combined with an international outlook, i.e. the general area of intercultural learning.

Besides, in recent years, the curricula of the *Länder* have increasingly taken into account the concept of lifelong learning. The acquisition of fundamental knowledge, abilities and skills, as well as the acquisition of a knowledge that will serve as an orientation aid for further learning, together with the development of key competences, have become main educational objectives.

## Teaching methods and material

Primary school teaching builds on pupils' personal experience and is designed to widen their horizons. The primary school includes its pupils in the process of planning, carrying out and evaluating lessons in a manner suited to each particular age group, and uses their experiences, questions, concerns, knowledge, abilities and skills as a basis for lessons.

In different teaching situations, pupils should increasingly develop the ability to choose subjects and methods, social forms in learning, and the place of work or the tools of work, as well as to manage their own work. They can develop the wealth of their own ideas and their independence by organising phases of work themselves (free work) and by helping to structure the work planned for the day and the entire week.

It is the task of the teachers' conference to select textbooks from the regularly published lists of textbooks approved by the Ministry. The use of new media (multimedia) is becoming increasingly important, both as a teaching aid and as something to be taught and learnt. By now, access to electronic networks (Internet) is provided for all schools. The latest information about the use of online resources in teaching and internet projects can be found on the Education Servers provided by the *Länder* Ministries which is accessible via the national information portal maintained by the federal and *Länder* authorities, the German Education Server ([www.eduserver.de](http://www.eduserver.de)).

## 3.4. Assessment, progression and certification

### Pupil assessment

Educational progress is normally examined by constant monitoring of the learning processes and by the use of oral and written controls. In grades 1 and 2, the focus is on direct observation of the pupils. In grade 3, pupils also begin to be familiarised with written class tests in certain subjects (especially German, *Sachunterricht* and mathematics).

Assessment is always based on curriculum requirements and the knowledge, abilities and skills acquired in class. Assessment is carried out by the teacher responsible for lessons, who is responsible educationally for his or her decision.

In most *Länder*, for the first two grades of primary school this assessment takes the form of a report at the end of the school year describing in detail a pupil's progress, strengths and weaknesses in the various fields of learning. At the end of grade 2, or sometimes later, pupils start to receive their reports at the end of each half of the school year with marks, which enable the individual pupil's performance to be recorded and placed in the context of the level achieved by the entire teaching group, and thus a comparative assessment to be made. In addition to the marks awarded for the individual subjects, the reports can also contain assessments concerning participation in class and social conduct within the school. In approximately 50 per cent of the *Länder*, an assessment of the work-related and social behaviour is already being performed.

### Progression of pupils

All children automatically move from grade 1 to grade 2 at the primary school. As a rule, from grade 2 of the primary school onwards each pupil is assigned to a suitable grade depending on his or her achievement level, either by being promoted a grade or by repeating a grade. The decision whether or not to move a pupil to the next grade is based on the marks achieved in the pupil's school report (*Zeugnis*) at the end of the school year.

Pupils who are not moved up have to repeat the grade they have just finished. Under certain circumstances, a pupil may also repeat a grade even if a decision has been made to let him or her move up from that grade at the end of the school year.

### Certification

There is no leaving examination at the end of primary school, and pupils are not awarded a leaving certificate. However, at the end of grade 4 (or grade 6) pupils do receive a report for that year. The transition from primary school to one of the secondary school types is regulated differently according to Land law.

### 3.5. Guidance and counselling

Counselling pupils on the choice of school career is, first of all, the responsibility of the schools themselves, e.g. when pupils move from primary to secondary schools, and when pupils choose their further school or training career following lower secondary education. The same also applies to opting for courses in the *Gesamtschule* and the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*, i.e. the upper level of the *Gymnasium*. Such advice may be obtained from the pupil's teachers.

### 3.6. Teachers

Responsibility for teacher training rests with the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* which regulate training through study regulations and examination regulations. *Staatsprüfungen* (First and Second State Examinations) are conducted by the state examination authorities or boards of the *Länder*. Due to the introduction of Bachelor's and Master's degrees in teacher training, the coming years are bound to see some changes in this regard.

The framework agreements of the Standing Conference (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) governing the training and examination of teachers in teaching careers 1 to 6 have been revised. The revised versions take account of the resolutions adopted by the Standing Conference regarding the recognition of Bachelor's and Master's degrees in teacher training.

### Institutions, level and models of teaching

Teacher training is basically divided into two stages, a course of higher education and practical pedagogic training. Practical pedagogic training in the form of a *Vorbereitungsdienst* (preparatory service) takes place in teacher training institutes (*Studienseminare*) and training schools.

### Curriculum, special skills, specialisation

#### *Studies at a higher education institution*

The first period of training includes:

- a specialist component (including subject-related didactics) with the study of at least two subjects or subject areas;
- an educational science component with compulsory study of educational theory and psychology; plus a choice of additional study areas as, for example, philosophy, social sciences/ politics and theology (the so-called *Bildungswissenschaften* or educational sciences);
- teaching practice, sometimes of several weeks' duration, accompanying courses of study.

The details are laid down by the *Länder* in *Studienordnungen* (study regulations), *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations) and *Prüfungsordnungen* (examination regulations). These include in particular provisions on the following:

- subjects/subject areas and combinations that may be chosen for the respective teaching career;

- the scope and content of the course of study in the individual subjects/subject areas, including subjects relating to educational sciences and subject-related didactics;
- the type of certificates required for admission to examinations, the type and scope of individual parts of the examinations and assessment procedures.

The various careers for which teachers are trained correspond to the levels and types of school in the *Länder*. In view of the resulting large number of different designations for teaching careers, six types of teaching careers can be distinguished for reasons of clarity. A teaching qualification for the primary level can be acquired through education and training for teaching career types 1 and 2:

- Teaching careers at the *Grundschule* or primary level (Type 1)
- General teaching careers at primary level and all or individual lower secondary level school types (Type 2)

#### *Second stage of teacher training: Preparatory service*

For all teaching careers studies at a university or equivalent institution of higher education are followed by the *Vorbereitungsdienst* (preparatory service) as the second stage of teacher training. Generally lasting two years and with the particular emphasis depending on the Land and the type of teaching career, it involves sitting in on lessons, guided and independent teaching at training schools and studies in educational theory and subject-related didactics at teacher training institutes (*Studienseminare*) which reappraise and consolidate experience gained through practical training.

The duration of preparatory service has been reduced to 18 months, and in some instances even to 12 months, in some *Länder* by means of awarding credits for semesters of practical pedagogical training, other courses in teaching practice etc.

#### **Evaluation, certificates**

As with all courses of study in higher education, certain certificates are required for admission to examinations and intermediate examinations have to be taken in teacher training courses. The details are regulated by *Studienordnungen* and *Prüfungsordnungen* (study and examination regulations). The teaching courses conclude with the examination known as the *Erste Staatsprüfung* which entitles the holder to be accepted into the *Vorbereitungsdienst* (state preparatory service). The preparatory service concludes with the Second State Examination. This is the prerequisite for permanent employment in a teaching career, but does not guarantee a teaching position. It has to be taken before a state examination board or a state examination commission and usually consists of four parts.

#### **In-service and further training for teachers**

The goals of in-service teacher training have been laid down by most *Länder* in their laws and regulations for teacher training or school legislation. The duty of teachers to undergo in-service training is expressly laid down in all *Länder* by law or ordinance, whilst it is the duty of the employers (usually the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs) to ensure that suitable training programmes are provided.

#### *Institutions of in-service and further training for teachers*

State-run in-service teacher training is organised in the *Länder* at central, regional and local level. In-service training can also take place within schools or in the form of guided private study.

In order to organise in-service teacher training at central locations, all *Länder* have established state-run in-service training institutes which are subordinate to the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs as dependent *Länder* institutions. Central in-service training institutions (a specific Land can

have several such institutions) have various names such as state academy (*staatliche Akademie*) or academic institute for in-service teacher training (*wissenschaftliches Institut für Lehrerfortbildung*).

In-service teacher training at regional level is conducted differently in each Land by the institutes for in-service teacher training and their branches and by middle- and lower-level school supervisory authorities.

The *Schulämter* (lower-level school supervisory authorities) are usually responsible for the organisation of in-service training at local level.

In-service teacher training within schools is carried out by schools for their own teaching staff or some members of their teaching staff.

In-service teacher training should not be confused with further training, the aim of which is to enable teachers to teach another subject or to teach in an additional special field. Further training also offers an opportunity to acquire qualifications for another teaching career. Many further training courses also serve to prepare teachers for special responsibilities (for example, work as a counselling teacher).

Courses are conducted by higher education institutions or in-service training institutions. The Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs regulate admission, the number of hours, certificates and final examinations.

### **Allocation**

Following the Second State Examination there is no legal entitlement to employment in teaching. An appointment to a permanent post is made within an application procedure according to the criteria of aptitude, qualifications and record of achievement and on the basis of current vacancies. In some *Länder*, the vacancies are advertised with a relevant requirement profile by the schools themselves. Teachers who are not taken on can apply for temporary posts such as providing cover for teachers on maternity/paternity leave or sick leave.

## 4. SECONDARY EDUCATION

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### Specific legal framework

#### *Secondary schools providing general and vocational education*

Based on the Education Acts and Compulsory Schooling Acts of the German *Länder* the school regulations known as *Schulordnungen* for schools providing general and vocational education contain detailed regulations covering the content of the courses as well as the leaving certificates and entitlements obtainable on completion of lower and upper secondary education.

#### *Vocational training*

The legal provisions for in-company vocational training and in handicrafts are contained and supplemented in the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*) of 1969 and the Handicrafts Act (*Gesetz zur Ordnung des Handwerks*) of 1953, respectively. The Vocational Training Act of 1969 was completely reformed in 2005. The reform is aimed at safeguarding and improving the training opportunities provided as well as a generally high quality standard in the vocational training available to all young people, irrespective of their social or regional backgrounds. In order to achieve these aims, the new vocational training legislation provides the responsible authorities within the Federation, the *Länder* and the regions with greater scopes of action.

The Protection of Young Persons at Work Act (*Jugendarbeitsschutzgesetz*) lays down special provisions for the protection of young trainees.

### Stages of secondary education

Secondary education breaks down into lower secondary level (*Sekundarstufe I*), which comprises the courses of education from grades 5/7 to 9/10 of school, and upper secondary level (*Sekundarstufe II*), which comprises all the courses of education that build on the foundations laid in the lower secondary level. Secondary level education includes courses offering general education, a combination of general and vocational education, or chiefly vocational education.

The function of all the courses of education at lower secondary level is to prepare pupils for courses of education at upper secondary level, completion of which is required for vocational or university entrance qualification. Accordingly, lower secondary education is predominantly of a general nature whereas, apart from *Gymnasien*, vocational education predominates at upper secondary level.

### General objectives

#### *Lower secondary education*

The organisation of lower secondary level schools and courses of education is based on the principle of basic general education, individual specialisation and encouraging pupils according to their abilities. Pursuant to an agreement reached in December 1993, amended in October 2009, by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* concerning the types of schools and courses of education, the schools endeavour to achieve these goals by:

- furthering the overall intellectual, emotional and physical development of pupils, teaching them to be independent, make decisions and bear their share of personal, social and political responsibility;
- providing instruction based on the state of academic knowledge that takes the pupils' age-related conceptual faculties into account in its organisation and in the demands made on them;



- gradually increasing the degree of specialisation in line with each pupil's abilities and inclinations;
- maintaining an open system allowing transfer from one type of school to the other after an orientation stage.

#### *Upper secondary education – general education schools*

The courses of education provided at general education schools within the upper secondary level lead to a higher education entrance qualification.

The aim of learning and work within the upper level of the *Gymnasium* is to obtain the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*, which entitles the holder to a place in higher education and also enables them to commence a course of vocational training. The instruction at the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* provides an in-depth general education, general capacity for academic study and the propaedeutics of scientific work. The *gymnasiale Oberstufe* is divided up into a one-year introductory phase and a two-year qualification phase. Grade 10 may have a dual function as the final year of schooling in lower secondary education and the first year of schooling in the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*.

#### *Upper secondary education – vocational schools and vocational training in the duales System*

The courses of vocational education and training provided at enterprises and *Berufsschulen* (part-time vocational schools) as well as full-time vocational schools within the upper secondary level lead to a vocational qualification for skilled work as qualified staff, e.g. in the *anerkannte Ausbildungsberufe* (state-recognised occupations requiring formal training) or the assistant occupations.

Training in the *duales System* is provided in a company and at *Berufsschulen* (part-time vocational schools). The necessary knowledge, skills and competences are imparted on the basis of typical requirements of work and business processes. Instruction prepares the trainees for work in a particular occupation. In-company training familiarises the trainees with the technological and organisational aspects of current work processes in companies. Furthermore, during their training trainees contribute to the company's productivity which reduces the overall cost of vocational training for both the companies and society at large. The educational function of the *Berufsschule* is to provide basic and specialised vocational education and at the same time to expand the previously acquired general education. The *Berufsschule* thus enables people to meet the requirements of their subsequent occupation and to engage in shaping the workplace for themselves and society in awareness of their social and ecological responsibility.

### **Age groups**

Lower secondary level covers the age group of pupils between 10 and 15/16 years old and upper secondary level the pupils between 15/16 and 18/19 years old. Both age groups are required to attend school: the former full-time, the latter, 15- to 19-year-olds, generally part-time for three years or until they have reached the age of 18, unless they are attending a full-time school.

### **Financial support for pupils**

In general, there are no provisions for financial assistance to secondary school pupils from grades 5/7 to 9.

On the basis of legal regulations on the part of the Federation (Federal Training Assistance Act – *Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz*), pupils from grade 10 onwards at general and vocational secondary schools are entitled under certain conditions to financial support from the state, as a rule, in the form of a grant, if they have no other means (mainly from their parents' income) of maintenance and financing training. The assistance provided by the state does not have to be repaid.

For the legal regulations governing financial support by provision of financial assistance to purchase teaching aids (*Lernmittelhilfe*), or their provision free of charge (*Lernmittelfreiheit*), for transport to and from school as well as by statutory accident insurance, see information on the primary sector in section 3.1.

## Types of institution

### *Lower secondary education*

Following the primary school stage at which all children attend mixed-ability classes (grades 1 to 4, in Berlin and Brandenburg grades 1 to 6) the organisation of the secondary school system (grades 5/7 to 12/13) in the *Länder* is characterised by division into the various educational paths with their respective leaving certificates and qualifications which are organised in different school types. These school types are:

- *Hauptschule*
- *Realschule*
- *Gymnasium*
- *Gesamtschule*

In most of the *Länder*, these school types are supplemented or replaced by school types with particular names which differ from one Land to another, in which the traditional courses available at the *Hauptschule* and the *Realschule* are brought under one organisational umbrella.

At the end of grade 9, it is possible in any Land to obtain a first general education qualification, which is called the *Hauptschulabschluss* in most *Länder*. At the end of grade 10, it is possible in any Land to obtain a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*, which is called *Realschulabschluss* in most *Länder*. The entitlement to attend the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* (upper level of the *Gymnasium*) is obtained, as a rule, if certain standards of achievement are met, at the end of grade 9 or grade 10 at the *Gymnasium* or at the end of grade 10 at the *Gesamtschule*.

### *Upper secondary education – general education schools*

The *gymnasiale Oberstufe* has also been established in other types of school in addition to the *Gymnasien*. In some *Länder*, these include the *kooperative Gesamtschule*, *integrierte Gesamtschule* and the *Berufliches Gymnasium* or *Fachgymnasium* that is described in more detail in the following. The *gymnasiale Oberstufe* (upper level of the *Gymnasium*) concludes with the *Abitur* examination. Upon passing the *Abitur* examination, a *Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife* (general higher education entrance qualification) is acquired, which also includes the academic performance in the qualification phase.

### *Upper secondary education – vocational schools and vocational training in the dual system*

Full-time vocational schools include the *Berufsfachschule*, the *Fachoberschule*, the *Berufliches Gymnasium* or *Fachgymnasium*, the *Berufsoberschule* and other types of schools that exist only in certain *Länder* or are of marginal importance due to their small numbers. According to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), continuing vocational training at the *Fachschule* is part of the tertiary sector. The *Fachschule* is thus described in chapter 6.

In Germany, about 60 per cent of the young people of any one-year age group undergo vocational education and training in the *duales System* for two or three years, depending on the respective occupation. It is described as a *dual system* because training is carried out in two places of learning: at the workplace and in a *Berufsschule* (part-time vocational school). In the company, trainees acquire practical skills in a real working environment. In the *Berufsschule*, trainees are taught general and



vocational knowledge related to their training occupation. Those successfully completing the training are immediately entitled to do skilled work in one of currently more than 340 *anerkannte Ausbildungsberufe* (recognised occupations requiring formal training).

### Privately-maintained schools

The main legal provisions for the establishment of privately-maintained schools are the special laws on private schools or the relevant provisions in the Education Acts, as well as financial aid regulations in the form of laws and regulations of the *Länder*. Standard framework conditions in the *Länder* are guaranteed by an *Agreement on Private Schools* of August 1951 drawn up by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*).

At secondary level two types of privately-maintained school are to be differentiated:

*Ersatzschulen* (alternative schools) are, in terms of their overall purpose, to serve as a substitute for a public-sector school which already exists or is essentially provided for in a Land. They must acquire state approval. At these schools compulsory schooling can be completed. However, these alternative schools, in their capacity as, for example, denominational schools, reformist schools, boarding schools or international schools may also fulfil an educational mission of their own.

*Ergänzungsschulen* (complementary schools) are to complement the range of courses on offer from public bodies by offering types of education which do not generally exist in public-sector schools, above all in the vocational sphere. Complementary schools merely have to notify education authorities that they plan to start up. Under certain conditions, the school authorities can, however, also prohibit the establishment and operation of a complementary school.

### Length of school education up to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*

In almost all *Länder*, the conversion from nine to eight years at the *Gymnasium* is currently under way. In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thüringen, since 2009 in Saarland, and in the future also in Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Hessen, Niedersachsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen and Schleswig-Holstein, the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* is obtained after 12 years.

### Statistics

**Selected secondary schools providing general education 2008/09**

Type of school	Schools	Pupils	Teachers
<i>Hauptschulen</i>	4 283	825 730	43 076
Schools offering both <i>Hauptschule</i> and <i>Realschule</i> courses	1 363	302 269	19 108
<i>Realschulen</i>	2 625	1 262 545	45 858
<i>Gymnasien</i>	3 070	2 468 949	106 282
<i>Integrierte Gesamtschulen</i>	705	503 170	25 235
<i>Freie Waldorfschulen</i>	204	79 624	3 098

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Fachserie 11, Reihe 1, 2008/2009

## Vocational Schools 2008/09

Type of school	Schools	Pupils	Teachers
<i>Berufsschulen</i> in the dual system	1 649	1 726 703	49 283
<i>Berufsgrundbildungsjahr</i> including <i>Berufsvorbereitungsjahr</i>	1 531	99 660	8 185
<i>Berufsfachschulen</i>	2 532	510 855	36 356
<i>Fachoberschulen</i>	831	134 303	7 048
<i>Berufliche Gymnasien/Fachgymnasien</i>	773	154 074	12 075
<i>Berufsoberschulen/Technische Oberschulen</i>	234	20 385	1 180
Other	105	7 692	849
Total	7 655	2 653 672	114 976

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Fachserie 11, Reihe 2, 2008/2009

## 4.1. Admission

### 4.1.1. Lower secondary education

In terms of the choice of school, a distinction must first of all be made between the choice of a particular school type and the pupil's acceptance into a specific school establishment.

#### *Choice of school within the differentiated school system*

The *Länder* have different regulations governing the transition from primary into secondary education. In some instances, a binding decision on the choice of school attended and/or course of education pursued in lower secondary education (*Sekundarstufe I*) is made in grade 4, and in others during grades 5 and 6, while in others still this decision is only made at the end of grade 6. No such decision has to be made if the pupil is entering an *integrierte Gesamtschule* (integrated comprehensive school).

#### *Choice of a specific school establishment*

The right of parents to choose a school for their children does not mean that a pupil has the right to be accepted by a specific school. The right to a free choice of the place of training which is laid down in the Basic Law does not refer to acceptance into a specific school. As a result, as long as attendance of another school of the same type is possible and can reasonably be expected, some *Länder* rule out a legal right to acceptance into a specific school in their Education Acts.

Pupils wishing to complete their compulsory schooling at the *Hauptschule* or *Berufsschule* must always attend the local school. This rule also applies to pupils at other types of secondary school if school catchment areas have been fixed for the type of school they have chosen. However, parents may choose a school other than that which is responsible for the local area and apply to the school authority to admit their child to that school. The school authority then decides on the merits of each particular case, following consultations with the parents and the authority maintaining the school, with the well-being of the pupil concerned being the decisive factor.

If no catchment areas have been fixed for a type of secondary school, parents are always able to choose which school their child attends. In this case, the capacity of the chosen school is the only limiting factor affecting the pupil's right to admission.

#### **4.1.2. Upper secondary education – general education schools**

Admission to courses of general education at upper secondary level is based on leaving certificates and qualifications acquired at the end of lower secondary level. At the eight-year *Gymnasium*, successful completion of grade 10 will entitle the pupil to enter the qualification phase of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*. At the nine-year *Gymnasium*, successful completion of grade 10 will entitle the pupil to enter the introductory phase of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*.

For the possibility of gaining admission into a specific school, see section 4.1.1.

#### **4.1.3. Upper secondary education – vocational schools and vocational training in the dual system**

##### *Full-time vocational schools*

Admission to courses of vocational education at upper secondary level is based on leaving certificates and qualifications acquired at the end of lower secondary level.

Depending on the training objective, *Berufsfachschulen* require their pupils to have a *Hauptschulabschluss* or a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*.

As a rule, the *Fachoberschule* requires a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*.

The *Berufliches Gymnasium* or *Fachgymnasium* requires a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* satisfying the requirements for admittance to the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* or an equivalent qualification.

Acceptance into the *Berufsoberschule* requires the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* or qualifications recognised as equivalent and at least two years' successful vocational training or at least five years' relevant practical experience.

##### *Vocational training in the dual system*

Compulsory full-time schooling must be completed before commencing vocational training. There are no other formal prerequisites for admission to the dual system; training in the dual system is generally open to everyone. The candidates' schooling background is, however, an important criterion for most companies when selecting their trainees.

#### **4.2. Organisation of time, groups and venue**

For the organisation of the school year in the secondary sector, see section 3.2. on the primary sector.

Education and care outside morning lessons is provided to lower secondary level pupils at *Ganztagsschulen* (all-day schools) and extended *Halbtagschulen* (half-day schools), via all-day offers in schools, as well as in programmes run in cooperation with youth welfare services. Currently these offers are, with particular emphasis depending on the respective Land, being developed in many *Länder*.

Within the compass of the investment programme Future Education and Care (*Zukunft Bildung und Betreuung*), the Federation has supplied the *Länder* with investment funding amounting to Euro 4 billion for the demand-driven establishment and expansion of all-day schools between 2003 and 2009. During this period, 7 192 schools have been funded or earmarked for funding. In all-day schools

in the primary or secondary sector, in addition to timetabled lessons in the morning, an all-day programme comprising at least seven hours per day is offered on at least three days per week. There are three different forms:

- in the *fully bound form*, all pupils are obliged to make use of the all-day offer
- in the *partially bound form*, part of the pupils (e.g. individual class units or grades) commit to making use of the all-day offer
- in the *open form*, the all-day offer is made available to the pupils on a voluntary basis

#### **4.2.1. Lower secondary education**

##### *Organisation of time*

At lower secondary level (*Sekundarstufe I*), lesson times are generally laid down from 7.30/8.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m./11.30 a.m. (Monday to Friday or Monday to Saturday). With the exception of the eight-year *Gymnasium*, pupils generally have 28 to 30 weekly periods in compulsory and optional subjects in grades 5 and 6 of all types of school, and 30 to 32 periods in grades 7 to 10. Each period is 45 minutes.

At the eight-year *Gymnasium*, the number of weekly periods at lower and upper secondary level is generally increased by two to four weekly periods. To guarantee the mutual recognition of the *Abitur*, all *Länder* have to ensure teaching of a total of at least 265 weekly periods in the lower secondary level and the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* to which up to five hours in elective subjects may be added.

##### *Organisation of groups*

At schools offering one course of education, pupils aged 10 to 16 are taught by subject teachers in classes made up of children of the same age group. *Schularten mit mehreren Bildungsgängen* (schools offering several courses of education) provide instruction in certain subjects and grades in classes organised either according to the desired qualification or to the required performance at a minimum of two levels of proficiency.

In the majority of *Länder*, at any school at lower secondary level grades 5 and 6 are organised as an orientation stage called *Orientierungsstufe*, a period of special promotion, observation and orientation to determine a child's subsequent educational path and the main thrust of his/her subsequent studies. Beginning in grade 7, the school types and courses of education increasingly diverge in terms of the subjects offered, the requirements with regard to individual specialisation and the qualifications being aimed at.

#### **4.2.2. Upper secondary education – general education schools**

##### *Organisation of time*

There is no fixed end to teaching times at upper secondary level (*Sekundarstufe II*). The weekly instruction time at the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* usually is also 30 weekly periods which are taken within the framework of courses at a basic level of academic standards and of courses at an increased level of academic standards.

##### *Organisation of groups*

At the latest upon entrance into the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*, the pupils are no longer taught in annual classes. The class unit is replaced by a system of compulsory and elective subjects, with the possibility of individual specialisation.

The *gymnasiale Oberstufe* is divided into a one-year introductory phase and a two-year qualification phase, whereby grade 10 may have a double function as last school year of the lower secondary level and first school year of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*. During the qualification phase, courses are structured in half-year terms, defined thematically, and assigned to subjects to which specific curricula apply. The courses provided are principally divided up into different levels of academic standards: courses at a basic level of academic standards and courses at an increased level of academic standards. Within the scope of the relevant agreement of the Standing Conference (*Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK*), the responsibility for the organisation of lessons and for the design of the compulsory and elective subjects with the possibility of individual specialisation lies with the *Länder*. The above explanations regarding the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* equally apply to the *Berufliche Gymnasien/Fachgymnasien*.

#### 4.2.3. Upper secondary education – vocational schools and vocational training in the dual system

At full-time vocational schools, 30 weekly periods are required at the two-year *Berufsfachschulen*. At least 12 periods are compulsory in grade 11 of *Fachoberschulen*, together with practical on-the-job training while at least 30 weekly periods of general and specialist lessons are required in grade 12.

As for vocational training in the *duales System* (dual system), where initial vocational training is carried out jointly in a company and in the *Berufsschule*, at least 12 weekly periods of teaching are required at the *Berufsschule*. Pupils generally are taught in subject-specific classes relating to a specific occupation or similar occupations. This may be organised in a variety of ways with students either attending classes on a part-time basis with 12 weekly periods two days a week throughout their course or alternating between two days one week and one day the next. Teaching may also be received in coherent blocks (*Blockunterricht*). The company organises learning on an average of three or four days per week on the basis of an individual training plan which forms part of the training contract concluded with the trainee.

### 4.3. Curriculum

With regard to the curricula, the remarks in section 3.3. for the primary level apply, according to which the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* are principally responsible for developing the curricula.

#### 4.3.1. Lower secondary education

The agreement reached in December 1993, as amended in October 2009, by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* concerning the types of schools and courses of education in lower secondary level lays down a framework schedule for grades 5/7-9/10, requiring certain core subjects in every type of school and course of education: German, mathematics, the first foreign language, natural and social sciences. Music, art and sport, at the very least, have to be among the other compulsory or elective subjects offered. A second foreign language is mandatory at *Gymnasium* in grades 7 to 10. In the course of the expansion of foreign language lessons in the primary sector, at the *Gymnasium* lessons in a second foreign language are often given from as early as grade 6. At other types of school, a second foreign language may be offered as an elective course. An introduction to the professional and working world is a compulsory component of every course of education and is provided either in a special subject such as *Arbeitslehre* (pre-vocational studies) or as part of the material covered in other subjects.

To implement the *Bildungsstandards* (educational standards) adopted by the Standing Conference for the *Hauptschulabschluss* and the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* (cf. section 1.4.), the subjects in the

curricula are to be adapted accordingly. The national educational standards specify the goals themselves, whilst the curricula describe and structure the way to achieve these goals.

#### *Teaching methods*

Teaching in schools in Germany is governed by regulations of various kinds laid down by the *Länder*. The prescribed curricula include guidelines on the treatment of the various topics of instruction, distribution of materials and various didactic approaches. Of increasing importance are interdisciplinary coordination of material taught and teaching objectives as well as interdisciplinary activities in such areas as health education, vocational orientation, computer literacy, environmental education and the treatment of European topics.

The use of new media (multimedia) is growing increasingly important, both as a teaching aid and as the subject of teaching and learning. Access to electronic networks (Internet) is now granted at all schools.

### **4.3.2. Upper secondary education – general education schools**

Building on the foundations laid at lower secondary level, the classes in the qualification phase are usually structured in relation to half-year terms. Whilst still required to take certain subjects or subject combinations during the qualification phase, they now have scope for individual specialisation. Related subjects are grouped together under main areas. The three main areas with examples of subjects they include are listed below:

- languages, literature and the arts,  
(e.g. German, foreign languages, fine art, music)
- social sciences,  
(e.g. history, geography, philosophy, social studies/politics, economics)
- mathematics, natural sciences and technology  
(e.g. mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, information technology).

Every single pupil is required to study subjects from each of these three areas right up to the completion of the upper level of the *Gymnasium*, including *Abitur* examinations. Religious education in line with the provisions of the Land and sport are also compulsory. German, a foreign language, mathematics and physical education as well as, as a rule, history and one of the natural sciences must be taken throughout the qualification phase of the upper level of the *Gymnasium* and results must be taken into account in the certificate of the *Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife* (general higher education entrance qualification).

The subjects at the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* are taught at different levels of academic standards in accordance with the Uniform Examination Standards in the *Abitur* Examination (*Einheitliche Prüfungsanforderungen in der Abiturprüfung – EPA*). They are divided in courses at a basic level of academic standards and courses at an increased level of academic standards. The courses at a basic level of academic standards teach the propaedeutics of scientific work, and the courses at an increased level of academic standards provide in-depth teaching of the propaedeutics of scientific work by way of specific examples. The courses at a basic level of academic standards in the subjects German, mathematics and foreign language comprise at least three weekly periods. The pupils are required to choose at least two subjects at an increased level of academic standards, comprising at least five weekly periods, or at least three subjects at an increased level of academic standards, comprising at least four weekly periods, one of which being either German, a foreign language, mathematics or a natural science. The *Länder* regulate the further details in their own responsibility. Generally, the pupils are required to take two foreign language courses during the introductory phase. Pupils who have not or not continuously been taught a second foreign language before entering the



*gymnasiale Oberstufe* are required to take a second foreign language course throughout the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*. The four or five subjects of the *Abitur* examination must include:

- at least two subjects at an increased level of academic standards
- two of the following three subjects: German, foreign language or mathematics
- at least one subject from every main area of compulsory subjects (the *Länder* may decide at their own discretion whether or not religious education can represent the social sciences area)

Courses in the subjects German, mathematics and foreign language comprise at least three periods per week. If instruction in three subjects at a level of increased academic standards is required, courses in these subjects comprise at least four periods per week. If instruction in two subjects at a level of increased academic standards is required, courses in these subjects comprise at least five periods per week. Subjects at a level of increased academic standards must include German, a foreign language, mathematics or a natural science. Whilst the compulsory courses are designed to ensure that all the pupils receive a common general education, electives, in conjunction with the compulsory curriculum, are intended to enable pupils to develop an area of specialisation.

#### *Teaching methods*

Based on the curricula, which also contain some guidance on teaching methods, the teachers take responsibility for teaching in their classes, taking the background and aptitude of each pupil into consideration. Use is made of new media (multimedia) and telecommunications (Internet etc.) in the classroom both as teaching aids and as the subject of teaching and learning. By utilising new resources and methods and by strengthening the individualist character of teaching, the aim is to promote creativity and independent learning skills.

#### **4.3.3. Upper secondary education – vocational schools and vocational training in the dual system**

As to the curricula, the comments on the primary sector in section 3.3. apply. The Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* are responsible for drawing up the curricula. The *Rahmenlehrpläne* (framework curricula) for vocational instruction at *Berufsschulen*, on the other hand, are worked out by the *Länder* in the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) and resolved in a coordinated procedure with the agreement of the Federation, employers' associations and unions on the basis of the *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations) for on-the-job training.

The knowledge, skills and competences to be imparted in on-the-job training for professional qualification are set out in the training regulations. These regulations are issued for all *anerkannte Ausbildungsberufe* (state-recognised occupations requiring formal training) by the competent federal ministry in consultation with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. They are drawn up with the assistance of the social partners as well as the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder*. Proposals for the development or revision of training regulations submitted by the industry are taken up by the Federal Government if they have been agreed between employers and unions. The coordination procedure ensures that the training regulations take account of what has been learnt from experiences in the world of work and in the vocational schools, as well as the results of employment and occupational research and the results of pilot schemes of the Federal Institute of Vocational Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB).

The training regulations for currently more than 340 recognised training occupations are continuously updated, as necessary. Furthermore, new training occupations are recognised by the state in areas where this is required by current developments in the world of work as, for example, the introduction of new technologies (*Mikrotechnologe/microtechnologist*) or the expansion of fields of employment now

requiring a specific occupational profile (*Fachkraft für Schutz und Sicherheit/safety and security specialist*). Nationally binding recognition of the training occupations ensures that the basic principles agreed between the industry and the *Länder* are taken into account and that training for a recognised occupation is only provided in accordance with the training regulations adopted by the Federal Government.

#### *Full-time vocational schools*

At *Berufsfachschulen* (full-time vocational schools) instruction is given in general/ multi-disciplinary and subject- or occupation-specific areas. Depending on the particular course being pursued, teaching in the two areas of learning accounts for a minimum of 30 periods per week.

The *Fachoberschule* is divided into the fields of study business and administration, technology, health and social work, design, nutrition and home economics, as well as agriculture. Training includes instruction and professional training. Instruction is given in the subjects German, foreign language, mathematics, natural sciences, economics and society and also in a field-specific subject. Practical training takes place in grade 11, i.e. in the first year of this school type, as a relevant controlled placement in companies or equivalent institutions. Completed relevant vocational training or sufficient relevant work experience can serve as a substitute for grade 11 of the *Fachoberschule*, so that pupils with such qualifications can proceed directly with grade 12 of the *Fachoberschule*.

Apart from the subjects offered at a *Gymnasium*, *Fachgymnasien/Technische Gymnasien* have career-oriented subjects like business, technology, nutrition and home economics and agronomy, as well as health and social studies, which can be chosen in place of general subjects as the second intensified course and are examined in the *Abitur*.

The *Berufsoberschule* covers specialisations in technology, economy, agricultural economy, nutrition and domestic science, social professions and design. The pupils are assigned a specialisation in accordance with the first vocational training or practical experience they have already completed.

#### *Vocational training in the dual system*

As a rule, teaching at the *Berufsschule* takes up four periods per week in general education subjects, namely German, social studies and economics, religion and sport, regardless of the training area, and eight periods per week in vocational education. Foreign languages are included in vocational education to the extent they are likely to be of importance in the pupils' future career, e.g. office jobs. Together with the companies providing training, the school supervisory body and the relevant bodies from industry, the *Berufsschule* decides on how to organise teaching time, drawing on a wide number of possibilities. The aim of the various different ways of organising the course is to guarantee the best possible attendance rate of the pupils within the companies providing training and, at the same time, to create a favourable situation in terms of educational gain and learning psychology.

Systematic teaching at vocational school is a necessary supplement to process-oriented training in the company which is rather more based on specific in-house requirements. Teaching at part-time vocational school takes complex processes into account as well: Theoretical content is therefore not taught in isolation but within the framework of so-called fields of learning, and is related to work in the respective occupation wherever possible. This approach is also used in classes on general subjects if feasible.

The trainees spend three or four days a week at the company and up to two days at the *Berufsschule*. Twelve periods a week are spent in class, eight of which generally cover material specific to the occupation in question.



### Teaching methods

At the *Berufsschule*, it is particularly important to employ teaching methods that are task-based and practice-oriented in providing technical vocational training and a broader general education. The use of new information and communication technologies opens up a new scope of conveying up-to-date vocational knowledge. The basic didactic methods to be used in on-the-job training are outlined in the *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations).

## 4.4. Assessment, progression and certification

The evaluation of a pupil's performance is a pedagogical process; but it is also based on legal and administrative regulations, whereby the teachers and the teaching staff as a whole are given some scope for discretion.

Generally speaking, it is possible to transfer between courses of education or school types, e.g. from *Realschule* to *Hauptschule* or even *Gymnasium*.

### 4.4.1. Lower secondary education

#### Assessment

The evaluation of a given pupil's performance is based on all the work he/she has done in connection with the class in question, specifically written, oral and practical work. Papers and written exercises are spread evenly over the school year. The requirements in this work are gauged to meet the standards laid down in the curricula. Oral work refers to oral contributions made by pupils and evaluated in class. Practical achievements serve as the basis of evaluation particularly in such subjects as sport, music, and arts and crafts.

Performance is assessed according to a six-mark system adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder*:

- very good = 1
- good = 2
- satisfactory = 3
- adequate = 4
- poor = 5
- very poor = 6

As a rule, each pupil's performance is set out on a report twice a year in the middle and at the end of the school year. During the school year, each assignment is marked by the respective subject teacher. On the report, the marks for each subject are given either by the subject teacher or, on the subject teacher's recommendation, by a teachers' conference known as the *Klassenkonferenz*. In addition to the marks in the various subjects, the report may contain comments or marks on class participation and social conduct at school.

#### Progression

Promotion of a pupil to the next grade depends on his/her level of achievement at the end of the school year as documented in the report received in the middle and at the end of the school year. An adequate mark (mark 4 or *ausreichend*) or better is generally required in each of the subjects that have a bearing on promotion. As a rule, poor or very poor marks in one subject can be offset to a certain extent by good or very good marks in another.

Whether or not to promote the pupils in a given grade is generally decided by the *Klassenkonferenz*, which is attended by all the teachers who have taught those pupils, and, sometimes, also by the *Lehrerkonferenz*, which is attended by all teachers of a particular school. The decision is noted on the report issued at the end of the school year.

If there is a risk of a pupil's not being promoted, the school must report this to the parents by noting it in the mid-year report or sending a written notice prior to the date on which the decision is to be taken.

#### *Certification*

On completion of the courses of education in lower secondary level, the pupils receive a leaving certificate, provided that they have successfully completed grade 9 or 10. In an increasing number of *Länder* pupils are required to sit central examinations at Land level in order to obtain the leaving certificate. As a rule, pupils at the *Gymnasium*, which also comprises the upper secondary level, are not issued leaving certificates at the end of the lower secondary level, but a qualification to attend the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*, the upper level of the *Gymnasium*. Pupils who have not achieved the goal of the course of education they were pursuing receive a school-leaving report (*Abgangszeugnis*) instead. The forms for leaving certificates are prescribed by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of each Land. School-leaving certificates and reports are issued by each school and signed by the head teacher and class teacher. The stages of education successfully completed and qualifications acquired for continued education are noted on the leaving certificates.

At the end of grade 9, it is possible in any Land to obtain a first general education qualification, which is called the *Hauptschulabschluss* in most *Länder*. A leaving certificate is issued after grade 9 if adequate marks (mark 4 or *ausreichend*) or better are received in every subject.

This first leaving certificate in general education is usually used for admission to vocational training in the so-called *duales System* (dual system). In addition, it qualifies a pupil, under specific conditions, for admission to certain *Berufsfachschulen* (a certain type of full-time vocational school). Moreover, it is a prerequisite for subsequent admission to certain *Fachschulen* (schools for continued vocational training) and institutions offering secondary education for adults known as *Zweiter Bildungsweg*.

At the end of grade 10, it is possible in any Land to obtain a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*, which is called *Realschulabschluss* in most *Länder*. In the majority of *Länder*, this certificate is issued after successful completion of grade 10 and after passing a final examination. The *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* can be obtained after grade 10 at other types of lower secondary schools as well if certain standards of achievement are met, and also at the *Berufsschule* with the requisite achievement level and average mark. It qualifies a pupil for admission to courses of upper secondary education, e.g. at special *Berufsfachschulen* and at the *Fachoberschule*, and is also used for entering a course of vocational training within the *duales System* (dual system).

The entitlement to attend the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* (upper level of the *Gymnasium*) is obtained, as a rule, if certain standards of achievement are met, at the end of grade 9 or grade 10 at the *Gymnasium* or at the end of grade 10 at the *Gesamtschule*. However, an entrance qualification required for transfer to the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* may also be obtained at *Hauptschulen*, *Realschulen* or at *Schularten mit mehreren Bildungsgängen* (schools offering more than one type of course of education) if certain performance requirements are fulfilled.

Qualifications and entitlements obtained after grades 9 and 10 are mutually recognised by all the *Länder* provided they satisfy the requirements stipulated by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder*. The requirements are laid down in the 1993 Agreement on Types of Schools and Courses of Education at Lower Secondary Level (*Vereinbarung über die Schularten und Bildungsgänge im Sekundarbereich I*) as amended in October 2009 and in

the Agreements on Educational Standards for the *Hauptschulabschluss* (grade 9) and the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* (grade 10) in 2003 and 2004.

#### 4.4.2. Upper secondary education – general education schools

##### Assessment

At the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* (upper level of the *Gymnasium*), performance is assessed on a scale of 15 to 0, which correlates with the usual scale of 1 to 6 as follows:

- Mark 1 is equivalent to 15/14/13 points depending on the trend of marks.
- Mark 2 is equivalent to 12/11/10 points depending on the trend of marks.
- Mark 3 is equivalent to 9/8/7 points depending on the trend of marks.
- Mark 4 is equivalent to 6/5/4 points depending on the trend of marks.
- Mark 5 is equivalent to 3/2/1 points depending on the trend of marks.
- Mark 6 is equivalent to 0 points.

##### Progression

In the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* the last two grades are known as the qualification phase. Marks obtained in this phase are used to calculate a pupil's total marks, composed of marks received in courses taken in these two years and the marks achieved in the *Abitur* examination. There is no procedure for promotion during the qualification phase, however, it is possible to repeat a year if the marks required for entrance to the *Abitur* examination have not been attained.

##### Certification

School-leaving certificates may be acquired at the end of upper secondary level courses of education subject to the same basic conditions as described for lower secondary level.

The *gymnasiale Oberstufe* (upper level of the *Gymnasium*) concludes with the *Abitur* examination. The questions are either set on a uniform basis by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of a Land or drawn up by the teachers of the individual schools and approved by the responsible school supervisory authority. In the future, there will be central *Abitur* examinations at Land level in almost all *Länder*. In order to be admitted to the examination, certain requirements have to be met in the qualification phase. The *Abitur* examination covers four or five examination subjects, which must include at least two subjects at a level of increased academic standards and two of the following three subjects: German, foreign language and mathematics. Additionally, all three subject areas (languages, literature and the arts; social sciences; mathematics, natural sciences and technology) must be included in the examination. The required minimum three written examinations must cover at least two subjects at an increased level of academic standards, which must include at least one of the following subjects: German, foreign language, mathematics or a natural science. The oral *Abitur* examination is taken in a subject which has not been examined in written form. As a rule, written and possibly oral examinations are taken in three subjects, whilst in the fourth subject, only an oral examination is taken.

Upon passing the *Abitur* examination, a *Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife* (general higher education entrance qualification) is acquired, which also includes the academic performance in the qualification phase. The *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* is awarded if the total marks attained are at least adequate (average mark 4 or a minimum of 280/300 points).

At present, the general higher education entrance qualification is still awarded by most *Länder* after 13 years of school (nine-year *Gymnasium*). In some *Länder*, the general higher education entrance

qualification can also be awarded after 12 years of school (eight-year *Gymnasium*), either generally or within the scope of pilot projects in schools. The conversion throughout the Land to the eight-year *Gymnasium* will take a few years as it generally takes place after grades 5 or 6. To guarantee the mutual recognition of the *Abitur* obtained after this shorter course, these *Länder* have to ensure teaching of a total of at least 265 weekly periods in the lower secondary level and the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* to which up to five hours in elective subjects may be added.

The comparability of the examination procedures and examination requirements is guaranteed for all *Länder* by the Uniform Examination Standards in the *Abitur* Examination (*Einheitliche Prüfungsanforderungen in der Abiturprüfung*). In October 2007, the Standing Conference resolved to develop the Uniform Examination Standards for the *Abitur* examination (*Einheitliche Prüfungsanforderungen in der Abiturprüfung*) initially in the subjects of German, mathematics and first foreign language (English/French) and furthermore for the natural sciences (biology, chemistry, physics) into educational standards for the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*. As far as possible, the standards are to be implemented for the pupils who will be moving into the qualification phase of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* in the school year 2010/11.

#### **4.4.3. Upper secondary education – vocational schools and vocational training in the dual system**

##### *Assessment*

For information about the assessment of pupils at vocational schools in the upper secondary level see section 4.4.1., in which the basis for assessing and marking in the lower secondary level is set out.

Before the end of their second year of training, trainees in the *duales System* (dual system) take an intermediate examination according to the standards laid down in the *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations) and *Rahmenlehrpläne* (framework curricula). These intermediate examinations are administered by the competent bodies (usually chambers of handicrafts or industry etc.). They consist of a practical and a written component. The intermediate examination usually covers the knowledge, skills and competences listed in the training regulations for the first three half-year terms of training, as well as the material taught at the *Berufsschule* according to the framework curriculum, to the extent it is of material importance for the vocational training. After taking an intermediate examination, the trainee receives information about his/her current level of training.

##### *Progression*

As far as full-time vocational schools are concerned, the comments on promotion in section 4.4.1. on the lower secondary level generally apply.

Non-progression is ruled out at the *Berufsschule*. If necessary, the duration of vocational training may be extended.

##### *Certification*

Double qualification courses of education that lead up to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (a general entrance qualification for higher education) or to the *Fachhochschulreife* and a vocational qualification or partial vocational qualification take three to four years and conclude with two separate examinations (academic examination and vocational examination). In addition, there are vocational training courses in which it is possible to obtain a vocational qualification, as well as the *Fachhochschulreife*. The acquisition of the *Fachhochschulreife* in vocational training courses requires the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* and, according to an agreement of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) made in 1998 in the version of 2001, is based on standards for contents and examinations. The regulations apply to all vocational training courses.

The programme at *Berufsfachschulen* (full-time vocational schools) normally concludes with a final examination. In the *Berufsfachschulen*, different qualifications can be obtained, depending on admission requirements; these qualifications are either of a vocational or a general education nature. At *Berufsfachschulen* offering basic vocational training, young people can obtain the *Hauptschulabschluss* or the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* in courses lasting one or two years. In contrast, the two-year full-time *Berufsfachschule*, for which a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* is required, in its various branches of study leads to a professional qualification as a *state-certified technical assistant* in biochemistry, garment making, information technology or mechanical engineering or as a *state-certified business assistant* specialising in business administration, clerical operations, foreign languages or data processing. At *Berufsfachschulen*, under certain conditions the *Fachhochschulreife* can be obtained as well as the vocational leaving certificate.

The programme at the *Fachoberschule* concludes with a final examination after grade 12. This exam covers three general subjects (German, mathematics, foreign language) and one individual specialised subject (e.g. in engineering, business, administration or agriculture). On passing the exam, pupils receive the certificate of *Fachhochschulreife*, a higher education entrance qualification qualifying them to go on to *Fachhochschulen*. The *Länder* may also establish a grade 13 leading to the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* or, with sufficient competence in a second foreign language, to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*.

The course of study in the *Berufsoberschule* ends with a final examination and leads to the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* and, with a second foreign language, to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*. There is a written final examination in German, a compulsory foreign language, mathematics and a specific subject relevant to the chosen specialisation. Oral examinations can be held in all subjects. The achievements in the final examination count for at least one-third of the total marks obtained for the individual subjects in the final certificate.

In the *duales System* of vocational training (dual system), trainees take a final examination or *Gesellenprüfung* (final examination which, if successfully passed, leads to the award of a certificate showing proficiency as journeyman) administered by the *authorities responsible for vocational training*. The responsible authorities include regional and sectoral organisations from the various branches of industry and commerce, e.g. chambers of industry and commerce, of handicrafts, of liberal professions and of agriculture that perform governmental functions in the domain of vocational training. The responsible authorities can also be public service authorities. The boards of examiners are made up of representatives of industry and labour and teachers at *Berufsschulen*.

The final examination or *Gesellenprüfung* may consist of practical, written and oral components. The competent body assesses whether the students have acquired the qualifications necessary to practise a skilled occupation within the meaning of the Vocational Training Act (Section 1, subsection 3 of the *Berufsbildungsgesetz*). This includes the ability to plan and perform work processes independently and to inspect and to judge the work result. For the purposes of assessment of performances in individual areas, the board of examiners may solicit expert opinions from third parties, in particular from vocational schools (Section 39, subsection 2 of the Vocational Training Act). Successful candidates are awarded an examination certificate. Concomitantly, the *Berufsschule* issues a leaving certificate if the trainee has achieved at least adequate performances in all subjects. This certificate incorporates a *Hauptschulabschluss* and may incorporate a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*, depending on the candidate's achievements. If the relevant tuition has been given, the *Fachhochschulreife* may also be attained. In order to improve the transparency of vocational qualifications and facilitate mobility, certificate supplements are being developed which describe the vocational knowledge, skills and competences acquired through vocational training. Certificate supplements are available in German, English and French. The results of a trainee's learning and examination achievements in the



*Berufsschule* can also be stated on the examination certificate at his or her request. It is provided by the authority responsible for the vocational training.

Under some training regulations or trial regulations (*Erprobungsverordnungen*), the intermediate and final examinations are replaced by so-called extended final examinations. In the extended final examinations, part of the professional competence is tested after two years in the first part of a final examination. The second part of the final examination takes place at the end of the vocational training. Qualifications which were covered in the first part of the final examination will be included in the second part only to the extent required for the assessment of professional proficiency. The result of the extended final examinations is made up of the two partial results. An intermediate examination does not take place.

## **4.5. Guidance and counselling**

### **4.5.1. Lower secondary education**

At the lower secondary level school career advice includes consultation not only on a possible switch to another school type and on which educational path to pursue, but also counselling pupils on the vocational qualifications offered by the education system. The school guidance services also collaborate with local employment agencies to provide the pupils with vocational guidance. The employment agencies have careers information centres (*Berufsinformationszentren* – BIZ). These are facilities where everyone facing career decisions can find information, especially about training, different trades and professions and educational requirements, continuing education and labour market trends.

An introduction to the professional and working world is a compulsory component of all courses of education at lower secondary level. The instruction is given either in a separate subject (*Arbeitslehre* – pre-vocational studies) or as part of the material covered in other subjects. Work experience placements, especially for pupils in the two last grades at *Hauptschule* and *Realschule*, aim to provide first-hand insight into the working world and guidance in choosing an occupation.

### **4.5.2. Upper secondary education – general education schools**

School leavers with a higher education entrance qualification usually do not immediately seek employment. Those who do not take up studies at a higher education institution, may acquire vocational qualifications at various institutions of secondary or tertiary education (e.g. in the dual system, at *Berufsfachschulen* and *Berufsakademien*).

In addition to the provisions named in section 4.5.1., each local employment agency offers special careers consultations for secondary school leavers who have completed the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* (upper level of the *Gymnasium*).

### **4.5.3. Upper secondary education – vocational schools and vocational training in the dual system**

Vocational courses of education at full-time schools initiate trainees into the working environment through work experience placements.

Young people who have finished their vocational training in the *duales System* (dual system) are well prepared to take up employment. Through on-the-job training they have grown used to every aspect of the working world and expected job behaviour.

## **4.6. Teachers and trainers**

For initial teacher training, in-service and further training for teachers and the allocation of teachers, the comments in section 3.6. apply.

### **4.6.1. Lower secondary education**

A teaching qualification for all or individual lower secondary level school types can be acquired through education and training for teaching career type 3.

### **4.6.2. Upper secondary education – general education schools**

A teaching qualification for general education subjects at upper secondary level or the *Gymnasium* can be acquired through education and training for teaching career type 4.

### **4.6.3. Upper secondary education – vocational schools and vocational training in the dual system**

Within the *duales System* (dual system) of vocational training, both the teaching staff in the *Berufsschulen* themselves and the instructors in the partner companies are responsible for the vocational training of the students.

A teaching qualification for vocational subjects at upper secondary level or at vocational schools can be acquired through education and training for teaching career type 5.

Conditions governing the training of in-company instructors are stipulated in federal law. The statutory provisions (Section 28 of the Vocational Training Act – *Berufsbildungsgesetz*, Section 22 of the Handicrafts Code – *Handwerksordnung*) stipulate that the instructors must have the necessary personal and technical skills, knowledge and qualifications for training young people. Their professional qualifications are used to judge whether they have the necessary technical skills. Furthermore, instructors must have the required pedagogical knowledge of professional and work-related issues which, as a rule, is proven by means of an instructor aptitude examination.

The content of training is laid down in general terms in the instructor aptitude ordinance. Training is usually provided in courses taken alongside full-time employment with a total duration of 120 hours. Participation in these courses as a means of preparing for the instructor aptitude examination is not, however, compulsory.

The training objective for in-company instructors is the conveyance of pedagogic knowledge within the following vocational and work areas:

- general concepts of in-company training (e.g. legislative framework for vocational training, task, status and responsibilities of the in-company instructor)
- planning of the training course
- involvement in the enlistment of trainees
- training at the workplace
- promotion of the learning process (this includes issues concerning the didactic presentation of course content and the methodological structure of the teaching provided)
- training in a group
- training certification



The examination requirements are stipulated by the bodies responsible (e.g. chambers of industry and commerce), which also set up an examining board.

The final examination consists of a written paper in several of the named subject areas and a practical examination, which is made up of a presentation or the implementation of a training unit and an oral examination. Every candidate is awarded a certificate detailing whether they have proved that they possess the necessary pedagogical knowledge of professional and work-related issues.

Responsibility for the examination of in-company instructors lies with the bodies responsible within the dual system of vocational training, such as, for example, industry's self-governing institutions (chambers of industry and commerce, chambers of handicrafts, chambers of agriculture). These institutions are responsible for adopting *Prüfungsordnungen* (examination regulations) and setting up examining boards to conduct aptitude examinations for instructors.

## 5. POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION

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The post-secondary non-tertiary sector comprises, amongst others, *Abendgymnasien* and *Kollegs*, *Berufsoberschulen* as well as courses of education at *Fachoberschulen* and *Berufsfachschulen* leading to the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife*, the *Fachhochschulreife*, or the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*. It is characterised by a combination of a vocational qualification with the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife*, the *Fachhochschulreife*, or the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*. Information on the *Fachoberschule* is available in chapter 4 on secondary education, information on *Abendgymnasien* and *Kollegs* can be found in chapter 7 on continuing education and training.

## 6. TERTIARY EDUCATION

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### Specific legal framework

The legal basis of higher education in Germany is provided by the Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz* – HRG) of the Federation and the legislation on higher education of the *Länder* (*Hochschulgesetze*), as well as the legislation regarding colleges of art and the legislation regarding Fachhochschulen of the *Länder* as far as these types of institution are not included in the general Higher Education Acts.

In the course of the reform for the modernisation of the federal system (*Föderalismusreform*) in 2006, amongst other things, the Federation's framework responsibility in the field of higher education has ceased to exist. The Federation has initiated legislative proceedings to annul the Framework Act for Higher Education. As part of concurrent legislation (Art. 72 of the Basic Law), the Federation continues to be 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.

Training at *Berufsakademien* is governed by the *Berufsakademie* laws 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 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*). 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.

### Bologna-Process

In implementing the requirements of the Bologna Process, Germany has achieved clear progress over past years. The number of German students abroad has risen from some 65,000 in 2003 to 90 300 in 2007. The share of consecutive study courses for Bachelor's and Master's qualifications on offer at German higher education institutions has increased from 61 % in the winter semester 2007/08 to 79 % in the winter semester 2009/10. As early as 2005, the Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* – HRK), the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* (*Kultusministerkonferenz* – KMK) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* – BMBF) presented a Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education Degrees (*Qualifikationsrahmen für deutsche Hochschulabschlüsse*). In December 2006, the Standing Conference and the BMBF passed a National Action Plan for the recognition of foreign qualifications (*Nationaler Aktionsplan zur Anerkennung ausländischer Qualifikationen*). More detailed information on the implementation of the Bologna Process in Germany as well as a national action plan regarding the social dimension of the Bologna Process can be found in the national report on the realisation of the targets of the Bologna Process for the period from 2007 to 2009.

### Programmes and qualifications

Qualifications in higher education vary according to the length and type of course followed. Studies at a university or equivalent institution are concluded by an academic examination (in the past: *Diplom* examination, *Magister* examination), a state examination, an ecclesiastical examination (in theology) or an artistic examination. In order to adapt the higher education system to the degree structure based

on two main cycles, a new graduation system of Bachelor's and Master's degrees has been implemented since 1998 in universities and equivalent higher education institutions.

The structural guidelines valid for all *Länder* adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in October 2003 (amended in September 2008) form the basis for the accreditation. The structural guidelines 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. Furthermore, the structural guidelines distinguish between more research-oriented Master's study courses and more practice-oriented ones. Bachelor's and Master's study courses are provided with a credit point system which is based upon the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

Studies at *Fachhochschulen* also lead to Bachelor's and Master's degrees (in the past: the *Diplom (FH)* degree).

*Universitäten* (universities) and equivalent institutions of higher education hold the right to award doctorates. *Fachhochschule* graduates holding a Master's degree or a qualified *Diplom (FH)* degree may be admitted for doctoral studies at a university with specified additional requirements.

Students who successfully complete their examination at *Berufsakademien* may be awarded a Bachelor's degree (in the past: the *Diplom (BA)* degree). Bachelor's degrees obtained at *Berufsakademien* are not higher education degrees but tertiary education qualifications providing qualification for a profession.

Two- to three-years programmes at schools in the health sector lead to vocational qualifications in a number of occupations in the health sector.

### Institutions

As per the winter semester 2008/09, Germany had a total of 395 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)

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.

### Statistics

**Institutions of higher education by type 2008/09**

Total	Universities and equivalent institutions	Colleges of art and music	<i>Fachhochschulen</i> including <i>Verwaltungsfachhochschulen</i>
395	124	51	220

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt

**Students by type of institution of higher education (as per the 2008/09 winter semester)**

Total	Universities and equivalent institutions	Colleges of art and music	<i>Fachhochschulen</i> including <i>Verwaltungsfachhochschulen</i>
2 025 307	1 365 927	31 565	627 815

Statistisches Bundesamt

**6.1. Admission****6.1.1. Universities**

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* or certain courses of vocational education at upper secondary level.

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 and the university entrance examination for employed persons of particular intellectual ability.

In 2009, the *Länder* have resolved the standard preconditions under which master craftsmen, technicians, people with vocational qualifications in a commercial or financial occupation and people with similar qualifications will be eligible to enter higher education following the successful completion of vocational training and three years of experience in their occupation.

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.

**6.1.2. 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.

**6.1.3. Fachhochschulen**

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*. 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.

#### 6.1.4. 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.

## 6.2. Students' contributions and financial support

### 6.2.1. Universities

The *Länder* may, at their own discretion, impose study fees on students. In order to maintain equal educational opportunities, the interest of low-income groups of the population should be taken into account. Currently, six *Länder* impose study fees of up to Euro 500 per semester.

Additionally, all students have to pay a minor contribution towards administrative fees and for the use of the institution's social facilities. If the institution has an organ of student self-administration (a General Student Committee – *Allgemeiner Studierendenausschuss*) students also pay an additional contribution. In most *Länder*, fees for long-term students and for an additional course of study are now being charged.

Students in the tertiary sector who have no other means (mainly from their parents' income) of maintenance and financing a course of study (*Bedarf*) can also receive financial assistance under the terms of the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz* – BAföG). Training assistance is predominantly granted to German students.

Since March 1, 2009, the full assistance available to students in higher education and at *Akademien* not living with their parents has been up to Euro 648 per month (made up of Euro 512 for their maintenance and accommodation plus Euro 50 health insurance allowance, Euro 9 for long-term care insurance allowance and up to Euro 72 rent allowance).

### **6.2.2. Colleges of Art and Music**

See section 6.2.1.

### **6.2.3. Fachhochschulen**

See section 6.2.1.

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

In parts, the *Berufsakademien* also impose admission fees or contributions for the use of social facilities.

The maximum amount of financial assistance under the terms of the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz – BAföG*) also applies to students at the *Fachakademien* in Bayern and to students at the so-called *Höhere Fachschulen*, which usually require a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* and award a higher professional qualification as well as the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* or *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* in some cases.

## **6.3. Organisation of the academic year**

### **6.3.1. Universities**

The academic year at the higher education institutions is generally divided into semesters. At universities, the summer semester runs from April to September, the winter semester from October to March. At *Fachhochschulen*, the summer semester runs from March to August, the winter semester from September to February. Lectures in the winter semester are usually held from late September/early October until mid/late February at universities and *Fachhochschulen* respectively. In the summer semester, lectures take place from mid April until mid July at universities, from mid March until mid July at *Fachhochschulen*. A period of three months without lectures at *Fachhochschulen* and five months at other higher education institutions allows students time for private study, as well as time to prepare for classes, complete essays or take part in practical work experience and sit examinations.

### **6.3.2. Colleges of Art and Music**

See section 6.3.1.

### **6.3.3. Fachhochschulen**

See section 6.3.1.

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

Unlike the institutions of higher education the *Berufsakademien* do not have semester holidays. Students at these professional academies have an annual holiday entitlement of approximately four weeks on account of their contract with the training company.

For the time schedule in continuing vocational education at *Fachschulen*, see section 4.2.



## 6.4. Assessment, progression and certification

### 6.4.1. Universities

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. As a rule, 180-240 ECTS points must be submitted for a Bachelor's degree. A Master's degree requires 300 ECTS points, including the preceding course of study for the first qualification for entry into a profession. 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 *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.

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.

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 a *Bachelorprüfung* (in the past: *Diplomprüfung*, *Magisterprüfung*) leading to the award of the *Bachelorgrad* (in the past: *Diplomgrad*, *Magistergrad*).

Bachelor's study courses provide the academic foundation, methodological skills and qualifications related to the professional field and lead to the Bachelor's degree. Master's study courses are differentiated by the profile types "more practice-oriented" and "more 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 "more practice-oriented" and "more research-oriented". The Bachelor's degree provides the same rights as *Diplom* qualifications obtained at a *Fachhochschule*. 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 Bachelor's and consecutive Master's degrees at universities:

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

- Master of Engineering (M.Eng.)
- Master of Laws (LL.M.)

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.

Ecclesiastical examinations are held within the subject of theology and correspond to a certain extent to the state examinations.

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.

### Doctoral studies

Following successful completion of a first degree course of study concluding in the *Magister*, *Diplom* or *Staatsexamen* as well as following the award of a Master's degree, with the achievement of a certain level of academic performance a doctorate may be embarked upon, a process termed *Promotion*. Particularly well-qualified holders of a Bachelor's degree can also be admitted to doctoral studies without first acquiring a further degree if they have successfully undergone a procedure to assess their suitability for doctoral studies. For Bachelor's and Master's degrees obtained at *Fachhochschulen*, the same regulations apply with regard to admission to doctoral studies as for Bachelor's and Master's degrees obtained at universities or equivalent institutions of higher education.

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*). With the exception of structured programmes for doctoral students, a doctoral thesis need not be written within any prescribed length of time. The doctorate entitles a graduate to bear the *Doktorgrad* (title of *Doktor*).

### 6.4.2. Colleges of Art and Music

The following designations are used for Bachelor's and subsequent Master'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.)
- Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.)
- Master of Arts (M.A.)
- Master of Music (M.Mus.)

In consecutive Bachelor's and Master's courses of study with a standard period of study of six years in one of the artistic core subjects at colleges of art and music, the Master's qualification generally requires 360 ECTS points.

### **6.4.3. Fachhochschulen**

See section 6.4.1.

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

For the accreditation of a Bachelor's training course at *Berufsakademien*, it is to be established that the training course is modularised and provided with a credit point system; the examinations are in general performed as an accompaniment to studies. The designation 'Bachelor' does not refer to a higher education degree but to a state-recognised degree.

For student assessment in continuing vocational training at *Fachschulen*, see section 4.4., which explains the basic principles for performance assessment and the awarding of marks.

The information given in section 4.4. essentially applies for progression at *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 (*Staatlich geprüfter Betriebswirt*) and state-certified designer (*Staatlich geprüfter Gestalter*), as well as other occupational titles in the social professions, e.g. state-recognised/state-certified youth or child-care workers (*Staatlich anerkannter/geprüfter Erzieher*). It is also possible to obtain the *Fachhochschulreife* at the *Fachschule*.

## **6.5. Guidance and counselling**

### **6.5.1. Universities**

The Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz – HRG*) and the Higher Education Acts of the *Länder* stipulate that institutions of higher education are responsible for providing subject-related advice accompanying a student's studies throughout the entire duration of their course.

The responsibilities of counselling in the higher education sector include the provision of information and advice for students and those applying for higher education on the content, structure and requirements of a course of study; it assists students during their complete course of study, and in particular on completion of their first year, by providing subject-related advice. Counselling tasks are divided among lecturers, who provide specialist guidance, and the student counselling office, which provides general guidance. The student counselling offices are also responsible for helping students cope with personal difficulties and for dealing with questions relating to their studies. In addition to lecturers and the student counselling offices, student bodies in each department also offer support and assistance relating to the individual subjects. In many cases special introductory seminars are held at institutions of higher education for future applicants. In providing counselling, higher education institutions are intended to cooperate in particular with the employment agencies responsible for careers advice and the offices responsible for the *Staatsprüfungen* (state examinations).

### **6.5.2. Colleges of Art and Music**

See section 6.5.1.

### **6.5.3. Fachhochschulen**

See section 6.5.1.

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

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.

### **6.6. Academic staff**

#### **6.6.1. Universities**

Full-time scientific and creative arts staff at institutions of higher education consist mainly of the following groups:

- professors and junior professors (*Hochschullehrer*)
- scientific and creative arts staff (*wissenschaftliche/künstlerische Mitarbeiter*);
- teaching staff for special tasks (*Lehrkräfte für besondere Aufgaben*).

Professors and junior professors perform the duties relating to science, the arts, research, teaching and continuing education which are incumbent upon their higher education institution independently in their respective subject areas in accordance with their own specific employment status.

Scientific and creative arts staff are responsible for academic services. These include teaching students specialised knowledge and practical skills and instructing them in the use of scientific methods. In particular cases, scientific and creative arts staff can also be entrusted with the independent performing of tasks in research and teaching.

If teaching serves mainly to communicate practical skills and knowledge, teaching staff for special tasks can be entrusted with this.

The employment requirements for professors at institutions of higher education are as follows:

- a degree from an institution of higher education,
- teaching ability,
- particular aptitude for academic work which is usually demonstrated by the quality of a *Promotion* (doctorate) or a particular aptitude for work in the creative arts,

and depending on the requirements of the post

- additional academic achievements or additional achievements in the creative arts,
- particular achievements in the application or development of academic or scientific knowledge and methods from several years of professional experience.

Employment requirements for junior professors (*Juniorprofessoren*) basically are:

- a degree from an institution of higher education
- teaching ability
- particular aptitude for academic work which is usually demonstrated by the exceptional quality of a doctorate

If the candidate has been employed as a member of scientific staff before or after the doctorate, the phases of doctorate and employment taken together should not exceed six years, in the subject area of medicine nine years.

The employment requirement for *Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter* is, in principle, a degree from an institution of higher education.

*Lehrkräfte für besondere Aufgaben* do not have to meet professorial qualifications for recruitment.

#### **6.6.2. Colleges of Art and Music**

See section 6.6.1.

#### **6.6.3. Fachhochschulen**

See section 6.6.1.

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

Teaching staff at *Berufsakademien* include both part-time and full-time staff. In accordance with the *Berufsakademie* laws at Land level, part-time teaching staff at *Berufsakademien* should be recruited from higher education institutions, schools, industry, the liberal professions, social services and administration.

Full-time staff at the state-run *Berufsakademien* in Thüringen and Sachsen must meet the same requirements as those appointed as professors at *Fachhochschulen*. Full-time teaching staff must give at least 40 per cent of the instruction. If teaching offers serve mainly to communicate practical skills and knowledge, teaching staff for special tasks can be entrusted with this.

## 7. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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There is general social agreement that lifelong learning including continuing education is increasingly assuming a key role in today's information and knowledge society. Accordingly, in its *Fourth Recommendation on Continuing Education* of February 2001 the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) claimed last time recognition that continuing education was an integral part of the education system, with special emphasis on personal development within the compass of lifelong learning. Growing importance is being attached to cooperation between all those groups working together in the field of continuing education. At the same time, the recommendation emphasises the growing importance of new information and communication technologies as an effective tool for self-organised learning, which is characterised by the individual taking responsibility for his or her learning process.

### 7.1. Policy and legislative framework

Continuing education in Germany is regulated by the state to a lesser degree than other areas of education. The justification given for this is that the diverse and rapidly-changing demands on continuing education can best be met by a structure which is characterised by diversity and competition among the institutions and the range of courses and services on offer. A central principle of continuing education courses is that attendance should be voluntary.

The activities of the state in the field of continuing education are, for the most part, restricted to laying down principles and to issuing regulations relating to organisation and financing. Such principles and regulations are enshrined in the legislation of the Federal Government and the *Länder*. State regulations are aimed at establishing general conditions for the optimum development of the contribution of continuing education to lifelong learning.

Regulations for the continuing education sector have been adopted at national level in the following legislation in particular: the Social Security Code III (*Sozialgesetzbuch III*), Career Advancement Training Promotion Act (*Gesetz zur Förderung der beruflichen Aufstiegsfortbildung*), Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*), Handicrafts Code (*Handwerksordnung*), Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz*) and Law on the Protection of Participants in Distance Education (*Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetz*).

The prerequisites and principles for the promotion and funding of continuing education are laid down in continuing education legislation and employment release legislation. Continuing and adult education legislation describes continuing education as an independent education sector which incorporates continuing general and political education and continuing vocational training and the development of which is the responsibility of the public sector. Continuing education legislation guarantees a diverse range of institutions maintained by a variety of organisations and lays down a state approval procedure for such institutions. All Land legislation includes regulations which recognise their freedom in the preparation of curricula and independence in staff selection.

In addition to continuing education legislation, school legislation at Land level contains regulations on continuing education within the school system (e.g. the attainment of school-leaving qualifications) and higher education legislation regulates the development of academic continuing education. Regulations regarding continuing education offers at *Berufsakademien* are contained, if necessary, in the *Berufsakademie* legislation.

In 12 of the 16 *Länder* legislation allows employees to attend continuing education courses (paid educational leave – *Bildungsurlaub*) for several working days per year (usually five) with no loss in earnings, provided that certain conditions are fulfilled.

## 7.2. Distribution of responsibilities

The activities of the state in the field of continuing education are, for the most part, restricted to laying down principles and to issuing regulations relating to organisation and financing. Such principles and regulations are enshrined in the legislation of the Federal Government and the *Länder*. State regulations are aimed at establishing general conditions for the optimum development of the contribution of continuing education to lifelong learning.

The joint responsibilities of the Federation and the *Länder* include research and pilot schemes in all sectors of continuing education. In addition, Federation and *Länder* are responsible for statistics on continuing education and for drawing up reports on continuing education in their respective areas of responsibility.

The responsibilities of the *Länder* include in particular the following powers to regulate and promote:

- continuing general education,
- continuing education leading to school-leaving qualifications,
- continuing academic education at higher education institutions
- continuing cultural education
- some elements of continuing political education and
- some elements of continuing vocational training.

The Federal Government's responsibilities include in particular:

- continuing vocational training outside the school sector,
- regulated further vocational training,
- basic regulations for the protection of those on distance learning courses which are offered under private law,
- some areas of continuing political education,
- international cooperation in continuing education, including within the European Union.

Responsibility for the promotion of continuing vocational training under the Federal Government's Social Security Code III lies with the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*). Promotion under the Social Security Code III includes the following measures:

- Further vocational training: schemes to assess, maintain, extend or adapt the vocational knowledge and skills of adults who have a vocational qualification or appropriate work experience.
- Vocational retraining leading to a qualification in a *anerkannter Ausbildungsberuf* (recognised occupation requiring formal training): targeted mainly at unemployed people with no vocational qualifications.

With the coming into force on 1 January 1996 of the Upgrading Training Assistance Act (*Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz*), a new comprehensive funding instrument was created in Germany for financing training designed to lead to promotion at work. With the coming into force on 1 January 2002 of the amendment of the Career Advancement Training Promotion Act, the promotion of professional career advancement was further improved. The amendment led to an increase in participation in continuing education and a significantly higher number of business start-ups. Within the scope of the Qualification Initiative for Germany „Getting Ahead through Education“, the Federal Government is to extend promotion under the Upgrading Training Assistance Act.



For further vocational training regulated by statute, the competent Federal Ministry issues further training regulations which specify, amongst other things, the conditions for admission to the examination and the examination requirements. At regional level, the competent bodies (e.g. the chambers of industry and commerce and the chambers of handicrafts) may issue rules for further training examinations. There are no binding requirements regarding the preparation for further training examinations which usually takes place in special courses offered on the adult and continuing education market. Examination preparation may also be organised individually, e.g. by studying on one's own.

### 7.3. Financing

The public sector, industry, social groups, continuing education institutions and public broadcasting corporations as well as the general public bear responsibility for continuing education. This joint responsibility is reflected by the funding principle, which obliges all the parties concerned to contribute towards the cost of continuing education in relation to their share and according to their means. Public-sector funding (local authorities, *Länder*, the Federal Government, the European Union) includes the following areas:

- institutional sponsorship of recognised continuing education institutions by the *Länder* on the basis of continuing education legislation
- institutional sponsorship of Volkshochschulen (local adult education centres) and sponsorship of activities of continuing cultural education by the local authorities,
- grants for adults seeking to obtain school-leaving qualifications under the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz* – BAföG) and career advancement training under the Upgrading Training Assistance Act (*Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz* – AFBG),
- continuing education for employees of the Federal Government, *Länder* and local authorities.

Industry provides a considerable proportion of funding for schemes under which people can obtain and improve vocational and/or working skills and qualifications. Companies spend substantial funds on continuing education for their staff. This spending came to more than Euro 26.8 billion in 2005 for continuing vocational and work-related education.

Expenses related to preparation for a further training qualification regulated by statute are, as a rule, borne by the individual. Sometimes, employers contribute towards the costs or bear them in full if, for example, the company has a particular interest in the qualification of its employee.

Further training schemes designed to meet the needs of the labour market, which are targeted especially at the unemployed and those facing the threat of unemployment, are funded under the Social Security Code III (*Sozialgesetzbuch III*) from the unemployment insurance fund and under the Social Security Code II which governs the granting of basic security benefits for job-seekers. From these fund, the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*) spent a total of some Euro 2.18 billion on the promotion of continuing vocational training in 2008.

The Federation provides a total amount of approximately Euro 480 million for the period from 2008 until 2011 to be spent on the promotion of vocational further education under the Upgrading Training Assistance Act (*Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz* – AFBG). The *Länder* are expected to provide some Euro 135 million for the promotion under the AFBG in this period. Promotion under the AFBG is to be extended.

Social groups (churches, trade unions, and so on) also bear a proportion of the cost of running their continuing education institutions. They guarantee the widest possible access to continuing education by setting their fees at an appropriate level.

#### 7.4. Programmes and providers

Under various continuing education legislation of some *Länder*, it is mainly the task of the *Volkshochschulen*, the local adult education centres, to take care of basic provision of continuing education courses in the field of general continuing education, in other words to provide a regular and comprehensive range of courses which meets the most diverse social requirements and individual needs.

It is usually possible to acquire school-leaving qualifications later in life at evening classes (*Abendhauptschulen*, *Abendrealschulen*, *Abendgymnasien*) and in what is called *Kollegs*. *Abendhauptschulen* prepare adults in a one-year course (two semesters) for the acquisition of the *Hauptschulabschluss*. *Abendrealschulen* take adults through to the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* in evening classes (four semesters). *Abendgymnasien* allow suitably capable adults to obtain the *Hochschulreife* (higher education entrance qualification) usually in a three-year period. *Kollegs* are full-time schools where adults can obtain the *Hochschulreife*.

In the course of the Qualification Initiative “Getting Ahead Through Education”, a legal entitlement to preparation for a *Hauptschulabschluss* for adolescents and adults is to be introduced. Parallel to this, the *Länder* offer qualification schemes for people returning to education to catch up on qualifications. The aim is to offer particularly those young people from migrant backgrounds an opportunity to obtain a school leaving qualification.

As institutions of continuing vocational training, *Fachschulen* offer courses lasting between one and three years (see section 6 for a more detailed description of this institution).

Distance learning offers adults in employment the opportunity to take up continuing education on a flexible basis while remaining in employment. More than 219,000 people were registered on distance learning courses in 2007. The range of subjects is wide and comprises social sciences, education, psychology, humanities, languages, business and commerce, mathematics, natural sciences and technology, leisure, health and housekeeping, school leaving qualifications – e.g. *Hauptschulabschluss*, *Realschulabschluss*, *Abitur* –, qualifications for state-certified business manager, engineer and translator, computer courses. The most popular subject area is *business and commerce* which accounts for about 24.5 per cent of all students.

Provided that the *Berufsakademie* laws at Land level contain the necessary provisions, the *Berufsakademien* may also offer continuing education courses.

The Federal Agency for Civic Education (*Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*) and the respective bodies of the *Länder* hold events in the field of continuing political education and promote private sponsors of continuing political education.

According to the Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*) and the legislation on higher education of the *Länder*, in addition to providing research and study courses, the main responsibilities of higher education institutions is to provide continuing education in the academic and creative field. Continuing education courses offer people the opportunity to specialise, to extend existing knowledge or to obtain an additional vocational qualification. Courses last from a few weeks or months to several semesters, with modular courses also being offered increasingly in the area of continuing education. Through continuing academic education, higher education institutions also contribute to regional development in cooperation with partners from industry.

Adult and continuing education institutions offer a variety of courses and subject areas covering general, vocational, political and continuing academic education. The aims, content and duration of courses vary accordingly.

An important continuing education sector in terms of size remains continuing general and political education with an especially broad range of subjects.

## 7.5. Quality assurance

In their laws and statutory provisions for the promotion of continuing education, Federation and *Länder* have formulated general minimum requirements of a structural and quantitative nature for institutions of continuing education. Furthermore, some *Länder* have adopted specific quality assurance standards in their statutory provisions. In the area of distance learning, the Law on the Protection of Participants in Distance Education (*Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetz*), as well as the control by the Central Office for Distance Learning of the *Länder* (*Zentralstelle für Fernunterricht der Länder*), assure the quality and further development of distance education provision.

The increasing importance of lifelong learning has also promoted the awareness of binding quality standards in the field of continuing education. The plural structure of maintaining bodies which support continuing education is also expressed in the number of different efforts and approaches for quality assurance in continuing education. Both jointly and individually, Federation and *Länder* promote numerous projects for improving quality assurance in continuing education.

In 2004, the support of continuing education was reformed with the aim of improving competition and transparency in the area of vocational continuing education as promoted by the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*). The employment agencies entrusted external certification bodies with the task of inspecting maintaining bodies for continuing education. Certification of the maintaining body of a continuing education measure or of the continuing education course by an expert body is a prerequisite before participants can obtain support in accordance with the Social Security Code III (*Sozialgesetzbuch III*). Amongst other things, organisers of continuing education must prove that they apply a recognised quality assurance system.

The quality management models currently applied cover countrywide supra-regional procedures specific to general or continuing education, as well as systems that are regional or specific to particular associations or federations. An outline of the various quality management models in continuing education as of 2006 is given in the publication *Quality Models at a Glance* (*Qualitätsmodelle im Überblick*) published by the German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning (*Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung – Leibniz-Zentrum für Lebenslanges Lernen* – DIE).

Since 1 January 1977, distance-learning courses provided by private organisers (institutes of distance-learning) must be approved by the state on the basis of the Law on the Protection of Participants in Distance Education (*Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetz*). The Central Office for Distance Learning of the *Länder* of the Federal Republic of Germany (*Staatliche Zentralstelle für Fernunterricht der Länder der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* – ZFU) decides whether or not a course is to be approved. In the admission procedure, the subject-related and didactic quality of the learning material with regard to the objective of the course, as well as the advertising placed for the course and the form and content of the distance-learning contract entered into is examined.

With regard to preparation for further vocational training examinations regulated by statute, framework curricula are devised at federal level which offer orientation to providers of relevant courses regarding the breadth, depth and level of the competences to be developed. In order to ensure a uniform standard, by far most of the examination items used in further vocational training examinations have

been developed at supra-regional level. Furthermore, with regard to the conduct of further vocational training examinations, uniform regulations for the examination procedure and the assessment of the candidate's performance as well as qualification-specific examination requirements apply.

Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung*) promotes comparative tests of continuing education media, continuing education measures and continuing education advice by *Stiftung Warentest*, Germany's independent consumer-product testing agency.

In October 2004, a quality certificate was introduced for all of Germany for suppliers in all areas of continuing education. The Learner-oriented Quality Certificate in Continuing Education, Version 2 (*Lernerorientierte Qualitätstestierung in der Weiterbildung, Version 2 – LQW 2*) quality seal was developed as part of the joint project Quality Certificate in Continuing Education (*Qualitätstestierung in der Weiterbildung*) of the Commission of the Federation and the *Länder* for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (*Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung – BLK*) and should provide orientation when searching for high-quality education offers.

## **7.6. Guidance and counselling**

It is a political objective in Germany to establish educational guidance as a service which aims to support individuals of all ages at every stage in their lives to make their own educational, training and career decisions on a well-prepared and informed basis and to take responsibility for their own working lives. In addition to guidance on transition situations, various forms of guidance have been established which focus on accompanying and supporting citizens in their educational and career decisions. Guidance and counselling measures are offered for individuals as well as for organisations: Individuals are supported in their decision-making and their learning as well as in documenting their competences. Companies may use learning guidance services for persons, teams or entire organisations. Currently several actors at all political levels offer guidance and counselling measures to ensure lifelong learning.

## **7.7. Teachers and trainers**

Most of the legislation in the *Länder* governing continuing education stipulates the qualification requirements demanded of the teaching staff. According to a resolution adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK*) in 1970, members of administrative and teaching staff at institutions of continuing education are supposed to have a higher education degree. Assistant tutors must have acquired a higher education degree, a further qualification in a profession (*Fachschulabschluss*) or a vocational training qualification plus several years of practical experience. According to a joint recommendation of the Standing Conference and the *Deutscher Städtetag* (Association of German Cities) of 1981, institutions of continuing education generally are to employ full-time tutors.

The professional further training of tutors in the field of continuing education takes place within the scope of the responsibility of the *Länder* for continuing education. In addition, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – BMBF*) promotes various projects for the improvement of academic and pedagogical competence of tutors in the field of continuing education.

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