

The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2024/2025

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



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Published by: Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and
Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany
Taubenstr. 10, 10117 Berlin

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in cooperation with the
German EURYDICE National Unit of the Federation
at the German Aerospace Center (DLR)
commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and
Youth

Editorial deadline of the original version: October 2025

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PREFACE BY THE EDITOR

Education shapes our society—and it unites Europe. It determines how we live together, how we shape the future, and what opportunities young people have.

Through the National Dossier for Germany, the Länder are contributing to this joint European exchange. It is produced within the framework of the EURYDICE information network and follows a structure that allows for comparison—while also leaving room for what distinguishes national education systems. For Germany, this means: diversity within federalism and shared responsibility.

This dossier describes the situation as of mid-2025. It spans the spectrum from early childhood education to continuing education and contextualizes structures, responsibilities, and developments. Thus, it is more than a snapshot: it is an invitation to understand the system as a whole.

In this issue, key developments are particularly evident. These include the consistent further development of common educational standards—and with it the commitment not only to describe quality and comparability but to reliably ensure them. The first-ever administration of nationwide Abitur exams based on new standards in the natural sciences marks an important step in this regard.

At the same time, education is changing at a pace that demands new answers. Digitalization and artificial intelligence open up new possibilities—while also raising fundamental questions. The Länder are addressing both: with clear strategic guidelines and with the goal of shaping technological developments in a way that serves learning.

What consistently impresses me in this context is the unique blend of autonomy and cooperation. The 16 Länder shape education independently—and find common solutions where reliability and quality demand it. This balance is not a contradiction. It is the foundation for a system that remains flexible while also providing direction.

Ultimately, the focus is on what matters most: a good education for all. To fair opportunities. To successful educational pathways. And to a system that continues to evolve without losing sight of its goals.

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education, Science and Cultural Affairs has also reorganized itself in this spirit. By differentiating into separate ministerial conferences for education, science, and culture, cooperation is more clearly structured and simultaneously strengthened—supported by a joint secretariat.

The National Dossier thus serves as both a working document and an invitation to dialogue. It acts as a reliable reference in international exchanges and makes the German education system compatible with the European dialogue. Readers will find guidance—and points of reference for their own perspectives.

I hope you find this an inspiring read.



Udo Michalik

Secretary General of the Standing Conference of the
Ministers of Education, Science and Cultural Affairs

PREFACE BY THE FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, FAMILY AFFAIRS, SENIOR CITIZENS, WOMEN AND YOUTH

Europe has always stood for diversity—it shapes life in European countries and regions. This applies to all areas of our society, including education systems. Continuous dialogue and learning from our partner countries strengthen our ability to address today's challenges. The digital transformation and the path toward sustainable development underscore the central importance of education and skills development for the future viability of democratic societies. The joint commitment to a European Education Area supports EU Member States in creating resilient and inclusive systems of general and vocational education. This also contributes to Europe's competitiveness.

Monitoring Europe's education systems, their innovations, and reforms is a proven tool of European educational cooperation. The goal is to support countries in their reform efforts.

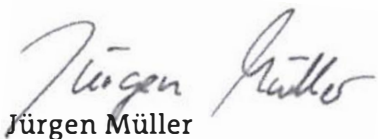
The European Union supports this process through the Eurydice education network, which comprises national units in 40 European countries as well as the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) in Brussels.

Since its founding in 1980, Eurydice has provided reliable, comparable information on education systems and policies across Europe. In this way, the network not only offers an overview of individual education systems but also produces comparable reports that facilitate the exchange of information and experience. Eurydice supports evidence-based policymaking, promotes cooperation among European countries, and provides decision-makers, researchers, and educators with a reliable source of information.

Like Germany, every member state of the Eurydice network produces such an overview of its own education system. This enhances transparency and enables meaningful comparisons across countries. All components of the respective education systems can also be looked up in individual chapters in Eurydice's online encyclopedia.

The Eurydice publication "Education in the Federal Republic of Germany 2024/25" offers a detailed description of the German education system and current policy initiatives. The report, jointly prepared by the federal and state governments for Eurydice, covers all areas and levels of education as well as current reform initiatives.

I hope you find this an engaging read on European education systems and that it provides inspiring ideas for European educational cooperation.



Jürgen Müller

Head of the Department for Policy and Digitalization
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1. ORGANISATION AND GOVERNANCE

1.1. Introduction

In the Federal Republic of Germany responsibility for the education system is determined by the federal structure of the state. Unless the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) awards legislative powers to the Federation, the Länder have the right to legislate. Within the education system, this applies to the school sector, the higher education sector, 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 early childhood education, on the school system, on higher education, on adult education and on continuing education. Responsibility for the laws governing career paths, remuneration and pensions of civil servants (e.g. teachers, professors and junior professors) also lies with the Länder.

The scope of the Federal Government's responsibilities in the field of education is defined in the Basic Law, according to which the Federation bears responsibility primarily for the regulations governing the following domains of education, science and research:

- In-company vocational training and vocational further education
- Admission to higher education institutions and higher education degrees (here the Länder may enact laws at variance with the legislation of the Federation)
- Financial assistance for pupils and students
- Promotion of scientific and academic research and technological development
- Child and youth welfare (in particular early childhood education and care in day-care centres and child-minding services)
- Legal protection of participants of correspondence courses
- Regulations on entry to the legal profession
- Regulations on entry to medical and paramedical professions
- Employment promotion measures as well as occupational and labour market research

Furthermore, the Federation has legislative authority over the status-related rights and duties of civil servants, as well as the legislative authority over foreign affairs.

In addition to the division of responsibilities described above, the Basic Law also provides for particular forms of cooperation between the Federation and the Länder within the scope of the so-called joint tasks (*Gemeinschaftsaufgaben*). Pursuant to Article 91b, paragraph 1 of the Basic Law, the Federation and the Länder may mutually agree to cooperate in cases of supra-regional importance in the promotion of science, research and teaching. Additionally, pursuant to Article 91b, paragraph 2 of the Basic Law, the Federation and the Länder may mutually agree to cooperate for the assessment of the performance of educational systems in international comparison and in drafting relevant reports and recommendations. Furthermore, pursuant to Article 91c, the Federation and the Länder may cooperate in planning, constructing, and operating information technology systems needed to discharge their responsibilities.

An amendment to Article 104c of the Basic Law entered into force in April 2019 which enables the Federation to grant financial aid to the Länder for investments by the Länder and municipalities that are significant for the nation as a whole in order to increase the efficiency of the municipal education infrastructure.

For more detailed information on the collaboration between the Federation and the Länder in the education sector, see chapter 1.7.

1.2. Fundamental Principles and National Policies

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. It contains a few fundamental provisions on questions of education, culture and science. Thus, for example, the Basic Law guarantees the freedom of art and scholarship, 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). In addition, supreme court case law derives a right to school education from the right to free development and unfolding of the personality under Art. 2, paragraph 1, of the Basic Law and from the state's mandate to ensure school education under Art 7, paragraph 1, of the Basic Law.

1.3. Lifelong Learning Strategy

Lifelong learning will become even more important in the future due to changes in the world of life and new requirements in the world of work. The “Länder Agreement on the Common Basic Structure of the School System and the National Responsibility of the Länder for Key Education Policy Issues” (*‘Ländervereinbarung über die gemeinsame Grundstruktur des Schulwesens und die gesamtstaatliche Verantwortung der Länder in zentralen bildungspolitischen Fragen’*) explicitly addresses this. The Länder pay particular attention to lifelong learning and will help to develop and shape corresponding processes in close exchange with each other and together with the Federal Government, the local authorities, the social partners and other providers of continuing education and training. Continuing education and training offers enable needs-based and flexible learning. The Länder ensure good framework conditions for this and support quality development. In addition, the Länder, together with the Federation and the partners in the national networks, take measures to ensure basic education for all.

More information on lifelong learning in the Federal Republic of Germany is available in chapter 7 on adult education and training and chapter 13 on ongoing reforms and policy developments.

1.4. Organisation of the Education System and of Its Structure

The education system in the Federal Republic of Germany is divided into

- early childhood education
- primary education
- secondary education

- tertiary education
- continuing education

Early childhood education and care

Early childhood education is provided by institutions catering for children until the age of six at which they usually start school. Children of school age who have not yet attained a sufficient level of development to attend a school have a further option in some Länder, namely *Schulkindergärten*, *Vorklassen* and *Grundschulförderklassen*. These institutions are either assigned to the early childhood or the primary sector according to the particular Land. Attendance is usually voluntary, although in most of the Länder in question the authorities are entitled to make it compulsory.

A detailed description of the elementary sector is provided in chapter 3.

Compulsory education

As a rule, general compulsory schooling begins for all children in the Federal Republic of Germany in the year in which they reach the age of six and involves nine years of full-time schooling (ten years in Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen and Thüringen; in Nordrhein-Westfalen, depending on the duration of the educational path, full-time compulsory education lasts nine years or ten years). Those young people who do not attend a full-time general education school or vocational school at upper secondary level once they have completed their period of compulsory general schooling must still attend part-time schooling (compulsory *Berufsschule* attendance – *Berufsschulpflicht*). This usually lasts three years, according to the duration of training in an *anerkannter Ausbildungsberuf* (recognised occupation requiring formal training). For pupils who do not attend a general education school at upper secondary level or enter training, some Länder have regulations under which pupils are required to remain in full-time education and attend some sort of vocational school.

Children and young people with disabilities are also required to attend school and complete their compulsory education. On the basis of their *sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf* (special educational needs), they are either taught in mainstream schools together with pupils without disabilities, or in *sonderpädagogische Bildungseinrichtungen* (e.g. *Förderschulen*, *Förderzentren*, *Schulen mit sonderpädagogischem Schwerpunkt*, *sonderpädagogische Bildungs- und Beratungszentren*). In recent years, based on a changed understanding of disability and the principles of participation and accessibility, the responsibility of general schools for all children and young people with and without disabilities has been emphasised. For detailed information on special needs education in special education institutions, see chapter 11.3.

Compulsory schooling involves regular attendance of lessons and other compulsory school events. Both pupils and parents are responsible for seeing that this obligation is met, and training companies are also responsible for ensuring that their trainees fulfil their obligation to attend vocational school. The school head checks on attendance records and can, if necessary, enforce attendance through various measures against the pupil, parents or the training company.

For children of school age, the child and youth welfare sector offers before-school and after-school care options, municipal and independent services as well as full-day school offers.

Primary education

As a rule, in the year in which children reach the age of six, they are obliged to enter primary education. Primary education comprises grades 1 to 4 or 1 to 6 (Berlin and Brandenburg). It is provided in primary schools and as part of comprehensive school types.

A detailed description of the primary sector is provided in chapter 4.

Transition from primary to secondary education

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. The vote of the school which the pupil is leaving is taken as a basis for the decision or as guidance in the decision regarding the pupil's future school career. This is accompanied by detailed consultations with parents. The final decision is taken either by the parents or the school or school supervisory authority. For certain school types, it is dependent on pupils demonstrating a certain level of ability and/or on the capacity available in the desired school. For an overview of regulations specific to the various Länder with regard to the transition from the *Grundschule* (primary school) to lower secondary education, see the website of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz*).

Secondary education

The lower secondary level of education follows on from the primary level and ends after grades 9 or 10. It is conducted at various types of school that lead to the First School Leaving Certificate (*Erster Schulabschluss*) or the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate or prepare for attendance of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*.

In addition to the qualification designation, which is uniform across the Länder, specific qualification designations of the Länder can also be shown as equivalent on the certificate.

The types of school in lower secondary level are divided into three categories:

- School types with a course of education leading to the First School Leaving Certificate or the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate or the General Higher Education Entrance Qualification (*Abitur*),
- school types with two courses of education leading to the First School Leaving Certificate and the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate, or
- school types with three courses of education leading to the First School Leaving Certificate, the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate and the General Higher Education Entrance Qualification (*Abitur*).

The lower secondary school system is characterised by the principle of permeability, i.e. all types of schools offer either within the respective type of school itself or via suitable connections the path to the First School Leaving Certificate, to the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate as well as to the General Higher Education Entrance Qualification.

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 education and training within the *duales System* (dual system). The majority of the Länder offer the following general education and vocational schools, with some forms specific to individual Länder:

General education schools:

- *Gymnasium*
- School types leading to the First School Leaving Certificate, the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate and the General Higher Education Entrance Qualification (Abitur)

Vocational schools:

- *Berufsschule*
- *Berufsfachschule*
- *Fachoberschule*
- *Berufsoberschule*
- *Berufliches Gymnasium*

A detailed description of the secondary sector is provided in chapter 5.

Tertiary education

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. Vocational upskilling also falls into this category.

The Federal Republic of Germany has the following types of higher education institutions:

- Universities and equivalent institutions of higher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*, theological colleges et al)
- Colleges of art and music
- *Fachhochschulen/Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften* (HAW/FH)
- *Duale Hochschulen*

Additionally, there are a number of special higher education institutions which only admit certain groups, e.g. higher education institutions of the Federal Armed Forces and *Verwaltungsfachhochschulen* and are not considered below.

Those with a higher education entrance qualification may also choose to enter a *Berufsakademie* offered by some Länder as an alternative to higher education. At state or state-recognised *Studienakademien* (study institutions) and in companies students receive academic but, at the same time, practical career training.

The *Fachschulen* and the *Fachakademien* in Bayern are institutions of continuing vocational education that, as a rule, call for the completion of relevant vocational education and training in an *anerkannter Ausbildungsberuf* (recognised occupation requiring formal training) and relevant employment. The qualification level achieved here is comparable to the first level of the tertiary sector in accordance with the International Standard Classification of Education ISCED.

Tertiary education also includes advanced vocational training within the framework of vocational upskilling in accordance with the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz* – BBiG) and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (*Handwerksordnung* – HwO). Vocational upskilling enables skilled workers to expand their professional

competence and advance in their careers. The 2020 amendment of the BBiG and the corresponding changes to the HwO introduced a three-level system of advanced vocational training. This provides for the following qualifications:

- as the first level of further training, the Certified Professional Specialist,
- as the second level of further training, the Bachelor Professional, and
- as the third level of further training, the Master Professional.

These state-recognised advanced training qualifications correspond to ISCED levels 5 to 7 of the tertiary education sector and to the competence levels at levels 5 to 7 of the German Qualifications Framework (*Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen – DQR*).

A detailed description of the tertiary sector is provided in chapter 6.

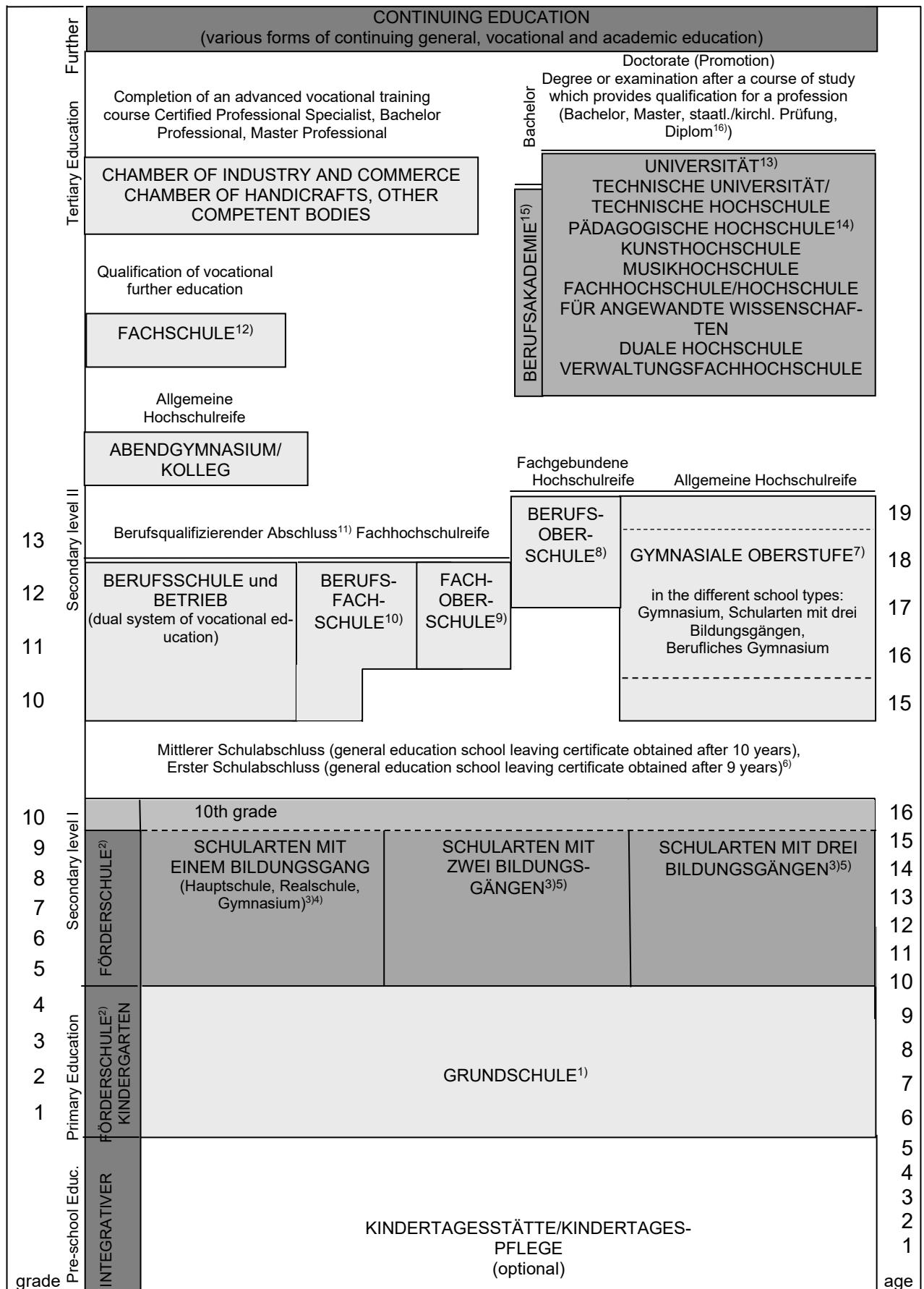
Continuing education

Continuing education and lifelong learning are becoming increasingly important with the present demographic development. In terms of lifelong learning, institutionalised continuing vocational training addresses the further development of individual qualifications as well as individual reorientation relative to the qualification. The development, recognition and certification of competences will become increasingly important in future, as will new, non-formal learning. Continuing education encompasses the general, vocational, academic and socio-political domains in equal measure. Their interactions are on the increase, particularly in view of the development and transfer of competences in the sense of lifelong learning.

In response to the vast range of demands made on continuing education, a differentiated structure has been developed. Continuing education is offered by municipal institutions, in particular *Volkshochschulen*, libraries, music schools and youth art schools, as well as by private institutions, church institutions, the trade unions, the various chambers of industry and commerce, political parties and associations, companies and public authorities, family education centres, academies, *Fachschulen*, institutions of higher education and distance learning institutions. Radio and television companies also provide continuing education programmes.

A detailed description of the continuing education sector is provided in chapter 7.

Basic Structure of the Educational System in the Federal Republic of Germany



Annotations

Diagram of the basic structure of the education system. The distribution of the school population in grade 8 as per 2024 taken as a national average is as follows: *Hauptschule* 3.5 per cent, *Realschule* 16.9 per cent, *Gymnasium* 36.2 per cent, *Schularten mit drei Bildungsgängen* 22.1 per cent, *Schularten mit zwei Bildungsgängen* 16.1 per cent, special schools 4.3 per cent.

The ability of pupils to transfer between school types and the recognition of school-leaving qualifications is basically guaranteed if the preconditions agreed between the Länder are fulfilled. The duration of full-time compulsory education (compulsory general education) is nine years (10 years in five of the Länder) and the subsequent period of part-time compulsory education (compulsory vocational education) is three years.

- 1 In some Länder special types of transition from early childhood to primary education (*Vorklassen*, *Schulkindergärten*) exist. In Berlin and Brandenburg, the primary school comprises six grades.
- 2 Teaching pupils with special educational needs in inclusive classes at general education schools or special education institutions with corresponding special educational focuses. Designation of schools varies according to the law of each Land. *Sonderpädagogische Bildungseinrichtungen* with a focus on “learning” and *sonderpädagogische Bildungseinrichtungen* with a focus on “mental development” award school-specific qualifications.
- 3 Grades 5 and 6 constitute a phase of particular promotion, supervision and orientation with regard to the pupil's future educational path and its particular direction.
- 4 *Hauptschule* and *Realschule* only exist in any appreciable numbers in some Länder. The *Hauptschule* course of education leads to a general education school-leaving certificate obtained after nine years of schooling (*Erster Schulabschluss*), the *Realschule* course of education leads to a general education school-leaving certificate obtained after ten years of schooling (*Mittlerer Schulabschluss*). These courses of education are also offered at schools with two or three courses of education, for which the names differ from one Land to another.
- 5 The following types of school with two courses of education bring the courses of education under one educational and organisational umbrella which lead to the *Erster Schulabschluss* or the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*: *Mittelschule* (Bayern), *Oberschule* (Brandenburg, Niedersachsen, Sachsen), *Verbundene Haupt- und Realschule* (Hessen), *Mittelstufenschule* (Hessen), *Regionale Schule* (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), *Realschule plus* (Rheinland-Pfalz), *Sekundarschule* (Sachsen-Anhalt), *Regelschule* (Thüringen). The course of education leading to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (Abitur) is also offered at types of school with three courses of education: *Integrierte Gesamtschule*, *Kooperative Gesamtschule*, *Gemeinschaftsschule* (Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, Saarland, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein, Thüringen), *Integrierte Sekundarschule* (Berlin), *Gesamtschule* (Brandenburg, Nordrhein-Westfalen), *Oberschule* (Bremen), *Stadtteilschule* (Hamburg), *Sekundarschule* (Nordrhein-Westfalen).
- 6 In addition to the qualification designations *Erster Schulabschluss* and *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* which are uniform across the Länder, specific qualification designations of the Länder can also be shown as equivalent on the certificate.
- 7 Admission to the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* requires a formal entrance qualification which can be obtained after grade 9 or 10. The *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* can be

- obtained after the successful completion of 12 or 13 consecutive school years (eight or nine years at the *Gymnasium*). At schools with three courses of education the *Gymnasium* course of education is not, as a rule, reduced to eight years.
- 8 The *Berufsoberschule* has so far only existed in a few Länder and offers school-leavers with the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* who have completed vocational education and training or five years' working experience the opportunity to obtain the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife*. Pupils can obtain the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* by proving their proficiency in a second foreign language.
 - 9 The *Fachoberschule* is a school type lasting for one or two years (grades 11 and 12) which admits pupils who have completed the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* and qualifies them to study at a *Fachhochschule*. In the majority of Länder, pupils who have successfully completed the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* and have been through initial vocational training can also enter the *Fachoberschule* directly in grade 12. The Länder may also establish a grade 13. After successful completion of grade 13, pupils can obtain the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* and under certain conditions the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*.
 - 10 *Berufsfachschulen* are full-time vocational schools differing in terms of entrance requirements, duration and leaving certificates. Basic vocational training can be obtained during one- or two-year courses at *Berufsfachschulen* and a vocational qualification is available at the end of two- or three-year courses. Under certain conditions the *Fachhochschulreife* can be acquired on completion of a course lasting a minimum of two years.
 - 11 Extension courses are offered to enable pupils to acquire qualifications equivalent to the *Erster Schulabschluss* and the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*. Under certain conditions the *Fachhochschulreife* can also be acquired.
 - 12 *Fachschulen* cater for continuing vocational education (duration: 1–3 years) and as a rule require a relevant vocational qualification and subsequent employment. Under certain conditions, the *Fachhochschulreife* can also be acquired.
 - 13 Including institutions of higher education offering courses in particular disciplines at university level (e.g. theology, philosophy, medicine, administrative sciences, sport).
 - 14 *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (only in Baden-Württemberg) are higher education institutions for teacher training and the right to award doctoral and post-doctoral degrees. The six *Pädagogische Hochschulen* in the federal state offer courses of study in teacher training and study courses leading to professions in the area of education and pedagogy outside the school sector.
 - 15 The *Berufsakademie* is a tertiary sector institution in some Länder offering academic training at a *Studienakademie* (study institution) combined with practical in-company professional training in keeping with the principle of the dual system.
 - 16 Study programmes usually conclude with a Bachelor's or Master's degree.

As at October 2025

1.5. Organisation of Private Education

In all areas of education there are also, to a greater or lesser extent, privately-maintained institutions. Institutions which fall under this category are those at pre-school level, which are assigned to child and youth welfare, schools and higher education institutions, as well as adult education institutions. The fact that state and non-state institutions exist side by side and cooperate with each other guarantees not only choice in terms of the educational programmes available but also choice between various maintaining bodies, which promotes competition and innovation in education. Through their maintenance of educational establishments, churches and other groups within the community help shape both society and the state.

Early childhood education and care

The education, socialisation and care of children up to school age takes place mainly in privately-maintained day-care centres. Book Eight of the Social Code VIII (*Achtes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Kinder- und Jugendhilfe*) gives priority to institutions run by non-public bodies (churches, welfare associations, parents' associations etc.) in the interests of providing a diverse range. The local maintaining bodies of public child and youth welfare – municipalities with the status of a district (*kreisfreie Städte*) and rural districts (*Landkreise*) – should only establish their own institutions if non-public bodies do not offer suitable recognised institutions or cannot set them up in time. As a result of this principle, around 67 per cent of day-care centres in Germany were run by non-public bodies of the child and youth welfare services in 2024.

Day-care centres for children which are funded by local authorities or non-public bodies are subject to public supervision by the responsible bodies for the public child and youth welfare services at Land level. This is generally exercised by the youth welfare offices of the Länder (*Landesjugendämter*). Maintaining bodies for youth welfare services from the private sector receive financial support from the Land as well as from the local authorities (*Kommunen*) to run day-care centres (e.g. for operating costs and investments). For more information on the funding of early childhood education and care see also chapter 2.2.

Privately-maintained schools

The right to establish privately-maintained schools is guaranteed by the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*, Art. 7, paragraph 4) and, to some extent, by provisions in the constitutions of the individual Länder. This freedom to establish privately-maintained schools is associated with an entitlement to state subsidies and a guarantee of the privately-maintained school as an institution. Thus, constitutional law rules out a state monopoly of education. The proportion of privately-maintained schools varies considerably from Land to Land and between the different types of school. The main legal provisions for the establishment of privately-maintained schools are the relevant provisions in the Education Acts and the special laws on privately-maintained schools, 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 (*Vereinbarung über das Privatschulwesen*) of August 1951 drawn up by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*).

Under the Basic Law, privately-maintained schools are also under the supervision of the state (cf. chapter 1.7). When establishing a privately-maintained school, general

legal requirements must be observed first of all, for instance with regard to building and fire safety regulations, health protection and protection of children and young people. The personal suitability of maintaining bodies, managers and teachers also has to be vouched for.

Primary sector

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 and schools with a bilingual and international profile, primary schools with an integrated boarding facility or schools of the Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein.

Secondary sector

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, schools with a bilingual and international profile or boarding 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.

State approval of *Ersatzschulen*

The criteria for approval of *Ersatzschulen* (alternative schools) are laid down in the Basic Law (Art. 7, paragraph 4). Such approval is given by the competent education authority of the respective Land on condition that privately-maintained schools are not inferior to public-sector schools in terms of their educational aims, their facilities and the training of their teaching staff and that they do not encourage segregation of pupils according to the means of their parents. Approval shall be withheld where the economic and legal status of the teaching staff is not adequately secured. The school supervisory authority must monitor whether the criteria on the basis of which approval was granted are being respected and can withdraw approval if these criteria are no longer being met.

The named individual prerequisites for state approval of privately-maintained schools as alternatives to public-sector schools include:

– the equivalence of educational aims:

As far as the equivalence of the educational aims of private schools and the corresponding school type in the public sector is concerned, strict adherence to the approved teaching hours and curricula of public-sector schools is not required. The private school can pursue religious or ideological educational aims and may use its own teaching methods.

– the equivalence of facilities:

This involves aspects such as school equipment on the one hand, and issues relating to school organisation on the other. Although schools must have equivalent buildings and equipment, differences are permitted in the organisation of privately-maintained schools (e.g. management by staff, particular rights of participation for pupils and parents).

– the equivalence of teacher training:

The teaching staff must have an academic education and teaching qualifications comparable to those provided by the state system of teacher training; in practice, most teachers have completed state teacher training courses.

– teachers' economic and legal security:

A contract of employment is required, covering duties, conditions for resignation or dismissal, holiday entitlement, sufficient emoluments and a right to future pension payments. In this way it should be ensured that teachers at privately-maintained schools are not in a significantly worse position than teachers at public-sector schools in terms of economic and legal security.

– no segregation of pupils according to means:

Under the Basic Law (Art. 7, paragraph 4) pupils should be able to attend alternative schools regardless of their economic means. School fees may be charged but must be socially equitable. State-approved alternative schools therefore only charge moderate fees or guarantee relief to pupils whose parents are of limited financial means (e.g. reduction in school fees, reduction for additional siblings attending the same school). Details on the financing of privately-maintained schools may be found at chapter 2.2.

State recognition of Ersatzschulen

In almost all Länder, state approval of a private school as an *Ersatzschule* (alternative school) does not automatically give that school the right to hold examinations and award leaving certificates corresponding to the qualifications gained at public-sector schools. The pupils concerned may only receive these through an external examination (*Nichtschülerprüfung, Schulfremdenprüfung*), i.e. an examination before a state examining board at a public-sector school.

Only state recognition permits the alternative school to hold examinations in accordance with the regulations in force for public-sector schools and to award certificates; state recognition thus confers the legal powers enjoyed by public-sector schools on the alternative school. A prerequisite for this recognition is that the conditions already required for approval are fulfilled on a permanent basis (operation of school without complaint from school supervisory authority), and that the regulations applicable to public-sector schools are applied to the acceptance of pupils and their transfer between school grades, as well as to examinations.

The approval or later recognition also involves several additional rights and obligations for the *Schulträger* (the body maintaining the school), and for teachers, parents and pupils. These include, for example, a fundamental right to public funding from the Länder for the school from the time a free school is approved or, in most Länder, after a waiting period of two to three years. Public funding for pupils of public-sector schools is used as a yardstick for funding directed at pupils of *Ersatzschulen*. Teachers may also be granted sabbatical leave to work at recognised alternative schools and have these years included in their years of teaching service. They bear titles like those conferred on teachers in the public sector; and schools can train student teachers. On the other hand, recognised schools in some Länder are also obliged to abide by public-sector school provisions relating to *Schulordnung* (school regulations), provision governing council meetings and rights to participation.

State-recognised institutions in the tertiary sector

In addition to state higher education institutions, there are also non-state institutions that are recognised by the Länder as higher education institutions. The legislation on higher education of the Länder (*Hochschulgesetze*) regulates both the procedure and the (minimum) requirements for granting state recognition. As a rule, the German Science and Humanities Council (*Wissenschaftsrat*) carries out institutional accreditations of non-public institutions on behalf of the Länder as part of recognition procedures. Institutional accreditation is a quality assurance procedure designed to determine whether an institution is in a position to offer study programmes that meet the quality standards resulting from the requirements laid down in the Länder laws governing higher education and which should be related to the individual profile of the institution to be accredited.

Official recognition by the respective Land, as a rule, is dependent on proof of that the non-public higher education institution is of equivalent status (not identical in form) to state higher education institutions. Therefore, a number of requirements must be met, e. g. that the non-public institution satisfies the demands, the standards and the performance of a comparable state institution. Furthermore, it must also be ensured that those belonging to the institution of higher education have at least a minimum level of co-determination in teaching and research matters. Recognition involves establishing the designation and organisation of the higher education institution, as well as the courses of study it plans to offer and the award of higher education degrees.

While the number of state-run and state-recognised institutions of higher education has remained relatively constant in recent years, the number of students at state-recognised higher education institutions has risen steadily. As at the 2025 summer semester, according to the German Rector's Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* – HRK), there were a total of 422 state-run and state-recognised institutions of higher education in the Federal Republic of Germany. These include 148 – mainly small – state-recognised institutions of higher education maintained privately or by the Churches.

Berufsakademien (professional academies) are governed by regulations specific to the Länder. The *Berufsakademie* laws in Hessen, Niedersachsen, Saarland and Schleswig-Holstein only provide for the existence of exclusively state-recognised professional academies, which require the approval of the relevant Land ministry. The Hamburg *Berufsakademie* law facilitates the establishment of state as well as state-recognised

institutions. In Baden-Württemberg and Thüringen, the state *Berufsakademien* have been converted into *Duale Hochschulen* (dual institutions of higher education). Sachsen has transformed the *Berufsakademie Sachsen* into the *Duale Hochschule Sachsen* on January 1, 2025.

Privately-maintained institutions providing adult education and training

The continuing education schemes on offer cover a broad spectrum of courses in continuing general, political and cultural education and continuing vocational training, which are supported by a diverse range of institutions – state and private-sector, non-profit-making and profit-oriented, in-company and public – and of institutions attached to the Protestant and Catholic Churches, the trade unions and other social groups.

1.6. National Qualifications Framework

The development of the German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (*Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen für Lebenslanges Lernen* – DQR) is part of a European process based on the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), which entered into force in 2008 and was revised in 2017. To implement the EQF, 39 European countries have now decided to develop national qualifications frameworks (NQFs). These NQFs can have a different number of levels and pursue different objectives. The implementation process is closely monitored by the European Commission. The new Europass portal provides information on the current status of developments (<https://europa.eu/europass/de/european-qualifications-framework-eqf>).

The EQF, as a reference framework for lifelong learning, maps the learning outcomes of the respective European national education systems in eight levels. It serves as a translation device between the education and qualifications systems of the EU member states and is intended to make learning outcomes from all educational sectors internationally more comprehensible and more comparable, thus promoting the mobility of employees in Europe.

The allocation of the DQR levels to the EQF levels was carried out in the so-called referencing process. The German Referencing Report was successfully presented to and approved by the EQF Advisory Group, the advisory body at European level, in December 2012.

The signing of the Joint Resolution on the DQR by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* – BMBF), the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz* – BMWK), the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) and the Conference of Ministers of Economics of the Länder (*Wirtschaftsministerkonferenz* – WMK) in May 2013, laid the foundation for the introduction of the DQR.

The aim of the DQR is to make the German qualification system more transparent, to support reliability, permeability and quality assurance and to increase the comparability of qualifications. The Federation and the Länder agree that the assignment of qualifications and degrees to levels does not replace the existing system of entrance qualifications. The allocation takes place in accordance with the principle that each

qualification level should always be accessible via various educational pathways. The achievement of a level does not provide automatic entitlement to access the next higher level and is not considered in conjunction with the implications for collective wage agreements and laws relating to remuneration. The EU Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications remains unaffected by the EU Recommendation.

The DQR was the first framework to cover all qualifications of the German education system across all educational sectors. In the Annex to the Joint Resolution, the qualifications of the formal sector assigned by consensus are presented in a tabular overview. A learning outcome-oriented justification is attached in each case.

In 2017, the Standing Conference decided on the allocation of general education degrees. The *Erster Schulabschluss* (ESA) was assigned DQR level 2, the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* (MSA) DQR level 3 and the *Fachhochschulreife* (FHR), the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* (FgbHR) and the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (AHR) DQR level 4. An allocation to two levels was confirmed for initial vocational education and training: Level 3 for two-year training programmes and level 4 for three-year and three-and-a-half-year training programmes. This ensures the equivalence of vocational and general education and training in the assignment process to the DQR.

The indication of the EQF/DQR reference level on new certificates issued for qualifications is being carried out by the respective authorities (vocational schools, chambers, etc.). In higher education, the EQF/DQR level is shown in the Diploma Supplement. A uniform formulation is used in all areas of education. The DQR level is not shown for qualifications obtained before the Joint Resolution came into force. The assignment is only noted on certificates of qualifications that are listed in the annually updated “List of Assigned Qualifications” (www.dqr.de).

In principle, all assignments of qualifications from the formal area are also shown bindingly in the DQR Qualifications Database in German and English.

As well as qualifications from the formal sector, the qualifications of the non-formal sector can also be allocated to the DQR – i.e. from the area that works with regulatory means that are not regulated by laws or ordinances.

The DQR Manual explains the DQR to all interested persons. It serves as a guide for authorities which are responsible for allocating qualifications to the DQR. It specifies the criteria and procedures for the description of qualifications for the DQR and is intended to ensure that the allocation of newly developed qualifications always follows the same criteria and procedures. It lays down binding allocations which indicate the competences acquired through a particular qualification, thereby making the allocations comprehensible, and also describes the competences and sources of information. A glossary explains the terms which are important to understand the DQR.

More detailed information on the DQR is available under www.dqr.de.

1.7. Administration and Governance at Central and/or Regional Level

Responsibilities of the Federal Government

Where the Federation has responsibility for education (with the exception of higher education) as well as early childhood education and care, this responsibility lies with the FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, FAMILY AFFAIRS, SENIOR CITIZENS, WOMEN AND YOUTH (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMBFSFJ*).

Where the Federation has responsibility for science, research and higher education, within the Federal Government this responsibility lies primarily with the FEDERAL MINISTRY OF RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY AND SPACE (*Bundesministerium für Forschung, Technologie und Raumfahrt* – BMFTR).

Wherever necessary, consultations between Federation and Länder take place in the *Bundesrat*, the Joint Science Conference (*Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz* – GWK) and the Conference of Ministers of Science (*Wissenschaftsministerkonferenz*). The BMBFSFJ is represented in the Standing Conference as a guest without voting rights.

For current information on the organisation of the ministries, see the websites www.bmbfsfj.bund.de (BMBFSFJ) and www.bmftr.bund.de (BMFTR).

The purview of the BMBFSFJ embraces the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB). It is a major instrument for cooperation between employers, trade unions, Federation and Länder at the national level. Paragraph 90 of the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*) defines the institute's responsibilities inter alia as follows:

- to carry out vocational education and training research on the basis of an annual research programme (*Jahresforschungsprogramm*);
- in accordance with the instructions of the competent federal ministry, to take part in the drafting of *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations) and other statutory instruments to be issued under the Vocational Training Act or under Part Two of the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (*Handwerksordnung*), to take part in the preparation of the Report on Vocational Education and Training (*Berufsbildungsbericht*), to take part in the compilation of vocational education and training statistics, to promote pilot schemes, including scientific investigations, to take part in international cooperation in the field of vocational education and training, as well as to assume further administrative tasks of the Federation for the promotion of vocational education and training;
- in accordance with general administrative provisions of the competent federal ministry, to implement the promotion of inter-company training centres and support the planning, establishment and further development of these facilities;
- to maintain and publish the register of *anerkannte Ausbildungsberufe* (recognised occupations requiring formal training);
- to carry out the tasks described in the Law on the Protection of Participants in Distance Education (*Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetz*) in accordance with approved guidelines and to contribute to the improvement and extension of vocational distance learning through the promotion of development projects;
- to carry out the tasks in accordance with section 53 (5) sentence 1 and section 54 of the Nursing Professions Act (*Pflegeberufegesetz*).

With the consent of the BMBFSFJ, the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training may conclude contracts with other parties outside the Federal Administration for the assumption of further tasks.

Vocational education and training in Germany is based on the consensus principle. Whenever major decisions on structure and substance have to be taken, such decisions are reached in a joint effort by Federation and Länder, employers and

employees. These groups are members of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training's board. One representative each of the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit* – BA), the umbrella organisations of municipal associations established at federal level and the Research Council may attend the meetings of the Board in an advisory capacity. The scientific advisory committee is intended to promote the quality of the Institute's research work by advising the board and the President of the Federal Institute.

Responsibilities of the Ministries of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science and cooperation at supra-regional level

Educational legislation and administration of the education system are primarily the responsibility of the Länder (cf. chapter 1.2.). This particularly applies to the school system, higher education and the adult education/continuing education sector.

Following the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany, it soon became clear that there was a basic public need for education to be coordinated and harmonised throughout the country if people were to be provided with the opportunity of mobility between the Länder in their professional and private lives. The main aim of the cooperation entered into by the Länder in 1948 with the founding of the **STANDING CONFERENCE OF THE MINISTERS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS OF THE LÄNDER IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY** (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) was to guarantee by means of coordination the necessary measure of shared characteristics and comparability in the Federal Republic of Germany's education system, an aim that is still pursued to this day.

In June 2024, the Standing Conference decided on a strategic realignment. With effect from July 1, 2024, the deliberations will take place within the framework of independent ministerial conferences for education, science and culture. The Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Länder (*Bildungsministerkonferenz*), the Conference of the Ministers of Science of the Länder (*Wissenschaftsministerkonferenz*) and the Conference of the Ministers of Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Kulturministerkonferenz*) will independently represent the resolutions in the area-specific topics to the public as part of the Standing Conference. They will be supported by the joint Secretariat of the Standing Conference.

The Standing Conference deals with overarching matters of education policy, higher education and research policy, and cultural policy of supraregional importance with the aim of forming a common opinion and will and representing common concerns.

Each Land has one vote. The Länder can transfer their vote to another Land.

Unanimous agreement is required for resolutions

- that serve to establish the necessary uniformity and mobility in the education system,
- that affect the budgets of the Länder,
- that affect the Standing Conference itself or
- that serve to establish joint institutions.

Other decisions are taken by a majority of at least 13 votes.

The resolutions have the status of recommendations – with the political commitment of the competent Ministers to transform the recommendations into law, however – until they are enacted as binding legislation by the parliaments in the Länder. The

resolutions are implemented in the individual Länder in the form of administrative action, ordinances or laws, with the Land parliaments playing a role in the legislative procedure.

Cooperation within the Standing Conference has led to uniform and comparable developments in many areas of the school and higher education system. Some of the most important results of the coordination work of the Standing Conference are detailed below.

School policy

Cross-Länder school policy is a key area of coordination for the Conference of the Ministers of Education, operating under the umbrella of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, with the aim of facilitating maximum mobility. Through its resolutions, the Conference of the Ministers of Education ensures the consistency or comparability of school curricula and qualifications. The agreements of the Conference of the Ministers of Education on individual subjects define the subject-specific requirements at key stages of the school career; recommendations on various curriculum content provide guidance on content, which is implemented in corresponding guidelines by the Länder. The resolutions of the Conference of the Ministers of Education on teacher training ensure the quality of training and the mobility of teachers.

Particularly due to international interdependence and the results of the PISA study, quality development and quality assurance in school education have come to the forefront of the Conference of the Ministers of Education's remit in recent years. In the school sector, this is reflected in the development of educational standards, participation in international comparative studies, regular educational reporting, and the establishment of the Institute for Educational Quality Improvement (*Institut zur Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungswesen* – IQB) and the Centre for International Student Assessment (*Zentrum für internationale Bildungsvergleiche* – ZIB).

With this paradigm shift in education policy, the focus is now much more strongly than before on the learning situation and individual educational journey of each pupil. Since then, considerations regarding effective measures for individual support and appropriate teaching have been on the agenda. All children and young people should have the opportunity to achieve the best possible educational success. A key focus is on the integration of children and young people from migrant backgrounds and the joint schooling of children and young people with and without disabilities (inclusion). Particular attention is also being paid to the design of transitions between individual stages of the school career. The objectives mentioned here and the associated measures also place new demands on teacher training.

The relevant overarching regulations concerning the aforementioned and other areas were adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in October 2020 in its “Agreement between the Länder on the common basic structure of the school system and the Länder's nationwide responsibility for key education policy issues” (*‘Ländervereinbarung über die gemeinsame Grundstruktur des Schulwesens und die gesamtstaatliche Verantwortung der Länder in zentralen bildungspolitischen Fragen’*). 40 articles describe central questions of quality assurance, overarching principles of education and upbringing in the Länder, the tasks of those

involved in schools, general regulations such as holiday regulations, the structure and organisation of the school system and questions of teacher training.

The agreement between the Länder includes the establishment of a Standing Scientific Commission on Education Policy of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Ständige Wissenschaftliche Kommission der Kultusministerkonferenz*). The task of this body is to advise the Länder on questions of the further development of the education system and on how to deal with its challenges, in particular on ensuring and developing quality, on improving the comparability of the education system and on developing medium- and longer-term strategies on education topics relevant to the Länder as a whole.

Vocational schools

Structural changes in the employment system, changes in the workplace, and the digitalisation and globalisation of work processes place high demands on the initial and continuing training of skilled workers. The Länder and the Conference of the Education Ministers, operating under the umbrella of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, contribute to the ongoing adaptation and further development of educational processes within the vocational education system. Vocational education and training is key to personal development and to participation in working life and society. Through its framework agreements on vocational training programmes, the Conference of the Ministers of Education has established the necessary consistency in the structure of the vocational school system and its qualifications, as required by the labour market and vocational qualification standards.

The Conference of the Education Ministers firmly pursues the educational policy approach of the equivalence of general and vocational education. With their differentiated, tailored and transferable educational programmes, vocational schools make a decisive contribution to permeability within the education system as a whole.

The status of vocational schools as an alternative course of education to acquire the entitlements of the general education school system was supported by the Standing Conference through resolutions on the mutual recognition of the leaving certificates and entitlements.

Higher education policy

In the higher education sector, the Conference of Ministers of Science under the umbrella of the Standing Conference contributes, through agreements, and by effecting coordinated administrative action, to ensuring a common higher education structure and to its continued development. The Conference of Ministers of Science is thereby involved in current developments which are taking place in the German higher education sector and cover the research and teaching tasks of higher education institutions and the rights and obligations of members of higher education institutions, the internal organisation of higher education institutions, their legal status, and the relationship between the State and higher education institutions. The relationship between the State and higher education institutions is also shaped by agreements on targets and performance requirements, as well as freedom on the part of the higher education institutions in evaluation and opting how to achieve targets. Internationalisation, competition and performance orientation have become major factors in the management and funding of higher education institutions.

The Conference of Ministers of Science contributes to this development for the purposes of transparency, mobility and safeguarding the performance of higher education through information exchange between the Länder, through joint recommendations and through cross-Länder agreements on individual aspects of the structural reform of higher education. In this process, the Standing Conference works closely together with the Federation, and with scientific organisations.

Topics relating to the field of higher education which have been covered in depth by the Standing Conference over the past few years include the digitalisation in higher education, including the impact of artificial intelligence, the further development of the system of the accreditation of study courses within the framework of quality assurance across the Länder and across institutions of higher education, quality assurance in teaching, teacher training, the further development of the dialogue-oriented service procedure (*Dialogorientiertes Serviceverfahren* – DoSV, the regulation of admission to courses of study with nationwide admission restrictions, the internationalisation of German higher education institutions as well as the continuation of the follow-up of the Bologna Process for the realisation of a European Higher Education Area.

Arts and culture

In addition to school and higher education policy, art and culture are the third focal points of the coordination work of the Standing Conference. In order to give even greater visibility to the cultural policy concerns of the Länder as the core element of the constitutionally guaranteed cultural sovereignty of the Länder and to improve their status in public perception, the Standing Conference has decided to set up its own Culture Ministers' Conference (*Kulturministerkonferenz* – Kultur-MK). The Kultur-MK began its work on 1 January 2019.

For a detailed description of the cooperation of the Ministers of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science visit the website of the Standing Conference (www.kmk.org).

Cooperation between Federation and Länder

Joint Science Conference

Pursuant to Article 91b, paragraph 1 of the Basic Law, the Federation and the Länder may mutually agree to cooperate in cases of supra-regional importance in the promotion of science, research and teaching.

Through an administrative agreement from 11 September 2007, last amended on 10 March 2023, the Bund and Länder agreed to set up a Joint Science Conference (*Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz* – GWK) on the basis of Article 91b, paragraph 1 of the Basic Law. Members of the GWK are the Ministers and Senators of the Federation and Länder responsible for science and research as well as for finance. The GWK addresses all questions of research funding, science and research policy strategies and the science system which jointly affect the Federal Government and the Länder.

The joint promotion of science, research and teaching in cases of supra-regional importance extends in particular to the institutions and projects named in the Annex to the GWK agreement.

Cooperation of the Federation and the Länder for the assessment of the performance of educational systems in international comparison

Pursuant to Article 91b, paragraph 2 of the Basic Law, the Federation and the Länder may mutually agree to cooperate for the assessment of the performance of educational systems in international comparison and in drafting relevant reports and recommendations. Important projects in the area of cooperation between the Federation and the Länder with regard to the assessment of the performance of educational systems in international comparison and in drafting relevant reports and recommendations are discussed in meetings of the Federal Minister of Education and Research and the ministers and senators of the Länder who are responsible for education. The meetings are prepared by a control group which in turn is supported by a scientific advisory committee.

Coordinating Committee for Training Regulations and Framework Curricula in vocational training

In the dual system, training in a recognised occupation basically takes place at company (including inter-company) learning venues and at the vocational school. The legal bases are the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*) and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (*Handwerksordnung*) and the Education Acts of the Länder. Training at company-based (including inter-company) learning venues is regulated by the Federal Government through training regulations (*Ausbildungsordnungen*). The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) adopts a framework curriculum (*Rahmenlehrplan*) for vocational education and training at the vocational school. The successful cooperation between the learning venues depends on the content and consecutive coordination of these two means of regulation.

To this end, on 30 May 1972 the Federal Government and the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder agreed on the procedure for the coordination of training regulations and framework curricula in the field of vocational education and training, as set out in the so-called Joint Results Protocol (*Gemeinsames Ergebnisprotokoll*). The basis for this was the first comprehensive statutory regulation of vocational education and training in the Vocational Training Act of 1969.

Since then, recognised dual occupations requiring formal training have been classified according to this procedure, which was not fundamentally changed by the amendments to the Vocational Training Act of 2005, 2020 and 2025. In this process, coordinated training specifications are created in training regulations and framework curricula for the learning venues of company and vocational school, which are aligned with the occupational principle. With these regulatory means, companies and vocational schools are obliged to carry out dual training in accordance with the time structures and content specifications laid down as binding at federal level.

The procedure for the coordination of training regulations and framework curricula was decided and further developed on the basis of the Joint Outcome Protocol in the Federal-Länder Coordination Committee on Training Regulations and Framework Curricula, which is made up of representatives of the Federation and the Länder. The Federal Government is represented on the coordination committee by the Federal Ministry of Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ), the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE) and the ministry

responsible for the respective occupation requiring formal training. The representation of the Länder is made up of the members of the Commission for Vocational Education and Continuing Education (*Kommission Berufliche Bildung und Weiterbildung*) of the Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Länder (*Bildungsministerkonferenz*) as part of the Standing Conference.

German Science and Humanities Council

Under an administrative agreement between the Federation and the Länder, the German Science and Humanities Council (*Wissenschaftsrat*) was established in 1957. Its tasks include the drawing up of recommendations on the content and structural development of higher education, science and research for the Federal Government and the governments of the Länder, as well as the joint promotion of the construction of facilities at institutions of higher education, including large scientific installations, in cases of supra-regional importance pursuant to Article 91b, paragraph 1, No. 3 of the Basic Law. The German Science and Humanities Council also prepares state-specific structural reports or reports on individual institutions. In addition, the German Science and Humanities Council has been carrying out the institutional accreditation of non-state institutions of higher education since 2001. Since 2010, the German Science and Humanities Council has also been conducting concept evaluations for institutions of higher education in the start-up phase. The German Science and Humanities Council is made up of scientists, recognised public figures and representatives from the Federal and Länder governments.

Foreign Cultural Relations and Education Policy

As regards foreign cultural relations and education policy, the Federation's responsibility for foreign relations (Art. 32 of the Basic Law) must be reconciled with the internal responsibility of the Länder for education and cultural affairs (Art. 30 of the Basic Law). This partnership brings with it the rights and duties of the Länder to contribute to tasks related to foreign cultural relations and education policy. These tasks range from bilateral cooperation within the framework of cultural agreements with foreign states to multilateral cooperation at the level of the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the OECD and the OSCE and supra-national cooperation within the EU. In addition to the internal coordination of the Länder, the Standing Conference is thus also a tool for a partnership-based cooperation with the Federation, particularly with regard to foreign cultural relations and education policy, as well as international and European cooperation in the education system and in cultural affairs. For more detailed information on cooperation between the Länder and the Federation in the field of foreign cultural relations and education policy, see chapter 12.1.

The system of German schools abroad is one particular area in which the Federation and the Länder cooperate as part of Germany's foreign cultural relations and education policy. An agreement reached in 1992 between the Federation and the Länder created the Joint Committee of the Federation and the Länder on School Affairs Abroad (*Bund-Länder-Ausschuss für schulische Arbeit im Ausland – BLASchA*), which took up where the work of the Standing Conference's Committee for German Schools Abroad, convened in 1951, had left off. The Committee is responsible for cooperation between the Standing Conference and the Federal Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) in the areas of German schools abroad, European Schools and the promotion of German language tuition abroad.

A representative of each Land, a representative of the Federal Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) and a representative of the Federal Office for Foreign Affairs (*Bundesamt für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten – BVA*) – Central Agency for Schools Abroad (*Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen – ZfA*) – coordinate in the committee on common areas of schools abroad and inform each other about measures in each other's exclusive competence.

The Central Committee for the German Language Diploma (*Deutsches Sprachdiplom – DSD*) of the Standing Conference, a subcommittee of the BLASchA, which is composed of three representatives of the Länder, one representative of the Federal Foreign Office and two representatives of the Federal Office for Foreign Affairs – Central Agency for Schools Abroad –, is responsible for coordinating and assuming tasks in the field of promoting German language teaching abroad, in particular the programme for the German Language Diploma.

General administration at the level of the Länder

The Ministries of Education, Cultural Affairs and the Ministries of Science in the Länder (which have different titles in the various Länder) in their capacity as highest authorities of a Land are responsible for education, science and culture. Their scope of responsibilities generally includes schools, higher education, research, libraries, archives, adult education, arts and culture in general, relations between the state and religious or ideological communities, (known as *Kultusangelegenheiten*), the preservation of monuments and sites and, in some Länder, also sport as well as child and youth welfare.

The Ministries of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science develop policy guidelines in the fields of education, science and the arts. They adopt legal provisions and administrative regulations, cooperate with the highest authorities at national and Land level and supervise the work of authorities under their purview and of subordinated bodies, institutions and foundations. To assist the ministries in their work the Länder have established their own institutes for school education, higher and continuing education.

The respective Ministries (in Berlin and Bremen: Senate department, in Hamburg: Authority) are headed by a Minister/Senator who is answerable to parliament. The Minister is usually represented by a State Secretary or State Councillor (*Staatssekretär* or *Staatsrat*) or a Director-General (*Ministerialdirektor*).

The following list shows the division of the departments in each of the Länder. For current information on ministers, see the respective website.

Baden-Württemberg

MINISTERIUM FÜR KULTUS, JUGEND UND SPORT

Thouretstraße 6

70173 Stuttgart

www.km-bw.de

MINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT, FORSCHUNG
UND KUNST

Königstraße 46

70173 Stuttgart

<https://mwk.baden-wuerttemberg.de>

Bayern

BAYERISCHES STAATSMINISTERIUM FÜR UNTERRICHT UND KULTUS

Salvatorstraße 2

80333 München

www.km.bayern.de

BAYERISCHES STAATSMINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT UND KUNST

Salvatorstraße 2

80333 München

www.stmwk.bayern.de

Berlin

SENATSVERWALTUNG FÜR BILDUNG, JUGEND UND FAMILIE

Bernhard-Weiß-Straße 6

10178 Berlin

www.berlin.de/sen/bildung

SENATSVERWALTUNG FÜR WISSENSCHAFT, GESUNDHEIT UND PFLEGE

Oranienstr. 106

10969 Berlin

www.berlin.de/sen/wissenschaft

Brandenburg

MINISTERIUM FÜR BILDUNG, JUGEND UND SPORT

Heinrich-Mann-Allee 107

14473 Potsdam

www.mbjs.brandenburg.de

MINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT, FORSCHUNG UND KULTUR

Dortustraße 36

14467 Potsdam

www.mwfk.brandenburg.de

Bremen

DER SENATOR FÜR KINDER UND BILDUNG

Herdentorsteinweg 7

28195 Bremen

www.bildung.bremen.de

DIE SENATORIN FÜR UMWELT, KLIMA UND WISSENSCHAFT

An der Reeperbahn 2

28217 Bremen

www.umwelt.bremen.de

Hamburg

BEHÖRDE FÜR SCHULE, FAMILIE UND BERUFSBILDUNG

Hamburger Straße 31

22083 Hamburg

www.hamburg.de/politik-und-verwaltung/behoerden/bsfb

BEHÖRDE FÜR WISSENSCHAFT, FORSCHUNG UND GLEICHSTELLUNG

Hamburger Straße 37

22083 Hamburg

<https://www.hamburg.de/politik-und-verwaltung/behoerden/bwfg>

Hessen

HESSISCHES MINISTERIUM FÜR KULTUS, BILDUNG UND CHANCEN

Luisenplatz 10

65185 Wiesbaden

<https://kultusministerium.hessen.de>

HESSISCHES MINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT UND FORSCHUNG, KUNST UND KULTUR

Rheinstraße 23–25

65185 Wiesbaden

<https://wissenschaft.hessen.de>

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

MINISTERIUM FÜR BILDUNG UND KINDERTAGESFÖRDERUNG

Werderstraße 124

19055 Schwerin

www.regierung-mv.de/Landesregierung/bm

MINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT, KULTUR, BUNDES- UND EUROPAANGELEGENHEITEN

Schloßstraße 6-8

19053 Schwerin

www.regierung-mv.de/Landesregierung/wkm

Niedersachsen

KULTUSMINISTERIUM

Hans-Böckler-Allee 5

30173 Hannover

www.mk.niedersachsen.de

MINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT UND KULTUR

Leibnizufer 9

30169 Hannover

www.mwk.niedersachsen.de

Nordrhein-Westfalen

MINISTERIUM FÜR SCHULE UND BILDUNG DES LANDES NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN

Völklinger Straße 49

40221 Düsseldorf

www.schulministerium.nrw.de

MINISTERIUM FÜR KULTUR UND WISSENSCHAFT DES LANDES NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN

Völklinger Straße 49

40221 Düsseldorf

www.wissenschaft.nrw.de

Rheinland-Pfalz

MINISTERIUM FÜR BILDUNG DES LANDES RHEINLAND-PFALZ

Mittlere Bleiche 61

55116 Mainz

www.bm.rlp.de

MINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT UND GESUNDHEIT DES LANDES RHEINLAND-PFALZ

Mittlere Bleiche 61

55116 Mainz

www.mwg.rlp.de

Saarland

MINISTERIUM FÜR BILDUNG UND KULTUR

Trierer Straße 33

66111 Saarbrücken

https://www.saarland.de/mbk/DE/home/home_node.html

MINISTERIUM DER FINANZEN UND FÜR WISSENSCHAFT

Mecklenburgring 23

66121 Saarbrücken

https://www.saarland.de/mfw/DE/home/home_node.html

Sachsen

SÄCHSISCHES STAATSMINISTERIUM FÜR KULTUS

Carolaplatz 1

01097 Dresden

www.bildung.sachsen.de

SÄCHSISCHES STAATSMINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT, KULTUR UND TOURISMUS

Wigardstraße 17

01097 Dresden

www.smwk.sachsen.de

Sachsen-Anhalt

MINISTERIUM FÜR BILDUNG DES LANDES SACHSEN-ANHALT

Turmschanzenstraße 32

39114 Magdeburg

<https://mb.sachsen-anhalt.de>

MINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT, ENERGIE, KLIMASCHUTZ UND UMWELT DES LANDES SACHSEN-ANHALT

Leipziger Straße 58

39112 Magdeburg

<https://mwu.sachsen-anhalt.de>

Schleswig-Holstein

MINISTERIUM FÜR ALLGEMEINE UND BERUFLICHE BILDUNG, WISSENSCHAFT, FORSCHUNG UND KULTUR

Brunswiker Straße 16–22

24105 Kiel

www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Landesregierung/III/iii_node.html

Thüringen

THÜRINGER MINISTERIUM FÜR BILDUNG, WISSENSCHAFT UND KULTUR

Werner-Seelenbinder-Straße 7

99096 Erfurt

www.thueringen.de/th2/tmbwk

The Ministries of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science have their own sections, departments and groups just like any other ministries. The allocation of specific responsibilities to the various organisational units is partly attributable to local developments and partly to ideas on cultural and educational policy. But for all their differences, the responsibilities of the Länder ministries are corresponding and their forms of organisation comparable.

State supervision and administration in specific educational sectors

The following description of each individual educational sector provides a comprehensive view of the administration of the various educational institutions.

Pre-school institutions

The education, upbringing and supervision of children until the age of six at which they usually start school, is generally 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 Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMBFSFJ*), 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. In some Länder, *Vorklassen* (pre-school classes) for children who are ready for school but are not yet of school age, or *Schulkindergärten* (school kindergartens) and *Vorklassen* for children of compulsory schooling age who are not expected to be able to participate successfully in initial education. As a rule, these institutions are accountable to the school supervisory authorities.

Public supervision (operating licence) to protect children in day-care centres maintained both by public and non-public bodies is generally exercised by the youth welfare offices of the Länder (*Landesjugendämter*) which are the responsible bodies at Land level for the public child and youth welfare services. This covers in particular compliance with the framework guidelines applicable to group size or staff-to-child ratios, staff qualifications, the space required, and standards relating to equipment, hygiene and safety, guaranteeing the rights of children and youths in the facility through appropriate procedures for involvement and the possibility of complaints in personal matters, measures to develop and ensure quality, and in some Länder, compliance with the pedagogical concept, which is also based on an education plan.

The principles of education policy in the elementary sector are laid down in the Common Framework of the Länder for early education in the early childhood sector (*Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen*) which was resolved by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) and the Youth Ministers Conference (*Jugendministerkonferenz – JMK*) in 2004 and updated in 2022. On the level of the Länder, education plans specify the basic notion of education and describe the day-care centres' independent responsibility for education. The responsibility for the actual educational work performed in the individual day-care centres lies with the maintaining body.

For children under three years of age, moreover, since 2005 child-minding services have gradually been upgraded as an equal-ranking, alternative form of care and the quality of these services developed. Permits for child-minding services are issued by the local youth welfare office (*Jugendamt*) and are dependent on the establishment of the personal suitability of the childminder and also, as a rule, on evidence of a basic qualification. The legally enshrined educational mandate also extends to child-minding services.

School supervision and administration

Under the Basic Law (Art. 7 paragraph 1) and the constitutions of the Länder, the entire school system is under the supervision of the state. Supervision of the general

and vocational school system is the responsibility of the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Länder in their capacity as the highest educational authorities. The duties of the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Länder and of the subordinate education authorities include the organisation, planning, management and supervision of the entire school system. The Länder sphere of influence also includes the detailed regulation of the school's mission and its teaching and educational objectives (*internal school matters*) within the framework of the education acts. The educational objectives presented in school legislation are given concrete shape in the curricula for which the Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs of the respective Land is responsible. In order to implement the curricula for the various subjects in the different types of school, textbooks are used as learning material in the classroom.

While the State is responsible for *internal school matters*, the school-maintaining bodies assume responsibility for *external school matters*. The public maintaining bodies of schools are, as a rule, the towns and cities (*Städte*) and municipalities (*Gemeinden*) and rural districts (*Landkreise*) or municipalities with the status of a district (*kreisfreie Städte*), and to some extent also the Länder. Generally speaking, the school-maintaining body is responsible for external school matters, i.e. school buildings, interior fittings, the procurement and provision of learning and teaching materials, administrative staff and ongoing administration, and also bears the non-personnel costs and the costs for non-teaching staff. The school-maintaining body is also, as a rule, responsible for school organisation measures such as setting up, changing and shutting down schools.

According to the law of the Länder, school supervision is exercised as *Rechtsaufsicht* (legal supervision), *Fachaufsicht* (academic supervision) and *Dienstaufsicht* (supervision of the staff at public-sector schools).

School supervision decides on all matters of fundamental importance concerning school organisation and school development and is responsible for ensuring compliance with the content-related regulations concerning teaching and school. In addition, together with the support systems, the school supervision advises and strengthens the schools in the fulfilment of their tasks, in particular in the exercise of school autonomy, in the development of school programmes, in internal and external evaluation and in the further training of teachers.

In October 2025, the Conference of the Education Ministers adopted a 'vision statement on the role and work of the school supervisory authority' on behalf of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, thereby establishing a common framework for the work of the school supervisory authority. The vision describes school supervision both as an institution and as an active agent. It is based on four pillars: attitude, tasks, competencies and tools. The focus is on close cooperation between school supervisors, school management and support systems, a clear division of responsibilities and adequate resources. In addition, school supervision staff are to receive regular training. Data and digital technologies are to help provide targeted support to schools in their further development.

Rechtsaufsicht (legal supervision) involves monitoring the lawfulness of the administration of external school matters, which is usually carried out by the *Kommunen* (local authorities) in their capacity as *Schulträger* (maintaining bodies).

Fachaufsicht (academic supervision) over teaching and educational work (internal school matters) in all public-sector schools is another responsibility of the school supervisory authorities. Academic supervision over primary schools and *Hauptschulen*, the various types of *sonderpädagogische Bildungseinrichtungen* (with the exception of residential special schools) and to some extent over *Realschulen* is exercised by the *Schulämter* (lower-level school supervisory authorities). The Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs, sometimes the middle-level school supervisory authorities and the lower-level school supervisory authorities, supervise all other types of school and schools of particular importance.

The supervisory authorities are awarded the power to check that schools are keeping to the prescribed curricula, timetables and *Prüfungsordnungen* (examination regulations) by visiting the school and sitting in on lessons, and to take necessary steps.

The pedagogical responsibility of the schools must be respected. Pedagogical responsibility – also termed pedagogical freedom or methodological freedom – includes the right of teachers to teach lessons on their own authority within the framework of the applicable legal provisions. The teacher is guaranteed this freedom in the interests of the pupils, as pupil-oriented teaching can only take place if the teacher has an adequate amount of freedom in selecting the content of lessons, teaching methods and assessment. The pedagogical freedom of the teacher is to be seen in relation to the requirement of acting in a professional manner, and to the pedagogical responsibility of the school. For example, the teachers are bound by the basic pedagogical concepts laid down in the school programmes.

The school supervisory authorities in the *Länder* also supervise teachers and head teachers at public-sector schools. Staffing issues, management and the general behaviour of the individuals working in the school are subject to such *Dienstaufsicht* (staff supervision). In some *Länder*, due to the increasing responsibility of the schools, the *Dienstaufsicht* has been transferred to the head teachers.

With increasing institutional independence of schools, the role of school supervision changes as well. In all *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. Support and advice to the schools is mainly provided through school development and school quality management. 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

Regulation of in-company vocational training in the sector of vocational education and training lies within the responsibility of the Federation. Within the Federal Government, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie – BMW*) or such other ministry as may be competent, adopts, in agreement with the Federal Ministry of Education, Family Affairs, Senior

Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend* – BMBFSFJ), *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations). These are drawn up by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB) pursuant to directions from the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy or such other ministry as may be competent in close cooperation with representatives of employers and employees as well as experts appointed by them. In parallel to the training regulations, and in coordination with them, the *Rahmenlehrpläne* (framework curricula) for the classes at *Berufsschulen* are developed by the Länder pursuant to the procedure described above (Joint Results Protocol – *Gemeinsames Ergebnisprotokoll*).

A training establishment may not only be the individual training company, but also an association of several companies which cooperate in order to meet the requirements of the training regulation (network training – *Verbundausbildung*). In order to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in their training, parts of the in-company training can be carried out in training centres (*überbetriebliche Berufsbildungsstätten* – ÜBS) on a supplementary basis. Training centres thus make a significant contribution to ensuring the training capability of SMEs and to securing skilled labour. In addition, there are other ways to support trainees and/or companies in their training, such as the possibility of extra-company training, external training management or assisted training.

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

Institutions in the 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 scholarship, research and teaching is guaranteed (Art. 5, paragraph 3), i.e. an autonomous sphere of academic self-administration is needed to guarantee freedom of scholarship. 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. The responsibilities and scope of, for example, authority over personnel matters vary depending on the regulations under state law.

Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes are subject to accreditation by the Accreditation Council (*Akkreditierungsrat*) (see chapter 10.3.). The establishment of new study courses may require agreement with the responsible Land ministry. In the Länder where this is required, accreditation as a rule is a prerequisite for ministerial approval. As a rule, the establishment of new study courses takes place within the framework of agreements on targets and performance in which the Land ministry and the higher education institution agree on developments inter alia in research and teaching. The study regulations, which are laid down for all study courses by the higher education institutions on the basis of the corresponding legal requirements, are as a rule approved by the governing boards of the higher education institutions;

some must be announced to or have the approval of the responsible ministry. *Prüfungsordnungen* (examination regulations) are dealt with in different ways: as far as study courses leading to a *Staatsprüfung* (state examination) are concerned, the examination regulations are issued by the competent Land ministries or, in agreement with the Land ministry competent for the relevant state examination, by the higher education institutions. As far as examination regulations for *Hochschulprüfungen* (academic examinations) are concerned, they are drawn up and approved by the higher education institution itself in the same way as the study regulations, whereby, depending on Land law, notification to the responsible Land ministry or approval by responsible Land ministry may be required.

In addition to the higher education institutions to which access is open to all, there are some specialised institutions with restricted access which are maintained by the Federation and the Länder. These include the universities for the Federal Armed Forces and *Verwaltungsfachhochschulen* (*Fachhochschulen* for federal and Land public administration). Finally, Germany has state-recognised institutions of higher education which are under church or private sponsorship.

The Higher Education Acts of the Länder contain 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. The higher education legislation of the Länder also regulates in detail the organisation and administration of higher education institutions for those higher education institutions that come within the purview of each Land.

The organisation and administration of *Berufsakademien* (professional academies) are governed by the *Berufsakademie* laws passed in the individual Länder. *Berufsakademien* can be divided into *Studienakademien* (study institutions) and, with regard to the practical part of the training offered, designated training establishments (under the terms of a dual system). The state study institutions are Land institutions and hence subject to the direct supervision of the ministry responsible for science and research. The training establishments for the practical component of training courses include private businesses, comparable establishments – particularly with regard to the liberal professions – and establishments run by maintaining bodies responsible for the provision of social tasks. The training and examination regulations for individual courses are adopted by the relevant ministry in the form of ordinances or by the *Berufsakademie* itself.

In addition to the state-run *Berufsakademien*, some Länder only offer privately-maintained professional academies, which, in each case, require recognition from the relevant ministry.

Institutions for continuing education

In the field of continuing education we find, more than anywhere else in the education system, a large number of different institutions and offers side by side – and also collaborating wherever necessary – run by the public and the private sector, non-profit making and commercial organisations, employers' and public institutions. The independence of institutions active in the field of continuing education, the freedom to organise courses as they see fit and to select their own staff are guaranteed as conditions essential to a continuing education set-up according with the interests of the community and its members.

The federal system in Germany means that the regulation of and assistance for general continuing education, continuing education leading to school qualifications, vocational further education at *Fachschulen* and that with an academic bias as well as, in some cases, political programmes, is in the hands of the Länder. The responsibilities of the Federation refer in particular to vocational education outside the school context, the development of new methods in continuing education through pilot projects, certain elements of political further education and statistical matters. The promotion of vocational further education under the Social Code III (*Drittes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Arbeitsförderung*) is the responsibility of the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*). The Upgrading Training Assistance Act (*Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz – AFBG*) provides a comprehensive nationwide means for financing vocational career advancement training. Responsibility for further vocational training as regulated by the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*) and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (*Handwerksordnung*) lies with the Federal Ministry of Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMBFSFJ*). Nationally uniform further training courses shall be issued in the form of a statutory order. Graduates who have been successfully examined on the basis of a further training regulation issued after 1 January 2020 shall bear the title of Certified Specialist, Bachelor Professional or Master Professional. Further training courses for which there is a regional need only are regulated by the *competent bodies*, generally the relevant chambers (e.g. chambers of handicrafts, chambers of industry and commerce), under their own responsibility. Responsibility for the master craft examinations as regulated by the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code lies with the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie – BMWE*).

1.8. Administration and Governance at Local and/or Institutional Level

Administration and government at local level

Pre-school institutions

Overall responsibility for pre-school establishments at local level lies with the youth welfare offices, the responsibility for the organisation of specific educational work in day-care centres for children (*Kindertageseinrichtungen*) lies with the maintaining bodies. A special feature is the bipartite nature of the youth welfare office (*Jugendamt*), in which the tasks of the youth welfare office are performed jointly by the administration and the youth welfare committee (*Jugendhilfeausschuss*). The youth welfare committee ensures the involvement of local civil society in fundamental issues of further development of child and youth welfare.

School administration

Public-sector schools are, for the most part, state/local authority schools maintained jointly by the Land and the *Kommunen* (local authorities) or administrative districts. The cost of the teaching staff is borne by the Land, and other staff or material costs are borne by the local authority. The local authorities or administrative districts, which are responsible for the establishment and maintenance of schools and supply them with financing, are described as *Schulträger*, or school maintaining bodies.

Schools with a catchment area extending beyond the local authority area, e.g. schools offering specialised education in artistic subjects or sport, certain *Fachschulen* and *sonderpädagogische Bildungseinrichtungen* (special schools) are in the majority of cases state schools, i.e. they are maintained by a Land, which bears the complete staffing and material costs. In some Länder, there are also local authority schools that are established by the local authorities and, in terms of the costs of teaching staff and material costs, are supported solely by them.

In-company vocational training institutions

At the local level, the self-administrative organisations of the economy (chambers of industry and commerce, chambers of handicraft, chambers of agriculture, chambers representing the liberal professions) are responsible for consulting and supervising in-company vocational training and for intermediate and final examinations in accordance with legislation.

At the training companies the elected representatives of the employees have a say in the planning and conduct of in-company vocational training and the appointment of trainees and instructors.

Administration and government at institutional level

Early childhood education and care

Early childhood education includes all institutions run by the non-public and public child and youth welfare services which cater for children until the age of six at which they usually start school.

For children from the age of three years until they start school, the *Kindergarten* is the traditional form of institutionalised early childhood education in Germany. Responsibility for the individual *Kindergarten* lies with the maintaining bodies (e.g. churches, welfare associations, local authorities, parents' associations etc.).

For children under three, day-care centres for children offer unmixed crèche groups and also some mixed age groups.

Supervision and care offered by childminding services is aimed primarily at the target group of children under three years of age. Childminders are, as a rule, self-employed, but may also be employed by private bodies or the local authority.

Children in day-care centres in the early childhood education sector are looked after by trained educational staff and by supplement educational staff as well as graduates from corresponding professional and other Bachelor's, Master's and Magister study programmes. The trained educational staff include state-recognised *Erzieher* (pedagogic staff) and state-recognised *Sozialpädagogen* (graduate youth and community workers). Some Länder also have supplement educational staff who help trained educational staff in their work. These include nursery assistants and social assistants in particular. Day-care centres are generally headed by trained educational staff. Heads of the day-care centres also carry out some pedagogical group work.

Some of the staff (especially those in senior positions) have a professional qualifying degree from an institution of higher education. 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). Other academically-trained teaching staff include for instance

childhood educators (*Kindheitspädagogen*). A variety of Bachelor study courses have now been established in this discipline.

More detailed information about initial education for pedagogic staff in early childhood education and care is available in chapter 8.2.

Primary and secondary education

Schools are run by a head teacher, who bears a particular title (e.g. *Rektor*). He or she is responsible for educational and pedagogical work in the school as a whole and at the same time is a member of the teaching staff. His/her responsibilities and duties are usually set out in the Education Act and in specific regulations for such posts. The head staff are required to cooperate closely with the teachers' conference and the *Schulkonferenz* (school conference) as far as this is provided for in the primary sector by Land legislation. The head teacher, whilst being subject to the legal and administrative regulations of the school supervisory authority, is also authorised to issue instructions to the other members of the teaching staff and the non-teaching personnel within the framework of his duties relating to *Dienstaufsicht* (staff supervision) and *Fachaufsicht* (academic supervision).

It is the task of the head staff, in cooperation with all those involved in the school, to ensure the proper running of the teaching and educational work as well as school life, and in doing so to ensure the further development and improvement of the educational work. In doing so, it carries out the tasks assigned to it within the framework of the school's own responsibility and develops them responsibly and innovatively.

The school head has a particular responsibility for quality development and for managing change processes in the individual school. It assumes this responsibility together with the school supervision authorities and the support systems and institutions of the Länder.

In detail, the head teachers' duties include the following:

- Unless this has been entrusted to other staff members, they work out the details of the weekly timetable, supervision and stand-in schedules, endeavouring to ensure that all teachers have about the same workload. They keep track of standards in the various classes by sitting in on lessons and inspecting written work so as to ensure uniform marking standards.
- They are responsible for monitoring all pupils' school attendance and ensuring compliance with the *Schulordnung* (school regulations) and the health protection and accident prevention regulations.
- They represent the school vis-à-vis outside bodies and individuals, notably the *Schulträger* (maintaining authority) and the general public. They may require outsiders (sales representatives, traders etc.) to leave the premises in order to avoid disruptions of normal school life.
- They conduct the school's external affairs (e.g. purchase of teaching materials) in close cooperation with the *Schulträger* (the authority maintaining the school) and are bound by its instructions in this field.
- During the past years, the scope of duties of the head teacher has expanded due to measures for the legal autonomisation of schools. As such, the right and/or the obligation of the schools to pass, implement and evaluate specific *Schulprogramme* (school-specific programmes) has brought about new duties for the head teacher. As part of securing the quality of the lessons, the head

teacher is additionally responsible for lesson development, staff development and organisational development as well as for the planning of further training, staff management and, where applicable, for the administration of budgetary funds.

- The school management represents the employer on site, i.e. it is responsible for all occupational safety and health measures (e.g. risk assessment, maternity protection, instructions) and health protection (e.g. company integration management, addiction prevention).
- The school management has tasks within the framework of the Infection Protection Act (e.g. measles immunity certificate, instruction of parents, reporting obligations to the public health department).

Whenever the head teacher is prevented from carrying out his functions, all these duties become the affair of the deputy head. In some Länder, the *Kommunen* (local authorities) as the maintaining bodies are involved in the appointment of the head teacher in that they are granted the right to make proposals or asked to give their opinion. For the qualifications required for application see chapter 9.1.

The head teacher generally chairs the conference where all teachers from the whole school meet to discuss matters of shared interest (*Lehrerkonferenz*), which he or she both convenes and presides over. The principle of shared staff responsibility for education and teaching applies in all Länder.

To support the head staff, organisational and administrative tasks (e.g. planning the school timetable, taking charge of the school library) can be transferred to individual teachers. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Land concerned appoints teachers as consultants for individual subject areas, whose job is to advise and support schools, teachers and officials of the school supervisory authority. The classroom hours of these teachers are reduced to allow them to carry out their management functions or administrative and consultative functions.

Tertiary education

The organisation and administration in higher education institutions essentially falls within the remit of the Länder. Basically, higher education institutions are organised and administered as follows: Higher education institutions are governed either by a rector (or rector's body) or else by a president (or presidential body). The rector is elected from among the group of professors belonging to that institution or selected from among external applicants. Anyone who has completed higher education and has the necessary career experience, notably in academic affairs or administration, may be nominated as a rector or president. The administration of higher education institutions is headed by a chancellor, who also acts as the budget officer.

The basic organisational unit at higher education institutions is the department (*Fachbereich*), in some Länder also known as faculty (*Fakultät*). Without impinging on the responsibility of the composite central bodies (*Kollegialorgane*), it performs the duties of the higher education institution that fall within its remit. The *Fachbereich* is responsible for ensuring that its members and scientific establishments are able to carry out the functions entrusted to them. The *Fachbereich* council is responsible for all research and teaching issues. It is chaired by the *Dekan* (dean), who, as a rule, is elected from among the professors of the department. Under recent laws the dean of a *Fachbereich* exercises a right of supervision and instruction over the professors of

the department with regard to the fulfilment of teaching and examination commitments.

Higher education institutions adopt their own statutes, or *Grundordnungen* (basic constitutions) which, as a rule, are subject to the approval of the Ministry of Science and Research of the Land in which they are situated. Depending on the law of the respective Land, decisions on the basic constitution and the election of the governing board of the higher education institution are taken by the senate of the higher education institution, the higher education council or the board of trustees, or a second composite central body (*Konzil* – Council, *Konvent* – Convention, *Großer Senat* – Full Senate, *Versammlung* – Assembly) in which representatives of the higher education institution, including members of staff and students, collaborate.

Organisation and administration of the state-run *Berufsakademien* are not subject to the provisions of the Framework Act for Higher Education or the Higher Education Acts of the Länder but are subject to the *Berufsakademie* laws of the Länder. Accordingly, the state-run *Berufsakademien* are predominantly managed by a board of trustees, expert committees or lecturers' conferences and the director of the *Studienakademie* (study institution) offering the theoretical component of training.

Internal consultation

The teachers' conference

One of the bodies of participation in the school sector is the teachers' conference (*Lehrerkonferenz*) in which the teaching staff takes decisions on instruction and education, taking care not to encroach on the freedom of the individual teacher to hold his or her lessons as he or she thinks fit. The term *teachers' conference* applies to the full conference, composed of all the teachers in a particular school, as well as to smaller conferences, made up, for example, of teachers from a particular department or responsible for one single class. It is one of the tasks of the teachers' conference to select textbooks from the lists of textbooks approved by the Ministry. In addition, the teachers' conference is also responsible for deciding on individual disciplinary measures, up to and including expulsion, in conflict situations. In several Länder, parents' (and sometimes pupils') representatives have a right to make their views known and take part in the deliberations of such bodies. They are not, however, as a rule, permitted to take part in discussions and decisions on what marks to award in certificates or whether pupils should or should not be moved up to the next school grade. In some Länder, parents' and, as the case may be, pupils' representatives have an advisory vote in conferences deliberating on certificates and/or on whether or not pupils should be moved up to the next grade. In the full conference, where all teachers from the whole school meet, it is generally the head teacher who presides over the conference and is responsible for the implementation of any decisions.

School conference

Besides the teachers' conference, the *Schulkonferenz* (school conference) generally exists as an additional organ governing cooperation between the head staff and teachers, pupils and parents as well as external cooperation partners, if applicable. It is constituted in different ways in the individual Länder. Sometimes teachers, parents and pupils are represented in equal numbers in the school conference, and sometimes teachers and/or parents are more strongly represented. The school conference is either chaired by the head of the school or by a member elected by the conference.

School conferences have different consulting rights and rights to participation in the various Länder. The Länder Education Acts contain different sets of objectives for the school conferences, but these do not represent hard and fast regulations. In most cases the *Schulkonferenz* is involved in the following areas:

- Organisation of school life and teaching: school regulations and disciplinary rules, lessons and breaks, allocation of classrooms
- Pupils' protection: road safety provisions for children on their way to and from school, school transport and prevention of accidents on the school premises
- Organisation of events outside school, but under school supervision, e.g. school partnerships and stays at residential facilities in the country, visits to factories and museums etc., school rambles

The school conference may also deal with general educational and teaching questions, e.g. the suitability of textbooks, classwork and homework requirements and the standards for the award of the different marks. The conference has the power to reach binding decisions on such matters as homework supervision, pupils' workgroups and the holding of pilot projects. In some Länder it also discusses and approves, or rejects, the organisation of the school in its present form, its division, relocation or merger with another school and construction projects as well as the school furnishings and equipment. Finally, corrective and disciplinary measures in conflict situations and counselling for parents and pupils may be dealt with.

In some Länder, the school conference has a say in the selection of the head teacher. The authority it enjoys in this respect varies between the Länder, from the right to propose a head teacher to the right to reject a particular choice. For legal reasons, however, it is the school's supervisory authority which actually appoints the head teacher.

Pupils' participation

The Länder Education Acts and school participation laws recognise pupils' basic right to participation and regulate the make-up and responsibilities of the pupils' representative body. Pupils elect pupil representatives from their forms or year groups to look after their interests in accordance with the principle of representation. Pupil representatives together make up the pupil parliament (*Schülerparlament*, also known as the *Schülerrat* or *Schülerausschuss*). This body elects one or more pupil spokespersons for the whole school. In some Länder, the pupil representatives are elected directly by all pupils. At local authority (*Kommunen*), town or district level, they are usually organised into local-authority, town or district pupil parliaments (*Gemeindeschülerrat*, *Stadtschülerrat*, *Kreisschülerrat*) and at Länder level into Länder pupil councils (*Landesschülerrat*). The school and the school supervisory authorities may not usually influence the choice of pupil representatives.

As well as the pupil representation organs, Land Education Acts or school constitution acts also provide for general assemblies of pupils (*Schülervollversammlungen*) either from the entire school or from different levels of the school, where it is intended that all pupils in a school or particular level of that school exchange opinions and hold talks or discussions.

Internal consultation in the tertiary sector

Institutions of higher education have a constitutionally guaranteed right to academic self-administration. Under the Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*) and the Länder laws governing higher education, all members of a higher education institution, i.e. all those whose main employment is at the institution and all matriculated students, are involved in the decision-making process. One or two composite central bodies are constituted to govern cooperation between the governing board of the institution and the members of that institution. For the purpose of their representation in bodies of participation, as a rule, the following each form a group of their own:

- the professors
- the students
- academic staff
- the other staff members

The group allocation of doctoral candidates is regulated differently in the higher education laws of the Länder. The type and scope of participation of the groups in the higher education bodies depend on the qualifications, functions and responsibilities of the parties involved and who the decisions affect. It is the professors who have the majority of votes in those bodies composed according to the various types of members that have the power of decision-making on research, artistic development programmes and the appointment of professors. Professors have at least half of the votes in matters regarding teaching, with the exception of evaluation.

Depending on state legislation, students elect student representatives or form student bodies. Depending on the legal structure of their tasks and responsibilities, the student bodies are responsible for representing the political, social and cultural interests of students in higher education, for maintaining supra-regional and international student relations and for representing student interests in relation to the tasks of the higher education institutions. Students participate in the governing bodies of higher education institutions through their elected representatives in the student councils in accordance with the statutory provisions. In the student representations, the students participate through their elected representatives in the university bodies in accordance with the statutory provisions. The bodies of the student representation, their responsibilities and composition as well as the details of the election procedure, the meeting and the passing of resolutions are regulated within the higher education institution. These student bodies, of which each student automatically becomes a member upon matriculation, are self-administrative. They are represented by the student parliament (*Studierendenparlament*) and the General Student Committee (*Allgemeiner Studierendenausschuss – AStA*) at most institutions of higher education. Both are elected by the students. The *Studierendenvertretung* or *Studierendenschaft* is subject to the *Rechtsaufsicht* (legal supervision) of the governing body of the higher education institution. At the level of the Länder, there are also the student councils of the federal states (Landes-ASten-Konferenzen) and comparable associations or (in some cases legally regulated) state-wide student representations.

Students also participate in teaching evaluation.

Participation of members in the administration and organisation of the *Berufsakademien* is regulated in the *Berufsakademie* laws of the Länder. Under these laws, the

director of the *Studienakademie* (study institution), representatives of the teaching staff, the involved training establishments, and the students are represented in the various committees, where they have a say in both fundamental and subject-related issues, as well as in the matter of coordination between the study institution and the involved training establishments.

Consultation involving players in society at large

According to the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*), the care and upbringing of children are a natural right of parents and a duty primarily incumbent on them (Art. 6, paragraph 2). However, the state keeps watch over the exercise of parental rights. The term *parents* refers to the respective persons who have parental power, i.e. those persons whom the care and custody of the child or young person has been conferred upon.

Consultation and participation in the pre-primary sector

In the field of early childhood education and care collaboration with parents is particularly important. Book Eight of the Social Code VIII (*Achtes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Kinder- und Jugendhilfe*) lays down that parents and legal guardians are to be involved in decisions on important matters relating to instruction, education and care (Section 22a, paragraph 2). This is carried out inter alia through the establishment of parents' councils (*Elternbeiräte*), which is regulated by Land law. Cooperation with the parents and legal guardians is also anchored in the education plans of the Länder. At the individual level, the experts in the establishments are required to work together with the parents and legal guardians for the welfare of the children and to ensure the continuity of the education process. The concept of educational partnership (*Bildungs- und Erziehungspartnerschaft*) has therefore become firmly grounded in the professional debate.

In addition, different forms of cooperation have more recently been established between day-care centres for children and other family and child-related offers in the community with the aim of guaranteeing comprehensive support for children offering the best possible quality. One outcome of this is the further development of a growing number of day-care centres for children into family centres.

Parents' participation in the school sector

The state is fundamentally responsible for the schooling of children under Article 7, paragraph 1 of the Basic Law. However, the state's right to regulate the education of children at school is limited by parental rights to bring up their children, without it being possible to derive specific rights to a say and rights of participation from parental rights. However, the Länder are free to equip parents' councils with rights to participation.

Parents exercise their rights, on the one hand, individually and, on the other hand, collectively through parents' groups and their representatives on other consulting and decision-making bodies at schools. The rights to a say enjoyed by the parents of primary school pupils do not fundamentally differ from those afforded parents of secondary school pupils who have not yet reached their majority.

Each of the Länder has developed its own approach to participation at school, whereby the collective participation of parents at school level and inter-school level is regulated to varying degrees and in diverse manners in the constitutions of the

Länder and in the Education Acts. It is generally the case, however, that parents have an opportunity to make their views felt at two levels, the lower level being the individual class (in bodies called *Klassenelternversammlung* or *Klassenpflegschaft*) and the upper level being the school as a whole (in the *Schulelternbeirat* or *Elternvertretung*). At a higher level we find regional parents' councils at the level of the local authority or district and, higher still, the representative organs at the Land level (*Landeselternbeirat*), sometimes organised according to the different school types. Finally, the representative bodies combine to form a single federal parents' council at national level (*Bundeselternrat*), in order to provide a forum for information for parents on developments in the field of education policy and to advise parents on school-related issues.

Other social groups involved in participation in the school sector

With the exception of vocational schools there are no provisions for individuals or institutions other than teachers, parents and pupils to have a say at the school level, be it individual classes or the school as a whole.

It is not until we reach the regional level or the Land level that representatives of business, the trade unions, the churches, local authority associations, institutions of higher education, youth associations and public figures are also involved in the decision-making process. These interest groups can exert influence on school affairs of general or fundamental importance at Land level, either through the permanent advisory committees (*Landesschulbeiräte*) or through legally regulated ad-hoc questioning. At the request of their members, however, such representatives may also be invited to attend meetings of lower-level bodies for information and advice.

The expansion of all-day school offers has significantly increased the trend towards involving external learning partners and learning locations in the local school-based social and academic educational work.

External consultation in the tertiary sector

In order to support the management of the higher education institution in matters of basic relevance by means of external expertise, higher education councils (*Hochschulrat*) or boards of trustees (*Kuratorium*) have been established in almost all of the Länder and include personalities from the economy or scientists from other institutions. Depending on the law of the respective Land, these bodies can exercise a right of veto or participation in, for example, basic budgetary issues or decisions regarding the development plans of the higher education institution. As a rule, they also have an advisory function and make recommendations.

Participation and consultation involving players in the society at large in the sector of continuing education

Various forms of cooperation have evolved between continuing education institutions, organisations which maintain continuing education and social partners (local authorities and Länder authorities, companies, employers' and employees' representatives, chambers of industry and commerce and other self-governing organisations within industry). However, this does not affect the freedom of institutions to take decisions relating to the courses they organise or the teaching staff they select.

1.9. Statistics on Educational Institutions

This section provides the most recent available data on the number of educational institutions from pre-primary to post-secondary non-tertiary education level (ISCED levels 0-4). Statistics on numbers and characteristics of higher education institutions (ISCED levels 5-8) can be found in the European Tertiary Education Register. A general overview of the categories of institutions providing publicly-subsidised adult education and training can be found in the chapter on adult education. The notes below the tables provide methodological explanations necessary for a good interpretation of data.

Statistics on educational institutions providing regular education					
Type of educational institution in English (and in national language)	ISCED levels provided	Main orientation of the programmes provided	Number of educational institutions		
			Total	Public	Government-dependent private
Day-care centres for children under the age of 3 (<i>Kindertageseinrichtungen für Kinder unter drei Jahren</i>)	0	(-)	1,920	(:)	(:)
Day-care centres for children from the age of 2 to 8 years (excluding schoolchildren) (<i>Kindertageseinrichtungen für Kinder im Alter von 2 bis 8 Jahren (ohne Schulkinder)</i>)	0	(-)	18,220	(:)	(:)
Day-care centres for children of all ages (including schoolchildren) (<i>Kindertageseinrichtungen mit Kindern aller Altersgruppen (einschließlich Schulkinder)</i>)	0	(-)	36,899	(:)	(:)
Primary schools/ <i>Grundschulen</i>	1	G	15,566	14,574	992
<i>Hauptschulen</i>	2	G	749	694	55
Schularten mit zwei Bildungsgängen (types of school with two courses of education)	2	G	2,747	2,407	145

<i>Schularten mit mehreren Bildungsgängen (types of school with several courses of education)</i>	2	G	340	(-)	340
<i>Realschulen</i>	2	G	1,698	1,386	312
<i>Gymnasien</i>	2,3	G	3,172	2,627	545
<i>Schularten mit drei Bildungsgängen (types of school with three courses of education)</i>	2, 3	G	2,401	2,068	333
<i>Freie Waldorfschulen</i>	1, 2, 3	G	240	(-)	240
No classification possible	(-)	G	873	873	(-)
<i>Berufsschulen in the dual system</i>	3, 4	V	1,465	1,282	183
<i>Berufsfachschulen</i>	3, 4	V	2,178	1,296	882
<i>Berufsoberschulen/Technische Oberschulen</i>	4	V	176	171	5
<i>Berufliche Gymnasien</i>	3	V	889	770	119
<i>Fachoberschulen</i>	3, 4	V	798	655	143

Sources

Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt), 2025. Statistical Report, General Education Schools, School Year 2024/2025 (Statistischer Bericht, Allgemeinbildende Schulen, Schuljahr 2024/2025). Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) (last accessed 08/12/2025)

Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt), 2025. Statistical Report, Vocational Schools and Schools in the Health Care Sector, School Year 2024/2025 (Statistischer Bericht, Berufliche Schulen und Schulen des Gesundheitswesens – Grunddaten, Schuljahr 2024/2025). Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) (last accessed 08/12/2025)

Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt), 2025. Genesis-Online, <22541-0007 Tageseinrichtungen: Deutschland, Stichtag, Altersgruppen der Kinder> Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) (last accessed 08/12/2025)

ISCED= International Standard Classification of Education

G=General	V=Vocational
(:) Data not available	(-) Not applicable

Terminology

The 2018 version of the UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat Manual on concepts, definitions and classification can be consulted for the definitions of regular education (p.10); general and vocational programmes of education (p.19); as well as public institution, government-dependent private institution and private independent institution (pp. 24-26)

Notes

With regard to day care-centres for children, the local site approach to counting is used. Day care centres for children are institutions in which children are admitted all

day or for part of the day and are cared for regularly in terms of nursing and education, who have the appropriate personnel and for whom an operating permit in accordance with paragraph 45 of the Social Security Code VIII (Achstes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Kinder- und Jugendhilfe) or a comparable permit is available. The term "institution" is understood to mean a combination, for a certain period of time, of material and personal means relating to a place and a building for a specific purpose under the responsibility of an executing agency.

The counting unit for the number of educational institutions providing regular education in the school sector is a 'type of school'. A type of school has an independent character with regard to curricula, educational objectives and qualification level. Counting 'types of school' is different from counting organisational units/legal entities, as an organisational unit/legal entity may combine more than one type of school under one umbrella.

'Type of school' may correspond to a specific study programme. The study programmes *Vorklassen*, *Schulkindergärten*, *Orientierungsstufe*, *Berufsvorbereitungsjahr* and *Berufsgrundbildungsjahr* are counted as separate types of school in German school statistics although they are in almost all cases established under the legal/organisational umbrella of a larger educational unit. These types of school are not included in the table because they fall outside the scope of the Eurydice understanding of the term 'educational institution' which privileges counting according to the legal entity or local site approaches.

In the case of *Hauptschule*, *Realschule* and *Gymnasium*, 'type of school' may apply to institutions who are legal entities/organisational units in their own right as well as to those who are not. 'Schools offering several courses of education' refers to a type of school in the Länder providing the courses of education otherwise offered by the *Hauptschule* and *Realschule* and in some cases also the *Gymnasium*. Designations for this type of school vary between the Länder. The different courses of education offered at this type of school are not counted as separate types of school.

Statistics on separate educational institutions providing special needs education					
Type of educational institution in English and (in national language)	ISCED levels provided	Main orientation of the programmes provided	Number of educational institutions		
			Total	Public	Government-dependent institutions
Day-care centres for handicapped children (<i>Kindertageseinrichtungen für behinderte Kinder</i>)	0	(-)	216	(:)	(:)
Special schools (<i>Förderschulen</i>)	1, 2, 3	G	2,811	2,139	672

Sources

Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt), 2025. Statistical Report, General Education Schools, School Year 2024/2025 (Statistischer Bericht, Allgemeinbildende Schulen, Schuljahr 2024/2025). Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) (last accessed 08/12/2025)

Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt), 2025. Genesis-Online, <22541-0004 Tageseinrichtungen: Deutschland, Stichtag, Art der Tageseinrichtung> Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis) (last accessed 08/12/2025)

ISCED= International Standard Classification of Education

G=General	V=Vocational
(:) Data not available	(-) Not applicable

Terminology

The 2018 version of the UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat Manual on concepts, definitions and classification can be consulted for the definitions of regular education (p.10); general and vocational programmes of education (p.19); as well as public institution, government-dependent private institution and private independent institution (pp. 24-26).

Notes

With regard to day care-centres for children, the local site approach to counting is used. For more detailed information, please see the notes on "Statistics on educational institutions providing regular education".

The counting unit for the number of separate educational institutions providing special needs education in the school sector is a 'type of school'. For more detailed information, please see the notes on "Statistics on educational institutions providing regular education".

The category 'private independent' is not relevant in Germany.

2. FUNDING

2.1. Introduction

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 from public budgets.
- Certain groups undergoing training receive financial assistance from the state to finance their living expenses and education or to develop their talent and skills.
- 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.

Public spending on education

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.

Since 2008, the Federal Statistical Office (*Statistisches Bundesamt*) has prepared an annual Education Finance Report on behalf of the federal ministry of education and in consultation with the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Federal Republic of Germany (*Kultusministerkonferenz*). The Educational Finance Report compiles the most important information that is available on the education budget. From 2023, the Education Finance Report will be published every two years. In the intervening years, the Statistical Report “Public Expenditure on Education” (*Bildungsausgaben der öffentlichen Haushalte*) will supplement the reporting. The Educational Finance Report is part of education reporting, which continuously provides data-based information on the framework, input, progress, results and effects of educational processes. It serves as the basis for the following comments on expenditures in the individual education areas.

The expenditure (basic funds) of the Federation, Länder and local authorities in Germany are shown in the demarcation of the financing statistics of the public budgets. In 2024, according to the Education Finance Report, the public sector spent a total of Euro 198,4 billion for day-care centres for children, general and vocational schools, higher education institutions, financial assistance for pupils and students, other educational expenditure as well as out-of-school youth education and youth association work. This amounted to Euro 11.4 billion for the Federation, Euro 134.8 billion for the Länder and Euro 52.2 billion for the local authorities. This corresponds to 4.6 per cent of gross domestic product and 20.4 per cent of the total public budget.

In-company training within the *duales System*, which is maintained by industry and by other training companies and institutions, is mainly financed by the companies. The *Berufsschulen* (vocational schools) which are, together with the training

companies, jointly responsible for education and training within the dual system receive public financing.

2.2. Early Childhood and School Education Funding

Funding

Early childhood education and care

Publicly-maintained day-care centres for children (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, day-care centres 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. Financing by the Länder may include subsidies to cover investment, personnel and material costs etc.

In 2024, according to the financing statistics, the public sector invested Euro 48.8 billion in early childhood education and care. The Länder share amounted to Euro 23.4 billion or 48.0 per cent of expenditure on the primary sector and the local authority share to Euro 25.4 billion or 52.1 per cent of expenditure.

Compared to the previous year, in 2024 planned public budget expenditure for early childhood education and care increased by 10.0 per cent. The increase in expenditure is closely linked to the expansion of childcare places for children until they enter school. The Federation, the Länder and the local authorities had agreed in 2007 to progressively establish quality and needs-oriented day-care services for children under three years of age in day-care centres and child-minding services until 2013. The Children Promotion Act (*Kinderförderungsgesetz – KiföG*) from 2008 regulates, amongst other things, the financial aid provided by the Federation to expand day care for children by setting up a “child care expansion” special fund. Since 1 August 2013, all children from the age of one have had a legal right to early-childhood education in a day-care centre or child-minding service.

With a total of five investment programmes, the Federation has contributed a total of Euro 5.4 billion to the expansion of child daycare since 2008. Within the framework of these programmes, the Länder and local authorities must bear a share of the investment costs themselves. With the fifth investment programme, which is partly financed by funds from the European Union's NextGenerationEU recovery plan, the Federal Government is providing Euro one billion until June 2024.

Within the framework of the investment programmes, the Länder and municipalities must bear a share of the investment costs themselves. Partly due to this co-financing share, the investment expenditures of Länder and municipalities for child day care have also increased since the investment programmes came into existence. The expansion of childcare capacities requires additional staff and material resources. The Länder or local authorities contribute to the additional operating costs directly (public day-care facilities) or in the form of subsidies (privately run day-care facilities).

With the Act on the Further Development of the Quality and Participation in Child Day Care (*Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Qualität und zur Teilhabe in der Kindertagesbetreuung*), the Federation supported the Länder from 2019 until 2022 with a total of around Euro 5.5 billion for measures to further develop the quality of childcare and

to relieve parents of the fees. With the Second Act on the Further Development of Quality and Participation in Child Daycare (*Zweites Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Qualität und zur Teilhabe in der Kindertagesbetreuung*), the so-called KiTa Quality Act, the Federation provided the Länder with a total of around Euro 4 billion in additional funding for 2023 and 2024.

Under the “Infrastructure and Climate Neutrality” Special Fund (*Sondervermögen ‘Infrastruktur und Klimaneutralität’* – SVIK), additional funding of Euro 3.76 billion (Euro 940 million annually) will be available from 2026 to 2029 for the expansion of early childhood education and care. The plan is to implement investments in daycare centres from the SVIK through a “Child Daycare Investment Program” administered by the Federal Ministry of Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend* – BMB-FSJ).

Primary and secondary education

Financing of school education

The public-sector school system is financed on the basis of a division of responsibilities between the Länder and the *Kommunen* (local authorities). While local governments cover the costs of capital expenditure and running costs, the state ministries of education are responsible for teachers' salaries. While the latter bear the capital expenditures and operating expenses for schools as well as, as a rule, the costs of non-teaching staff, 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, for certain expenses (e.g. for transporting pupils to and from school) the local authorities receive reimbursements or lump-sum allocations from the Land budget (generally by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs or by the Ministry of Finance). 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 *sonderpädagogische Bildungseinrichtungen* (special schools) and *Fachschulen*, the Land can be the *Schulträger* (maintaining body) and therefore also responsible for funding the material costs and the non-teaching staff payroll.

In 2024, according to the Education Finance Report, expenditures of the public sector for general and vocational schools amounted to Euro 97.4 billion. The Länder share amounted to Euro 74.7 billion or 76.7 per cent of expenditure, and the local authority share to Euro 21.2 billion or 21.8 per cent of expenditure. Federal expenditure amounted to Euro 1.5 billion or 1.5 per cent.

In March 2019, after the *Bundestag*, the *Bundesrat* also approved an amendment to Article 104c of the Basic Law. Parallel to the legislative procedure, the Federation and the Länder have agreed on a corresponding administrative agreement. With the constitutional amendment, the Federation can grant the Länder financial assistance to increase the efficiency of the municipal education infrastructure, which, like the digitisation of the education system, is of particular importance for the state as a whole.

The amendment of Article 104c of the Basic Law was a prerequisite for the DigitalPact School 2019-2024 (*DigitalPakt Schule 2019–2024*), with which the Federal Government and the Länder are pursuing, among other things, the goal of creating digital education infrastructures suitable for the future. The Federation promotes digital technology, while the Länder are responsible for content development. Euro 5 billion from the Federation and a further Euro 500 million from the Länder will be invested in the digital infrastructure of schools. In addition, the Länder will ensure the further training of teachers, the adaptation of educational plans and the further development of teaching. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the DigitalPact School was expanded in 2020 to include three supplementary agreements totalling Euro 1.5 billion.

In addition, the *DigitalPakt Schule* has created a new foundation for the digital infrastructure in the Länder. Euro 250 million will be invested in cross-Länder projects (*länderübergreifende Vorhaben – LüV*) that deal with the interoperability of the different learning platforms, the provision of learning materials, the cooperation of teachers and the adaptive individual practice of pupils, among other things.

Regular reports on the use and commitment of funds are submitted to the Budget Committee of the *Bundestag*.

Since February 2023, the *DigitalPakt Schule* will be scientifically evaluated by an independent third party (evaluator). The evaluator has submitted an interim report at the end of 2024 (<https://www.digitalpaktschule.de/de/fortschrittsbericht-zum-digitalpakt-schule-2023-2024-1870.html>) and is to submit a final report by the end of 2026. The aim of the evaluation is to determine what changes the DigitalPakt Schule has led or contributed to in the area of digital infrastructure and the use of digital media in schools. The results of the evaluation will be published.

In December 2024, the then Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Conference of Education Ministers jointly announced that, building on the Digital Pact for Schools (2019–2024), the Digital Pact 2.0 would be adopted as an overarching strategy for the digitization of schools. The Digital Pact 2.0 continues and further develops the work of the Digital Pact for Schools.

In December 2025, the Conference of Education Ministers adopted Digital Pact 2.0: The federal government and the Länder will invest a total of Euro 5 billion by 2030. The federal government will provide Euro 2.5 billion, and the Länder will contribute an equal share.

Digital Pact 2.0 consists of three interlinked action strands: the further development of digital infrastructure (Action Strand I), school and instructional development (Action Strand II), and the federal-state initiative on Digital Teaching and Learning (Action Strand III). Action Strand I directly builds on the Digital Pact for Schools.

Digital Pact 2.0 goes beyond the financing of digital infrastructure in school buildings and also enables the promotion of educational software and structures for professional technical support. A central element of Digital Pact 2.0 is the simplification of administrative processes.

The cross-state projects (*länderübergreifende Vorhaben – LüV*) are being restructured under the Digital Pact 2.0. A new LüV must be implemented by at least twelve Länder, which access funding from a central pool. This is intended to enable better pooling of resources and the creation of joint system solutions.

Financing of vocational training

The *duales System* (dual system) of vocational education and 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, whose net costs are estimated at about Euro 9.7 billion in the training year 2022/2023 (latest survey). It is hard to put a figure on public spending on education and training in the dual system. For 2023, according to the Federal Institute of Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB), almost Euro 9.6 billion have been budgeted for vocational schools in the public budgets. An estimated Euro 3.5 billion of the budgeted funds will be allocated to part-time vocational schools. The remaining Euro 6.1 billion will be used to finance other types of school in the vocational education system, such as full-time *Berufsfachschulen*, *Fachgymnasien*, *Fachoberschulen*, the *Berufsvorbereitungsjahr*, the *Berufsprüfungsjahr* and the *Fachschulen*.

Financial Autonomy and Control

Early childhood education and care

Under the statutory provisions the maintaining bodies for day-care centres for children are free to administer their own funding.

Primary and secondary education

A process to modernise and further develop the field of public administration is currently underway, which aims to attain a more effective and efficient use of resources. The purpose of this process is, above all, to remove the heavily regulated use of resources by extending the financial autonomy of the schools. 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.

Fees within Public Education

Early childhood education and care

Early childhood education and care is not a part of the state school system, and attendance of day-care centres is not, as a general rule, free of charge. To cover some of the costs, parental contributions are levied, the level of which may vary from Land to Land as well as from local authority to local authority and can depend on parents' financial circumstances, the number of children or daily attendance time. The Act on the Further Development of the Quality and Participation in Child Day Care introduced a nationwide obligation to stagger cost contributions from 1 August 2019.

In recent years, more and more regulations have been introduced to relieve parents of their costs. In some Länder, for example, attendance at a day care centre is already completely or partially free of charge, depending on the child's age and the scope of care. In some Länder no contributions are levied for the final year or the final years in a day-care centre for children.

Primary and secondary education

Attendance of public-sector primary and secondary schools is free of charge, and there are no fees for enrolment or for report cards.

Financial Support for learners' families

Early childhood education and care

On application, financial contributions may be waived in part or in full if parents cannot afford to pay them. These would then be assumed by the local youth welfare office. From 1 August 2019, the Act on the Further Development of the Quality and Participation in Child Day Care exempts not only families receiving transfer payments, but also families with a low income from childcare contributions, for example if they receive a child supplement or housing benefit. The Länder can also use these funds for additional Länder-specific measures to relieve families of the fees.

Primary and secondary education

In the basic social security for persons seeking employment under Book Two of the Social Code (*Zweites Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Grundsicherung für Arbeitsuchende*) and welfare benefits under Book Twelve of the Social Code (*Zwölftes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Sozialhilfe*), in accordance with the *Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz* (German social welfare law for asylum seekers) and with the *Bundeskindergeldgesetz* (Federal Child Benefit Act) (for families who receive a supplementary child allowance or housing allowance), children, youths and young adults in need are legally entitled to education and participation benefits (so-called education package).

The law takes into account the following needs for pupils who are eligible for the benefit:

- Expenses for the lunch together in schools as well as in principle also in day care facilities and in childminding services;
- suitable learning support that supplements the schooling, whereby the respective school law provisions are to be taken into account in each individual case;
- a total of Euro 195 for the 2024 calendar year in two instalments for personal school needs such as a satchel, writing, calculation and drawing materials as well as digital learning materials;
- expenses for school trips lasting one or several days (including class trips within the scope of education regulations), day care facilities for children and child day care;
- expenses for school transport, unless these are covered or assumed otherwise.

Until they reach the age of 18, children/young people entitled to benefits also receive a lump sum of 15 Euro per month provided that expenses for participation in social and cultural life in the community can be proven (e.g. for membership fees in sports clubs or music school fees). The participation budget can be saved to a limited extent. The implementation of the education package is the responsibility of the respective local authorities and districts.

Financial support for families of pupils with special educational needs

No information is available on financial support measures for families of pupils with special educational needs. Families of children with (impending) disabilities can be supported within the framework of integration assistance under Book Eight of the Social Code (*Achtes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – SGB VIII*) or within the framework of benefits for the rehabilitation and participation of people with disabilities under Book Nine of the Social Code (*Neuntes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – SGB IX*).

Financial support for learners

Financial support for pupils

In general, there are no provisions for financial assistance to secondary school pupils from grades 5 to 9. Some Länder have regulations allowing for the provision of financial assistance to pupils up to grade 9 who must be accommodated outside of their home.

On the basis of legal regulations on the part of the Federation (Federal Training Assistance Act – *Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz – BAföG*), pupils from grade 10 onwards at general and vocational secondary schools are entitled under certain conditions to financial support from the state in the form of a grant, if they have no other means (mainly from their parents' income) of maintenance and financing training. For certain types of school, financial support for pupils is dependent e.g. on pupils being accommodated outside the parental home if the place of training is not accessible from there. Training assistance is paid to cover living costs and training, with the income and financial means of the pupil as well as the income of his or her parents and, if applicable, his or her spouse or partner also being taken into account. Starting in the 2024–2025 school year, students can receive up to Euro 276 or 775 per month in educational assistance under the terms of the Federal Training Assistance Act, depending on whether they live with their parents and the type of educational institution they attend, with income being taken into account. If recipients actually incur costs for health and long-term care insurance, the Federal Training Assistance Act generally provides a health and long-term care insurance supplement of Euro 137; in some cases, this amount can be as high as Euro 233. In addition, a child-care allowance of Euro 160 may be claimed for each child. The assistance provided by the state does not have to be repaid.

In 2024, just less than 129,000 pupils received training assistance under the Federal Training Assistance Act. Federation expenditure on financial support for pupils under the Federal Training Assistance Act amounted to around Euro 500 million. Pupils granted support each received an average Euro 539 monthly.

Besides federal training assistance, pupils are entitled under certain circumstances to basic social security benefits for job seekers under Book Two of the Social Code (*Zweites Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Grundsicherung für Arbeitsuchende*). Some Länder have provisions under which upper secondary pupils who have no claim to assistance under the Federal Training Assistance Act can receive financial assistance from the Land under certain conditions.

In the penultimate and final years of their education, students who already hold a vocational qualification or who will obtain one upon successfully completing their current school education may apply for the federal government's Educational Credit

Programme (*Bildungskreditprogramm*). More detailed information on the Educational Credit Programme is available in chapter 2.3.

From 2024, school and trainees in the dual system will be able to receive scholarships from organisations for the promotion of young talent for the first time.

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. As a rule, pupils at public-sector schools are lent textbooks and other expensive teaching aids for the time they require them. A fee is charged in some cases for the loan, or the parents may be required to pay a portion of the costs (in some Länder, this applies, for example, to digital devices). Parents and pupils are expected to provide their own expendable materials (exercise books, pens and pencils) and other items (e.g. drawing instruments, material for use in crafts and needlework/metalwork lessons).

The provision of digital, mobile terminals as loan devices has not yet been regulated in all Education Acts of the Länder. In addition to the procurement, the operation (maintenance, updates, IT security) as well as the data protection-compliant integration of the end devices into the school infrastructure is also the task of the school authorities, which in turn must contractually bind the IT service providers required for this. In some Länder Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) applies. Students make their mobile devices available for use in class. Each Land decides differently on whether pupils at privately-maintained schools are to be supplied with teaching aids free of charge. In analogy to the devices lent to pupils, corresponding regulations for the use of devices lent to teachers as teaching aids are to be agreed with the school authorities (operators of the school infrastructure). In addition, pupils entitled to assistance under the Second Book of the Social Code (*Zweites Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Grundsicherung für Arbeitsuchende – SGB II*) can apply for a loan for digital devices.

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, schoolchildren with and without handicaps.

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 usually funded by the maintaining bodies or the rural or urban districts (i.e. usually the local authority). In most cases subsidies are granted by the Land in question.

School transport services must be reasonable in terms of costs for the authority which supplies the funding and offer acceptable standards to the pupils who use them. Only such pupils who live a certain distance away from their school have a right to use transport to school. There are slight differences on this between the various Länder. Two kilometres is the general minimum distance for which transport is provided for primary school pupils, whilst from grade 5 onwards pupils living up to three or four kilometres away from school are expected to make their own way there and back. Exceptions can be made for shorter distances than these if the roads are particularly dangerous, and for pupils with disabilities. Public transport is usually the cheapest solution. Where no public transport is available the local authorities provide school buses. In cases where this alternative does not make economic sense or is unreasonable for pupils with disabilities, a subsidised private car or handicapped taxi service often provides the best solution. Where a pupil is unable to make his own way to school because of a physical or mental disability or strong sensory impairment, the local authority may also pay the fares of a person to accompany him. The actual form of transport between home and school depends on local conditions and the specific cases involved. Some Länder have enacted very detailed regulations, while others leave it up to the districts and municipalities to make their own arrangements for the implementation of general guidelines.

The authorities are not obliged to provide transport for pupils to any school, regardless of distance. A right to school transport as such exists only to the *nearest school*, though the term is defined differently from one Land to the next. A partial refund of travelling costs may often be granted in cases where parents decide to send their children to a school other than that which is nearest to their home.

The assumption of travelling costs by the authorities does not mean that school transport is entirely free of charge in all Länder. In some Länder, the transport costs are assumed in full if the parental income is so low that they are considered to be living in poverty. In other Länder, parents still have to make a contribution despite being on a low income. However, in this case, the amount of the contribution depends on the parental income.

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.

Private and Grant-Aided Education

Early childhood education and care

Maintaining bodies for child and youth welfare services from the private sector receive financial support from the Land and from the local authorities (*Kommunen*) to run day-care centres for children (e.g. for operating costs and investments).

Primary and secondary education

Financing of privately-maintained schools

The maintaining bodies of privately-maintained schools receive some financial support from the Länder, in various forms. The reference value is the situation pertaining to costs in the public-sector schools. 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. As well as school fees and standard financial support, there are other forms of financial assistance, which may be paid together with that support, such as contributions to construction costs, contributions to help provide teaching aids to pupils free of charge, contributions to old-age pension provision for teachers, and granting sabbatical leave to permanent teachers with civil servant status while continuing to pay salaries. Parents and guardians may have school fees and transport costs reimbursed. The funds are mostly provided by the Länder, but a small proportion is provided by the local authorities. A huge number of *Ersatzschulen* (alternative schools) are maintained by the Catholic or Protestant churches, which fund their schools from their own means to the extent that sometimes little or no fees must be charged. The share of public funding in the overall financing of privately-maintained schools varies between the Länder, and also depends on the type of school (there are also numerous special provisions, for example for approved privately-maintained schools in contrast to recognised privately-maintained schools, for boarding schools and for church-run alternative schools).

2.3. Higher Education Funding

Funding

Financing of higher education institutions by the Länder

Public higher education institutions are, with few exceptions, maintained by the Länder, and are supplied by these with the funds they need to carry out their work from the budget of the Ministry of Science and Research. The financing procedure usually comprises several stages of coordination between the responsible ministry and the higher education institutions. First the higher education institution notifies the Land authorities of its finance requirement in the form of an estimate to be included in the budget of the Land ministry responsible for higher education. The entire budget is then compiled by the competent minister by agreement with the other responsible ministries and finally included in the budget proposals the government presents to parliament for its approval. The funds are made available once the parliament has discussed the budget and adopted it. 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 transfer of scientific findings into societal application, in the promotion of up-and-coming academics, in the area of internationalisation and the equality of opportunity for women in science. The provision of funds by the Land is followed by internal distribution and management of the higher education institution, which in turn is subject to varying degrees of control by the Land. The Länder conclude framework agreements with their institutions of higher education on the development and -funding of higher education institutions,

which are generally valid for a period of several years. The framework agreements define, for example, the objectives of the Land, the structural development of the institutions of higher education, the expansion plans, the strategic performance and development goals, taking into account the tasks regulated by law and their achievement, the type and scope of state funding for institutions of higher education and the further development of the budget management and management of higher education institutions. This procedure is intended to increase the planning security of the higher education institutions.

In 2024, according to the Education Finance Report, expenditures of the public sector for higher education institutions amounted to Euro 38.3 billion. The Länder share was Euro 33.1 billion, or 86.4 per cent of expenditure, while the Federation share was Euro 5.2 billion or 13.6 per cent of expenditure.

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. These funds are supplemented by the grants and third-party funding from institutions for the promotion of science and industry described below.

Following an amendment of the German Basic Law, the Federation and the Länder have had additional scope for action in the joint promotion of science since January 2015. Pursuant to Article 91b, paragraph 1 of the Basic Law, in cases of supraregional importance, they may now mutually agree to cooperate in the promotion of science, research and teaching. This means that institutions of higher education can now also be supported permanently by federal funds, whereas this only used to be possible through fixed-term programmes such as the Higher Education Pact 2020 or the Excellence Initiative. Agreements between the Federation and the Länder which primarily concern institutions of higher education require the consent of all Länder.

Excellence Strategy

In June 2016, the Federal Government and the Länder concluded an agreement on the promotion of top-level research at universities (Excellence Strategy) as a successor to the Excellence Initiative launched in 2006. For the first time, this programme makes use of the possibilities offered by the amended Article 91b of the Basic Law (GG) and now provides for the continuation of the promotion of excellence on a permanent basis.

The continuation of the Excellence Initiative which aimed to train top performers in research and to raise the quality of Germany as a location for higher education and science across the board, further strengthens top university research. Within the scope of the Excellence Strategy, the Federation and Länder will provide a total of Euro 533 million annually between 2018 and 2025, and a total of Euro 687 million annually from 2026 onwards, in the two funding lines “Excellence Cluster” and “Excellence Universities”. As in the Excellence Initiative, 75 percent of the funds will come from the Federation and 25 percent from the Land in which the successful university is located. In the Excellence Clusters funding line, a total of around Euro 385 million annually up to 2025, and a total of around Euro 539 million annually from 2026 onwards will be made available for the project-related funding of internationally competitive research fields at universities or university alliances. Project

funding of around 45 to 50 excellence clusters will be provided. The funding period is generally two times seven years. In the Excellence Universities funding line, a total of around Euro 148 million will be provided to permanently support eleven institutions. From 2027 onwards, the necessary funding will be made available to increase the number of funding cases by up to 15. The selected universities will undergo an independent and external evaluation every seven years, the results of which decide whether funding is to be continued.

In May 2025, 70 clusters of excellence at 43 universities were selected for funding from 1 January 2027. With the selection of the clusters of excellence, the second part of the Excellence Strategy was initiated. Universities with at least two or university consortia with at least three clusters of excellence could apply for funding as universities of excellence until the end of 2018. Since November 2019, ten universities of excellence and one excellence consortium are funded, or are being evaluated for the continuation of their funding.

Funding Initiative “Innovative Institutions of Higher Education and Programme to Support Up-and-Coming Academics”

In addition to the Excellence Strategy, the Federation and Länder resolved two schemes in June 2016: the funding initiative “Innovative Institution of Higher Education” and the programme to support up-and-coming academics.

The initiative “Innovative Institution of Higher Education” to support the research-based transfer of ideas, knowledge and technology helps institutions of higher education that already have a coherent strategy for their interaction with business and society to raise their profile in their so-called third mission “Transfer and Innovation”. The initiative has been endowed with up to Euro 550 million for ten years and is aimed particularly at *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH) as well as small and medium-sized universities. The Federation provides 90 percent of the subsidies, the respective Land 10 percent. At least half of the funding and at least half of the funding cases should be allocated to HAW/FH or consortia coordinated by a HAW/FH. The Federal Government and the Länder are providing up to Euro 285 million for the second funding round for a maximum period of five years. In May 2022, a total of 55 higher education institutions were selected for funding in 16 individual and 13 collaborative projects. These include 39 *Fachhochschulen* and *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften*, 3 colleges of art and music and 13 universities and *Pädagogische Hochschulen*.

The goal of the Federation-Länder programme to support up-and-coming academics that has been endowed with Euro 1 billion is to make the career paths of academics at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education easier to plan and more transparent at an early stage. It aims to improve the international appeal of the German scientific system and help the universities and equivalent institutions of higher education attract and permanently retain the best junior scientists from home and abroad as far as possible by encouraging the tenure-track professorship, an internationally recognised and accepted career path to a professorship. The Federal Government provides up to Euro one billion for the programme, while the host Länder of the funded universities provide the overall funding. The up to 1,000 new Tenure Track Professorships funded by the Federation are to be continually re-advertised by the universities and maintained by the Länder in the long term. At the same time, the Länder will increase the number of permanent professorships by 1,000.

Contract for the Future of Higher Education and Teaching

The Federation and the Länder are providing institutions of higher education with additional funding to maintain study capacities in line with demand and to improve the quality of studies and teaching with the Future Contract for *Teaching and Learning*. In their agreement on the Future Contract in 2019, the heads of government of the federal and Länder governments agreed that the Federation would provide Euro 1.88 billion annually from 2021 to 2023 and Euro 2.05 billion annually from 2024 onwards. The Länder will provide their own funds in at least the same amount.

In November 2022, the GWK decided to energise the Future Contract from 2023 onwards. According to this, the funds provided by the Federation and the Länder will increase by three percent in 2023 compared to the previous year, by around 5.9 percent in 2024 compared to the previous year, by 1.5 percent in 2025 and by three percent in 2026 and 2027. The Federation and the Länder will each provide a further Euro 338 million in the period from 2023 to 2027 as a result of the agreed dynamisation. With the dynamisation of the Future Contract, the budget development of higher education institutions will be aligned with that of non-university research institutes.

Federal-Länder Agreement on “Innovation in Higher Education Teaching”

Since 2021, the agreement between the Federation and the Länder “Innovation in Higher Education Teaching” (*Innovation in der Hochschullehre*) concluded in June 2019 as the successor to the Teaching Quality Pact (*Qualitätspakt Lehre*) promotes the further development of higher education teaching and its strengthening in the higher education system as a whole. To this end, the Foundation for Innovation in Higher Education Teaching (*Stiftung Innovation in der Hochschullehre*) was established under the auspices of the Toepfer Stiftung gGmbH. Appropriate funding schemes are intended to ensure high-quality and internationally competitive teaching at German universities. In addition, the exchange and networking of relevant actors as well as the transfer of knowledge are to be supported. The Federal Government and the Länder are providing Euro 150 million annually to promote the Foundation for Innovation in Higher Education Teaching. Financing was provided by the Federation from 2021 to 2023 and jointly from 2024, with the Federation contributing Euro 110 million and the Länder Euro 40 million annually.

Funding for Investment Projects at Institutions of Higher Education

With its funding to promote research buildings, large scientific installations and national high-performance computing at institutions of higher education on the basis of Article 91b, paragraph 1, No. 3 of the Basic Law, the Federation and the Länder aim to create the infrastructure for research of supra-regional importance. Up to Euro 401 million in funds research buildings and Euro 170 million in funds for large-scale equipment are available annually for this purpose. The Federation and the respective host Land each provide half of these funds for the corresponding investment projects.

Funding for national high-performance computing serves to provide high-performance computing capacities for researchers at higher education institutions on a nationwide basis and in line with demand, to strengthen cross-location and interdisciplinary cooperation, to strengthen the methodological competence of users, to promote young scientists and researchers, and to provide training and continuing

education in scientific computing. An annual sum of Euro 62.5 million is available for this purpose. On the basis of a competitive and science-driven procedure within the framework of a review by the DFG and an evaluation by an independent strategy committee appointed by the Joint Science Conference, nine computing centres have been selected by the GWK and included in the funding.

Female Professors Programme

In 2008, the Federation and the Länder launched the Women Professors Programme (*Professorinnenprogramm*) to support women in their academic careers and increase their share of professorships at German institutions of higher education. In three program phases to date, the programme has sustainably improved equal opportunities in the academic system and is the central instrument for promoting equality between women and men at institutions of higher education. It has also made a contribution to increasing the proportion of women among professors throughout Germany from one sixth in 2008 to over a quarter today. To date, more than 1,000 professorships have been funded through the Women Professors Program.

In November 2022, the GWK adopted the Federation-Länder agreement on the Women Professors Programme 2030. This brought the Women Professors Programme into a fourth phase. Building on the successful previous three program phases, the cultural change towards more gender equality at institutions of higher education is to be further strengthened. The aim of the funding programme is to dynamically increase the number of female academics in top positions in the field of science towards parity and to anchor gender equality even more firmly in the structure of institutions of higher education. The institutions of higher education first submit an equality concept; after a successful assessment, they can apply for funding for up to three professorships for women. Furthermore, in the 2030 Women Professors Programme, higher education institutions whose gender equality concepts are among the best in terms of their respective situation will be awarded the title of 'Gender Equality Strong Higher Education Institution' by an external selection committee. These award-winning higher education institutions can also apply for funding for a position for a female scientist or artist on the way to a lifetime professorship. The programme is funded in equal parts by the Federation and the Länder. The Women Professors Programme 2030 will run for eight years (2023 to 2030) and has a total funding volume of Euro 320 million.

Financing of research at higher education institutions by external funding

The funds allocated from the budget of the Land ministries responsible for higher education are the main source of finance for higher education institutions. However, members of the institutions engaged in research are also entitled, within the scope of their professional responsibilities, to carry out research projects which are not financed through the Land budget, but by third parties, e.g. organisations concerned with the promotion of research. Competitively raised research funds, a significant portion of which is provided by the public sector, are increasingly supplementing the basic funding of higher education institutions. In 2023, the institutions of higher education received a total of just less than Euro 10.7 billion in external funding.

The most important institution involved in promoting research in higher education is the German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* – DFG). It promotes research projects by, for example, providing individuals, institutions or

collaborations with financial assistance. The Federation and the Länder annually supply funds of just less than Euro 3.2 billion for institutional research funding (including programme allowances) through the DFG.

Higher education institutions also receive funds from companies if the companies commission them with certain research and development work. In 2023, external funding from the commercial sector amounted to more than Euro 1.5 billion.

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. The privately funded *Berufsakademien* in individual Länder are an exception.

Financial Autonomy and Control

The strengthening of the autonomy of higher education institutions in recent decades has also led to a paradigm shift from detailed state control to self-responsible action by higher education institutions in the area of finance. The reforms primarily concerned distribution modalities. Budget funding is hence partly 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. In this context, changes in the Higher Education Acts of the Länder have strengthened the governance structures of higher education institutions and increased their financial autonomy. The relationship between the state and higher education institutions is now, amongst other things, marked by agreements on objectives and performance requirements. Higher education institutions now have some scope as regards specific measures to implement the agreed objectives. They have also been given greater flexibility in the use of the funds thanks to the introduction of global budgets, for instance. In addition to their basic funding, higher education institutions apply for funds from public and private bodies to promote research and development, technology and knowledge transfer as well as to support teaching and up-and-coming academics.

Fees within Public Higher Education

The Länder may, at their own discretion, impose study fees on students. After a number of Länder had charged general study fees in the interim, these have been abolished in all Länder. Baden-Württemberg charges students arriving from outside the EU or the EEA for the purpose of studying tuition fees of Euro 1,500 a semester from the winter semester 2017/18 onwards. Exemptions should ensure the social compatibility and international scientific exchange at the institutions of higher education in the Land. Under new state legislation, institutions of higher education in Bayern and Sachsen are also permitted to charge fees to international students from non-EU countries. In Sachsen, both colleges of music are making use of this option.

Some Länder charge an administration fee for registration or a contribution for the use of the institution's social facilities. If the institution has an organ of student self-administration (General Student Committee – *Allgemeiner Studierendenausschuss*)

within the framework of a constituted student body (*verfasste Studierendenschaft*) (in all Länder with the exception of Bayern) students also pay an additional contribution. In some Länder, fees for long-term students, study courses providing continuing education and for an additional course of study are now being charged.

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

Financial Support for Learners' Families

In addition to the direct support provided to students from low-income families by the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz* – BAföG), all students up to the age of 25 are supported through their families by the tax allowances or child benefits under the Income Tax Act or the child benefits under the Federal Child Benefit Act (*Bundeskindergeldgesetz*). In specific individual cases, the child supplement may also be considered. If students finish studying before their 25th birthday, the financial benefits enjoyed through their family come to an end with the end of the course of study.

Financial Support for Learners

Financial Assistance under the Federal Training Assistance Act

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 (BAföG). Training assistance is granted to German students and also principally to foreign students who have a long-term prospect of remaining in Germany such as, for instance, students with a settlement permit or citizens of a member state of the European Union with a right to permanent residency under the EU Freedom of Movement Law.

Training must generally be commenced by the age of 45 in order to be eligible for support under BAföG. The duration for which such assistance is payable largely depends on the course of study chosen. The assistance limit corresponds to the standard period of study as stipulated in the respective examination regulations. Once the maximum funding period has expired, BAföG funding may be granted for a further, immediately subsequent semester (flexibility semester) if the trainee has not yet taken advantage of a flexibility semester for an earlier stage of their training. Under certain circumstances, an extension of funding may be granted. From the fifth subject-related semester, students only continue to receive funding if they provide a certificate required for admission to examinations (*Leistungsnachweis*). The amount of the assistance is generally dependent on the income and assets of the student as well as the income of a spouse or civil partner and their parents.

Starting in the winter semester 2024/2025, students at higher education institutions and academies who do not live with their parents can receive up to Euro 992 per month (Euro 855 for their living expenses and accommodation, Euro 102 health insurance supplement and Euro 35 nursing care insurance supplement). As a rule, half of the amount is provided over the maximum period for which assistance is payable as a non-repayable grant, while the other half takes the form of an interest-free state loan. The childcare allowance is paid out as a subsidy. Repayment terms for this state loan depend on social considerations and income and takes place through a repayment of a maximum of 77 monthly instalments of Euro 130 each.

Those students eligible for financial support who begin or continue their studies in another EU member state or in Switzerland are funded as well. Study periods ranging from a minimum of one semester up to one year spent abroad outside the EU and Switzerland are funded if they are beneficial to studies and can be – at least partially – counted towards the training period or are carried out within the framework of higher education cooperation schemes. In the latter case, a shorter period of at least twelve weeks is also eligible for support. In exceptional cases funding may also continue over a longer period. Compulsory placements of at least 12 weeks abroad can also be funded under certain conditions. This minimum duration does not apply to internships in the EU or Switzerland.

In 2024, around 483,000 students received financial assistance under the Federal Training Assistance Act. Federation training assistance expenditure supporting students totalled just less than Euro 2.6 billion for the student sector alone. Students in receipt of assistance obtained an average of Euro 657 each.

From the 2024/2025 winter semester, the '*Studienstarthilfe*' was introduced as a new funding instrument under the BAföG. This is a one-off financial grant of Euro 1,000 paid at the start of a course of study. The *Studienstarthilfe* is aimed at people under the age of 25 who are receiving certain social security benefits prior to commencing their studies and who are enrolling in a degree programme for the first time. Funding through the Start-up Grant is provided independently of any subsequent standard funding under the BAföG.

In 2024, 10,700 people received the Start-up Grant. The federal government accordingly spent Euro 10.7 million on the Start-up Grant.

Educational Credit Programme and Student Loan Programme

The support system is supplemented through the Educational Credit Programme (*Bildungskreditprogramm*) which can support pupils and students in an advanced stage of their training – also alongside or in addition to benefits under BAföG. The income and assets of the trainee or their parents are irrelevant. For trainees not receiving BAföG funding, the educational loan is used to secure and accelerate their education; for trainees receiving BAföG funding, it is used to finance extraordinary expenses not covered by BAföG, such as excursions or special study materials. Borrowers can freely choose up to 24 constant monthly instalments of Euro 100, 200 or 300 per training stage, subject to a maximum amount of Euro 7,200 per training stage. If the limit of 24 instalments and the total amount of Euro 7,200 is not exceeded, a one-off payment of up to Euro 3,600 can be paid out in advance in addition to the monthly loan. To qualify, applicants must demonstrate a credible need for the funds to cover an extraordinary expense or to secure and accelerate their education. Eligible are adult trainees who have not yet reached the age of 36. As a rule, students can only take up this credit until the end of the twelfth semester of study. The credit accrues interest as soon as it is paid out. However, interest is automatically deferred until repayment commences. The educational credit is applied for at the Federal Office of Administration (*Bundesverwaltungsamt* – BVA) and disbursed by the Reconstruction Loan Corporation (*Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* – KfW).

As part of the student loan programme of the KfW, since 2006, students of any study course are offered a loan in order to finance cost of living to the amount of Euro 100 up to 650 per month, irrespective of their income or assets.

Additional Means of Financial Assistance

In addition to financial assistance provided under the Federal Training Assistance Act, there are other sources of funding available to students. In some Länder, for example, the student associations or the institutions of higher education themselves provide loans of varying amounts in cases of extreme social need. Several smaller, predominantly regional foundations, which usually have private funds at their disposal, also provide needy students with assistance. The student loan systems developed by the Länder are an additional support system for the promotion of academic studies.

Financial Assistance Through Grants

Particularly gifted and dedicated students can be supported with a grant from the thirteen organisations for the promotion of young talent supported by the Federation. The organisations for the promotion of young talent reflect the diversity of German society and mirror the various ideological, religious, political, business or union-based tendencies in Germany. The oldest and biggest organisation for the promotion of young talent is the German National Scholarship Foundation, which is also partly financed by the Länder.

Furthermore, gifted and high-achieving students at German institutions of higher education can be supported with the *Deutschlandstipendium*. The grant is paid in equal halves by private sponsors (companies, foundations, private individuals) and the Federation.

In addition, the federal government's advancement scholarship supports high-performing skilled workers with training and professional experience to study at an institution of higher education for the first time.

The German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* – DAAD) offers grants for foreign students and up-and-coming academics and scientists to pursue studies or further education of limited duration at a German higher education institution. Alongside the DAAD, some Länder also have special funds for providing assistance to foreign students at the local institutions of higher education.

On completion of a first degree, students may also receive scholarships to support their further studies in line with the postgraduate assistance acts (*Graduiertenförderungsgesetze*) and regulations of the Länder. The foundations for gifted students (*Begabtenförderungswerke*) also provide students who have already completed a first degree with grants to enable them to study for a *Promotion* (doctorate).

Indirect Forms of Financial Assistance

Students receive various indirect forms of financial assistance which include reduced health insurance rates, the fact that time spent studying is partially acknowledged by the pension insurance authorities, subsidised student ticket prices in local public transport, reduced dining prices in canteens and rents in publicly subsidised dormitories.

Students in higher education are also protected by statutory accident insurance against accidents occurring at an institution of higher education or on the way between their home and the institution. It is the Länder that are responsible for statutory accident insurance for students.

Private Higher Education

Study fees are charged at non-state-maintained higher education institutions in all Länder. As a rule, higher education institutions maintained by the church charge no or significantly lower tuition fees than the privately-maintained higher education institutions.

2.4. Adult Education and Training Funding

Funding

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 or adult 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*),
- individual promotion of continuing vocational training for employees by the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*),
- 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.

Further vocational education and training for the target groups of the unemployed and for employees is financed by contributions pursuant to Book Three of the Social Code (*Drittes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Arbeitsförderung*) from unemployment insurance scheme funds.

In 2024, the Federal Employment Agency's expenditure on the funding of continuing education and training under SGB III amounted to around Euro 1.9 billion for continuing vocational training measures, around Euro 0.57 billion for funding the subsequent acquisition of a vocational qualification and around Euro 1.4 billion for unemployment benefits during continuing vocational training. In addition, the Federal Employment Agency provided around Euro 700,000 in funding for the subsequent acquisition of the *Hauptschulabschluss* or an equivalent school-leaving qualification under the further training funding programme in accordance with the German Social Code (SGB III).

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.

The obligation of employers to grant employees leave for training while continuing to pay their wages may be regarded as indirect funding for adult education; this is regulated in most Länder in laws on paid training leave and educational leave. The Land law rules differ depending on the purpose of the education or training (vocational, socio-political or general continuing education). In addition, the financing of further training by employers, even without a legal obligation, is in their own interest to maintain competitiveness and secure jobs.

Fees Paid by Learners

Those attending continuing education courses make a contribution towards their cost. This contribution can be subsidised by tax relief and by assistance for low-income groups and for special courses. For example, depending on the Land, between 15.1 and 31.7 per cent of the cost of *Volkshochschulen* courses (especially general continuing education) was covered by course fees in 2024. In particular, those on career development courses within continuing vocational training bear a large proportion of continuing education costs themselves. Additionally, costs are partly covered by enterprises within the framework of personnel development measures.

Continuing academic education at higher education institutions is funded by the fees of course members.

Financial Support for Adult Learners

Financial Assistance under the Federal Training Assistance Act

Grants are provided for adults seeking to obtain school-leaving qualifications under the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz* – BAföG). Training assistance under the Federal Training Assistance Act is for example granted for the attendance of *Abendschulen* or *Kollegs*, if the student has not yet exceeded the age of 45 at the beginning of the training section. Participants in courses of the so-called *zweiter Bildungsweg* may receive up to Euro 498 or 775 per month in educational assistance under the terms of the Federal Training Assistance Act, depending on whether they live with their parents and the type of educational institution they attend, with income being taken into account. A health and long-term care insurance allowance of up to Euro 137 in total, or up to Euro 233 in individual cases, may also be granted, as well as, where applicable, a childcare allowance of Euro 160 for each child. This support takes the form of a grant and therefore does not need to be repaid.

Financial Assistance under the Upgrading Training Assistance Act

Those who take part in career advancement training programmes have a legal right to state funding under the Upgrading Training Assistance Act (*Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz* – AFBG). The so-called Upgrading BAföG supports full-time and part-time continuing education courses offered by public and private providers that specifically prepare participants for public further training examinations pursuant to the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*), Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (*Handwerksordnung*) or equivalent advanced training qualifications pursuant to federal or state law. The professional qualification aspired to must be above the level of a skilled worker, journeyman and assistant examination or a *Berufsfachschule*

qualification. The AFBG supports persons who prepare for an upgrading training qualification e.g. as a master craftsman or master tradesman in industry, educator, state-certified technician, business administrator, economist, certified specialist, Bachelor Professional, Master Professional or one of more than 700 comparable qualifications in an eligible scheme. This grant is partly a subsidy and partly a low-interest loan from the Reconstruction Loan Corporation (KfW). Support for participants who already have a Bachelor degree or comparable higher education qualification as their highest higher education qualification is also possible.

The AFBG is financed 78 per cent by the Federation and 22 per cent by the Länder. In 2024, a total of over Euro 1 billion in funding was available under the AFBG, and a total of just less than 190,000 participants were supported in upgrading training schemes.

Promotion of continuing vocational training in accordance with the Second and Third Book of the German Social Code

Funding for continuing vocational training is regulated in the Third Book of the German Social Code. Funding is provided for further training costs such as course costs, travel costs, childcare costs or accommodation away from home. For unemployed people who are entitled to unemployment benefit, the costs of further training are covered in addition to the fact that unemployment benefit continues to be paid during further vocational training. In this case, only half a month of unemployment benefit entitlement is used up for each month of further training. People receiving benefits under the Second Book of the German Social Code continue to receive the benefits to which they are entitled to cover their living expenses whilst participating in a further training programme, in addition to the further training costs mentioned above.

The Twelfth Act Amending Book II of the Social Code and Other Acts – Introduction of a Universal Basic Income (*Zwölftes Gesetz zur Änderung des Zweiten Buches Sozialgesetzbuch und anderer Gesetze – Einführung eines Bürgergeldes*) also expanded training opportunities for the unemployed and for employees receiving basic income support for jobseekers, and strengthened financial incentives.

Preventive further training support for employees in accordance with SGB III includes, on the one hand, the assumption of training course costs for employees and, on the other hand, the granting of wage subsidies to employers for periods of absence from work due to further training.

The Law to Strengthen the Promotion of Training and Continuing Education (*Gesetz zur Stärkung der Aus- und Weiterbildungsförderung*) improved the funding of continuing education for employees from 1 April 2024 and added a new funding instrument with the introduction of the training allowance (*Qualifizierungsgeld*). The training allowance is available to employees whose jobs are at risk due to structural change, but who can be helped to secure long-term employment within the same company through further training.

Financial Assistance through Grants

As part of the *Vocational Education and Training Promotion for Gifted Young People*, the Federation assisted by the Foundation Vocational Education and Training Promotion for Gifted Young People (*Stiftung Begabtenförderung berufliche Bildung gGmbH – SBB*) provides grants to support continuing education measures for high-performing

young people in employment who have completed a recognised course of vocational education and training in accordance with the Vocational Training Act, the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code or one of the health sector professions governed by federal law and who are younger than 25 on commencing the programme (Continued Training Scholarship). The Federation also supports high-performing people with professional experience who want to start studying after several years of professional activity via the SBB (upgrading scholarships).

Voucher programmes for the promotion of non-formal further education

For more than a decade, Germany has also been supporting continuing vocational training in the form of voucher programmes. At the federal level this took place from 2008 through 2021 through the so-called education premium (*Bildungsprämie*), which consisted of the two components premium voucher (*Prämiengutschein*) and savings voucher (*Spargutschein*). The education premium consists of the two components premium voucher and savings voucher. Those interested in continuing education could receive a subsidy of up to Euro 500 to finance continuing education measures (premium voucher) if certain conditions are met. The financing of further training measures has been facilitated by the opening of the Capital Accumulation Act (savings voucher).

In addition, the majority of the Länder have their own regulations for the promotion of non-formal vocational continuing education and training, which support the vocational continuing education and training of employees and their guidance under designations such as (further) education cheque, qualification cheque, qualification cheque or continuing education and training bonus. The programmes differ from the earlier training premium in terms of objectives, target groups and funding conditions. In addition, there are voucher programmes in some federal states which are aimed exclusively at employers to promote their employees.

3. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

3.1. Introduction

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) includes all institutions run by the non-public and public child and youth welfare services which cater for children until they start primary school.

Day-care centres (*Kindertageseinrichtungen*) provide for either children under the age of three (ISCED 010) or from the age of three up to starting primary school (ISCED 020) separately (in *Krippen* and *Kindergärten*, respectively) or operate as one setting for the entire phase of early childhood education and care. In past years, the profile of day-care centres has changed considerably. The number of facilities, which offer ECEC exclusively for children from the age of three up to starting school has decreased while more and more centres offer ECEC for both age groups. One reason for this change in the supply structure is the expansion of day-care for children under three years of age agreed by the Federation, Länder and local authorities. The legal right to ECEC in a day-care centre or childminding service from the age of one entered into force on 1 August 2013. A nationwide needs-oriented supply of day-care places for children is to be established in order to create the basis for fulfilling this right.

For children who have reached compulsory schooling age but whose level of development does not yet allow them to cope with the challenges of primary school, *Schulkindergärten*, *Vorklassen* oder *Grundschulförderklassen* have been established in some Länder. These institutions are classified at ISCED level 020 and fall under the responsibility of the ministries of education.

Under the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*), as part of its responsibility for public welfare, the Federation has concurrent legislative competence for child and youth welfare. This also applies to the promotion of children in early childhood education and care (*Kinderkrippen*, *Kindergärten*, *Horte* or *Kindertagespflege*). The Federation exercised its legislative authority in this field by passing Book Eight of the Social Code (*Achtes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – SGB VIII*) in June 1990.

Pursuant to paragraph 22 of the Book Eight of the Social Code day-care centres for children and childminding services are called upon to encourage the child's development into a responsible and autonomous member of the community. Furthermore, early childhood education and care 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. This duty includes instructing, educating and caring for the child and relates to the child's social, emotional, physical and mental development. It includes the communication of guiding values and rules. The provision of education and care is to be adjusted to the individual child's age and developmental stage, linguistic and other capabilities, life situation and interests, and take account of 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.

In this context, the providers of day care must not only ensure the best interests of the child, but also developmentally appropriate and suitable procedures for participation and the possibility of complaints in personal matters. Based on the attitude of the pedagogical staff, who place children as individual personalities in the centre of pedagogical action, education cannot take place without participation.

If children with and without disabilities are supported together, the day-care facilities for children and the local youth welfare authority cooperate with other rehabilitation agencies involved (§ 22 paragraph 2 (3) SGB VIII).

The legal framework of the Federation for child and youth welfare is completed, supplemented and extended by the Länder in their own laws.

The principles of education policy in the ECEC sector are laid down in the Joint Framework of the Länder for Early Education in Day-Care Centres (*Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen*) which was resolved by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) and the Youth Ministers Conference (*Jugendministerkonferenz* – JMK) in 2004 and updated in March 2022.

Quality development in day-care centres and in child day care is a task for society as a whole. Since 2019, the Federal Government has therefore been supporting the Länder with additional funds for quality development measures in child day care in order to further develop quality nationwide and to make a contribution to creating equal living conditions for growing up in the Federal territory. On 1 January 2025, the Third Act for the Further Development of Quality and Participation in Day Care entered into force. With this further development, the law will in future focus on seven fields of action that are of particular importance for the quality of child day care and in which the long-term aim is to establish nationwide standards. By way of compensation, the Länder will receive around Euro 4 billion in 2025 and 2026 as part of the vertical distribution of sales tax revenue.

3.2. Access

Place guarantee to ECEC

Since 1 August 2013 there has been a legal entitlement to a place in a day-care centre or in a childminding service for children who have reached the age of one. This complements the legal entitlement introduced back in 1996 to care in a day-care centre for children from the age of three up to starting school. Verbatim, the corresponding regulations in § 24 paragraphs 2 and 3 of Book Eight of the Social Code (*Achtes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Kinder- und Jugendhilfe* – SGB VIII) read:

“(2) A child who has reached the age of one is entitled to early childhood support in a day-care centre or in childminding service until he or she reaches the age of three.”

“(3) A child who has reached the age of three is entitled to support in a day-care facility until he or she starts school. The public youth welfare organizations shall work to ensure that a demand-oriented range of all-day places is available for this age group. In case of special need or as a supplement, the child may also be fostered in home-based child care.”

Correspondingly, the local maintaining bodies of public youth welfare (local authorities – *Kommunen*) are obliged to provide places in day-care centres or child-minding services to all children from the age of one until they start school. In this regard, they cooperate with the non-public youth welfare services.

If the legal entitlement to care in a day-care centre or in a child-minding service cannot be honoured by the city or municipality, parents can sue to have the legal entitlement honoured.

Affordability

Early childhood education and care is not a part of the state school system, and attendance of day-care centres is not, as a general rule, free of charge. To cover some of the costs, parental contributions are levied, the level of which may vary widely from Land to Land. In some Länder, for example, many parents have no or very low child-care costs, while in other Länder they have to pay an average of well over Euro 300 for a full-day place for children under three. With the Act on the Further Development of the Quality and Participation in Child Care (*Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Qualität und zur Teilhabe in der Kindertagesbetreuung*), the so-called Good Child Day Care Act (*Gute-KiTa-Gesetz*), a nationwide obligation for social staggering of parental contributions was introduced on August 1, 2019. The criteria that can be used are in particular the parents' income, the number of children entitled to child benefit, and the daily child care hours. Furthermore, since then families throughout Germany no longer have to pay parental contributions under certain conditions. The local public youth welfare organisation is obliged to provide advice on exemption from contributions.

In recent years, more and more regulations have been introduced at the level of the Länder to relieve parents of their costs. This was done partly with federal funds. In some Länder, for example, attendance at a day-care centre is already completely or partially free of charge, depending on the child's age and the scope of care. In some Länder no parent contributions are charged for the final year or the final years in a day-care centre for children.

3.3. Organisation of Centre-based ECEC

Admission Requirements and Choice of ECEC institution

There are no admission requirements for a child to be admitted to a day-care centre. Parents are free to choose the facility. There is no entitlement to admission to a particular day-care centre, however.

Group Size and Child/Staff Ratios

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) takes place to some extent in age-based groups and to some extent in groups of mixed ages.

Regulations on group size and staff-to-child ratios are determined by the Länder and are therefore difficult to compare. Group sizes are either not specified or range from a maximum of 20 to 25 children per group for children aged 3 to 6 and from a maximum of 8 to 15 for children aged 0 to 3. In groups with children under the age of three, the nationwide staff-child ratio on 1 March 2024 was on average 3.8 children per pedagogical staff member. The range at Länder level was from 2.9 to 5.5 children per pedagogical staff member. In groups with children aged from three years to school entry, one pedagogical staff member was responsible for an average of 7.5 children nationwide in 2024. The range at Länder level was from 6.1 to 11.1 children per pedagogical staff member.

The child/staff ratio relates to trained pedagogic staff such as, for example, *Erzieherinnen* und *Erzieher*. As a rule, trained pedagogic staff in early childhood education and care are trained at *Fachschulen* for youth and community work which are internationally assigned to the tertiary level. In some Länder, supplemental pedagogic staff, especially nursery assistants (*Kinderpflegerinnen* und *Kinderpfleger*), are

employed in the ECEC sector alongside trained pedagogic staff (*pädagogische Fachkräfte*). In most Länder, these staff attend a two-year training course at *Berufsfachschulen*, full-time vocational schools.

Annual, weekly and daily organisation

The organisation of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in day-care centres during the year corresponds to a large extent with the organisation of school time (see chapter 4.2.). If day-care centres 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, early childhood education and care in day-care centres 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 early childhood education and care. However, in some Länder there exist legal entitlements to child care hours that must correspond to the best interests of the child.

The opening hours of the day-care centres are mainly regulated by the responsible bodies in consultation with the municipalities responsible for planning the services and with the involvement of the parents. These times may vary between the different day-care centres and depend to some extent on the needs of the families in their catchment areas. In terms of contractually agreed care hours, the spectrum of services generally ranges from up to five hours in the morning to between six and seven hours of daily care, sometimes with lunch breaks, to over seven-hour all-day services with lunch. There are considerable regional differences in the pattern of daily use of places in day-care centres.

Many day-care centres 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 a late service as well as a lunch-time service for some children or groups of children. However, any extension in opening hours is to some extent limited by the number of staff employed at each establishment, the capacity of its premises and the obligation to take into account the child's best interest.

3.4. Educational Guidelines

Steering Documents

The principles of education policy in the early childhood education and care sector are laid down in the Joint Framework of the Länder for Early Education in Day-Care Centres (*Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen*) which was adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) and the Youth Ministers Conference (*Jugendministerkonferenz – JMK*) in 2004 and updated in March 2022. This binding framework applies to centre-based settings across the whole phase of early childhood education and care.

According to the Common Framework, the focus of the educational mandate of the day-care centres is on the early strengthening of individual competences and learning dispositions, on language education integrated into everyday life, on the expansion, support and challenge of children's urge to explore, on the formation and education in values, on the promotion of learning competence ("learning to learn") and

on the appropriation of the world in social contexts. Child day-care facilities also have the task of living inclusion as a comprehensive pedagogical principle and to offer all children good starting opportunities and development conditions. The aim is to enable participation, to promote a self-determined life and to enable all children to communicate and interact in the different areas of life.

On the level of the Länder, education plans specify the basic notion of education and describe the day-care centres' independent responsibility for education and upbringing. The educational plans make educational processes in day-care centres transparent and at the same time provide orientation for professionals, day-care workers, parents and teachers as well as for all other places of education and learning where children spend time and are cared for. In particular, educational plans have the task of laying the foundations for early, individual and talent-oriented support for all children and thus, through an inclusive approach, to promote the social participation of all people regardless of gender, cultural affiliation, socio-economic background or physical limitations.

Each day-care centre must draw up its own pedagogical concept, which must be approved by the regional or local Youth Welfare services. The responsibility for the quality of educational work performed in the individual day-care centres lies with the maintaining body. Whether the existing educational guidelines developed by the Länder for ECEC apply to childminders depends on the regulations of the Länder and the age of the children.

Areas of learning and development

The legal mandate of child day care is a holistic one and combines the triad of education, upbringing and care. Subjects and weekly teaching hours are not laid down for the sector of early childhood education and care, and there are no curricula such as those in schools. The Länder have laid down educational objectives and educational areas in Land laws which are concretised in educational plans and educational programmes and whose implementation has been agreed with the providers of the day-care centres.

According to the specialist recommendations of the national working group of the Land youth welfare services of November 2009 on the quality of the education, upbringing and care of children under three in day-care centres for children and childminding services, and the current education plans of the Länder insofar as they take this age group into account, early childcare must respond in particular to the basic needs. The specific needs of children under three include:

- loving attention;
- sensitive care based on stable relationships;
- sympathetic support appropriate to development stage;
- empathy and support in stressful situations;
- unconditional acceptance;
- safety and security.

Educational support at this stage in life is primarily understood as shaping relationships with the child and as holistic support complementing development. It is accompanied by educational partnership with parents. The educational processes take place through social interaction and communication, and above all through play.

Special development themes of early childhood education include supporting communication, language and motor development.

The aim of supporting the development of children until they start school is to develop their intellectual, physical, emotional and social abilities. According to the Joint Framework of the Länder for Early Education in Child Care Centres, educational areas are:

- Everyday integrated language education and communication
- Personal and social-emotional development, value orientation and religiosity, culturally sensitive competences
- MINT – Mathematics, Informatics, Natural Science and Technology
- Media and digital education
- Aesthetic education
- Body, movement, health, prevention
- Environmental education and education for sustainable development

These educational areas are not meant to be exhaustive or exclusive. In the educational plans of the Länder, different boundaries may be drawn between the individual areas. The decisive factor is that the contents presented are reflected in the concrete pedagogical work.

Pedagogical approaches

The pedagogical profile in the day-care centres is characterised by the principle of holistic and inclusive educational support for all children. Here, the individual educational needs of the child are taken as a starting point and the right of children to an unrestricted, comprehensive education oriented towards their individual needs is emphasised. The content-related educational focal points in the education plans do not stand in isolation but interpenetrate each other and are not to be handled in a subject-oriented manner. Through holistic educational offers, it is possible to implement several educational areas at the same time. The pedagogical practice specifically maintains and shapes this connection and interpenetration of the educational areas.

Project work is a good example of holistic learning. Learning contents are recommended which, in the sense of co-construction, relate to the children's living environment and tie in with their interests, as well as forms of learning which promote self-directed learning, open up scope for creativity, enable teamwork, strengthen the productive handling of mistakes and allow the children to explore freely and try things out.

The educational work in day-care centres for children 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 observe the children, document their development and talk to parents regularly.

The promotion of communication and language is a core educational task, especially with regard to children under three years of age. Children acquire language skills not in isolation, but in daily interaction with adults and other children. Language development is promoted in an emotionally approachable atmosphere. Educational staff are expected to support workflows and care processes with language, and to structure them as language-stimulating situations. Language development is also supported

by the language model provided by educational staff, through customs including songs, finger play and verse, teaching work with picture books, and much more besides.

Another development aspect is the promotion of motor development in the sense of basic physical education. Extensive opportunities for motor activities are designed to support secure movement and the development of body awareness, self-acceptance and the attentiveness of the child. This includes inter alia a wealth of physical activities taking into account the “National Recommendations for Physical Activity and Physical Activity Promotion” (*Nationale Empfehlungen für Bewegung und Bewegungsförderung*), open spaces, programmes such as rhythmic early education, and song and movement games. Children should also have enough time to make motor advances by themselves.

The work of the day care centres is inclusive and takes into account the needs of all children – with and without disabilities.

Assessment

There is no assessment of performance in day-care centres for children, as there are no lessons in the traditional sense. Regular observation and documenting of development and the abilities and needs of the children allows educational staff to support individual development tasks competently. Staff incorporate these observations into dialogue with the child and conversations with the parents.

Transition to primary school

In June 2009, the Standing Conference and the Conference of Ministers of Youth and Family Affairs (*Jugend- und Familienministerkonferenz – JFMK*) adopted a joint resolution entitled “Making the transition from day care for children to primary school meaningful and effective – optimizing the interaction between elementary and primary education”. They have thus agreed on a set of common principles that can serve as guidelines for action for the educational institutions involved, their employees and parents. Day care centres and primary schools should support children in their curiosity, willingness to learn and methodical learning competence by enabling a variety of learning experiences and promoting their abilities. This also includes reliable promotion of skills in the German language.

Furthermore, with regard to the cooperation between day-care centres and primary schools, the Standing Conference and JFMK consider it necessary for the Länder to formulate binding goals for the transition and cooperation between day-care centres and primary schools through legislation or agreement and to ensure their implementation through appropriate instruments.

The “Common Framework of the Länder for Early Education in Child Day-Care Centres” also emphasises that the transition process is to be understood as a joint development and support task of child day-care centres and primary schools.

3.5. Home-based provision

Objectives and accessibility

As well as day-care centres for children, child-minding services are also available, especially for children under the age of three. The general objectives of day-care for children according to Book Eight of the Social Code (*Achtes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch –*

Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – SGB VIII) mentioned in the introduction also apply to home-based provision of day-care for children. Here one or more children are cared for by a childminder in a private home or an apartment or house rented for this purpose. Children in day-care centres are sometimes also looked after by a childminder if the opening times of the facility do not suit the needs of parents. Pursuant to § 24 paragraphs 2 and 3 of Book Eight of the Social Code, the legal entitlement to a publicly subsidised place in day care from the age of one may be used in home-based provision until children reach three years of age.

On the federal level, within the framework of public welfare responsibility for early childhood education and care (ECEC) in home-based provision lies with the Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend* – BMBFSFJ), on the level of the Länder, the Ministries of Youth and Social Affairs are the competent authorities.

Requirements for childminders and child ratios

Since 2005 minimum qualification requirements for the childminder are in place.

In 2015, the German Youth Institute (*Deutsches Jugendinstitut* – DJI) in Munich published the competence-oriented *Qualification Manual for Child Day Care* (*Qualifizierungshandbuch Kindertagespflege* – QHB) in order to create a new basis for the quantitative and qualitative expansion of child day care for children under three years of age.

The QHB realigns the qualification of childminding staff. It extends the basic qualification to 300 teaching units plus internships and self-learning units. The 300 teaching units are divided into 160 teaching units of activity-preparing and 140 teaching units of activity-accompanying basic qualification. In addition to 100 hours of self-study, the future childminders complete a total of 80 hours of practical training. Due to the increased scope of qualification, the QHB also opens up new possibilities for follow-up qualification for vocational training paths for child day care workers. An updated new edition of the QHB was published in 2019.

In accordance with Book Eight of the Social Code (§ 43 paragraph 3), the childminder-child ratio is a maximum of five children per childminder.

3.6. Organisational Variations and Alternative Structures in Early Childhood Education and Care

Besides the day-care centres and home provision, in some Länder other forms of institution and care facilities exist in the early childhood sector. However, in terms of the number of children they cater for, these institutions are of lesser significance. For information on *Vorklassen*, *Schulkindergärten* and *heilpädagogische* or *sonderpädagogische Kindergärten* for children with disabilities see chapter 11.3.

4. PRIMARY EDUCATION

4.1. Introduction

As a rule, in the year in which children reach the age of six, they are obliged to enter primary education. Primary education comprises grades 1 to 4 or 1 to 6 (Berlin and Brandenburg). It is provided in primary schools and as part of comprehensive school types.

General objectives

The tasks and objectives of the *Grundschule* 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 orient the form and content of teaching programmes towards the different learning requirements and capabilities of individual pupils.

In March 2024, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) adopted an "Agreement on Work in Primary School" (*Vereinbarung zur Arbeit in der Grundschule*). The agreement is based on the 2015 resolution "Recommendations for Work in Primary School" (*Empfehlungen zur Arbeit in der Grundschule*), which thus acquires a binding character and is intended to provide a uniform framework for work in primary schools throughout Germany.

According to the agreement, the task of the primary school is to guarantee basic and well-rounded school education in a joint educational programme for all children. The goal is to acquire adaptable competences. These include above all the key competences in the areas of linguistics and mathematics, which form a basis for not only all other educational areas in the primary school but also for continuing education as well as lifelong learning and independent appropriation of culture. The nationwide educational standards in the subjects German and mathematics are hereby decisive for the primary sector, grade 4 (resolutions of the Standing Conference of 15 October 2004 as amended on 23 June 2022). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as well as the Perspectives Framework for General Studies (*Perspektivrahmen Sachunterricht*) also provide an orientation.

Primary schools also place particular emphasis on fostering emotional and social development, as well as on the holistic development of the individual.

The primary school takes account of the heterogeneity of its students by providing individualised learning situations that promote the development of students in the sense of educational equity. The primary school combines the general educational offer with supplementary educational, counselling or support services. The participating professions act in a coordinated manner according to individual needs and also offer all-day development and learning opportunities.

Specific legislative framework

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 are laid down in particular in the Education Acts and the Compulsory Schooling Acts of the Länder as well as in the *Schulordnungen* (school regulations) for

the primary school enacted by the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Länder.

4.2. Organisation of Primary Education

Geographical Accessibility

One of the responsibilities of the Länder in their education policy is to maintain a sufficiently varied range of schools. As the highest school supervisory authority, the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of each Land is therefore concerned with establishing the base for an efficient school system. Accordingly, present and future school needs and school locations are identified in a school development plan drawn up at Land level or at the level of the school-maintaining body. The establishment of plans for developing schools is regulated by the Education Acts in some Länder.

The *Kommunen* (local authorities), i.e. the municipalities, districts and municipalities not being part of a district, must, in their capacity as the maintaining bodies of public-sector schools, ensure that a well-balanced choice of education is available in their area. This means that school development planning is a task of the local authority maintaining bodies, which identify the school capacity required and determine the location of schools. The plans of each of the local authorities must be established on the basis of mutual consultation and approved by the schools' supervisory authorities, in most cases by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. The exception to this is Bayern, where schools are generally established by the Land in consultation with the local authorities.

Regional differences in the number and geographical distribution of schools depending on the type of school result from the number of children and youths of school age, demographic forecasts, the voting behaviour of parents, the economic and social situation in the region or school planning stipulations of the competent authorities.

Admission Requirements and Choice of School

Choice of school

In order to complete general compulsory schooling, pupils must, in principle, attend the local *Grundschule* (primary school). In Nordrhein-Westfalen and Schleswig-Holstein parents are free to enrol their child in a *Grundschule* other than the one nearest their home. In Berlin, admission to a primary school other than the one nearest their home may take place according to the availability of places. In Sachsen, children can apply to attend a school other than the local one, provided the school confirms the existence of an important reason. School maintaining bodies have the right and duty to establish school districts for elementary schools. In some Länder, maintaining bodies can establish overlapping or joint school districts for several elementary schools. For lower secondary schools, catchment areas can be defined.

Start of 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 (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) 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. The aim of the recommendations was to reduce what are, in part, high deferment rates and to encourage parents to send their children to school as early as possible. The strengthening of the collaboration between day-care centres for children and primary schools in most of the Länder serves the same purpose. Offers of flexible school entrance phases are being further developed.

Early entrance

All children who have their sixth birthday after the statutory qualifying date as determined by the Länder may be permitted to start school early on their parents' application. Compulsory schooling for such children starts with their admittance.

Deferment of schooling

The conditions for a deferment of school attendance or a postponement of the start of school are regulated differently in the Länder. In most Länder a deferment is possible in exceptional cases if support in a school environment is not expected to create conditions more favourable to the child's development. In some Länder a deferment of schooling is possible only on health grounds.

In the majority of Länder, the children involved may take part in pre-school educational programmes (*Schulkindergarten, Vorklasse, Grundschulförderklasse*). In Berlin and Brandenburg, the attendance of a pre-school educational institution for children whose schooling has been deferred is obligatory. If a flexible school entrance phase is in place, where teaching is provided across grades, and which pupils complete in minimum of one year and a maximum of three years, there is no deferment of schooling in some Länder.

Age Levels and Grouping of Pupils

Primary school pupils (aged six to ten, in Berlin and Brandenburg six to twelve) are normally taught in classes according to age. Lessons are taught in classes organised by grade; in some Länder classes are also organised across grades. In the first two grades especially most lessons are taught with just a few teachers, particularly the class teacher. The principle of class teacher leadership is a constituent and age-appropriate element of the work in the primary school and is in a balanced relationship to the professionalism of the teaching. From grade 3 onwards the children in the majority of the Länder 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.

Pupils with special educational needs are taught inclusively within the framework of the provisions of the Länder. Further information on special educational needs at mainstream educational institutions can be found in the chapter on special education needs provision within mainstream education in the elementary sector and the school sector.

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 on the Common Basic Structure of the School System and the National Responsibility of the Länder in Central Questions of Educational Policy” (*‘Vereinbarung über die gemeinsame Grundstruktur des Schulwesens und die gesamtstaatliche Verantwortung der Länder in zentralen bildungspolitischen Fragen’*), the school year begins on 1 August and ends on 31 July. The actual beginning and end of the school term 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. Pursuant to an agreement of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder, the six-week summer holidays are fixed within this period in accordance with a rota system, whereby the Länder take turns to have the summer holidays later or earlier. The long-term agreement adopted by the Standing Conference in December 2021 lays down the dates of the summer holidays for all Länder until 2030. Under the rotating system, the Länder are divided into five groups each with about the same population. 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 at Easter and Christmas. The teaching administration can fix a shorter holiday at Whitsun and in autumn and authorise individual variable holidays to take account of special local situations. The total annual duration of school holidays is 75 working days.

Organisation of the School Day and Week

In grades 1 to 4 of primary education, pupils attend lessons for 20 to 29 periods a week. In most Länder there are 20 to 23 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 “Agreement on Work in Primary School” (*‘Vereinbarung zur Arbeit in der Grundschule’*) established a cross-state framework of teaching hours that forms a condition for the comparability of the pedagogical work of the primary school. A minimum of 94 hours applies to the state-specific lesson tables for grades 1 to 4.

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) for the so-called reliable half-day primary school (*verlässliche Halbtagsgrundschule*).

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

Supervision of pupils outside lesson times

Changes in children's living conditions have meant that the development and education of pupils before and after lessons as well as in the afternoon have become more important in the primary school too. All Länder are currently expanding their provision of education and care for children outside lesson time. Supervision outside lesson times in particular for children aged between six and ten is provided through primary schools with reliable attendance times (*verlässliche Grundschule*), intramural all-day education and supervision offers as well as in after-school centres (e. g. *Horte*) run by the public child and youth welfare services.

Primary schools with reliable attendance times have introduced fixed opening hours outside lessons time so that parents can be sure their children are cared for even outside compulsory lessons. This involves amended school and teaching concepts and offering activities which complement lessons and are run by non-school bodies. The all-day and childcare services are provided by employed specialists and freelance staff, who are usually paid by the provider of the service, who also covers the material costs. Parental contributions are usually charged on a sliding scale. Depending on the Land, approval of the all-day and childcare concept by the school authorities is required, especially if subsidies from the Land can be applied for.

Intramural all-day education and care offers are to be organised under the responsibility of the head staff or under joint responsibility of the child and youth welfare services and the school and are implemented in many places in cooperation with partners from outside school such as the maintaining bodies of child and youth welfare services or bodies maintaining cultural education, youth sport clubs and parents' associations. The pedagogical efforts concentrate on a close spatial and content-related cooperation of the partners.

The nationwide and demand-oriented expansion of supervision and all-day provision in all types of schools is a priority goal of the Länder and represents an essential contribution to the future-oriented further development of the education system. With the expansion of all-day education and care in schools and of programmes in cooperation between schools and child and youth welfare services, the Länder are meeting new social and educational challenges such as improving the compatibility of family and work, increasing equal opportunities and participation in school and society and supporting parental educational work. By participating in all-day school programmes, pupils should be sustainably supported in the development of their cognitive, social and motivational competences.

All-day schools

Schools can be set up and run as all-day schools. All-day schools enable individual, performance-differentiated, subject-related and social learning of pupils through an extended range of offers and contribute to an increase in educational success.

In all-day schools, an all-day option is provided for pupils pursuant to the nationwide definition of the Standing Conference on the primary or lower secondary level on at least three days a week, comprising at least seven hours daily. 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*, some 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; registration is usually binding for half a school year.

All-day offers are to be organised under the supervision and responsibility of the head staff and to be carried out in cooperation with the head staff. The activities should be conceptually linked with the lessons. Typical extracurricular offers include learning and practice offers, study periods, homework supervision, learning support and inclination offers, study groups, recreational activities, periods used by the class teachers to settle class business. All-day schools provide a midday meal on the days on which they offer all-day supervision.

Open all-day schools also include those offers that

- provide an all-day option for pupils on at least three days a week comprising at least seven hours a day;
- provide a midday meal for all participating pupils on every day on which all-day schooling is offered;
- the all-day offers are organised under the supervision and responsibility of the school head and are carried out in close cooperation with the school head as well as being conceptually related to the lessons.

The sharp rise in the number of schools offering all-day schooling is reflected in the report *Allgemein bildende Schulen in Ganztagsform in den Ländern in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Statistik 2020 bis 2024* – that is available on the website of the Standing Conference. The internet portal www.ganztagsschulen.org provides information on the development of all-day offers in the Länder and on current empirical accompanying research.

In the school year 2024/2025, 73.8 per cent of all public and private primary schools were *Ganztagsschulen*. A total of 51.3 per cent of all primary school pupils were involved in all-day education – an increase of 1.3 percentage points over 2024. Most of the all-day primary schools in Germany operate in the open form.

The Act on the All-Day Support of Children of Primary School Age (*Ganztagsförderungsgesetz – GaFöG*) of October 2021 will gradually introduce a legal entitlement to all-day care for children of primary school age from the school year 2026/2027. The legal entitlement will initially apply to the first-grade level and will be extended by one grade level each year. From 1 August 2029, every child of primary school age will have an entitlement to all-day support for eight hours a day on working days. The child's entitlement to support in day-care facilities is deemed to be fulfilled to the extent of the time spent in lessons as well as the offers of the all-day primary schools, including the open all-day primary schools. The GaFöG also stipulates that, in future, data on the extent to which children of primary school age make use of extra-curricular activities will be collected in the official statistics.

Against the backdrop of the nationwide implementation of the legal entitlement to all-day support and care from 2026, in October 2023 the Standing Conference "Recommendations for the further development of the pedagogical quality of all-day schools and other all-day education and care services for children of primary school age" (*Empfehlungen zur Weiterentwicklung der pädagogischen Qualität der*

Ganztagsschule und weiterer ganztägiger Bildungs- und Betreuungsangebote für Kinder im Grundschulalter‘). The twelve recommendations provide impetus for the further development of the quality of formal, non-formal and informal learning throughout the day and specify what pedagogical quality includes. For example, the guiding role of children in the design of the provision, the importance of well-being and positive pedagogical relationships, strong cooperation between professions and stakeholders based on a common understanding of education, the connection to the living environment and social space as well as a needs-based room concept and healthy lunchtime meals are highlighted. The recommendations are intended to make a substantial contribution to using the extended time frame of all-day schools and other all-day education and childcare services in an educational way and thus provide children with extended learning opportunities.

4.3. Teaching and Learning in Primary Education

Curriculum, Subjects, Number of Hours

Development of curricula

The material and competences which are important to the educational process at primary school are laid down in curricula, education plans or framework plans which may be subject-related, area-related or interdisciplinary.

In all Länder, the educational standards of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) for primary education also form the basis for the subject-specific requirements for teaching German and mathematics in primary school. The educational standards for primary education describe the competencies that pupils should generally have acquired in German and mathematics by the end of the fourth school year. To implement the *Bildungsstandards* (educational standards) for the primary sector, the subjects in the curricula are adapted accordingly. The educational standards define the objective, whereas the curricula reveal concrete and binding competence expectations for specific subjects. In addition to educational standards, the competencies and goals formulated in the strategy of the Standing Conference Education in the Digital World (*Bildung in der digitalen Welt*) of December 2016 (last amended in December 2017) have led to a review or revision of curricula in all Länder. For further information on quality assurance and quality development by means of educational standards, see chapter 10.2. More detailed information on the strategy of the Standing Conference Education in the Digital World is available in chapter 5.3.

Curricula or education plans 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. 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 way that the teachers can act to perform their pedagogical responsibility. Nevertheless all the teachers of a specific subject at one school hold conferences to reach a consensus on methods, contents and assessment criteria as well as, depending on the individual Land, also teaching and learning aids.

A curriculum or education plan is usually drawn up as follows: Once the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of a particular Land has reached the decision to revise or completely reorganise a curriculum, a commission is appointed usually consisting

in the main of serving teachers, including heads, as well as school inspectors, representatives of the school research institute of the Land concerned and of experts in the relevant disciplines from institutions of higher education. As a rule, it is the job of the commission to devise a curriculum for a certain subject at a specific type of school, for a specific school level or for a type of school. It will then work on a draft. Experience gained with previous curricula is taken into account when it comes to devising new ones. In some Länder curricula are launched on a trial basis before being finalised and becoming universally valid. Finally, there are set procedures according to which the commission may consult associations, universities and parents' and pupils' representative bodies.

As soon as a new curriculum or education plan has been completed and is introduced on a definitive or preliminary basis at schools, the in-service training institutes for the teaching profession maintained by the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs are charged with training teachers to work with it. Textbook publishers also embark on a revision or completely new edition of their titles.

A central database with curricula or education plans for schools providing general education is accessible on the website of the Standing Conference (www.kmk.org).

Subjects

As a rule, the primary school curriculum includes the following subjects in particular:

- German
- Mathematics
- General studies
- Foreign languages
- Art
- Music
- Sports
- Religion/Ethics/Philosophy
- Handicrafts/textile design

Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work is the driving force in the context of all subjects. German, mathematics and general studies hereby form the core subjects in primary school. In accordance with the "Agreement on Work in Primary School" (*Ver Vereinbarung zur Arbeit in der Grundschule*), teaching in the subjects of this core area takes up more than half of the total teaching (at least 53 hours of at least 94 hours). The minimum number of hours includes non-subject-specific comprehensive or project-oriented teaching, which particularly strengthens mathematical and linguistic skills. When determining the time frame, it should also be taken into account that language-sensitive teaching is considered a teaching principle, and that language education is the task of all subjects.

In November 2024, the Standing Conference adopted a "policy paper on embedding media and digital literacy in primary schools" (*Eckpunktepapier zur Verankerung von Medienbildung und informatischer Bildung in der Grundschule*). The paper provides guidance on digital media and digital literacy in primary schools and focuses on the interfaces between early years, primary and lower secondary education.

Individualised support

Educational diagnostics and the counselling and individualised support that build on them are among the core tasks of primary school.

Individual support is based on the pupils' initial learning and development situations as well as their different interests, strengths, potential and talents. High-quality teaching that caters for individual differences is always the basis for targeted educational support. Building on this, targeted support can be provided for individual groups with specific developmental needs or additional individual support for pupils with persistent learning or developmental needs.

Primary schools receive professional support in the field of diagnostics and guidance from counselling teachers, school psychologists, school social workers, child and youth welfare organisations, the school doctor service or special education institutions.

Cross-curricular topics

The subject-specific curricula are supplemented in the Länder by various overarching educational areas. Pupils acquire interdisciplinary skills that enable them to meet subject-specific requirements on the one hand, and to focus on significant individual and social tasks and concerns on the other. The Standing Conference emphasises the significance of these topics in schools through resolutions and recommendations on individual lesson contents. The following overarching lesson contents play a role in teaching at primary schools: language education, intercultural education, media education and education in the digital world, health education and promotion of physical activity, MINT education, education for sustainable development, democracy education. More detailed information is available in chapter 5.3.

Besides, in recent years, the curricula or education plans 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 Materials

Teaching methods

In the “Agreement on Work in Primary School” (*Vereinbarung zur Arbeit in der Grundschule*), the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) formulates the following principles for teaching and learning in primary school:

Heterogeneity and inclusion

Teachers see the diversity of pupils as an opportunity for productive learning from and with each other. Different talents, strengths and interests are made accessible for this purpose and enrich the teaching. In this context, particular importance is attached to promoting emotional and social development in primary school.

Individualised learning situations promote the development of pupils in the sense of educational justice. Primary school combines the general educational offer with supplementary educational, counselling or support offers. The professions involved act

in a coordinated manner according to individual needs and also offer all-day development and learning opportunities.

Competence orientation and self-efficacy

Learning is an individual, self-directed and social process that is professionally designed by teachers. This includes communication, interaction, reflection and collaboration. The focus on skills and competencies centres on the learning process in both cross-curricular and interdisciplinary contexts, both in and out of school. The skills acquired enable students to successfully cope with different and unknown situations in which they are required to apply their knowledge, thus experiencing self-efficacy.

Communication and language sensitivity

In primary school, language is consciously used as a means of thinking and communicating in order to link subject-specific and linguistic learning. Key elements here are teachers' language-sensitive attitudes and the systematic integration of targeted support for pupils' linguistic and educational language activities into lessons.

Digitality and basic computer science education

Analogue and digital work are linked in the sense of high-quality teaching. An age-appropriate, critical reflection of the effects of digital applications on oneself and on the community also belongs in this context. Pupils use digital services, tools and media in a way that makes pedagogical sense and is appropriate for their age in an adequate learning environment. The aim is to develop user skills and to use digital possibilities creatively and productively.

Media education and computer science content in the classroom helps students to acquire digital and computer science skills. This takes into account the culture of digitality.

Life-world orientation and participation

Primary school ties in with the reality of the pupils' lives and addresses it in an age-appropriate and topic-related way. Teachers incorporate the pupils' experiences, questions and concerns into their lessons. Teaching and school life open up a wide range of opportunities for participation, for example in the context of pupil representation and class councils. These promote responsibility for one's own learning process and can increase motivation to perform. Primary schools take into account the specific ways in which pupils think and experience the world through holistic learning approaches.

Educational diagnostics and support

Educational diagnostics and the counselling and individual support that build on them are among the core tasks of primary schools.

Individual support is based on the pupils' learning and developmental starting points as well as their different interests, strengths, potential and talents. High-quality teaching that is differentiated internally always forms the basis for targeted educational support. Building on this, targeted support can be provided for individual groups with specific developmental needs or additional individual support for pupils with persistent learning or developmental needs.

Performance requirements that are individually appropriate, challenging and achievable promote motivation and a willingness to achieve, a love of learning and

self-esteem. Intelligent and regular practice is essential, especially for the acquisition of basic skills.

In addition, the primary school monitors the acquisition of skills by pupils in both a formative and a summative way, based on state-specific guidelines. The results are incorporated into constructive performance feedback. Further information on performance assessment in the primary school can be found in the chapter on assessment in primary education.

Teaching materials

It is the task of the teachers' conference to select textbooks from the regularly published lists of textbooks which are, in some of the Länder, approved by the Ministry responsible for school education. The use of digital media (multimedia) and the internet is becoming increasingly important, both as a teaching aid and as something to be taught and learnt. 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).

4.4. Assessment in Primary Education

Pupil assessment

Competence-oriented learning calls for corresponding forms of performance review and assessment. Competence-oriented feedback in the course of the learning process provides information on how far the individual child has progressed along the path to the target competences at the end of a learning pathway. It is the basis of the assessment. Feedback instruments include competence-based reports, observation sheets, learning development reports, learning diaries, portfolios. Children and their parents are provided with regular information on the next learning steps in counselling and learning development talks. This feedback takes place according to transparent criteria and illustrates the individual progress and competence level on the basis of educational standards that has been achieved. More detailed information on the educational standards is available in chapter 10.2.

The teaching staff familiarise pupils with self-assessment instruments and encourage them to reflect on their learning pathways and results in a manner appropriate for their age and development. They therefore successively strengthen them in their self-assessment competence and enable them to set their own goals and to see external assessments as an opportunity for learning.

Altered forms of learning in the Grundschule are contributing towards a better understanding of what is conducive to learning, and of assessing pupil performance. The focus has shifted to encouraging each individual pupil to achieve all that he or she is capable of – guided by the learning requirements for the respective school grade. In order to do this it is necessary to monitor the individual development and performance of each pupil on a constant basis, as well as their working and social behaviour, and assess these factors comprehensively.

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, at the latest, pupils also begin to be

familiarised with written tests in certain subjects (especially German, *Sachunterricht* and mathematics).

Assessment is always based on the standards indicated in the curricula or education plans 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 as well as work-related and social conduct within the school.

Pupils experiencing difficulties with reading and writing or in mathematics are generally subjected to the same assessment standards that apply for all pupils. In primary schools, compensation for any disadvantages and deviations from the basic principles for surveying and assessing performance take place.

Progression of pupils

All children automatically move from grade 1 to grade 2 at the primary school. In some Länder there is a flexible school entrance phase, where teaching is provided across grades, and which pupils complete in minimum of one year and a maximum of three years. As a rule, from grade 3 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. In some Länder, promotion takes place as early as grade 2 or as late as grade 4.

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. On the basis of the total number of pupils in the primary sector, 0.9 per cent of pupils repeated a class in school year 2024/2025.

Certification

There is no leaving examination at the end of primary school, and, as a rule, 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. Exceptions are the Länder Baden-Württemberg and Rheinland-Pfalz, where a leaving certificate is issued at the end of the *Grundschule*. There only pupils who have not achieved *Grundschule* target outcomes at the end of grade 4 receive a report. The transition from primary school to one of the secondary school types is regulated differently according to Land law. For further information, see chapter 5.2.

4.5. Organisational Variations and Alternative Structures in Primary Education

Pupils who are not ready to go back to school following hospital treatment may receive lessons at home. Teachers at the type of school which the pupil is to attend after his or her convalescence are employed to this end, thus effectively working towards the pupil's reintegration.

According to the regulations of the Länder, pupils who are in medical institutions for six weeks or more, or repeatedly, and therefore cannot attend classes at school, may receive hospital tuition.

Pupils who cannot attend school for a longer period or even permanently, due to illness, without requiring hospitalisation, should also be taught at home. This depends on their ability to follow lessons. This, and the pupil's physical capacity, is certified by a doctor.

As a rule, International Schools in Germany cater for primary as well as secondary school pupils. In particular, the five European Schools offer a European education model. Teaching is available in the official languages of all EU countries, from kindergarten or primary school to the European Baccalaureate in various language sections.

The Staatliche Europa-Schule Berlin (SESB) is a "School of Special Educational Character" and a network of bilingual classes at 33 schools with approximately 6,000 students. According to the principle of dual immersion, a continuous bilingual education is offered in two equally important languages (German and one of nine other languages) from the first grade up to the *Abitur*.

5. SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY EDUCATION

5.1. Introduction

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.

In lower secondary education, pupils can obtain the First School Leaving Certificate (*Erster Schulabschluss*) and the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate (*Mittlerer Schulabschluss*). Pupils can also be prepared for upper secondary education programmes, which lead to a vocational qualification or the right to access higher education. Accordingly, lower secondary education is predominantly of a general nature whereas upper secondary level includes the general course of education at the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* as well as vocational courses of education.

As a rule, lower secondary level is attended by pupils between 10/12 and 15/16 years of age and upper secondary level by pupils between 15/16 and 18/19 years of age. 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.

Lower secondary level educational institutions do differ in terms of duration and school-leaving qualifications, but largely constitute an open system allowing transfer from one type of course to the other. The same qualifications can, as a rule, also be obtained subsequently in vocational education and training institutions as well as adult education institutions or through an external examination (*Nichtschülerprüfung, Schulfremdenprüfung*) (see chapter 7.5.).

General objectives

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. 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 and provides a basis for successful further education in the sense of lifelong learning;
- 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.

General objectives – 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 enter any study course at any institution of higher education and also enables them to commence a course of vocational education and training. The instruction at the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* provides an in-depth general education, general capacity for academic study and the pro-paedeutics of scientific work. Of particular importance are in-depth knowledge, skills and competences in the subjects German, foreign language and mathematics. In addition, the teaching of artistic, social science and scientific-technical subjects contributes significantly to the realisation of the goals of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*. The instruction is organised along specialist, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary lines. It offers an introduction by example to academic issues, categories and methods, and provides an education which facilitates the development and strengthening of personality, the shaping of a socially responsible life, and participation in democratic society. Instruction at the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* includes appropriate information on higher education institutions, on vocational fields and on structures and requirements of higher education and of the professional and working world.

General objectives – upper secondary education – vocational schools and vocational training in the dual system

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 an *anerkannter Ausbildungsberuf* (recognised occupation requiring formal training) or in an occupation for which individuals can only qualify by attending school. Resolutions of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) ensure, moreover, that many professional qualification training courses can lead to the acquisition of a higher education entrance qualification.

The *Berufliches Gymnasium* provides a three-year course of education. Starting on the basis of a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* satisfying the requirements for admittance to the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* or an equivalent qualification, the *Berufliches Gymnasium* leads to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (a general entrance qualification for higher education). The *Berufsfachschulen* serve to provide an introduction to one or several occupations, provide part of vocational education and training in one or several recognised occupations requiring formal training or lead to a vocational education and training qualification in a specific occupation. At the same time, they extend the level of general education previously acquired and can lead to the acquisition of the *Fachschulreife*, i.e. basic vocational qualification and the intermediate school leaving certificate. In the *Berufsoberschule*, the knowledge, capabilities and skills acquired by pupils during their initial vocational education and training are taken as the basis for an extended general and in-depth subject-related theoretical education, which shall enable pupils to pursue a course in higher education. The three- to four-year courses of education for double qualification provide both vocational qualification (e.g. the assistant occupations or vocational qualifications in a number of recognised occupations requiring formal training) and a higher education entrance qualification. The *Berufsoberschule* provides two years of full-time education and leads to the

Fachgebundene Hochschulreife (qualification entitling holder to study particular subjects at a higher education institution). Pupils can obtain the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* by proving their proficiency in a second foreign language. The *Fachoberschule* requires a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* and leads as a rule in a two-year course of study up to the *Fachhochschulreife*, i.e. the higher education entrance qualification for the *Fachhochschule*. It equips its pupils with general and specialised theoretical and practical knowledge and skills. The Länder may also establish a grade 13, after successful completion of which pupils can obtain the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* and, under certain conditions, the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*.

Within the framework of vocational education and training within the *duales System* (dual system), the task of the *Berufsschule* is to teach practically-oriented and interdisciplinary competences with special consideration for the requirements of vocational education and training and at the same time to provide an educational programme that prepares pupils for vocational education and training or accompanies the professional activity. The *Berufsschule* can cooperate in tasks of further vocational and continuing education.

Specific legislative framework

Secondary schools providing general and vocational education

Based on the Education Acts and Compulsory Schooling Acts of the German Länder, ordinances for schools providing general and vocational education in particular 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 Crafts and Trades Regulation Act (*Gesetz zur Ordnung des Handwerks*) of 1953, respectively. Among other issues, these two laws govern fundamental matters of the relationship between trainees and companies that provide training (e.g. contracts, certificates, pay), in other words the rights and obligations of trainees and trainers. They also govern the regulatory aspects of vocational training (e.g. the suitability of training providers and instructors, the terms of the training regulations known as *Ausbildungsordnungen*, the examination system and supervision of training) and the organisation of vocational training (e.g. the function of the various chambers of industry and commerce as the *competent bodies* and of their vocational training committees).

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

5.2. Organisation of General Lower Secondary Education

Types of Institutions

The lower secondary level follows on from the primary level and ends with grade 9 or 10. It is run at various types of school where the First School Leaving Certificate (*Erster Schulabschluss*), the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate (*Mittlerer Schulabschluss*) and the entitlement to transfer to the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* can be

acquired. The school system at lower secondary level is characterised by the principle of permeability, i.e. all types of school offer the pathway to the First School Leaving Certificate, the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate or the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* either within the respective type of school itself or via suitable connections. Under certain conditions (e.g. by extending school attendance, with certain achievements or on the basis of an additional assessment of performance), some Länder award an extended First School Leaving Certificate (*Erweiterter Erster Schulabschluss*), which goes beyond the First School Leaving Certificate in its requirements. In addition to the standard cross-Länder qualification designation, the Länder-specific qualification designation can also be shown as equivalent.

The types of school at lower secondary level are divided into three categories:

- School types with a course of education leading to the First School Leaving Certificate or the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate or the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (Abitur),
- school types with two courses of education leading to the First School Leaving Certificate and the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate, or
- school types with three courses of education leading to the First School Leaving Certificate, the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate and the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (Abitur).

Hauptschule and *Realschule* only exist in any appreciable numbers in five Länder (Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Hessen, Niedersachsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen). The *Gymnasium* is now the only type of school that still exists in all Länder. Furthermore, integrated or cooperative secondary schools under various designations exist in most Länder. The cooperative secondary school brings together the educational pathways of *Hauptschule*, *Realschule* and *Gymnasium* under one pedagogical and organisational roof. The integrated *Gesamtschule* forms a pedagogical and organisational unit covering the three educational programmes of lower secondary level, irrespective of the number of levels of proficiency when differentiating between the performance in specific subjects. Schools offering several courses of education combine two or three courses of education under one roof and may also integrate the grades of the primary sector. In the meantime schools offering several types of education have led to the abolition of the *Hauptschule* and *Realschule* in most Länder.

The following types of school with two courses of education bring the course of education leading to a *Erster Schulabschluss* and the course of education leading to a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* under one educational and organisational umbrella: *Mittelschule* (Bayern), *Oberschule* (Brandenburg, Niedersachsen, Sachsen), *Verbundene Haupt- und Realschule* (Hessen), *Mittelstufenschule* (Hessen), *Regionale Schule* (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern), *Realschule plus* (Rheinland-Pfalz), *Sekundarschule* (Sachsen-Anhalt), *Regelschule* (Thüringen). The course of education leading to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (Abitur) is also offered at types of school with three courses of education: *Integrierte Gesamtschule*, *Kooperative Gesamtschule*, *Gemeinschaftsschule* (Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, Saarland, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein, Thüringen), *Integrierte Sekundarschule* (Berlin), *Gesamtschule* (Brandenburg, Nordrhein-Westfalen), *Oberschule* (Bremen), *Stadtteilschule* (Hamburg), *Sekundarschule* (Nordrhein-Westfalen).

Grades 5 and 6 of all general education schools constitute a phase of particular promotion, supervision and orientation with regard to the pupil's future educational path and its particular direction.

A description of the special educational support available at general education schools and *sonderpädagogische Bildungseinrichtungen* (special schools, e.g. *Förderschulen*, *Förderzentren*, *Schulen mit sonderpädagogischem Schwerpunkt*, *Sonderpädagogische Bildungs- und Beratungszentren*), may be found in chapter 11.3.

Common principles for lower secondary education were laid down by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) in the Agreement on types of school and courses of education at lower secondary level (*Vereinbarung über die Schularten und Bildungsgänge im Sekundarbereich I*) of December 1993 as periodically amended.

Description of the school types and organisation of the courses of education

The types of school at lower secondary level each comprise one or more courses of education. At schools with one course of education, all teaching is geared to a specific qualification.

Schools with one course of education which are geared to the First School Leaving Certificate provide their pupils with a basic general education which enables them, according to their performance and inclinations, to continue their education in accordance with their qualifications, above all in courses leading to vocational qualifications, but also in courses leading to higher education entrance qualifications.

School types with a course of education geared to the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate provide their pupils with an extended general education which enables them, according to their performance and inclinations, to continue their education in courses leading to vocational and higher education entrance qualifications.

School types with a course of education leading to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (*Abitur*) impart to their pupils an in-depth general education which enables them, according to their performance and inclinations, to continue their education at a higher education institution, but also in courses leading to vocational qualifications, in accordance with their qualifications at upper secondary level.

At schools leading to the First School Leaving Certificate and to the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate, instruction is given either in classes related to the leaving certificate or is differentiated according to performance at two defined aspiration levels.

At school types leading to the First School Certificate, the Intermediate School Certificate and the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (*Abitur*), instruction is either given in classes related to the leaving certificate or differentiated according to performance at two or three defined aspiration levels.

The following applies to performance-differentiated teaching:

Instruction at different levels of aspiration takes place at least in German, mathematics, the first foreign language and in one of the science subjects. It begins at the latest

- in mathematics in year 7 at the latest,
- from year 7 in the first foreign language,
- from year 9 in German,

- in at least one science subject in year 9.

Geographical Accessibility

For the geographical accessibility of schools in the secondary sector, see chapter 4.2. on the organisation of primary education.

Admission Requirements and Choice of School

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) or another school offering several courses of education.

During grade 4 or grade 6 in the primary school, a vote is taken by the school which the pupil is leaving that contains general information about the pupil's progress in primary school and concludes with an overall assessment of her or his aptitude for certain types of secondary schools. This is accompanied by detailed consultations with parents. The vote of the primary school is either the basis for the decision or an aid in the decision regarding the pupil's future school career. Depending on Land legislation, various methods can be used to assess the pupil's suitability for a future school career at the *Realschule* or *Gymnasium* (e.g. trial half-year, trial lessons, entrance examination). The final decision is taken either by the parents or by the school or school supervisory authority.

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 (*Grundgesetz*) does not refer to acceptance into a specific school. As a result, as long as attendance of another school of the same type or, if not available, a type of school offering the same educational programme, is possible and can reasonably be expected, some Länder rule out a legal right to acceptance into a specific school.

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 have in principle the option to freely choose which school their child attends. As a rule, in

this case the capacity of the chosen school is the only limiting factor affecting the pupil's right to admission.

Age Levels and Grouping of Pupils/Students

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, as a rule, either according to the desired qualification or to the required performance at a minimum of two levels of proficiency.

At any school at lower secondary level grades 5 and 6 constitute, irrespective of their organisational allocation, a period of special promotion, observation and orientation to determine a child's subsequent educational path and its specialist focus. 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.

Organisation of the School Year

For the organisation of the school year in the secondary sector, see chapter 4.2. on the primary sector.

Organisation of the School Day and Week

At lower secondary level (*Sekundarstufe I*), core lesson times are generally laid down from 7.30/8.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. (Monday to Friday). 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.

For general information about the daily and weekly timetable and the five-day or six-day week see chapter 4.2.

All-day education and supervision offers

Education and care outside morning lessons is provided to lower secondary level pupils at *Ganztagsschulen* (all-day schools) and extended *Halbtagsschulen* (half-day schools), via all-day offers in schools, as well as in programmes run in cooperation with providers of child and youth welfare services or cultural education, sports clubs, parents' initiatives or other external cooperation partners. All Länder have signed co-operation agreements with education providers outside the school sector. Currently these offers are, with particular emphasis depending on the respective Land, being developed in many Länder. Both concepts strengthen education and individual support as compared to the aspect of mere supervision. The objectives of the expansion of all-day offers include a sustainable improvement of the quality of schools and teaching as well as a decoupling of social background and competence acquisition. In detail, the new all-day facilities are aimed at creating the prerequisites for improved individual promotion, closer linkage between the education available in schools and out-of-school educational facilities and the stronger participation of parents and pupils.

In all-day schools, an all-day option is provided for pupils pursuant to the nationwide definition of the Standing Conference on the primary or lower secondary level on at

least three days a week, comprising at least seven hours daily. More detailed information on the definition of all-day schools is available in chapter 4.2.

The sharp rise in the number of schools offering all-day schooling is reflected in the report *Allgemein bildende Schulen in Ganztagsform in den Ländern in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Statistik 2020 bis 2024* – that is available on the website of the Standing Conference. The internet portal www.ganztagsschulen.org provides information on the development of all-day offers in the Länder and on current empirical accompanying research.

In May and June 2020, the Conference of Ministers of Youth and Family Affairs (*Jugend- und Familienministerkonferenz – JFMK*) and the Standing Conference adopted the recommendation “Development and expansion of cooperative all-day education in lower secondary schools” (*Entwicklung und Ausbau einer kooperativen Ganztagsbildung in der Sekundarstufe I*). The recommendation highlights conceptual and structural aspects of cooperative all-day education, aspects of specialists and managers, financing and the law. It makes clear what contribution high-quality all-day education makes to individual support and personal development, to educational equality and equal opportunities, to strengthening the school as a place of learning and living, and to reconciling family and career.

The statements on the nationwide implementation of the legal entitlement to all-day support and care from 2026 in chapter 4.2. on the structure of the primary sector also apply to the lower secondary sector.

In Germany there is also traditionally a variety of institutions, both public and private, that are active in youth, culture and education work and that offer pupils opportunities for extracurricular education and recreational activities or that help with homework. Out of the large choice available, special mention should be made of the concerted cooperation of schools with sports clubs and associations, with youth centres and bodies maintaining Vocational Orientation (*Berufliche Orientierung*), music schools, youth art schools and other bodies maintaining cultural education as well as maintaining bodies of child and youth welfare.

5.3. Teaching and Learning in General Lower Secondary Education

Curriculum, Subjects, Number of Hours

A common timetable ensures a common core of subjects for all types of schools and courses of education in lower secondary education, comprising German, mathematics, first foreign language, natural sciences and social sciences. Further compulsory or optional subjects are at least music, art and sport. The following framework applies to the timetables for grades 5 to 9/10:

The total number of hours per week of compulsory and elective subjects in lower secondary education up to the First School Leaving Certificate (*Erster Schulabschluss*) after grade 9 is at least 146 hours, up to the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate (*Mittlerer Schulabschluss*) at least 176 hours.

The weekly number of hours in individual subjects or subject groups for the courses of education leading to the First School Leaving Certificate after grade 9 or to the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate is as a rule:

Subjects and subject groups	First School Leaving Certificate	Intermediate School Leaving Certificate
German	19	22
Mathematics	19	22
First foreign language	16	22
Natural sciences (biology, chemistry, physics)	13	16
Social sciences (history, geography, political science/social science or/and a comparable subject)	13	16
Artistic subjects (music, art and possibly other subjects)	6	7
Sports	10	12
Religion, ethics or a comparable subject	according to the regulations of the Länder	

Pupils with a non-German language of origin may, in accordance with the regulations of the Länder, be given the opportunity to have their language of origin or a foreign language learned abroad recognised instead of the compulsory foreign language if they meet certain requirements.

At the *Gymnasium*, two foreign languages are compulsory from grade 7 at the latest. The second foreign language is taught in at least four ascending years with at least 14 lessons per week. 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 schools, a second foreign language may be offered with generally the same scope. Foreign-language tuition in other subjects may be credited towards tuition in the corresponding foreign language.

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, also called Economics-Work-Technology, Work-Economics-Technology or Economics and Occupation) or as part of the material covered in other subjects or subject groups.

Religion is subject to the respective regulations in each Land, according to which religion is a standard subject in nearly every Land. For the situation of Protestant and Catholic religious education, see the reports of the Standing Conference of 2002 which were updated in June 2023. An amended version of the report on the teaching of ethics was published in June 2020.

With regard to the curricula or education plans, generally the remarks in chapter 4.3. 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. As a consequence of the results of international comparative studies, the curricula have been thoroughly revised over the past years. In most Länder the revision focused on the following main areas:

- in the course of education leading to the First School Leaving Certificate: acquisition of basic competences in German and mathematics, orientation towards professional practice and promotion of social competence
- definition of compulsory key areas of learning, provision of scope for measures to activate pupils and inspire problem-solving thought processes
- development of educational standards binding for all Länder, which are based upon the areas of competence for the individual subject or subject group which determine the capabilities, skills and knowledge students should dispose of at a certain stage of their school career
- To impart those competences that are necessary in order to be able to participate actively, reflectively and maturely in a society shaped by digitalisation.

To implement the *Bildungsstandards* (educational standards) of the Standing Conference for the *Erster Schulabschluss/Hauptschulabschluss* and the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*, the subjects in the curricula have been adapted accordingly. The educational standards binding for all Länder specify the goals themselves, whilst the curricula of the Länder describe and structure the way to achieve these goals. For further information on quality development and assurance through educational standards, see chapter 10.2.

The comments on the subject of physical education in chapter 4.3. on teaching and learning in the primary level also apply to the lower secondary level.

Foreign language teaching

Foreign language teaching is an integral part of basic general education at all lower secondary level schools as from grade 5 and a core element of individual specialisation as from grade 7. On transition to lower secondary level, foreign language learning connects with sound competences acquired in the primary sector and continuously expands on them. The prerequisite for this is institutionally guaranteed cooperation between the primary and secondary sectors. Foreign language lessons in lower secondary level are characterised by systematic learning and a higher level of abstraction. They also aim at increasingly independent and autonomous management of and reflection on learning. Compulsory and elective foreign language offers take account of differences in aptitudes and biographies, and the interests of pupils. The development of foreign language competence up to the end of the lower secondary level is geared to competence level B1 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR). The objective of functional multilingualism requires that pupils be given the opportunity to acquire fundamental knowledge in at least another foreign language. Language lessons that have been continuously attended since lower secondary level may be supplemented by bilingual teaching and learning in other subjects. More information can be found in the resolution “Recommendations of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany on strengthening foreign language competence” (*Empfehlungen der Kultusministerkonferenz zur Stärkung der Fremdsprachenkompetenz*) of December 2011 and the report “Concepts for bilingual teaching” (*Konzepte für den bilingualen Unterricht*) of October 2013.

Teaching in MINT subjects

At all levels of the education system the strengthening of natural science and technical education (MINT – mathematics, information technology, natural sciences,

technology) is currently of particular importance. The Standing Conference has repeatedly addressed the development of school teaching in MINT subjects. By introducing educational standards in this area, it has facilitated the description of demanding and achievable objectives in the form of competences. Against the background of the predicted need for specialists in mathematics and natural sciences, the Standing Conference adopted “Recommendations to strengthen mathematics, natural sciences and technical education” (*Empfehlungen zur Stärkung der mathematisch-naturwissenschaftlich-technischen Bildung*) in May 2009 which were updated in June 2024. The revised version takes into account the changing conditions and new challenges in education and society and aims to further strengthen STEM education in Germany and adapt it to the current and future needs of a dynamically developing world. Particular emphasis is placed on the importance of computer science and the linking of STEM education with topics of digitisation and education for sustainable development (ESD).

Cross-curricular topics

The Standing Conference emphasises the significance of these topics in schools through resolutions and recommendations on individual lesson contents. These are generally interdisciplinary lesson contents that relate mainly to questions of historical-political, economic and cultural education. Apart from this, it is also about topics such as health education, media education and vocational guidance:

- Antisemitism
- Vocational Orientation
- Sustainable development education
- Formal language competences
- Democracy education
- Digital education
- Educating about Europe
- Gender-sensitive education
- Health education
- National Socialism and the Holocaust
- Intercultural education
- Jewish history, religion and culture
- Cultural education
- Media education
- Human rights education
- Sinti and Roma
- Road safety education
- Economic education and consumer education

In addition, the Länder set their own priorities.

Vocational Orientation

In the “Recommendation on Vocational Orientation at schools” (*Empfehlung zur Beruflichen Orientierung an Schulen*) from December 2017, the Länder advocate a curricularly anchored and individual vocational orientation in all lower and upper secondary education programmes in order to set the course for a viable career choice decision at an early stage and thus for a successful transition to training, study and occupation. For the Standing Conference and the Länder, a successful transition is of

central importance for the educational and vocational biographies of young people. The activities for Vocational Orientation in the Länder are published in the “Documentation on Vocational Orientation in general education schools” (*Dokumentation zur Beruflichen Orientierung an allgemeinbildenden Schulen*).

Education for sustainable development

Within the scope of the United Nations’ World Decade of “Education for Sustainable Development”, the Standing Conference and the German Commission for UNESCO (*Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission* – DUK) in 2007 adopted a joint recommendation with regard to “Education for sustainable development at school” (*Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung in der Schule*). Also in 2007 the Standing Conference and the Federal Government agreed upon a Cross-Curricular Framework for Global Development Education (*Orientierungsrahmen für den Lernbereich Globale Entwicklung*) which can be taken as a basis for the development of the curricula, teacher training and work in schools. The cross-curricular framework was revised in 2015. In the National Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development (*Nationaler Aktionsplan Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung* – NAP BNE), the National Platform for ESD, in cooperation with representatives of the Federal Government, the Standing Conference as well as of science, business and civil society, has identified key areas of action and levers for anchoring ESD in schools. The Standing Conference presented the key developments in its publication in January 2023 „Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung – Informationen der Länder“ [https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Bildung/AllgBildung/2023-02-17_BNE-Info-Laender.pdf].

In June 2024, the Standing Conference adopted a new version of the recommendation on education for sustainable development in schools. The recommendation formulates guidelines, criteria and prerequisites for effectively anchoring ESD in school and teaching development. In doing so, it substantiates the educational understanding and objectives of ESD in schools: ESD is based on the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and integrates them into everyday education. Key skills include systemic thinking, critical reflection and participatory action. The aim is for pupils to shape both their personal future and social development in a positive way, within planetary boundaries and while upholding the rights of all people. The recommendation emphasises the importance of a holistic adaptation of curricula and syllabuses, both subject-specific and cross-curricular. The Standing Conference recommends implementing ESD through the so-called Whole School Approach.

In 2025, the recommendation on education for sustainable development in schools was extended to include upper secondary schools. The focus is on fostering an understanding of science that adheres to the principles of scientific inquiry in subject-specific teaching and aims to encourage active participation in scientific and public discourse on sustainable development.

Democracy education

In October 2018, the Länder published the recommendation “Democracy as an objective, subject and practice of historical-political education and upbringing in schools” (*Demokratie als Ziel, Gegenstand und Praxis historisch-politischer Bildung und Erziehung in der Schule*) in a fundamentally revised form. In the future, the Standing Conference will continue to promote democratic school and teaching development and encourage all participating institutions and people to assume

responsibility and participate in shaping schools and civil society. In order to further strengthen the commitment of teachers, specialists and pupils to democratic development at school and in society, the Länder have agreed to support various measures. These include, among other things, expanding the anchoring of democracy education in the guidelines and curricula of all subjects and developing democratic bodies and forms of work in order to enable real participation by pupils. It is seen as the task of school and teaching development and of all subjects as well as extracurricular activities to strengthen pupils' commitment to the democratic rule of law and to resolutely oppose anti-democratic and inhumane attitudes and developments.

Media education

With its resolution on "Media education in schools" (*'Medienbildung in der Schule'*) in March 2012 the Standing Conference reacted to the new technological developments and their impact on society and on every individual. The attainment of media competence through media education in schools includes the constructive and critical examination of the media world on the one hand, and the sensible use of the possibilities it offers for individual learning processes on the other. Young people should be put in a position where they can handle media autonomously, correctly, in a socially responsible, communicative and creative way, use these for their own education processes and to extend their scope of action, to find their way around in media and non-media environments and to take value-based decisions.

Human rights education

In October 2018, countries adopted a revised version of the "Recommendation on human rights education in schools" (*'Menschenrechtsbildung in der Schule'*). According to this recommendation, addressing and implementing human rights, and thus also children's rights, is part of sustainable and comprehensive education and school development. This is regarded as a task for all teachers and all professionals working in schools and as an important object in the cooperation between schools and the domestic environment. As a cross-cutting theme for the entire school life, human rights education is also the subject of interdisciplinary teaching. Although subjects such as history, politics/business/social studies/professional knowledge, languages, biology, religion and ethics/philosophy have a special potential for value creation oriented towards human rights, all other subjects are also called upon to make their contribution. The Länder have agreed on measures to implement and further develop these recommendations.

Education in the digital World

Against the background of the possibilities and challenges that the progressive digitisation of all fields of life entails, the Standing Conference resolved the "Education in the digital world" strategy (*'Bildung in der digitalen Welt'*) in December 2016. This strategy formulates clear goals for digital education and specifies the content orientation. In addition to the pedagogically sound inclusion of digital teaching and learning materials, the Standing Conference formulates the goal of incorporating the competences for the digital world described in the strategy into the curricula of the individual subjects. The strategy also describes the opportunities offered by digital educational media for creating multimedia learning worlds. For teachers, this opens up

new possibilities for the provision of learning media suitable for the target group in increasingly heterogeneous learning groups. Digital educational media can be individually adapted to the level of competence achieved and can be put together specifically on the basis of the learners' interests. For the school sector, teaching and learning in the digital world have to follow the primacy of the pedagogical – in other words the educational mission. This means in particular that a consideration of digital changes serves the objective of supplementing the current educational policy guidelines and of encouraging independence through changes in the content-related and formal organisation of learning processes and of allowing a better development of individual potentials within inclusive education through the use of digital learning environments too.

Also in December 2021, the Standing Conference presented a supplement to the strategy “Education in the Digital World” in the form of the resolution “Teaching and Learning in the Digital World” (*‘Lehren und Lernen in der digitalen Welt’*). The supplement goes into greater depth on individual aspects of the strategy, reflects on the experiences from the pandemic phase, and highlights the importance of teaching quality and school development when using new technologies. The supplementary recommendation focuses on the necessary digital school development processes and on the qualification of teachers in didactic and technical terms. The aim is to improve the quality of teaching.

Cultural education

At the end of 2022, the Standing Conference presented the second update of its recommendation on cultural education for children and young people. It was developed jointly by the Ministries of Education and Culture of the Länder. The update takes into account the diverse initiatives, cooperative approaches and innovative projects in the Länder, which have also received valuable support from foundations operating nationwide. In order to strengthen cultural education and achieve a broad impact on children and young people, the focus of the revised recommendation is on cultural education as a cross-sectional task, which is to be developed, strengthened and consolidated in schools and cultural institutions against the background of current social changes. The target group is children from primary school age up to school-leaving age. This requires a cooperative education, culture and youth policy that recognises the different places where children and young people learn for life, with their specific ways of working, and links them together and relates them to each other.

Health promotion and prevention

Building on its recommendations on “Health education in schools” (*‘Gesundheitserziehung in der Schule’*) of June 1979 and on “Addiction and drug prevention” (*‘Sucht und Drogenprävention’*) of July 1990, in November 2012 the Standing Conference adopted the “Recommendation on health promotion and prevention in schools” (*‘Empfehlung zur Gesundheitsförderung und Prävention in der Schule’*). The updated recommendations on health promotion and prevention are consistent with the advanced understanding of modern addiction and the interaction of behavioural and relationship facets and take up the key aspects of school prevention work such as strengthening pupils' life skills and the interprofessional networking of all stakeholders involved in health promotion and prevention. Emphasis is placed on local,

regional, Land-specific and national cooperation as well as interprofessional networking of all those involved in health promotion and prevention.

The recommendation of the Standing Conference sets out a framework for the implementation of modern health promotion and prevention and is accompanied by further resolutions relevant to implementation in schools.

Consumer education

Consumer education in schools aims to impart everyday skills and the foundations for social participation in a globalised world. It empowers pupils to acquire knowledge, develop understanding, engage in reflection and take action across all areas of consumption, based on individual needs and requirements, social objectives, and ethical and democratic values; it is essential to the success of the transition towards sustainability in an increasingly digital world.

In June 2025, the Standing Conference revised its recommendation on “Consumer education at schools” (*‘Verbraucherbildung an Schulen’*) and focused on the following topics:

- consumption and lifestyle
- finance, pensions and consumer rights
- nutrition and health
- media and information in a digital world

The content of the recommendation includes central targets and general principles of consumer education at schools, measures for educational administration and education policy, advice for implementation in school, support and advisory systems and cooperation with non-school partners.

In order to open up the opportunity for learners to form a health-promoting lifestyle, nutrition and consumer education is named as a common field of action in the recommendations of the Standing Conference on health promotion and prevention.

Intercultural education

In a globalised world, intercultural competences are increasingly important as key qualifications for all children and young people. The Standing Conference therefore emphasised, in its December 2013 amended recommendation “Intercultural education at school” (*‘Interkulturelle Bildung und Erziehung in der Schule’*) the potentials of cultural diversity and developed cornerstones for the work at schools which are rounded out by suggestions for educational administrations and for cooperation with non-school partners. Intercultural competence here is understood to not simply mean engaging with other languages and cultures but most of all the ability to consider one’s own perceptions of other cultures and being aware of and reflecting on the social framework conditions in which these perceptions have developed.

Culture of Remembrance

In December 2014, the Standing Conference resolved “Recommendations on a culture of remembrance to form an object of historical-political education in schools” (*‘Empfehlungen zur Erinnerungskultur als Gegenstand historisch-politischer Bildung in der Schule’*). The recommendations take up earlier resolutions on individual topics from the field of political education and have been developed with the involvement of relevant institutions and associations. The aim of a common “culture of

remembrance” in schools is to enable young people to describe and evaluate historical developments and to understand that they have the ability to shape and change our world with their own actions. The recommendations are directed at teaching staff, at those with management responsibility in education, in teacher-training, further training of teachers or extracurricular education, training and learning venues.

Teaching of Jewish history, religion and culture in school

The “Joint declaration of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and the Standing Conference on the teaching of Jewish history, religion and culture in school” (*‘Gemeinsame Erklärung des Zentralrats der Juden in Deutschland und der Kultusministerkonferenz zur Vermittlung jüdischer Geschichte, Religion und Kultur in der Schule’*) of December 2016 aims to present Judaism in schools in its diversity and authenticity, and to provide students with a lively and differentiated picture of Judaism. According to the declaration, awareness and recognition of the diversity and complexity of Judaism are key steps toward gaining understanding and reducing prejudice. The manifold perspectives of historical and contemporary Judaism should be discussed in as many grades and subjects as possible. A special responsibility is attached to subjects and projects of historical and political education. The analyses of current political developments and past events and processes are inseparable in this regard.

In April 2018, the Standing Conference and the Central Council of Jews in Germany (*Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland*) presented an annotated collection of material on the teaching of Judaism in schools at a joint symposium to support teachers. The collection of didactically prepared teaching materials on all the topics listed in the above-mentioned joint declaration can be found at www.kmk-zentralratderjuden.de.

In December 2024, a comprehensive joint statement and set of recommendations were signed to ensure the accurate and nuanced portrayal of Judaism in educational media. These are the result of collaboration between the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, the Central Council of Jews in Germany and the Association of Educational Media (Verband Bildungsmedien e. V.).

Antisemitism

In June 2021, the Central Council of Jews in Germany, representatives of the Federal-Länder Commission of Anti-Semitism and the Standing Conference adopted a joint recommendation on dealing with anti-Semitism in schools. The recommendation states that knowledge about the history and present of Jewishness as well as about the origins, manifestations and consequences of hatred of Jews is necessary to prevent and combat anti-Semitism. The first step is to sensitise teachers in all subjects to recognise anti-Semitic incidents as such in order to be able to react accordingly. The inclusion of the perspective of those affected is of particular importance. In this way, pupils should be enabled to recognise anti-Semitism in all its forms and to take a stand against it.

Sinti and Roma

In December 2022, the Standing Conference, the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma (*Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma*) and the Alliance for Solidarity with the Sinti and Roma of Europe adopted a “Joint Declaration of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and the Alliance for Solidarity with the Sinti and Roma of Europe on Teaching the History and Present of Sinti

and Roma in Schools” (*‘Gemeinsame Erklärung der Kultusministerkonferenz mit dem Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma und dem Bündnis für Solidarität mit den Sinti und Roma Europas zur Vermittlung der Geschichte und Gegenwart von Sinti und Roma in der Schule’*).

The declaration is intended to encourage schools to intensify their efforts to deal with the history and present of the Sinti and Roma in the classroom and in extracurricular activities. In particular, the aim is to raise awareness of the issue of antiziganism. There are approaches to the topic in subjects such as historical-political education as well as in religion and ethics classes, but also in language, literature and art subjects. This should be taken into account in curricular extensions and instructions as well as in the development of handouts. Elements of the topic can also be taken up in primary school.

The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and the Standing Conference have continued their collaboration and, in March 2025, adopted a “Joint Recommendation on Addressing Antiziganism in Schools” (*‘Gemeinsame Empfehlung zum Umgang mit Antiziganismus in der Schule’*). The joint recommendation describes the causes, manifestations and effects of antiziganism, provides guidance on dealing with the various forms of antiziganism and outlines measures for prevention and intervention. It is aimed at teachers of all school types, levels and subjects, at school management and other school staff, at institutions providing initial, in-service and further training for teachers, and at the relevant institutions.

Gender-sensitive education

The guidelines adopted by the Standing Conference and the Conference of Ministers for Gender Equality and Women’s Affairs of the Länder (*Konferenz der Gleichstellungs- und Frauenministerinnen und -minister, -senatorinnen und -senatoren der Länder – GMFK*) in October 2016 on securing equal opportunities through gender-sensitive school education and upbringing (*‘Leitlinien zur Sicherung der Chancengleichheit durch geschlechtersensible schulische Bildung und Erziehung’*) give concrete form to the mandate of Article 3 of the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) for the effective enforcement of equal rights for women and men and the elimination of gender-related disadvantages in the school sector.

Formal language competencies

In December 2019, the Standing Conference adopted the recommendation “Strengthening formal language competencies in the German language” (*‘Bildungssprachliche Kompetenzen in der deutschen Sprache stärken’*). Formal language (*Bildungssprache*) differs from so-called colloquial or everyday language by a high degree of conceptual writtenness and is characterized by a specific inventory of lexical, morphosyntactic and textual means. It finds expression in oral and written language use and encompasses the competence areas of reading, writing (including spelling), listening and speaking. These educational language competences are individually available. They are developed and strengthened from the beginning through language education and language support. German lessons play a central role in the development of language skills. The joint responsibility of all subjects, learning areas and learning fields results from the respective tasks and goals of subject-related learning.

The recommendation contains common principles of language education and language support for school work across the Länder. It identifies measures of education

policy and education administration as well as their implementation in school and emphasizes the contribution of support systems and extracurricular partners.

Language education and language support are anchored in the educational standards of the Standing Conference as well as in the corresponding reference frameworks for school quality and the education plans and curricula of the Länder. At the same time, a wide variety of language education and language support programs are already established in practice in all of the states. The Standing Conference's ten basic principles for strengthening formal language competencies in German serve as an orientation for the work and assessment of the measures taken by the Länder.

More information on "Educating about Europe in schools" (*Europabildung in der Schule*) may be found in chapter 12.5. Preparation for working life is addressed in chapter 11.5.

Teaching Methods and Materials

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.

In almost all Länder, measures for the promotion of a professional approach to the increasing heterogeneity of learning groups in terms of pre-conditions and performance have been brought on the way. Such measures include, without limitation:

- the internal differentiation of learning groups (*Binnendifferenzierung*)
- self-regulated learning
- pupil-oriented instruction

The measures aim at enhancing individual promotion on all performance levels, in particular of pupils with migrant backgrounds or non-German language of origin or from difficult social backgrounds but also of particularly gifted pupils. In the further development of in-service training for teachers, the approach to heterogeneous learning groups also plays an important part (see chapter 8.3.).

Central importance is attached to the use and thematisation of digital media as a subject of teaching and learning and, in connection with the equipment of schools, also as a digital environment for teaching. In March 2019, as part of the DigitalPact School 2019–2024 (*DigitalPakt Schule 2019–2024*), the Federal Government and the Länder agreed, among other things, to strengthen the digital infrastructure of schools across the board. The latest information about the use of new media can be found on the Education Servers provided by the Länder Ministries and is also available on the information portal maintained centrally by the federal and Länder authorities, the German Education Server (www.eduserver.de).

5.4. Assessment in General Lower Secondary Education

Pupils/Students 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.

As a rule, 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 (*Kultusministerkonferenz*):

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

The Länder may provide for other forms of performance assessment except in the case of leaving certificates.

Each pupil's performance is set out on a school report or a learning development report twice a year in the middle and at the end of the school year. In Bayern, in grades 5–8 the intermediate report can under certain conditions be replaced by at least two or more written notices detailing marks. At the *Mittelschule* in Bavaria, the interim report card can in selected grades be replaced by a documented learning development interview. 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.

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.

In December 2012, the Standing Conference adopted a "Recommendation on the recognition and evaluation of extracurricular learning outcomes in lower secondary level" (*Empfehlung zur Anerkennung und Bewertung einer außerunterrichtlich erbrachten Lernleistung in der Sekundarstufe I*). Learning outcomes achieved by pupils outside lessons, particularly in work placements and competitions, are in future to be given greater recognition and evaluated also. Recognition can take the shape of a supplement to the certificate, a partial credit towards a subject mark or, under certain conditions, a separate mark.

To ensure the comparability of the pupils' performances, increasingly orientation and comparative tests are being held in the Länder. As for the use of quality assurance procedures and the introduction of *Bildungsstandards* (educational standards) binding for all Länder, see chapter 10.2.

Progression of Pupils/Students

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 at least satisfactory marks in others.

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 teachers' conference (*Lehrerkonferenz*), which is attended by all teachers at a particular school. The decision is noted on the report issued at the end of the school year. In some Länder, pupils who initially have not been promoted to the next grade may, in certain school types and in certain grades, at the beginning of the next school year be granted a probationary promotion by the teachers' conference and/or take a re-examination in order to be subsequently promoted, in each case provided that certain conditions are fulfilled. A pupil who has not been promoted must repeat the last year attended. Depending on the type of school, in the school year 2024/2025, 1.3 per cent to 4.9 per cent of pupils in lower secondary level repeated a year; the total figure was 2.2 per cent. If a pupil's performance is far superior to that of the rest of the class, it is possible to skip a year according to the regulations of the Länder.

If there is a risk of a pupil's not being promoted, in the majority of Länder 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. Some Länder introduced an obligation of the school to provide assistance in cases of a pupil's promotion being at risk. In such Länder, pupils at risk of not being promoted are for example supported through individual assistance programmes or holiday classes.

Generally speaking, it is possible to transfer between courses of education or school types.

In some Länder, depending on the type of school or in all types of school at lower secondary level, there is no repetition of grades or repetition of grades does not take place in every grade. Pupils generally move up to the next grade at the start of the new school year.

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 most of the 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, the class teacher and, if applicable, the members of the examination board. The stages of education successfully completed and the qualifications acquired for continued education are noted on the leaving certificates.

Qualification after grade 9

At the end of grade 9, it is possible in any Land to obtain a First School Leaving Certificate (*Erster Schulabschluss*). A leaving certificate is issued after grade 9 if adequate marks (mark 4 or *ausreichend*) or better are received in every subject or on total average. In some Länder, the certificate is attained by successfully completing grade 9 and/or passing a final examination. At lower secondary level schools that go beyond grade 9, a corresponding qualification can be obtained in most Länder if certain marks are achieved. This first school leaving certificate in general education is usually used for admission to vocational education and 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*.

In some Länder, it is possible to obtain a qualifying first school leaving certificate testifying to an above-average performance. At the end of grade 10, in some Länder, an extended first school leaving certificate may be acquired which, under certain conditions, allows admission to further *Berufsfachschulen*.

Qualification after grade 10

At the end of grade 10, it is possible in any Land to obtain an Intermediate School Leaving Certificate (*Mittlerer Schulabschluss*). 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 or 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 education and training within the *duales System* (dual system).

Entitlement to proceed to the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*

The entitlement to attend the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* (upper level of the *Gymnasium*) is obtained at the end of grade 10 at the *Gymnasium* if certain standards of achievement are met. An entrance qualification required for transfer to the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* may also be obtained on the basis of a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* obtained at a school leading to the First School Leaving Certificate or the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate if certain performance requirements are fulfilled.

Mutual recognition of leaving certificates and qualifications

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. 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 periodically amended and in the educational standards for the lower secondary level.

5.5. Other organisational models and alternative structures

The description of other organisational models and alternative structures in the primary sector in chapter 4.5. also apply to secondary education.

5.6. Organisation of General Upper Secondary Education

Types of Institutions

Gymnasiale Oberstufe

In almost all of the Länder the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (general entrance qualification for higher education) is obtained after the successful completion of 12 (eight-year *Gymnasium*) or 13 consecutive school years.

At *Schularten mit drei Bildungsgängen* the *Gymnasium* course of education is not, as a rule, reduced to eight years.

Common principles for upper secondary education were laid down by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) in the “Agreement on the structure of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* in the upper secondary level” (*Vereinbarung über die Gestaltung der gymnasialen Oberstufe in der Sekundarstufe II*) of July 1972, as periodically amended.

The *gymnasiale Oberstufe* is divided up into a one-year introductory phase and a two-year qualification phase. At the eight-year *Gymnasium*, 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*. 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*.

Geographical Accessibility

For the geographical accessibility of schools in the secondary sector, see chapter 4.2. on the organisation of primary education.

Admission Requirements and Choice of School

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 (see chapter 5.4.). For the possibility of gaining admission into a specific school, see chapter 5.2. The admission requirements for the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* are set forth above.

Age Levels and Grouping of Pupils/Students

At the latest upon entrance into the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*, the pupils are, as a rule, 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. Within the scope of the relevant agreement of the Standing Conference (*Kultusministerkonferenz*), 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*.

Organisation of the School Year

For the organisation of the school year in the secondary sector, see chapter 4.2. on the primary sector.

Organisation of the School Day and Week

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

At the eight-year *Gymnasium*, the number of weekly periods at lower and upper secondary level is generally increased by two to four 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.

For general information about the daily and weekly timetable and the five-day or six-day week see chapter 4.2.

5.7. Teaching and Learning in General Upper Secondary Education

Curriculum, subjects, number of hours

In accordance with the resolution of the Standing Conference “Agreement on the structure of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* in the upper secondary level” (*Vereinbarung über die Gestaltung der gymnasialen Oberstufe in der Sekundarstufe II*), teaching in the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* (upper level of the *Gymnasium*) imparts an in-depth general education, general study skills and scientific education. Of particular importance are in-depth knowledge, skills and abilities in the basic subjects German, foreign language and mathematics.

In addition, teaching in the arts, social sciences, natural sciences and technology, sport and religious education (or a substitute subject) makes a significant contribution to achieving the objectives of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*.

Teaching in the upper secondary school is subject-related, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary. It provides an exemplary introduction to scientific questions, categories and methods and conveys an education that enables students to develop and strengthen their personality, to shape their own lives in a socially responsible manner and to participate in a democratic society.

In addition, lessons in the upper secondary school are about mastering basic subject knowledge as a prerequisite for developing connections between areas of knowledge, working methods for the systematic acquisition, structuring and use of information and materials, learning strategies that support independence and personal responsibility as well as teamwork and communication skills. A further task of teaching in all subjects is to impart the skills required to participate actively, reflectively and maturely in a society shaped by digitalisation.

Teaching in the upper secondary school includes appropriate information about courses of study, occupational fields and the structures and requirements of studying and the professional and working world.

In the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*, as a rule, classes take up at least 30 periods a week. 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. In the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* of the eight-year *Gymnasium*, the number of weekly periods is generally increased by two to four.

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)

Each of the three areas has to be represented right up to the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* and in the *Abitur* examination. Religion 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 indicated and taken into account in the certificate of the *Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife* in accordance with the determinations of the Standing Conference. For more information on leaving certificates see chapter 5.10.

The subjects at the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* are taught at different levels of academic standards in accordance with the educational standards for the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* or the Uniform Examination Standards in the *Abitur* Examination. 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.

Pupils choose two or three subjects at an increased level of academic standards. The courses at a basic level of academic standards in the subjects German, mathematics and foreign language comprise three or four weekly periods, three weekly periods in the natural science subjects biology, chemistry and physics, two or three weekly periods in all other subjects. The subjects at an increased level of academic standards are taught for at least four hours, and in the case of two subjects at an increased level of academic standards, for at least five hours. At least one of the subjects German, mathematics, a foreign language or a natural science must be taken at an increased level of academic standards.

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 religion can represent the social sciences area)

Foreign language lessons in the upper secondary level build on the competences acquired in lower secondary level. The focuses of teaching and learning are in-depth intercultural understanding, written language in terms of competences involving different text types, corresponding oral discourse abilities and language awareness. These competences are based on the educational standards for the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* or the Uniform Examination Standards in the *Abitur* Examination (*Einheitliche Prüfungsanforderungen in der Abiturprüfung – EPA*) and aim to achieve, at the end of the upper level of the *Gymnasium*, at least reference level B2 in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) for languages that have been studied since lower secondary level, and reference level B1, in parts also B2, for new foreign languages. Language lessons attended throughout the upper secondary level may be replaced by bilingual teaching and learning in other subjects. More information can be found in the resolution “Recommendations of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany on strengthening foreign language competence” (*Empfehlungen der Kultusministerkonferenz zur Stärkung der Fremdsprachenkompetenz*) of December 2011 as well as the report “Concepts for bilingual teaching” (*Konzepte für den bilingualen Unterricht*) of October 2013.

The comments in chapter 5.3. apply to cross-curricular topics addressed in upper secondary education.

Teaching methods and materials

Based on the curricula and core 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 digital media (multimedia, electronic dictionaries, graphing calculators) 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. More detailed information on the use of digital media in teaching is available in chapter 5.3.

5.8. Assessment in General Upper Secondary Education

Pupils/students assessment

In the qualification phase of 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 of pupils/students

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. In the school year 2024/2025, 1.6 per cent of pupils at the nine-year *Gymnasium* and 2.2 per cent of pupils at the eight-year *Gymnasium* at upper secondary level repeated a grade.

Abitur examination and 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 in chapter 5.4.

The *gymnasiale Oberstufe* concludes with the *Abitur* examination. The tasks are set state-wide in almost all Länder by the ministry of education and cultural affairs, whereby teachers or the candidates or both in some cases can make a choice. 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. Depending on the legislation of a Land, a fifth subject can be examined in either oral or written form, or a particular achievement (*besondere Lernleistung*) which has been performed over at least two half-year terms (e.g. a year paper, the results of a multi-disciplinary project or the performance in a recognised competition) may be incorporated in the *Abitur* examination. The particular achievement is to be documented in written form and is complemented by a colloquium. Upon passing the *Abitur* examination, a *Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife* (general higher education entrance qualification) is acquired, which also includes two thirds of 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 300 of 900 possible points).

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 – EPA*) or the educational standards for the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*. General criteria are available for the design, correction and assessment of standard-based *Abitur* examination tasks and suitable written *Abitur* examination tasks including the necessary evaluation sheets are provided in a pool of *Abitur* examination tasks. Examination task pools have been available to the Länder for the subjects German, English, French and

mathematics since the 2017 examination year. From the 2025 examination year, common pools will also be provided for the science subjects biology, chemistry and physics. The task pools were developed jointly by the Länder; the development was coordinated by the Institute for Educational Quality Improvement (*Institut für Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungswesen – IQB*).

The *Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife* is issued in the Länder between mid-June and mid-July. An exception is Rheinland-Pfalz where the general higher education entrance qualification at the nine-year *Gymnasium* is issued before March 31.

Upon transition to vocational education and training and to higher education study, to document foreign language competences on the leaving certificate the language proficiency levels achieved according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) are documented alongside the grades. A Europe-wide coordinated documentation of foreign language, bilingual and intercultural competencies is offered, for example, by the Europass and, in the case of mastery of two foreign languages at least at level B2 of the CEFR, by the CertiLingua label of excellence.

5.9. Other organisational models and alternative structures

The description of other organisational models and alternative structures in the primary sector explanations in chapter 4.5. also applies to secondary education.

5.10. Organisation of Vocational Upper Secondary Education

Types of institutions

Full-time vocational schools

Full-time vocational schools include the *Berufsfachschule*, the *Fachoberschule*, the *Berufliches Gymnasium*, 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.

Berufliches Gymnasium

This course of education is called *Berufliches Gymnasium* in most of the Länder and *Fachgymnasium* in two Länder. In contrast to the *Gymnasium* providing general education, which normally offers a continuous period of education from grade 5/7 to grade 12 or 13, the *Berufliches Gymnasium*, as a rule, has no lower and intermediate level (grades 5–10). This type of school exists in almost all Länder in the form of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* with career-oriented specialisations and comprises a three-year course of education. Starting on the basis of a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* satisfying the requirements for admittance to the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* or an equivalent qualification, the *Berufliches Gymnasium* leads to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (a general entrance qualification for higher education). In addition, the Länder can offer double qualification courses of education (see chapter 5.10.).

Berufsfachschule

Berufsfachschulen are full-time schools which aim to teach and deepen the basics for pupils to acquire vocational skills, either to provide them with basic vocational qualifications for one or more recognised training occupations or to lead

them to a vocational training qualification in one occupation. *Berufsfachschulen* extend the previously acquired general education and can lead to a school-leaving qualification that is above this level.

Berufsfachschulen generally include upper secondary education, and no vocational training or activity is required for attendance. Full-time courses (standard form) last at least one year, part-time courses accordingly longer.

Pupils can obtain a vocational qualification in accordance with Land regulations. The qualifications of the *Berufsfachschulen* acquired in accordance with Land law as well as additional school entitlements are mutually recognised by the Länder provided that the courses comply with the agreed framework conditions. Additional school qualifications acquired at *Berufsfachschulen* for the professions in the health care system regulated by federal law are also mutually recognised by the Länder. Under certain conditions, it is also possible to obtain the *Fachhochschulreife* at vocational schools.

In cases where such schools do not provide a full career qualification, the successful completion of the *Berufsfachschule* may, under certain conditions, be credited as part of the training duration in occupations requiring formal training (Art. 7 of the Vocational Training Act – *Berufsbildungsgesetz*). In order to prove the equivalence of a vocational qualification at a *Berufsfachschule* with dual vocational education and training, successful graduates can sit an examination before the competent authority if the course of education corresponds to vocational training in a recognised training occupation. Admission to this so-called chamber examination is possible if the Land in question has adopted appropriate regulations pursuant to Article 43, paragraph 2 of the Vocational Training Act or if there are arrangements to this end between the vocational schools and the competent authorities.

Depending on the training objective, *Berufsfachschulen* require their pupils to have a *Erster Schulabschluss* (First School Leaving Certificate) or a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* (Intermediate School Leaving Certificate). The duration of training at *Berufsfachschulen* varies from one to three years, depending on the intended career specialisation.

Fachoberschule

As a rule, the *Fachoberschule* covers grades 11 and 12 and requires a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*. It equips its pupils with general and specialised theoretical and practical knowledge and skills and leads up to *Fachhochschulreife*, i.e. higher education entrance qualification for the *Fachhochschule*. The Länder may also establish a grade 13. After successful completion of grade 13, pupils can obtain the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* and, with sufficient competence in a second foreign language, the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*. 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, bio- and environmental technology. Training includes instruction and professional training. As a rule, completed relevant vocational education and 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*. This gives them the opportunity to acquire not only in-depth professional knowledge, skills and competences, but also the *Fachhochschulreife*. The *Fachoberschule* thus makes an

important contribution to the permeability of the education system and thus to the equivalence of general and vocational education and training.

Berufsoberschule

The *Berufsoberschule* also contributes greatly to the permeability of the education system. Just as in the *Fachoberschule*, graduates of vocational training in the dual system or graduates of vocational training under Land law (see *Berufsfachschule*) can acquire a higher education entrance qualification in the *Berufsoberschule*. Providing two years of full-time education, the *Berufsoberschule* leads to the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* and, with a second foreign language, to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*. Attendance of the *Berufsoberschule* can also be on a part-time basis for a correspondingly longer period.

Acceptance into the *Berufsoberschule* requires the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* or qualifications recognised as equivalent and at least two years' successful vocational education and training or at least five years' relevant practical experience. The first year of the *Berufsoberschule* can be replaced with other study courses leading to the *Fachhochschulreife*. The *Berufsoberschule* covers specialisations in technology, informatics, economy and management, nutrition and domestic science, health and social professions, design as well as agriculture, bio- and environmental technology. The pupils are assigned a specialisation in accordance with the first vocational training or practical experience they have already completed.

Vocational education and training in the dual system

Around half of each age cohort (2024: 50.8%) begins training in one of the 327 occupations that are recognised under the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz* – BBiG) and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (*Handwerksordnung* – HwO). The vocational education and training lasting two, three or three-and-a-half years depending on the occupation takes place in the *duales System*. It is described as a *dual system* because training is carried out in two places of learning: at the workplace and in a *Berufsschule* (vocational school). The aim of vocational education and training is to impart, within a structured course of training, the vocational skills, knowledge and qualifications necessary to practise a skilled occupation in a constantly changing professional world. Those successfully completing education and training are immediately entitled to do skilled work in a recognised occupation requiring formal training (*anerkannter Ausbildungsberuf*).

There are no formal prerequisites for admission to the dual system; education and training is generally open to everyone. According to the 2025 *Report on Vocational Education and Training*, of those beginning dual vocational training under the BBiG/HwO in 2023, 23.4 per cent had achieved the First School Leaving Certificate (*Erster Schulabschluss*) and 47.2 per cent had gained a Intermediate School Leaving Certificate (*Mittlerer Schulabschluss*) when they transferred from lower secondary education. The proportion of trainees in the dual system who had already completed the upper secondary level and obtained a higher education entrance qualification was 21.9 per cent in 2023.

The training is based on a training contract under private law between a training company and the trainee. The trainees spend three or four days a week at the company and up to two days at the *Berufsschule*. Alongside this, training at the *Berufsschule* in the form of coherent blocks (*Blockunterricht*) lasting up to six weeks is

increasingly common. The training companies assume the costs of the on-the-job training and pay the trainee a training allowance which, as a rule, is in accordance with a collective bargaining agreement in the sector concerned. For apprenticeship contracts not covered by a collective agreement, a statutory minimum apprenticeship allowance applies. This is subject to dynamic adjustment. The amount of the minimum apprenticeship allowance for the first year of training is adjusted annually in line with the average increase in all apprenticeship allowances and is published in the Federal Law Gazette (*Bundesgesetzblatt*) by 1 November of each year.

The vocational skills, knowledge and qualifications to be acquired in the course of training at the workplace are set out in the *Ausbildungsordnung* (training regulations), the particulars of which are specified by the training company in an individual training plan. A nationwide *Rahmenlehrplan* (framework curriculum) is drawn up for vocational *Berufsschule* classes for each recognised occupation requiring formal training as set out in the training regulations.

The acquisition of advanced and in-depth vocational competences can be made possible by offering additional qualifications, which can be laid down in the respective training regulations.

Comprehensive information and data on vocational education and training and especially about the dual system is available in the annual Report on Vocational Education and Training (*Berufsbildungsbericht*) of the federal ministry of education and in the Data Report Annexed to the Report on Vocational Education and Training (*Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht*) of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB).

On-the-job training

Vocational training places outside school (on the job) are available in industry and commerce as well as public administrations, in independent professions and, to a lesser extent, also in private households. The training companies are contractually committed to impart to the trainees the vocational skills, knowledge and qualifications as provided for in the *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations) for the respective recognised occupation requiring formal training.

The binding *Ausbildungsordnungen* have been established to set uniform nationwide standards that are independent of the companies' current operational needs and meet the requirements in the respective occupation. Training may only be provided in training companies in which the skills demanded by the training regulations can be imparted by training personnel with the personal and technical qualification. Responsibility for the examination of in-company instructors lies with the bodies responsible within the dual system of vocational education and training, such as, for example, industry's self-governing institutions. The qualification of training companies and in-company training personnel is supervised by the bodies responsible for vocational education and training within the dual system. These are predominantly the *Kammern* (chambers of industry and commerce, chambers of handicrafts, chambers of agriculture, chambers of the liberal professions but also authorities in the public service sector). The responsible bodies also monitor the training to make sure it is conducted properly. Training should correspond to the requirements of the *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations) in terms of both content and time but can

deviate from this if required by practicalities within the company and if the communication of all remaining training contents is guaranteed.

A training establishment may not only be the individual training company, but also an association of several companies which cooperate in order to meet the requirements of the training regulation (network training – *Verbundausbildung*). Inter-company training centres, which can be linked to boarding-schools, provide supplementary training to young people who are being trained at small or specialised companies where they do not receive comprehensive training as defined by the *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations). With modern technical equipment, these inter-company training centres can give training in areas many small companies are unable to cover for reasons of cost and capacity.

Training at the *Berufsschule*

The *Berufsschule* and the training establishments have a joint training and educational mission in the dual system of vocational education and training. In accordance with its position as an autonomous place of learning, the *Berufsschule* works together on an equal footing with the parties participating in vocational education and training. Its function is to enable pupils to acquire vocation-related and interdisciplinary competences, having particular regard for the requirements of vocational education and training, and to enable them to carry out their occupational duties and to help shape the world of work and society as a whole with a sense of social and ecological responsibility. The *Berufsschule* is also expected to offer courses preparing for vocational education and training or accompanying professional activities. In cooperation with general education schools, the pupil's competence is advanced so that they are able to take a reflected decision on their choice of vocation. The *Berufsschule* pupils can cooperate in tasks of further vocational and continuing education.

The scope of training at the *Berufsschule* amounts to at least twelve hours a week. It consists of vocation-related and interdisciplinary lessons and covers vocational learning content and a practically-oriented extension of the previously acquired general education, in particular in the fields of German language, a foreign language, politics or economics, religion or ethics and sports. Further details are regulated by the Länder. Practically-oriented teaching at the *Berufsschule* usually covers eight hours a week. It is based on the framework curricula resolved by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz*), which were agreed in accordance with the latest version of the process agreed between the Federation and the Länder Joint Protocol of Results from 30 May 1972 (*Gemeinsames Ergebnisprotokoll vom 30. Mai 1972*). An increase in the scope of lessons through supplementary offers (e.g. *Fachhochschulreife*) for high-achieving pupils and additional remedial teaching for low-achieving pupils (e.g. language development) is possible.

The framework curricula of the Standing Conference for vocation-related teaching at the *Berufsschule* provide for seven lessons a week in the first year of training. Notwithstanding this, the scope of lessons in the vocation-related field can be eight weekly teaching hours if framework curricula are drawn up for *Ausbildungsberufe* (recognised occupations requiring formal training) that combine competences from more than one profession in the first year of training.

In order to be able to cater for specific local needs, the organisation of lessons in *Berufsschulen* is left up to the Länder and thus the schools. In principle, the way lessons are organised in the *Berufsschule* is chosen in close cooperation with the chambers or guilds and the companies within the catchment area. Flexible regulations hereby allow a number of different temporal organisational forms aimed at optimising the learning phases in the company and in school.

The Länder can enact regulations by statutory order concerning the crediting of periods of vocational education spent in school for dual vocational education and training (Art. 7 of the *Berufsbildungsgesetz*). In this respect, the Standing Conference has recommended that

- the organisation of suitable education careers needs to achieve that learning periods spent in full-time vocational schools can be fully credited for vocational education and training and
- the extent of the crediting be made dependent on the scope of vocation-related teaching given within the school education and a consideration of the *Rahmenlehrpläne* (framework curricula) and *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations) applicable to vocational education and training.

Crediting only takes place upon a joint application by training company and student.

Geographical accessibility

For the geographical accessibility of schools in the secondary sector, see chapter 4.2. on the organisation of primary education.

Admission requirements and choice of school

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 (see chapter 5.4.). The admission requirements for the various types of schools and courses of education in the sector of vocational education are explained above.

Age levels and grouping of pupils/students

At the *BERUFSSCHULE*, classes in a specific or related *anerkannter Ausbildungsberuf* (recognised occupation requiring formal training) are given. For occupations with a small number of trainees (splinter occupations), the Länder are faced with special challenges in terms of school subjects and school organisation. If individual Länder are unable to ensure that instruction is differentiated according to subject, a range of instruction at vocational schools with a cross-border catchment area is to be set up on the basis of the school-law regulations for the *Berufsschule* pupils concerned from these Länder.

Organisation of the School Year

For the organisation of the school year in the secondary sector, see chapter 4.2. on the primary sector.

Organisation of the School Day and Week

In courses at *Berufsfachschulen* that provide basic vocational training, teaching in both areas of learning together comprises at least 30 hours per week. In the courses at vocational schools leading to a qualification in a recognised occupation, instruction shall comprise at least 32 hours per week. 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. At the *Berufsoberschule* teaching comprises around 30 hours per week.

As for vocational education and training in the *duales System* (dual system), where initial vocational education and training is carried out jointly in a company and in the *Berufsschule*, at least 12 weekly periods of teaching are required at the *Berufsschule*. This may be organised in a variety of ways with students either attending classes on a part-time basis with, as a rule, 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*).

For general information about the daily and weekly timetable and the five-day or six-day week see chapter 4.2.

5.11. Teaching and Learning in Vocational Upper Secondary Education

Curriculum, subjects, number of hours

The statements made in chapter 4.3 on the primary sector apply for the CURRICULA AND EDUCATION PLANS for the vocational full-time schools. The responsibility for developing the curricula essentially lies with the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder.

Apart from the subjects offered at a *Gymnasium*, BERUFLICHE GYMNASIEN have career-oriented subjects like business, technology, professional computer science, biotechnology, nutrition, agronomy, as well as health and social studies, which can be chosen in addition to general subjects as intensified course and are examined in the *Abitur*. In some Länder, there are a limited number of schools providing further vocational courses and specialisations. The subjects relating to such vocational courses and specialisations may also be elected as subject at an increased level of academic standards. In double qualification courses of education, additional occupation-specific subjects are taught, which as a rule are also examination subjects for the final vocational examination. The total volume of periods in these courses is at least 118 hours per week in the *gymnasiale Oberstufe*.

At BERUFSFACHSCHULEN (full-time vocational schools) instruction is given in general/cross-occupational and subject- or occupation-specific areas. In courses providing basic vocational training, teaching in both areas of learning together shall comprise a minimum of 30 periods per week. In courses leading to a qualification in a recognised occupation, instruction shall comprise a minimum of 32 periods per week. They offer a very wide range of courses. There are *Berufsfachschulen* for business occupations, occupations involving foreign languages, trade and technical occupations, crafts industry occupations, home-economics-related and social-work-related occupations, artistic occupations, the health sector occupations regulated by federal law etc. The division into subjects, fields of learning and projects is regulated by the Länder.

Instruction at the FACHOBERSCHULE is given in the subjects German, foreign language, mathematics, natural sciences, economics and society, religion/ethics as well as in field-specific subjects. 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. The language and communication area of learning accounts for at least 480 lessons (240 each for German and a foreign language), the mathematics and

natural sciences area of learning at least 320 lessons (mathematics 240, natural sciences 80) and the business and society area of learning at least 120 lessons in grades 11 and 12. Subject theory accounts for at least 440 lessons and practical experience 800 lessons in the first year in the subject-related field. The differentiation field accounts for at least 320 lessons, which can be used by the Länder to increase the subjects and areas of learning shown in the number of hours and to create further subjects.

In the BERUFSOBERSCHULE that pupils attend for two years, instruction covers a total of at least 2400 periods (approx. 30 periods a week). Pupils are taught German, a compulsory foreign language, social studies (with history, politics, economics), mathematics as well as specialised subjects (*Profilfächer*) in accordance with the chosen specialisation, and natural sciences including information technology. The German and foreign language group of subjects accounts for at least 720 to 800 lessons, the social studies area of learning at least 160 to 320 lessons, mathematics at least 400 to 560 lessons and the advanced level courses and natural sciences including information technology at least 800 to 1,040 lessons. For the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*, knowledge of a second foreign language must also be proven which accounts for at least an additional 320 lessons. The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) passed common standards in June 1998 regarding the requirement level for instruction in German, a compulsory foreign language and mathematics.

Vocational education and training in the dual system

The curriculum at the part-time BERUFSSCHULE, like that of full-time vocational schools, breaks down into cross-occupational and vocational classes (see chapter 5.8.). Twelve periods a week are spent in class, eight of which generally cover material specific to the occupation in question.

The *Rahmenlehrpläne* (framework curricula) for vocational instruction at *Berufsschulen*, on the other hand, unlike the curricula for the vocational full-time schools, are worked out by the Länder in the Standing Conference and resolved in a coordinated procedure with the agreement of the Federation on the basis of the *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations) for on-the-job training (see chapter 1.7.). They are structured in accordance with areas of instruction so as to support the acquisition of vocational knowledge, skills and competences. Areas of instruction contain a complex statement of objectives oriented around typical vocational acts, as well as references and time guidelines as regards content, i.e. references to the time of communication in the course of education as well as to the number of lessons. The knowledge, skills and competences to be attained in on-the-job training for professional qualification is set out in the training regulations. These regulations are issued for all *anerkannte Ausbildungsberufe* (recognised occupations requiring formal training) by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie* – BMWF) competent federal ministry with the assistance of the social partners and in agreement with the Federal Ministry of Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend* – BMFSFJ). The coordination procedure ensures that the training regulations take account of what has been learnt from experiences in the working world 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 for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB).

Vocational education and training is particularly affected by digitisation and its repercussions for working, production and business processes. The teaching objective is increasingly the acquisition of competence in the use of digital tools and techniques. Apart from an understanding of digital processes, this also calls for an investigation of the direct effects of ever-increasing digitisation, e.g. with respect to work organisation and communicative aspects in, in some cases, globally networked production, supply and service chains.

In September 2021, the Standing Conference adopted a “Recommendation on the use of digitised teaching and learning formats to maintain the principle of specialised classes at vocational schools” (*‘Empfehlung zum Einsatz digitalisierter Lehr- und Lernformate zur Beibehaltung des Fachklassenprinzips in der Berufsschule’*). The requirements for vocational education and training formulated in the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs’ strategy “Education in the Digital World” (*‘Bildung in der digitalen Welt’*) are taken into account in this recommendation (application and use of digital devices and working techniques, personal vocational skills, self-management and self-organisation, data protection and data security, critical handling of digitally networked media and the consequences of digitisation for the world of life and work). In detail, the Standing Conference makes recommendations on didactic-curricular, organisational-administrative and legal criteria that should be taken into account when using digitalised teaching and learning formats.

Foreign language teaching in vocational schools

Foreign language teaching in the vocational sector builds on the competences attained in the lower secondary level. It makes a fundamental contribution to vocational education and training or the vocational orientation of pupils by equipping them to deal with foreign language professionally in relevant work situations. Given ongoing globalisation in the economic sector and on the labour market, in language activities specific to a profession and to a professional field, foreign language competence forms an important part of the professional ability to act. In the specialised subject classes (*Fachklassen*) of the dual system especially, the development of language competence relevant to the professional field is of great importance.

Teaching in the *Berufsschule* extends and deepens the foreign language competence according to its significance in the relevant *Ausbildungsberuf* (recognised occupation requiring formal training). In addition, the Standing Conference’s foreign language certificate is an opportunity to demonstrate the acquisition of foreign language competences on the basis of the “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages” (CEFR) of the Council of Europe.

Language-sensitive subject teaching

Corresponding to the recommendation of the Standing Conference “Strengthening educational language competencies in German” (*‘Bildungssprachliche Kompetenzen in der deutschen Sprache stärken’*) (cf. chapter 5.7.), the Standing Conference adopted the recommendation “Language-sensitive subject teaching at vocational schools” (*‘Sprachsensibler Fachunterricht an beruflichen Schulen’*) in December 2019, which addresses the particular challenges of promoting vocational language competencies at vocational schools. With their offerings for career entry, initial vocational training,

and higher and continuing education, vocational schools provide a coordinated and interlocked system of diverse educational options designed to integrate broad-based target groups into the workplace and society. Adolescents and young adults with varying degrees of linguistic and communicative competence enter the educational programmes of vocational schools. It is the task of the vocational schools to link up with the competence profiles of the learners within the framework of continuous language education, taking into account the specific circumstances of the individual courses of education. The present recommendation shows fields of action and recommendations for this.

Teaching methods and materials

The Berufsschule bases its teaching on action-oriented didactic methods that are reflected in the curricula by the concept of learning areas. The use of new information and communication technologies opens up a further 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).

5.12. Assessment in Vocational Upper Secondary Education

Pupil/students assessment

For information about the assessment of pupils at VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS in the upper secondary level see chapters 6.4. and 6.7., in which the basis for assessing and marking in the lower and upper secondary level is set out.

Berufliche Gymnasien in some cases offer pupils the opportunity to obtain more than one qualification at the same time (double qualification courses of education), viz. a combination of *Hochschulreife* or *Fachhochschulreife* (higher education entrance qualifications) and a vocational qualification in accordance with Land law (e.g. for assistant occupations). A vocational education of this kind may also be obtained at institutions combining the *Gymnasium* and vocational schools (e.g. *Oberstufenzentren*) or at a particular type of school such as, for example, the *Berufskolleg* in Nordrhein-Westfalen. These double qualification courses of education at upper secondary level take three to four years to complete.

Under the DUALES SYSTEM (dual system) trainees take an intermediate examination according to the standards laid down in the *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations) and *Rahmenlehrpläne* (framework curricula) around halfway through their training. These intermediate examinations are administered by the competent bodies (usually chambers of handicrafts or industry etc.). They may consist of practical, written and oral components. 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 vocational education and training. After taking an intermediate examination, the trainee receives a certificate showing his/her current level of training.

Instead of an intermediate examination and a final examination, some training regulations have provided for a so-called *gestreckte Abschlussprüfung* (extended final examination). This does away with the previously standard intermediate examination, which was not relevant to achieving a pass grade. In the extended final examinations, part of the professional competence is tested after around two-thirds of the

training period in part one of a final examination. The second part of the final examination takes place at the end of vocational education and 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.

Progression of pupils/students

As far as FULL-TIME VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS are concerned, the comments on promotion in chapter 5.4. on the lower secondary level generally apply. Pupils do not repeat grades in vocational schools – if necessary, the training period may be extended.

Certification

DOUBLE QUALIFICATION COURSES OF EDUCATION at *Berufliche Gymnasien* which lead up to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (a general entrance qualification for higher education) or to the *Fachhochschulreife* (higher education entrance qualification for the *Fachhochschule*) and a vocational qualification (according to Land regulations) 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 the version valid at any one time of an agreement of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) made in 1998, is based on standards for contents and examinations.

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 *Erster Schulabschluss* (First School Leaving Certificate) or the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* (Intermediate School Leaving Certificate) 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, for example, 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 design). On passing the exam, pupils receive the certificate of *Fachhochschulreife*, a higher education entrance qualification qualifying them to go on to *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH) and in some Länder also to study in a consecutive degree programme (Bachelor's degree) at universities. The Länder may also establish a grade 13 leading to the *Fachgebundene*

Hochschulreife or, if proficiency in a second foreign language is demonstrated, 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 education and training (dual system), trainees take a final examination or a *Gesellenprüfung* (final examination which, if successfully passed, leads to the award of a certificate showing proficiency as journeyman) administered by the *authorities responsible for the respective vocational education and 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 accordance with the Vocational Training Act (§ 71 *Berufsbildungsgesetz* – BBiG) in the domain of vocational education and training. The responsible authorities can also be public service institutions. The competent body shall appoint examination boards which must be composed of at least three examiners, one representative of the employers, the employees and one teacher from a vocational school.

The final examination or *Gesellenprüfung* consists of several examination areas, which are assessed in practical, written and/or oral tests. This determines whether the trainees have acquired the professional ability to act necessary to practice a skilled occupation within the meaning of the Vocational Training Act (Art. 1, Section 3 of the Vocational Training Act). 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 (Art. 39, Section 2 of the Vocational Training Act). Since the amendment of the Vocational Training Act in 2020, it has also been possible to appoint so-called examiner delegations to take and assess examinations. Examination committees and delegations of examiners also have the option of having written and other non-volatile examinations assessed by only two of their members. The Vocational Training Validation and Digitisation Act (*Berufsbildungsvalidierungs- und -digitalisierungsgesetz*), which came into force on 1 August 2024, also opens up the option of virtual participation by examiners when conducting and evaluating exam performances. Successful candidates are awarded an examination certificate by the responsible authority. Concomitantly, the *Berufsschule* issues a leaving certificate if the trainee has achieved at least adequate performances in all subjects. The Länder can offer the option to compensate an inadequate performance. This certificate incorporates a *Erster Schulabschluss* (First School Leaving Certificate) and may include a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* (Intermediate School Leaving Certificate), depending on the candidate's achievements. Through additional lessons and an additional examination, the *Fachhochschulreife* (higher education entrance qualification for the *Fachhochschule*) can be awarded in vocational courses of education accompanying the training. The leaving certificate of the

vocational school shows the classification of the final examination and/or the vocational qualification within the German Qualification Framework (*Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen* – DQR) and the European Qualification Framework (EQF) (cf. chapter 1.6.). At the trainee's request, a description of qualifications from the vocational school in German, English and French will also be attached to the final certificate. At the trainee's request, an English and a French translation must also be attached to the certificate issued by the competent body. At the trainee's request, the competent body must also indicate the results of the vocational school assessments on the certificate. If the school is obliged by Land law to forward the vocational school performance record to the competent body, the competent body must indicate the vocational school performance record on the certificate after it has been forwarded.

Under the Vocational Training Act (Art. 43 Section 2), anyone who has been trained in a vocational school or other vocational education and training establishment may also be admitted to a final examination carried out by the authority responsible for the vocational education and training, provided this course of education corresponds to vocational education and training in a recognised training occupation; for this purpose the course of education must be comparable to the relevant training regulations in terms of content, requirements and duration, it must be implemented systematically and must guarantee a suitable proportion of practical specialist training.

5.13. Other organisational models and alternative structures

The description of other organisational models and alternative structures in the primary sector in chapter 4.5. also applies to secondary education.

5.14. Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary Education

According to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), the post-secondary, non-tertiary sector covers courses of education which follow the acquisition of a general education qualification or vocational qualification at upper secondary level. In Germany this definition basically applies to the one-year courses at *Fachoberschulen* and the two-year courses at *Berufsoberschulen/Technischen Oberschulen*, which lead to the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* and, with sufficient competence in a second foreign language, the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*, and the *Kollegs* and *Abendgymnasien*, at which the *Fachhochschulreife* (academic part) or the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* can be obtained. The post-secondary, non-tertiary sector also covers combinations of general and vocational courses and the acquisition of an entitlement to study and of a vocational leaving certificate at a *Berufsschule* in the *duales System* or at a *Berufsfachschule*, which conveys a vocational training certificate.

In Germany, these courses are allocated to upper secondary education. A description of vocational schools can be found in chapters 6.8. to 6.10. on the vocational upper secondary level, and a description of *Abendgymnasien* and *Kollegs* in chapter 7 on general and vocational adult education.

6. TERTIARY EDUCATION

6.1. Introduction

The tertiary sector includes, first and foremost, the various different types of institution of higher education and, to a limited extent, establishments outside the higher education system. Thus, in addition to institutions of higher education, some Länder also have *Berufsakademien*, which offer an alternative to higher education in the form of courses qualifying to practise a profession for those who have completed the upper level of secondary education and gained a higher education entrance qualification. The *Fachschulen* and the *Fachakademien* in Bayern are classified as post-secondary on the national level but are assigned to the tertiary sector internationally.

Additionally there are a number of special higher education institutions which only admit certain groups, e.g. higher education institutions of the Federal Armed Forces and *Verwaltungsfachhochschulen* and are not considered below.

Furthermore, the tertiary sector includes advanced vocational training as a multi-level system of nationally regulated advanced vocational training qualifications.

General objectives

Teaching and study shall impart to students the particular knowledge, skills and methods required in a way appropriate to each course so as to enable them to perform scientific or artistic work and to act responsibly in a free, democratic and social state governed by the rule of law. These purposes of study are common to all types of higher education institution and provide systematic coherence to the higher education sector.

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

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

The characteristic features of the design of the courses of study and the organisation of teaching and studying at *HOCHSCHULEN FÜR ANGEWANDTE WISSENSCHAFTEN/FACH-HOCHSCHULEN* (HAW/FH) are the particular emphasis on practical application and the closer links with the requirements of the professional world.

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

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

responsible tasks. They contribute to the preparation for entrepreneurial independence.

Advanced vocational training enables, among other things, the acquisition of complex professional skills that qualify individuals for middle and, in some cases, senior management positions in companies.

Specific legislative framework

The legal basis of higher education in Germany is provided by the legislation on higher education of the Länder (*Hochschulgesetze*), as well as the legislation regarding colleges of art and music of the Länder as far as these types of institution are not included in the general Higher Education Acts. For the most part, higher education law falls within the legislative competence of the Länder (Art 30, 70 para. 1 Basic Law). The Higher Education Acts of the Länder describe the general objectives of higher education institutions as well as the general principles underlying the system of higher education, study, teaching and research, admission, membership and participation, as well as the staff of institutions of higher education. As a rule, the regulations apply to all institutions of higher education, including privately-maintained establishments, and provide a systematic framework for the higher education sector.

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 or the *Berufsakademie* itself.

Continuing vocational education at *Fachschulen* is regulated by education legislation and by the training regulations and examination regulations of the individual Länder in particular.

As a rule, the chambers (e.g. chambers of crafts and chambers of industry and commerce) are responsible for advanced vocational training examinations under the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz* - BBiG) and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (*Handwerksordnung* – HwO). Insofar as there is a nationwide uniform regulatory interest, the advanced training examinations are issued by ordinances of the Federal Ministry of Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Senioren, Familie, Frauen und Jugend* – BMBFSFJ) in close consultation with employer and employee representatives.

6.2. Types of Higher Education Institutions

As per 2025, Germany had a total of 422 state-maintained and state-recognised institutions of higher education, which are of the following types:

- Universities and equivalent institutions of higher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*, theological colleges et al)
- Colleges of art and music, which are generally also equivalent to universities
- *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH)
- *Duale Hochschulen*

In addition, Germany's tertiary sector also includes either state-run or state-recognised *Berufsakademien* in some Länder. The *Fachschulen* and the *Fachakademien* in Bayern are also internationally classified as institutions of the tertiary sector.

Universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

Institutions of higher education that only offer individual courses of study, such as theological colleges, or that focus on specific areas, such as *Pädagogische Hochschulen* in the field of educational science (only in Baden-Württemberg), are treated as equivalent to universities.

What these institutions of higher education have in common, as a rule, is the right to award the *Doktorgrad* (*Promotionsrecht*) as well as the right to award lecturing qualification (*Habilitationsrecht*). Academic and basic scientific research and the training of the next generation of academics are also distinctive features of universities and equivalent institutions of higher education.

Colleges of art and music

Colleges of art and music offer courses of studies in the visual, design and performing arts as well as in the area of film, television and media, and in various music subjects; both, in some cases, also teach the appertaining theoretical disciplines (fine arts, art history and art pedagogy, musicology, history and teaching of music, media and communication studies as well as, more recently, the area of the digital media). Some colleges teach the entire gamut of artistic subjects, others only certain branches of study. In the academic subjects at colleges of art and music, as a rule, doctorates can be awarded; as a rule, they are therefore also equivalent to universities.

Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen

The *Fachhochschulen* were integrated in the system of higher education in the Federal Republic of Germany as a new type of institution in accordance with an agreement between the Länder from 1968. They fulfil their own specific educational function, characterised by an application-oriented bias in teaching and research, a usually integrated semester of practical training, as well as professors, who have, in addition to their academic qualifications, gained professional experience outside the field of higher education.

The term *Fachhochschule* (FH) is increasingly being replaced by the term *Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaften* (HAW).

A relatively high proportion of them, over 40 per cent of 239 HAW/FH, are not state-maintained, but are to a large extent subject to the same legal provisions as state HAW/FH. They vary considerably in terms of size, number of students and number of courses of studies, and consequently the individual HAW/FH have a specific regional character or particular area of specialisation.

A special role is played by the 30 *Verwaltungsfachhochschulen* (*Fachhochschulen* for public administration), which train civil servants for careers in the so-called higher level of the civil service. They are maintained by the Federation or by a Land. Their students have revocable civil servant status.

Duale Hochschulen

Duale Hochschulen in Baden-Württemberg, Sachsen und Thüringen constitute a distinct type of higher education institution that combines academic study with systematically integrated practical vocational training within a company or public institution. A key feature is the regular alternation between theoretical phases at the higher education institution and practical phases with the dual partner or work placement partner, who also enters into a study or training contract with the

students and pays them a salary. *Duale Hochschulen* do not have their own right to award doctorates.

Establishments outside the higher education system – Berufsakademien, Fachschulen

Berufsakademien (professional academies) are state-run or state-recognised institutions of the tertiary sector and combine academic training at a *Studienakademie* (study institution) with practical professional training in a training establishment, thus constituting a *duales System* (dual system). The companies bear the costs of on-the-job training and pay the students a wage, which is also received during the theoretical part of the training at the study institution.

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

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

- agricultural economy
- design
- technology
- business
- social work

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

6.3. First Cycle Programmes

In a system of consecutive qualifications, the Bachelor is the first higher education qualification providing qualification for a profession and the standard qualification for study undertaken at a higher education institution. In the 2025/2026 winter semester, universities and equivalent institutions of higher education, *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH) as well as colleges of art and music collectively offered a total of 10,168 different courses of study leading to the Bachelor's degree.

The following designations are used for Bachelor's degrees:

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

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

- Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.)
- Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)
- Bachelor of Music (B.Mus.)

The following designation is used for Bachelor's degrees acquired in teacher training courses conveying the educational prerequisites for teaching positions:

- Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.)

6.3.1. Bachelor

Branches of Study

An overview of the courses that lead to a first qualification for entry into a profession can be found in the annual handbook *Studienwahl* (Choice of Studies) and the internet portal www.studienwahl.de/en/index.htm, which are produced on behalf of the Foundation for Higher Education Admission (*Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung* – SfH) and the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit* – BA). . The German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* – HRK) provides a daily updated overview of study programmes offered by German higher education institutions in the form of the Higher Education Compass, which is accessible as a database on the Internet. It is available on the Internet at www.higher-education-compass.de.

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

Universities and equivalent institutions of higher education offered a total of 5,032 undergraduate courses of study in the 2025/2026 winter semester that led to a Bachelor degree. The courses of study differ greatly from one institution of higher education to the next. The range of subjects includes languages, the humanities and sport, law, economics and social sciences, natural sciences, medicine, agronomy, forestry and nutritional science and engineering sciences.

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

Languages and the humanities, sport

Philosophy

Theology

Archaeology and study of antiquity

History

Art studies/art history

Musicology/music history

Theatre studies/dramatic art

European and non-European languages and literature

Education

Psychology

Library science/documentation science/media studies

Sport

Law, economics and social sciences

Law

Social sciences

Administrative sciences

Economics

Political science

Mathematics, natural sciences

Mathematics

Physics
 Computer science
 Chemistry
 Biochemistry
 Biology
 Earth science
 Pharmacy

 Medicine
 Human medicine
 Dentistry
 Veterinary medicine

 Agronomy, forestry, nutritional science
 Agronomy
 Forestry
 Nutritional science

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

Study courses in the disciplines law, medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and pharmacy do not, as a rule, end with a Bachelor examination but with a *Staatsprüfung* (state examination). More details on courses of studies which lead to a *Staatsprüfung* may be found in chapter 6.5. Some teacher-training courses also end with a *Staatsprüfung*. More information on the training of teaching staff may be found in chapter 8.2.

International study courses, which have a special foreign focus, are also on offer within the named branches of study. The main subject focus in these courses of study at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education lies in the area of language and the humanities, followed by law, economics, social sciences and engineering sciences. More detailed information on international study courses is available in chapter 12.5.

A *Regelstudienzeit* (standard period of study) is fixed in the *Prüfungsordnungen* (examination regulations) for each course of study. The regulations state the time in which a course of study with the intended examination can be completed. The total standard period of study for consecutive study courses leading to a Bachelor's or Master's degree is five years. The standard period of study for Bachelor's study courses can be six, seven or eight semesters. At universities and equivalent institutions of higher education, the standard period of study for Bachelor's study courses is generally six semesters.

Branches of study, specialisation at colleges of art and music

Colleges of art and music in the 2025/2026 winter semester offered a total of 437 different courses which lead to a Bachelor's degree. The courses of studies vary widely from college to college. In general, they may be divided up along the following lines:

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

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

Branches of study, specialisation at Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen

Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen in the 2025/2026 winter semester offered a total of 4,419 different courses which lead to a Bachelor's degree. Above all, study courses in the following areas of study are taught in HAW/FH:

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

There are also international study courses within the named areas of study. Most of these courses of study at HAW/FH are based in the area of law, economics and social sciences, followed by engineering sciences. More detailed information on international study courses is available in chapter 12.5.

A *Regelstudienzeit* (standard period of study) is fixed in the *Prüfungsordnung* (examination regulations) for each course of study. The regulations state the time within which a course of study with the intended examination can be completed. For the total standard period of study in consecutive Bachelor's and Master's courses of study at HAW/FH, the description of the standard period of study at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education applies. At HAW/FH, the standard period of

study for Bachelor's study courses is generally six or seven semesters including semesters of practical training.

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

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

Fachschulen offer courses of education in the fields of agricultural economy, design, technology, business and social work and lead up to a state-administered examination. The subject areas are subdivided into a total of about 150 subjects. Besides social work, the most strongly represented subjects include electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, construction engineering and business management. The subject area of social work comprises the three subjects social pedagogy, assistance and education for people with disabilities (*Heilerziehungspflege*) and curative education. State-certified youth and child care workers, *Erzieher*, are trained over a two to three-year period at *Fachschulen* for youth and community work to enter the socio-educational field of child and youth welfare services, i.e. day-care centres for children, *Horte* and youth welfare organisations.

Admission requirements

Admission requirements to universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

Higher education entrance qualification

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

The *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* or *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* is obtained after 12 or 13 ascending school years on completion of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* (see chapter 5.7.) or certain courses of vocational education at upper secondary level (see chapter 5.10.).

The *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* can also be acquired at *Abendgymnasien*, i.e. evening schools for working people, and *Kollegs*, i.e. full-time schools for those who have completed vocational education and training. Other options are the *Abitur* examination for non-pupils or for employed persons of particular intellectual ability.

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

Under certain circumstances, in addition to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* or the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife*, a vocational qualification may also confer entitlement to admission to higher education. In March 2009, the Länder resolved standard

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

As a rule, applicants who do not have German higher education entrance qualifications have to submit a secondary school certificate that qualifies them to attend higher education in their country of origin. If necessary, they also have to provide proof that the school-leaving qualification is equivalent to a German higher education entrance qualification or that they have passed an entrance examination at a university in their native country or proof of enrolment at the university. Applicants from some countries of origin must, moreover, provide proof that they have successfully completed some course modules at a higher education institution in the country of origin or, following attendance at a half-year or one-year core course, must take an assessment test at a *Studienkolleg*. Also, foreign applicants for study places must prove that they have a sufficient command of the German language.

Foreign applicants for study places from countries where there is an *Akademische Prüfstelle* (APS) will only be admitted to a German institution of higher education if they can submit a certificate of the *Akademische Prüfstelle*.

With the resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) of December 2015 “Access and admission to higher education for applicants unable to provide evidence of a higher education entrance qualification obtained in their home country on account of their flight” (*‘Hochschulzugang und Hochschulzulassung für Studienbewerberinnen bzw. Studienbewerber, die fluchtbedingt den Nachweis der im Heimatland erworbenen Hochschulzugangsberechtigung nicht erbringen können’*), applicants are able to provide proof in a three-stage procedure. Furthermore, the resolution contains regulations on higher education admission for degree programmes with restricted admission and on student mobility. In 2024 and 2025, the Standing Conference adopted a follow-up resolution that regulates higher education access for school and HEI students with Ukrainian educational certificates who were unable to complete their school or higher education year due to the war.

Admission to higher education institutions

Admission to higher education is subject to concurrent legislative competence in accordance with Art. 74 Para. 1 No. 33 in conjunction with Art. 72 of the Basic Law, i.e. the federal states have the power to legislate as long as and as far as the federal government has not exercised its legislative competence by law. If the federal government has made use of its legislative powers, the federal states may adopt deviating regulations by law (Art. 72 Para. 3 No. 6 Basic Law). Against this background, higher education admission is essentially regulated by the *State Treaty on Higher Education Admission* and the Higher Education Admission Acts of the Länder and the ordinances based on them.

The State Treaty of the Länder on the Establishment of a Joint Institution for Higher Education Admission of June 5, 2008 (*Staatsvertrag der Länder über die Errichtung einer gemeinsamen Einrichtung für Hochschulzulassung vom 5. Juni 2008*) already established the Foundation for Higher Education Admission (*Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung* – SfH). The 2008 State Treaty was superseded by the State Treaty on Higher Education Admission (*Staatsvertrag über die Hochschulzulassung*), which entered into force on December 1, 2019. According to the State Treaty on Higher Education Admission, the SfH has the task of supporting higher education institutions in the implementation of local admission procedures and in the implementation of registration procedures in admission-free study programmes (services), as well as implementing the central allocation procedure for study programmes with nationwide admission restrictions.

Study courses with nationwide quotas

Study programmes in which the number of applicants regularly exceeds the total number of places available at all institutions of higher education are subject to nationwide admission restrictions. At present, these are human medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine and pharmacy. Places on degree courses with nationwide admission restrictions are allocated in the central allocation procedure, which is regulated in the State Treaty on Admission to Higher Education (*Staatsvertrag über die Hochschulzulassung*):

In a selection process, up to 20 percent of the available study places are to be reserved for certain preliminary quotas – e.g. hardship cases, second degree applicants, etc.

The study places remaining at each higher education institution after deduction of advance quotas are allocated

- 30 percent by the Foundation for Higher Education Admission according to the result of the university entrance qualification (so-called *Abiturbestenquote*)
- 10 percent by the higher education institutions according to the results of a selection procedure in which only criteria independent of school grades are taken into consideration (so-called additional eligibility quota), and
- 60 percent by the higher education institution within the framework of the “selection procedure of the higher education institutions” (*Auswahlverfahren der Hochschulen* – AdH).

Higher education institutions must take into account at least one selection criterion independent of school grades in the AdH in addition to the result of the higher education entrance qualification, and at least two in the case of human medicine. At least one criterion independent of school grades must be weighted significantly. A subject-specific student aptitude test is specified as a binding criterion for the selection decision. Details of the procedure and the content-related criteria to be applied are determined by the Länder and the higher education institutions.

Study courses with local restrictions on admissions

There are local restrictions on admission to around one fifth of all Bachelor’s courses of study. Each higher education institution decides whether to admit applicants in accordance with Land law. The higher education institutions can commission the SfH to operate a service for the relevant courses of study.

The above-mentioned State Treaty on Admission to Higher Education makes it possible to use the “dialogue-oriented service procedure” as a uniform IT procedure both for the study programmes that are subject to the central allocation procedure and for the study programmes with local admission restrictions.

Study courses without restrictions on the number of applicants

In study courses without restrictions on the number of applicants who can be admitted, all applicants who meet the above-mentioned entrance requirements are registered at the higher education institution for the course of study of their choice without having to go through any special admission procedures. In some cases there are so-called prior notification periods at higher education institutions even for study courses without restrictions. Institutions of higher education can now also include admission-free degree programmes in the dialog-oriented service procedure, which means that the effects of multiple admissions matching can be used to a greater extent.

Entrance and admission requirements to colleges of art and music

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

Entrance and admission requirements to Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen

Higher education entrance qualification

The prerequisite for admission to *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH) is either the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (general higher education entrance qualification) or *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* (higher education entrance qualification restricted to a specified field of study) on the one hand or the *Fachhochschulreife* on the other, which as a rule is acquired after twelve ascending grades at a *Fachoberschule* (see chapter 5.10.). However, the *Fachhochschulreife* can also be obtained by taking additional classes at vocational schools, e.g. *Berufsfachschulen* and *Fachschulen*. In addition, previous related practical experience is required for admission to certain courses of study.

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

Admission to higher education institutions

Many HAW/FH restrict the number of students admitted to individual subjects locally due to capacity constraints. As a rule, the HAW/FH decides on the allocation of study places on the basis of the average mark, the result of a test to determine the applicant’s capability to study a specific subject or the result of a selection interview, the vocational education and training or employment of an applicant, or weighted individual marks in the higher education entrance qualification, which provide specific information on the applicant’s capability to study a specific subject. The HAW/FH can commission the SfH to implement a service procedure for the corresponding study courses.

Entrance and admission requirements to *Duale Hochschulen*

Depending on state legislation, the entrance requirements include, in particular, the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (general higher education entrance qualification), *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* (higher education entrance qualification restricted to a specified field of study) or the *Fachhochschulreife*, as well as admission for those with vocational qualifications. Admission to dual degree programmes at *Duale Hochschulen* in Baden-Württemberg, Sachsen and Thüringen generally requires a study or training contract with a practice partner or dual partner recognised by the higher education institution. The selection of applicants is primarily carried out by the practice partner or dual partner, whilst the higher education institution checks the formal entry requirements and carries out the enrolment.

Entrance and admission requirements to establishments outside the higher education system – *Berufsakademien, Fachschulen*

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

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

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

Curriculum

Curriculum at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

The structure and contents of the courses of studies are specified in module descriptions, *Studienordnungen* (study regulations) or *Studienplänen* (study plans) and *Prüfungsordnungen* (examination regulations). Module manuals or module catalogues describe the individual modules in terms of student workload and the number of credit points awarded. The description of a module contains at least the following information:

- Intended learning outcomes and course content of the module
- forms of teaching and learning
- prerequisites for attendance

- prerequisites for the award of ECTS credit points according to the European Credit Transfer System
- ECTS credit points and marking
- frequency at which the module is offered
- student workload
- duration of the module

As a rule, the study regulations list the individual modules – including the credits to be awarded – required for successful completion of a course of study, and show which subjects are compulsory, elective and optional. Study regulations and module descriptions furnish guidance to the students, on the one hand, while serving as the basis for the planning of the curriculum in each department, on the other.

The *Prüfungsordnungen* (examination regulations), on the other hand, specify the *Regelstudienzeit* (standard period of study), requirements for entry to examinations, crediting of specific courses and examinations taken, time allowed for completion of a dissertation, examination standards, procedures and examination subjects. The study and examination regulations are often summarised in one charter.

Accreditation of study courses

In 2017, the Länder agreed on the Interstate Treaty on the organization of a joint accreditation system to ensure the quality of teaching and learning at German higher education institutions (Interstate study accreditation treaty) (*Staatsvertrag über die Organisation eines gemeinsamen Akkreditierungssystems zur Qualitätssicherung in Studium und Lehre an deutschen Hochschulen – Studienakkreditierungsstaatsvertrag*), which came into force at the beginning of 2018. The Länder determine the details of the formal criteria, the subject-specific content criteria and the procedure by means of legal ordinances. These ordinances are based on a model legal ordinance jointly developed by the Länder and are essentially in agreement. With the Interstate study accreditation treaty, the existing system was further developed jointly by the Länder.

The aim of the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's courses of study (programme accreditation) is to guarantee standards in terms of subject and content, compliance with structural guidelines and examination of the professional relevance of the qualifications through a formalised and objectively verifiable procedure. Accreditation can also be carried out in the form of system accreditation, the subject matter of which is the internal quality assurance system of a higher education institution. A positive system accreditation certifies that the higher education institution's quality assurance system in the field of study and teaching is sufficient to guarantee the achievement of the qualifications objectives and the quality standards of the study courses.

Accreditation is based on the Specimen decree pursuant to the Interstate study accreditation treaty, which the Länder have largely transposed into their respective state legislation. Among other things, the Specimen decree stipulates that Bachelor's degree programmes must impart academic foundations, methodological competence and profession-specific qualifications, and ensure a broad academic or artistic qualification. Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes are based on a credit point system founded on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

For more detailed information on the joint accreditation system and the accreditation of study programmes, see chapter 10.3. on quality assurance in higher education.

Foreign language teaching

To do justice to the importance of foreign language teaching in higher education, the Standing Conference in 1991 issued directives on attainment of a *technical language* certificate (*Richtlinien für den Erwerb eines Zertifikats "Fachsprache"*). Foreign language training is optional; as a rule, this certificate can be obtained after four semesters' training for a total of 12 to 16 hours of attendance per week during a semester (a workload of 170 to 200 lessons of 45 minutes each in total) and after a final examination. German universities traditionally offer a wide range of foreign language courses, both general and technical in orientation. Classes are given in many European and non-European languages.

Curriculum at colleges of art and music

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

Accreditation of study courses

With a few specific special regulations, the observations on the accreditation of study courses at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education apply to colleges of art and music as well. The Education Ministers of the individual Länder decide whether to include the liberal arts study courses in cooperation with the particular higher education institution. For arts Bachelor courses at colleges of art and music, the Specimen decree valid for all Länder provides for the promotion and development of artistic abilities, the teaching of basic scientific principles, methodical and professional skills as well as a broad artistic education. In addition, arts degree programmes foster and develop the ability to create art.

Curriculum at Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen

The observations on the accreditation of study courses at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education essentially apply to *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH) as well.

Accreditation of study courses

The structural guidelines for all Länder and the specifications for programme and system accreditation passed by the Standing Conference also apply to (HAW/FH).

Foreign Language Teaching

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

Dual Study-Courses

Study courses at HAW/FH are highly application-oriented and of great practical relevance. Against this background, particularly HAW/FH also offer so-called dual courses of study (*duale Studiengänge*) in the form of study courses which integrate vocational training, work and practical placements. A defining feature of dual study

programmes is that the various learning venues (at least a higher education institution or *Berufsakademie* and a company) are systematically interlinked in terms of content, organisation and contract.

To this end the higher education institutions conclude cooperation agreements with companies and other practice partners which provide training or traineeships. In dual study courses which integrate vocational training, higher education studies are interlinked with in-company training. The periods of study and work experience are distributed according to various models and subject to the *Studienordnung* (study regulations) or module description. Dual study courses which integrate vocational training lead to two qualifications for entry into a profession: graduates are awarded the Bachelor's degree (in rare cases still the *Diplomgrad*, to which the word *Fachhochschule* is added) and, at the same time, they obtain a vocational qualification. In practice-integrated dual study programmes, students complete practical study semesters in companies to a greater extent than is traditionally provided for in higher education studies, and these are integrated into the course of study. Vocational integration dual study programmes combine the course of studies with a related professional activity. Everyday professional life is an integral part of the study programme. In addition, HAW/FH in particular organise study courses that accompany training, work or professional practice. These allow, for example, to complete a Bachelor's or Master's degree course parallel to a professional activity.

A characteristic feature of *Duale Hochschulen* is that they exclusively offer dual courses of study, i.e. dual courses of study that integrate training, practical experience and, in some cases, vocational training.

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

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

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

The requirements for admission to continuing vocational education courses and upgrading training at *FACHSCHULEN* are appropriate vocational education and training in conjunction with the relevant vocational experience. The compulsory component in the two-year *Fachschulen* comprises the multi-disciplinary and subject-specific areas

in the five subject areas, as well as a practical in youth and community work or in healthcare support for the social services area. Instruction in the multi-disciplinary area serves primarily the acquisition of extended general knowledge, skills and competences. Instruction in the subject-specific areas serves the acquisition of extended vocational knowledge, skills and competences in one of the five subject areas.

Teaching Methods

Teaching methods at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

Classes take the form of lectures, seminars, practical exercises, work placements and study trips. The main function of the lectures is to impart general and basic knowledge about the various fields of study. The seminars afford an opportunity to deal in depth with a more narrowly defined topic. Practical exercises and practicals, meanwhile, provide the opportunity to develop the theoretical knowledge gained in a practical manner. The use of digital media is becoming increasingly important.

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

Teaching methods at colleges of art and music

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

Teaching methods at Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen

Particular characteristics of courses of study at *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH) include practice- and application-oriented training. Typical teaching forms include lectures, seminars, practical exercises, work placements and study trips in small groups. The seminars afford an opportunity to deal in depth with a more narrowly defined topic, whilst practical classes and work placements enable the theoretical knowledge to be consolidated in a practical context.

A further special feature of courses of studies at HAW/FH is the integration into the course of one or two *Praxissemester* (semesters of work experience). The HAW/FH lays down the rules for and content of these training periods, supervises them and provides parallel classes. They are spent in a company or in another place of work for a duration of at least 20 weeks.

Teaching methods at Duale Hochschulen

Teaching at *Duale Hochschulen* is characterised by a regular alternation between theory at the higher education institution and practical work in the workplace (usually on a quarterly basis). Courses such as lectures, seminars, tutorials and case studies generally take place in smaller groups. The practical phases are an integral part of the curriculum, enabling students to systematically develop a high level of professional competence.

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

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

See chapter 5.9. for teaching methods in continuing vocational education and vocational upgrading training at *Fachschulen*.

Progression of Students

Progression of students at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education, colleges of art and music as well as *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* and *Duale Hochschulen*

Studienordnungen (study regulations) and *Prüfungsordnungen* (examination regulations) lay down the requirements for admission to a certain stage of studies or a particular module. Module examinations can be repeated at least once, in some cases several times.

It is generally possible to change one's course of study even in later semesters. If it is a course of study with nationwide restrictions on admission, the proviso is that the student in question obtains a study place for the subject of his choice. Previous periods of study and the courses and examinations that have been passed in another study course are to be recognised if there are no significant differences between the competences to be acquired and those demonstrated. Higher education institutions must give reasons for decisions rejecting such applications.

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

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

The information given in chapter 5.10. essentially applies for progression at *FACHSCHULEN*.

Employability

The higher education institutions' student counselling offices and the employment agencies' career guidance services furnish information and guidance to help graduates move from higher education into the professional world. Higher education institutions are also increasingly setting up so-called Career Centres which combine student counselling and the teaching of professionally-relevant key qualifications. Their prospects on the employment market may be improved by specialising in appropriate

fields of study and enrolling in appropriate *weiterführende Studiengänge* (further study, supplementary and follow-up courses).

Measures to facilitate the transition from university to working life

Work placements afford an opportunity to gain an insight into the working world and establish contact with prospective employers. Proof of work experience (for four to six months, in some cases up to a year) acquired before or while studying is demanded in a number of fields, especially in natural and engineering sciences. To improve the employment prospects of arts and social science graduates, some higher education institutions have set up programmes in collaboration with employment agencies to place them in industry and equip them with key skills (e.g. a grounding in computing, elementary business skills).

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

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

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

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

Measures to facilitate the transition from *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* to working life

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

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

HAW/FH can also facilitate the entry of their graduates into professional life through connections with their former students (Alumni).

Measures to facilitate the transition from Duale Hochschulen to working life

At *Duale Hochschulen*, there is no longer a need to facilitate the transition into working life due to the dual study model, as the work-integrated study phases ensure

continuous involvement in workplace processes. As a result, graduates are optimally prepared for the demands of the labour market, and the transition into the workplace is seamless and efficient. The high employment rates among graduates by the industry partners/dual partners confirm this.

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

Thanks to the combination of theoretical and practical training, graduates of vocational education and 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.

Student assessment

Student assessment at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

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

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

Credit points and grades must be shown separately. Alongside the grade based on the German grading scale from 1 to 5, in the final grade a relative grade is also to be shown.

Student assessment at colleges of art and music

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

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

Student assessment at Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen

For student assessment in Bachelor's and Master's study courses at *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH), the observations on student assessment at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education apply.

Student assessment at *Duale Hochschulen*

At *Duale Hochschulen*, performance assessment takes place both at the higher education institution and in the workplace. ECTS credits are made up of theoretical and practical components, with the weighting varying depending on the degree programme. In addition to traditional forms such as written assignments, presentations or seminars, examinations also include practical reports, project work and assessments by the workplace partner/dual partner.

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

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

For student assessment in continuing vocational training at *Fachschulen*, see chapter 5.10., which explains the basic principles for performance assessment and the awarding of marks.

Certification

Certification at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education

With regard to higher education degrees, a distinction is drawn between academic, state and ecclesiastical examinations. As a rule, a higher education qualification for a profession is conferred on the basis of these examinations.

Institutions of higher education are authorised by law to administer *Hochschulprüfungen* (academic examinations). The Bachelor examination is an academic examination on the basis of which the Bachelor's degree is conferred.

Bachelor's study courses lay academic foundations, provide methodological skills and lead to qualifications related to the professional field corresponding to the profile of the higher education institution and the study course.

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

- Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)
- Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.)
- Bachelor of Engineering (B.Eng.)
- Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.)
- Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.)

For theological degree programmes that qualify students for the ministry, the priesthood and the profession of pastoral assistant (*Theologisches Vollstudium*), different designations may also be used.

Universities and equivalent institutions of higher education add a diploma supplement to the leaving certificate that describes, usually in English, the progress of the studies and the performance of the graduate.

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

Certification at colleges of art and music

The artistic qualification awarded on completion of a first-degree course of study is the Bachelor or the *Diplom*. In December 2004, as part of the structural requirements that are binding for all Länder, the Standing Conference passed a resolution for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses at colleges of art and music. The following designations are used for Bachelor's degrees at colleges of art and music:

- Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.)
- Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)
- Bachelor of Music (B.Mus.)

Apart from artistic training, colleges of art and music also provide courses of teacher training, which entitle students to teach art or music at schools after passing their *Staatsprüfung* (state examination) or acquiring a Master's degree and undergoing *Vorbereitungsdienst* (preparatory service). In 2003 and 2004, the Standing Conference adopted framework guidelines for teacher training in the subjects of art and music for all teaching careers; these were updated in 2019 to take account of the requirements of digitalisation. In February 2023, the Standing Conference updated its recommendations on the training of art and music teachers. Information on teacher training courses conveying the educational prerequisites for teaching positions are available in chapter 8.1.

The number of Bachelor's and Master's degree courses at *Kunsthochschulen* and *Musikhochschulen* (colleges of art and music) has rapidly increased over the past few years. Just less than 82.1 per cent of all study courses on offer at German colleges of art and music are Bachelor's and Master's degree courses.

Certification at Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen and Duale Hochschulen

Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen (HAW/FH) and *Duale Hochschulen* award the Bachelor's degree and the Master's degree as a final qualification at the end of the degree course; the *Diplomgrad* is also still awarded at present to a lesser extent. On the basis of agreements with a foreign institution of higher education, some HAW/FH and *Duale Hochschulen* confer a foreign degree (double degree, multiple degree) or a joint degree in addition to the German *Diplom*.

Bachelor's study courses at HAW/FH and *Duale Hochschulen* lay academic foundations, provide methodological skills and lead to qualifications related to the professional field corresponding to the profile of the higher education institution and the study course and lead to the Bachelor's degree. The Bachelor's degree generally provides the same rights as *Diplom* qualifications acquired at a HAW/FH.

The following Bachelor's degrees can be obtained at HAW/FH:

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

The HAW/FH and the *Duale Hochschulen* add a diploma supplement to the leaving certificate of the *Diplom* and *Magister* study courses, as well as to the Bachelor/Master study courses, that describes, usually in English, the study course, the progress of the studies and the performance of the graduate.

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

Berufsakademien

In October 2004, the Standing Conference has passed criteria for the accreditation of Bachelor's training courses at *Berufsakademien*. The state-recognised Bachelor's degrees obtained after the completion of training courses which have been accredited on this basis are equivalent to Bachelor's degrees obtained at institutions of higher education. The academic equivalence of the Bachelor's degrees is linked to their equivalence with regard to the right to practise certain professions. However, the designation does not refer to a higher education degree but to a state-recognised degree.

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*) or, in the field of home economics, state-certified home economics manager (*Staatlich geprüfter hauswirtschaftlicher Betriebsleiter*), and state-certified designer (*Staatlich geprüfter Gestalter*), as well as other occupational titles in the social professions, e.g. state-recognised youth or child-care workers (*Staatlich anerkannter Erzieher*). It is also possible to obtain the *Fachhochschulreife* at the *Fachschule*.

6.3.2. Short-Cycle Higher Education

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

6.4. Second Cycle Programmes

Branches of study

For a detailed discussion of the branches of study offered at institutions of the tertiary sector, see chapter 6.3.1.

The standard period of study for Master's study courses can be two, three or four semesters.

Entrance and admission requirements

The admission requirement for a Master's study course is, as a rule, a higher education degree qualifying for entry into a profession. Under Land higher education laws, in clearly defined exceptional cases for Master's study courses providing further education and for artistic Master's study courses, an entrance examination may take the place of the requirement for a higher education degree qualifying for a profession.

For quality assurance purposes or on grounds of capacity, additional admission requirements may be laid down for Master's study courses. Admission requirements are subject to accreditation. The Länder may reserve the right to approve admission requirements.

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

For admission to Master's study courses providing further education, also evidence of qualified employment is required for a period of not less than one year as a rule.

Curriculum

Under the Specimen decree pursuant to the Interstate study accreditation treaty, a distinction may be made between "research-oriented" and "practice-oriented" profiles for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes. Master's degree programmes at colleges of arts and music may have a specific artistic profile. When establishing a Master's degree programme, it must be specified whether it is a consecutive or a continuing education programme. The latter require, in accordance with the Specimen decree, at least one year of qualified professional experience.

Detailed information on the specific course of study underlying the qualification is provided in the Diploma Supplement, which forms part of every degree certificate. Further information on the *Diploma Supplement* can be found in Section 6.3.1.

Teaching methods

For a discussion of teaching methods at institutions of the tertiary sector, see chapter 6.3.1.

Progression of students

For a discussion of the progression of students at institutions of the tertiary sector, see chapter 6.3.1.

Employability

For a detailed discussion of measures to facilitate the transition from institutions of the tertiary sector to working life, see chapter 6.3.1.

Student assessment

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

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

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

Credit points and grades must be shown separately. Alongside the grade based on the German grading scale from 1 to 5, in the final grade a relative grade is also to be shown.

Certification

In designating consecutive Master's degrees, no distinction is made between the profile types "practice-oriented" and "research-oriented." The Master's degree provides the same rights as *Diplom* and *Magister* qualifications of universities and equivalent higher education institutions.

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

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

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

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

In the courses of study at art and music colleges, which provide the educational prerequisites for a teaching position, a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in music or fine arts is awarded.

The following designations are used for Master's degrees in consecutive Master's study courses at *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH):

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

Bachelor's degrees generally confer the same rights as *Diplom* degrees at *Fachhochschulen*, Master's degrees confer the same rights as *Diplom* and *Magister* degrees at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education.

6.5. Programmes Outside the Bachelor and Master Structure

In the course of the Bologna Process to establish a European Higher Education Area the study system has been converted to the consecutive structure of study with Bachelor's and Master's qualifications. The study structure reform has largely been completed. In the 2025/2026 winter semester, 92.3 per cent of all study offers at German institutions of higher education were Bachelor's and Master's study courses.

Alongside the Bachelor degree, the *Diplom* degree as well as Church and state qualifications obtained after an integrated single-cycle course of study exist as first vocational degrees qualifying for an occupation.

Diplom

A small number of study courses end with a *Diplom* examination. Courses of studies that culminate in a *Diplom* concentrate on a single subject. The *Diplom* examination is associated with a *Diplom* degree (e.g. *Diplom-Psychologe*). The *Hochschule für*

angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschule Diplom certificate bears the additional notation (“FH” for *Fachhochschule*), e.g. *Diplom-Ingenieur/-in (FH)*.

Bachelor’s degrees generally confer the same rights as *Diplom* degrees at HAW/FH, Master’s degrees confer the same rights as *Diplom* degrees at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education.

Staatsprüfung

A state examination or *Staatsprüfung* has to be taken in some courses of studies. This is the case in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, pharmaceuticals and law, and to some extent in degree programmes in food chemistry, teacher training programmes, and courses of study that qualify students to work in specialised health professions (e.g. midwifery). The standards of performance on state examinations correspond to those on academic examinations. Hence, the difference between state and academic examinations is essentially of a formal nature. The state examination is conducted by the state examination bodies; professors from the universities are appointed as examiners. After the First State Examination, prospective lawyers and teachers, in particular, undergo a second phase of training called *Vorbereitungsdienst* or preparatory service, which is concluded by another state examination. Only this Second State Examination entitles them to practise their profession. Information on teacher training courses conveying the educational prerequisites for teaching positions are available in chapter 8.2.

As a rule a state examination entitles graduates to start doctoral studies in the same way as an academic degree.

Theological degrees

In December 2007, the Standing Conference adopted the guidelines developed in conjunction with the Protestant Church in Germany and the German Bishops’ Conference (*Deutsche Bischofskonferenz*) on the structure of study courses in Roman Catholic or Protestant Theology/Religion (*‘Eckpunkte für die Studienstruktur in Studiengängen mit Katholischer oder Evangelischer Theologie/Religion’*), which were updated in 2022. For theological courses of study which qualify students for the ministry, priesthood or the profession of a pastoral assistant (*theologisches Vollstudium* – full theological course of study) the guidelines provide, until further notice, for courses which conclude – after a standard study period of five years in total – with an academic and a Church examination. There are no plans at present to introduce a consecutive study structure pursuant to the Bologna Process within the *theologisches Vollstudium*. The courses of study are, nonetheless, modularised and provided with a credit point system.

Other postgraduate study courses

In addition to the courses leading to a first degree, besides consecutive Master’s study courses and Master’s study courses providing further education, there are other postgraduate study programmes in some Länder (further study, supplementary and follow-up courses) that either build on the first degree, providing further vocational skills, increased specialisation and reinforcement, or are taken in parallel with a different course of study. Key characteristics of postgraduate study courses are, inter alia:

- a completed higher education course of study leading to a first degree as the admission requirement and, where applicable, additional admission requirements depending on the objective of the postgraduate study course
- specific orientation to the level of qualification achieved in the first degree qualifying for entry to a profession and corresponding admission requirements
- the structuring of the study course through an examination regulation
- the award of an independent qualification, which requires the knowledge and abilities acquired in the first-degree course but goes far beyond them.

Information on Master's study courses providing continuing education can be found in chapter 6.4., as they are part of the Bachelor and Master structure.

An overview of the range of special graduate courses on offer provided by the German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* – HRK) is available on the Internet at www.hochschulkompass.de.

Vocational upskilling at institutions outside the higher education sector

Tertiary education also includes advanced vocational training within the framework of vocational upskilling in accordance with the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz* – BBiG) and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (*Handwerksordnung* – HwO). Vocational upskilling enables skilled workers to expand their professional competence and advance in their careers. The 2020 amendment of the BBiG and the corresponding changes to the HwO introduced a three-level system of advanced vocational training. This provides for the following qualifications:

- as the first level of further training, the Certified Professional Specialist,
- as the second level of further training, the Bachelor Professional, and
- as the third level of further training, the Master Professional.

These state-recognised advanced training qualifications correspond to ISCED levels 5 to 7 of the tertiary education sector and to the competence levels at levels 5 to 7 of the German Qualifications Framework (*Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen* – DQR).

The chambers and other competent bodies, including those in the public sector, as well as the chambers of trade, are responsible for conducting examinations in advanced vocational training in Germany in accordance with §§ 53 ff. BBiG, §§ 42 ff. HwO. The special provisions of §§ 45 ff. HwO apply to master tradesmen. The legal bases are regulated uniformly throughout the country in the BBiG and in the HwO. The competent bodies and the chambers of trade conduct the examinations and issue further training examination regulations in so far as no uniform national further training regulations have been issued.

The scope of learning for the skills, knowledge and abilities tested, including self-study, is as follows:

- at the first further training level: at least 400 hours,
- at the second advanced training level: at least 1,200 hours,
- at the third advanced training level: at least 1,600 hours.

The following is to be provided as a requirement for admission as a rule:

- at the first advanced training level: a qualification in a recognised training occupation, a certificate of full comparability of the individual's professional

ability to act with the professional ability to act required to pursue a training occupation,

- at the second further training level: as for the requirements at the first further training level or a qualification at the first vocational further training level,
- at the third further training level: in a qualification at the second vocational further training level.

A complete list of all existing advanced training courses can be found in the directory of recognised training occupations, which is maintained by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB). This directory also contains the relevant advanced training regulations and provides information on the respective duration of advanced training and the respective legal bases.

6.6. Third Cycle (PhD) Programmes

Particularly well-qualified students may also choose to complete a doctorate. The disciplines in which it is possible to obtain a doctorate at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education or at *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH) are listed under www.higher-education-compass.de.

The PhD proves the ability to carry out more in-depth, independent academic or scientific work. It embodies a separate research achievement and is not seen as a third phase of the course of studies in Germany. The goal of the PhD phase is to qualify for an activity in research and science, though also for leadership tasks in the scientific society.

The paths to a doctorate in Germany are varied. The leading model in Germany is the individual, supervised doctorate. Structured doctoral programmes are also becoming increasingly important. Doctoral studies are, as a rule, completed at universities or equivalent institutions of higher education, to some extent in cooperation with non-university research institutes and HAW/FH.

Increasingly, under certain conditions, it is also possible to do a doctorate at central or inter-university institutions at HAW/FH. In addition to the establishment of state-wide doctoral colleges (with and without cooperation with universities), many HAW/FH are setting up doctoral centres, doctoral colleges or similar, either as separate or joint organisational units, to carry out doctorates.

More than 28,000 doctoral students obtained their doctorate in 2024.

Organisation of doctoral studies

In order to support the up-and-coming academics, *Graduiertenkollegs*, financed by the German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* – DFG), have been set up at institutions of higher education since 1990 to provide students with the opportunity to prepare their doctorate within the framework of a systematic programme. In 2024 there were 243 DFG-funded *Graduiertenkollegs* in Germany. International doctoral programmes, International Max-Planck Research Schools and Graduate Schools are further options for structured doctoral training in Germany.

Entrance and admission requirements

Admittance to doctoral studies is regulated in the Higher Education Acts of the Länder and in the doctoral regulations (*Promotionsordnungen*) of the higher education institutions with the right to award a *Doktorgrad*. Master's degrees obtained at universities and equivalent higher education institutions, or at *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH), principally provide entitlement to doctoral studies. A pass in the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination) also provides entitlement to doctoral studies.

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

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

Funding of doctoral students/candidates

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

Assessment

A doctorate is conferred on the strength of a doctoral thesis, which must be based on independent research, and an oral examination called *Rigorosum*. Oral examinations may be replaced by a defence of the student's thesis (*Disputation*) or a comparable achievement. A doctoral thesis need not be written within any prescribed length of time. The dissertation is often written as a monograph, but cumulative dissertations are also possible in some cases.

Certification

The doctorate entitles a graduate to bear the *Doktorgrad* (title of *Doktor*).

Organisational Variation

The potential organisational formats of the doctorate are set out above.

7. ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

7.1. Introduction

Continuing education and further learning are becoming increasingly important with the present demographic development. In terms of lifelong learning, institutionalised continuing vocational training addresses the further development of individual qualifications as well as individual reorientation relative to the qualification. The development, recognition and certification of competences will become more and more important in future, as will new, non-formal learning. Continuing education encompasses the general, vocational and socio-political domains in equal measure. Their interactions are on the increase, particularly in view of the development and transfer of competences in the sense of lifelong further learning.

In response to the vast range of demands made on continuing education, a differentiated structure has been developed. Adult and continuing education institutions offer a variety of programmes, courses and subject areas covering general, vocational, political and continuing academic education. The aims, content and duration of courses vary accordingly.

7.2. Distribution of Responsibilities

Continuing education in Germany is regulated by the state to a lesser degree than other areas of education. The rationale 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 laws and ordinances 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
- some elements of continuing vocational training
- family education

The prerequisites and principles for the promotion and funding of continuing education are laid down in continuing education legislation and employment release

legislation of the Länder. 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 the maintaining body's freedom to prepare 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 14 of the 16 Länder legislation allows employees to attend continuing education courses (paid educational leave – *Bildungsurlaub*, *Bildungsfreistellung* or *Bildungszeit*) for up to five working days per year with no loss in earnings, provided that certain conditions are fulfilled. The exemption mostly refers to political and vocational continuing education and training, in some Länder also to parts of general continuing education and training, especially qualification for an honorary office. The legal basis differs from Land to Land.

Over the past years, the Länder have encouraged innovative offers and developed numerous programmes to support further education and training that take into account the various aspects of the demand for continuing education on regional labour markets and the increased importance of professional and vocational continuing education. Special attention is hereby paid to less qualified, as well as educationally deprived persons, and older employees.

In addition to the above-mentioned responsibilities, which are carried jointly by the Federation and the Länder, the FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S responsibilities include in particular:

- continuing vocational training outside the school sector
- 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

Regulations for the continuing education sector have been adopted at national level in the following legislation in particular: Book Three of the Social Code (*Drittes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Arbeitsförderung*), Upgrading Training Assistance Act (*Gesetz zur Förderung der beruflichen Aufstiegsfortbildung – AFBG*), Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz – BBiG*), Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (*Handwerksordnung – HwO*), Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz – BAföG*) and Law on the Protection of Participants in Distance Education (*Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetz – FernUSG*).

The Federal Employment Agency is responsible for promoting continuing vocational training under Book Three of the Social Code including for those eligible for

assistance under Book Two of the Social Code. The funding provided under Book Three includes the following measures, among others:

- Schemes to assess, maintain, extend or adapt the vocational knowledge and skills of adults.
- Qualification-oriented schemes aiming at a qualification in an *anerkannter Ausbildungsberuf* (recognised occupation requiring formal training): targeted mainly at persons with no vocational qualifications.
- Subsequent acquisition of a *Hauptschulabschluss* or an equivalent school-leaving qualification.
- Acquisition of basic skills to improve employability and prepare for subsequent qualifications.

Through the Upgrade Training Assistance Act participants in vocational upgrade training schemes, for example to a *Meister, Fachwirt, Techniker* or *Erzieher*, have received financial support since 1996. Regardless of their income, they receive a contribution towards the course and examination fees as well as towards the material costs of the masterpiece or comparable work. 50 per cent of this contribution is a grant and 50 per cent is an offer from the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) to take out a low-interest loan. For full-time measures, the AFBG provides for a contribution to living expenses in the form of a grant, depending on income and assets. In 2024, there were around 190,000 subsidised students.

The Federation and Länder cooperate in various projects to secure the profits of life-long learning for the design of individual educational and working lives. The key focus is on the topics literacy and basic education, competence balancing, quality management, networking and counselling as well as municipal education management.

7.3. Developments and Current Policy Priorities

The original objective of *learning for learning's sake* increasingly gave way to the task of responding to the educational needs arising from the demands of the state, society and industry. Since 1970, a more vocational slant, an emphasis on formal qualifications, systematisation and a new understanding of continuing education have been gaining importance.

With regard to the further development of the sector of continuing education within the scope of life-accompanying learning, the aim is to provide a foundation for the individual to

- develop the willingness for life-accompanying learning
- acquire the competences necessary for lifelong learning
- use institutionalised as well as new possibilities for learning in his or her life and work

Guiding ideas are

- reinforcement of self-responsibility and self-guidance
- redress of unequal opportunities
- cooperation between providers of education and users
- reinforcement of the relations between all sectors of education

The use of the potential of digitalisation is also becoming increasingly important in continuing education. In December 2017, a chapter on continuing education was

added to the Standing Conference's strategy Education in the Digital World in order to emphasise the role of continuing education institutions as an integral part of life-long learning. Against this background, digitally supported learning should enable location-independent, time-flexible offers that have a high degree of individualisation.

In September 2021, the Standing Conference adopted a "Position Paper on the Digital Continuing Education Initiative" (*Positionspapier zur Initiative Digitale Weiterbildung*). The Digital Continuing Education Initiative focuses on the Adult Education Centres (*Volkshochschulen*) and other non-profit institutions and providers that are recognised or funded under the adult and continuing education laws of the Länder and are active in general adult education. The initiative thus covers an area that is still poorly represented in previous nationwide digitisation programmes. The position paper formulates four relevant fields of action for the further digitisation of general continuing education:

- Digital infrastructure and equipment
- Education for digital competence development
- Further education and qualification
- Exchange and networking

In June 2019, the Federal Government, the Länder, the social partners, the chambers of industry and commerce and the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit – BA*) adopted the National Skills Strategy (*Nationale Weiterbildungsstrategie – NWS*). The strategy, which focuses on continuing vocational training, is intended to make a significant contribution to enabling individuals, companies and businesses, as well as society as a whole, to successfully cope with structural change and new challenges (e.g. automation, digitisation). The aim is to make further training courses and funding opportunities more transparent and more easily accessible for all in order to provide targeted support for groups of people with previously below-average participation in further training or for small and medium-sized enterprises without large personnel departments.

In September 2022, the partners of the National Skills Strategy decided to continue and further develop the strategy. Tried and tested instruments and concepts are to be widely applied, and new ideas discussed with representatives from practice and academia. In addition, concrete measures and activities for the further development of the continuing education system and for strengthening the culture of continuing education are to be agreed. The second implementation report on the NWS was published in March 2025.

As part of the EU 2030 Strategy, Germany has set itself the target of increasing participation in continuing education by 11 percentage points to 65 per cent by 2030. By implementing the NWS, the partners are helping to achieve this goal. In the follow-up paper "Continuing Education 2030: Opening up opportunities, strengthening skills, securing the future!" (2025), the NWS partners jointly focus on the following objectives: To equip people without vocational qualifications or suitable skills for the labour market, to support companies and employees in continuing education during structural change, and to harness the opportunities offered by digitalisation and artificial intelligence for continuing education.

These objectives are to be underpinned by measures and initiatives from all NWS partners. In doing so, the following four cross-cutting themes will continue to serve as a guide for their joint work:

- Facilitate access to counselling, promotion and further training offers, taking into account the financial and temporal framework conditions;
- Intensify cooperation in regions and sectors;
- Further develop concepts for competences of the future, qualification planning in the company as well as company and collective agreement approaches to strengthen continuing education;
- Strengthen digital CET with more transparency and innovative learning offers.

7.4. Main Providers

Continuing education is offered by municipal institutions, in particular *Volks-hochschulen*, public libraries and music schools, as well as by private institutions, church institutions, the trade unions, the various chambers of industry and commerce, political parties and associations, companies and public authorities, family education centres, academies, *Fachschulen*, institutions of higher education and distance learning institutions. Radio and television companies also provide continuing education programmes.

Under various continuing education legislation of some Länder, it is mainly the task of the VOLKSHOCHSCHULEN, the local adult education centres, but also of other maintaining bodies from the private sector, 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.

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.

It is usually possible to acquire school-leaving qualifications later in life at evening classes (*Abendhauptschulen*, *Abendrealschulen*, *Abendgymnasien*), at *Kollegs* and *Volks-hochschulen*. *Abendhauptschulen* prepare adults in a one-year course for the acquisition of the *Erster Schulabschluss* and the *Erweiterter Erster Schulabschluss*. *Abendrealschulen* take adults through to the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* in evening classes (four semesters). As a rule, the same applies to the acquisition of qualifications at *Volks-hochschulen*. *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*.

The Länder and maintaining bodies from the private sector offer qualification courses for young people and adults to obtain school-leaving certificates. These measures are designed to give young people with migrant backgrounds in particular the opportunity to obtain a school-leaving certificate.

As institutions of continuing vocational training, *FACHSCHULEN* offer courses lasting between one and three years (see chapter 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. Distance learning courses offered by private organisations have required state approval in the Federal Republic of Germany since 1 January 1977 under the Law on the Protection of Participants in Distance Education (*Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetz*). The decision to approve a distance learning course is taken by the Central Office for Distance Learning (*Staatliche Zentralstelle für Fernunterricht – ZFU*) of the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany. Under an approval procedure, checks are carried out not only on the factual and didactic quality of the teaching material in relation to the course objective, but also on advertising and on the form and content of the distance learning agreement which has to be concluded between the student and the distance learning institute. In total more than 38,000 people were registered in state-approved distance learning courses in 2023.

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

According to the Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*) and the legislation on higher education of the Länder (*Hochschulgesetze*), in addition to providing research, teaching 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, deepen and supplement practical professional experience and thus lead to an additional vocational qualification. The predominantly modularised courses last from a few weeks or months to several semesters. Through continuing academic education, higher education institutions in cooperation with partners from the economy, also contribute to the employability of working adults and thus promote regional development.

7.5. Main Types of Provision

Provision to Raise Achievement in Basic Skills

In November 2016, the Federation and Länder proclaimed the National Decade of Literacy and Basic Education 2016–2026 (*Nationale Dekade für Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung*), which takes up the findings and results of the “National Strategy for Literacy and Basic Education of Adults 2012–2016” (*Nationale Strategie für Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung Erwachsener*) that was launched in 2012. As a broad social alliance the strategy includes, among others, the local authorities (*Kommunen*), trade unions, churches, the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit – BA*) and *Volkshochschule* associations. The goal of the National Decade is to raise the reading and writing skills as well as the level of basic education amongst adults in Germany. Increasing the number of participants in corresponding educational measures is seen as one of the key factors for its success. The goals of the Decade are set out in a joint policy paper on the National Decade for Literacy and Basic Education 2016 to 2026 by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – BMBF*) and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (*Kultusministerkonferenz*). This policy paper is flanked by a 10-point programme of the Länder for the National Decade for Literacy and Basic Education, with which the

Länder participate in the implementation of the Alpha Decade with their own measures in their respective areas of responsibility.

In 2022, the Standing Conference's Working Group on Continuing Education published the second report of the Länder on the National Decade. The report shows that the Länder are making a significant qualitative and quantitative contribution to reducing functional illiteracy among adults in Germany with these fields of action and confirmed that the Länder are implementing and promoting the measures agreed within the framework of the National Decade. The central finding remains that it must be made easier for functionally illiterate people to gain access to existing learning opportunities. In mid-2023, the Federation also submitted the second progress report on the Alpha Decade to the German Bundestag. The report focuses on the wide range of federal funding provided as part of the Alpha Decade in the 2019–2022 reporting period. Since autumn 2024, the federal ministry of education has been funding a total of ten regional projects and a nationwide competence centre with the aim of developing and testing model basic education pathways. These pathways address specific target groups and link various advisory and learning opportunities and learning locations, such as integration courses, courses at *Volkshochschulen* or vocational training measures.

Provision to Achieve a Recognised Qualification during Adulthood

Admission requirements

Applicants for evening classes for the acquisition of a higher education entrance qualification (*Abendgymnasien*) must provide evidence of a vocational qualification or evidence that they have been in employment for at least two years. They must also be at least 19 years of age in the school year in which they enrol and have obtained the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*. Applicants who cannot provide evidence of the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* or an equivalent qualification have to complete at least a half-year preliminary course teaching mainly German, a foreign language and mathematics. The Länder may adopt special provisions on examinations for admission to and on the qualification for the preliminary course. Course members must be in employment except during the last three half-years. The admission conditions for *Kollegs* are the same as for *Abendgymnasien*. Those attending such schools are not allowed to combine their study with work.

Applicants will be admitted to *Abendrealschulen* (evening secondary schools leading to intermediate qualification) who are employed at the time of their admission or were employed for at least six months, who have successfully completed the educational programme at a *Hauptschule* or compulsory full-time schooling and have reached the age of 18.

Applicants will be admitted to *Abendhauptschulen* (evening secondary schools leading to intermediate qualification) who are employed at the time of their admission or were employed for at least six months, who have completed compulsory full-time schooling and are not yet in possession of the envisaged qualification or an equivalent qualification and have reached the age of 18.

Learner assessment/progression

The principles and objectives for the assessment of performance and the examinations in courses leading to school qualifications are comparable to those that apply in the secondary sector.

Certification

For information about how adults can attain school-leaving certificates through the so-called *Zweiter Bildungsweg* (second-chance education), i.e. evening classes and *Kollegs*, see chapter 7.2. The *Volkshochschulen* also offer courses in this area.

Provision Targeting the Transition to the Labour Market

Continuing vocational education and training also includes retraining and adaptation training (see chapter 2.4). Benefits from the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*) in accordance with Book Three of the Social Code (*Drittes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Arbeitsförderung*) can be received by unemployed persons or persons threatened by unemployment, but also by employed persons. In particular, people who want to catch up on vocational training or who have not worked in their learned profession for more than four years, for example, due to unemployment, raising children or caring for close relatives, or for whom a professional reorientation is necessary for health or labour market reasons, can also receive support. Further training oriented towards qualifications can also be completed step by step via partial qualifications or training modules. Partial qualifications oriented towards qualifications offer the possibility of achieving a vocational qualification by means of subsequent qualification. In these cases, the vocational qualification requires successful completion of the final examination on the basis of special approval by the competent body (so-called external examination). Support can also be provided for the acquisition of basic skills (e.g. skills in mathematics, reading or basic skills in information and communication technologies) as well as for catching up on the *Hauptschulabschluss* or an equivalent school-leaving qualification.

The basic prerequisite for the promotion of continuing vocational education and training is, on the one hand, the necessity of the continuing vocational education and training: it aims to secure or further develop the individual's employability to achieve sustainable employment prospects on the labour market. Before starting further training, unemployed persons and employees receiving supplementary Citizen's Benefit (*Bürgergeld*) must also receive advice from the employment agency or job centre. In addition, the continuing vocational education and training provider and the training measure must be approved for funding, unless a qualification allowance is claimed. Certification of the provider is sufficient for the qualification allowance within the framework of employee support. If the legal requirements for funding are met, the interested party receives an education voucher from the employment agency. Holders of education vouchers can choose freely from among the continuing vocational education and training providers approved for employment promotion in accordance with the agreed educational objective. Under certain conditions, employees do not require a training voucher for subsidized participation in a further training measure.

Subsidised continuing education and training costs include, for example, course costs, travel costs, costs for accommodation and meals away from home, if necessary, costs for childcare and the continued payment of unemployment benefit in the case

of continuing vocational education and training (*Arbeitslosengeld bei beruflicher Weiterbildung*) or basic security benefits under Book Two of the Social Code. Employers who release employees for qualification periods can – depending on the size of the company – receive wage subsidies.

Funding for continuing vocational education and training is a discretionary benefit provided by the Employment Agency, to which there is no legal entitlement. An exception to this is the legal entitlement to funding for continuing vocational education and training to catch up on a vocational qualification and for continuing vocational education and training with the aim of catching up on a *Hauptschulabschluss* or an equivalent school-leaving qualification.

Provision of Liberal (Popular) Adult Education

Admission requirements

In terms of size general and political further education remains an important continuing education sector with an especially broad range of subjects. There are usually no entry requirements for continuing general and political further education courses.

Contents

General continuing education encompasses all forms of learning that serve to deepen, expand or renew the knowledge, skills and abilities of people who have completed a first phase of education. It has become an essential element of lifelong learning.

As part of lifelong learning, the aim of continuing political education is to impart socio-political knowledge and competence as well as knowledge and skills that enable independent judgment of social contexts and promote active participation in democracy. Civic education and further education events are offered by numerous institutions and independent providers such as clubs, associations, trade unions, further education institutions and foundations for different target groups. Various umbrella organizations have emerged, particularly for the independent providers of civic education and continuing education, which serve to coordinate and organize internally and represent their interests externally.

The Federal Agency for Civic Education (*Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung* – bpb) has a special role to play. With its educational program, the bpb focuses on the fundamental issues of democratic development and social coexistence. Its task is to promote understanding of political issues, to strengthen democratic awareness and to increase the willingness to participate in politics. The bpb's wide-ranging program includes events, publications, audiovisual media and online offerings that impart knowledge about the historical and social contexts of political, social, cultural, economic and ecological processes. In addition, the bpb acts as an interface between the state, politics, educational institutions, science and the media with all forces of civil society. The bpb's permanent cooperation partners are primarily the 16 centres for political education of the Länder and the independent providers of political education. In addition, cooperation is sought with other educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, foundations and other social actors. Educational institutions recognized by the bpb can receive financial support for the implementation of continuing political education events.

The 16 centres for political education of the Länder operate independently at Land level and promote local projects in the field of political education, among other things.

Teaching Methods and Approaches

As in the school sector, the teaching staff take responsibility for teaching in their classes, taking the background and aptitude of each participant into consideration.

The use of new information and communication technologies as an effective tool in self-organised learning is also becoming an increasingly important aspect of adult education/continuing education. The majority of distance learning offers are supported online, either in full or in part. Many initiatives and projects have been launched to promote the use of these technologies.

Continuing education in the academic and creative field at higher education institutions

Entrance and admission requirements

The entry requirement for continuing education in the academic and creative field at higher education institutions is usually that participants have a degree, though sometimes continuing education courses are also open to applicants who have achieved the necessary skills through a period of employment or other means (see also chapter 6.3.1.). Master's study courses providing further education require, as a rule, a first higher education degree followed by relevant skilled work experience of at least one year.

Learner assessment/progression

For study courses providing continuing education in the academic and creative field which lead to a higher education degree, the observations on the first cycle programmes in chapter 6 apply.

Certification

Continuing education in the academic and creative field leads to certificates and, in the case of study courses, higher education degrees as well.

7.6. Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning

In the 'ValiKom' collaborative project, funded by the federal ministry of education, a total of 17 Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHKs), 13 Chambers of Crafts (HWKs) and 2 Chambers of Agriculture (LWKs) developed and tested a procedure for validating informally and non-formally acquired vocational competences between 2015 and 2024.

The Vocational Training Validation and Digitalisation Act (*Berufsbildungsvalidierungs- und -digitalisierungsgesetz – BVaDiG*) introduced, with effect from 1 January 2025, a procedure for assessing vocational competence against the standards of a dual vocational training programme, as set out in the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz – BBiG*) and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (*Handwerksordnung – HwO*).

With this assessment procedure, people without a formal vocational qualification are, for the first time, entitled to have their vocational competences assessed and certified against the standards of a dual vocational training occupation. The basic

requirement is that they are at least 25 years old and that their competences cover at least the majority of the job profile. Exceptions apply to people with disabilities, provided that this has a corresponding impact on their professional competence (no age limit; partial comparability is sufficient). High standards are set both for access to this assessment procedure and for the actual assessment of the applicant's professional competence, in order to ensure that the assessment is comparable to a standard final examination.

It is essential that applicants have worked in the profession for at least one and a half times the standard training duration prescribed for the reference profession for which they are applying for an assessment. During this period, their work must have covered the relevant job profile almost entirely if they are seeking full comparability. Only then can the procedure be initiated at all.

In order to support all Chambers of Industry and Commerce, Chambers of Crafts and Chambers of Agriculture responsible for assessing individual professional competence in fulfilling their new statutory duty – the organisation and conduct of procedures for assessing professional competence – during the initial years, a 'Validation' service centre has been established with funding from the federal ministry of education.

8. TEACHERS AND EDUCATION STAFF

8.1. Introduction

This chapter contains information on the initial education, conditions of service and continuing professional development of pedagogic staff in the early childhood sector and teachers working in school education, of teaching staff in tertiary education as well as of teachers and trainers working in adult education and training.

Pedagogic staff in early childhood education and care

Pedagogic staff in the German early childhood sector do not have the training and status of teachers. The pedagogic staff in the early childhood sector consist mainly of *Erzieherinnen/Erzieher* (state-recognised youth or child-care workers).

Teachers

Training of teachers at all types of schools is regulated by Land legislation. The relevant statutory provisions include laws and regulations for teacher training, *Studienordnungen* (study regulations) for teacher training courses, *Prüfungsordnungen* (examination regulations) for the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination) or for Bachelor's and Master's examinations, *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations) for the *Vorbereitungsdienst* (preparatory service) and examination regulations for the (Second) State Examination. The framework agreements of the Standing Conference for six types of teaching profession create the prerequisite for mutual recognition of training and examinations for the various teaching careers.

Responsibility for teacher training rests with the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs and Ministries of Science of the Länder which regulate training through study regulations or training regulations and examination regulations or corresponding statutory provisions. The First and the Second State Examination are conducted by the state examination authorities or boards of the Länder. In Bachelor's and Master's study courses which provide the qualifications required for admission to the preparatory service, the state responsibility for content requirements in teacher training is ensured through the involvement of a representative of the highest Land education authority for the school system in the accreditation procedure; any accreditation of individual study courses requires the approval of this representative. The accreditation procedure particularly involves monitoring the compliance with subject-specific requirements in teacher training valid for all Länder as well as with Länder-specific specifications concerning the content and structure. The subject-specific requirements valid for all Länder embrace the "Standards for teacher training: Educational sciences" (*Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften*) and the "Content requirements for subject-related studies and subject-related didactics in teacher training which apply to all Länder" (*Ländergemeinsame inhaltliche Anforderungen für die Fachwissenschaften und Fachdidaktiken in der Lehrerbildung*).

A compilation of the statutory requirements of all Länder for teacher training is available on the website of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) (www.kmk.org).

8.2. Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education

Institutions, level and models of training

Early childhood education and care

As a rule, pedagogic staff in early childhood education and care are trained at *Fachschulen* for youth and community work which are internationally assigned to the tertiary level. In recent years, a considerable dynamic and differentiation in training models and formats can be observed. The aim is to attract new target groups to the occupational field through relaxed entry requirements, a stronger practical connection already during training or a shortened duration of training in order to meet the urgent need for skilled workers. 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 cooperation between *Fachschulen* and *Fachhochschulen*.

Some of the staff (especially those in senior positions) have a degree from an institution of higher education as youth and community workers (*Sozialpädagogen*). 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 up to two integrated semesters of work experience (*Praxissemester*). Other academically-trained teaching staff include for instance childhood educators (*Kindheitspädagogen*). A variety of Bachelor study courses have now been established in this discipline.

In some Länder, supplemental staff, especially nursery assistants (*Kinderpflegerinnen und Kinderpfleger*), are employed in the sector of early childhood education and care 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.

In December 2011, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) developed a competence-based qualification profile for all fields of work of pedagogic staff in early childhood education and care in training in a *Fachschule* which was updated in 2017. The qualification profile defines the requirement level for the profession and describes the professional competences a qualified person must have. This should make it easier to credit qualifications gained at *Fachschulen* and *Fachakademien* to a degree course at an institution of higher education and thus ensure the mobility and appeal of the profession.

Teachers

Teacher training is basically divided into two stages, a course of higher education including periods of practical training and practical training in a school setting. The share of practical training in schools in higher education courses has been substantially increased in recent years. For study courses at universities, in all Länder institutions (e.g. centres for teacher training, Schools of Education) have been established in order to coordinate teacher training between the faculties, offer guidance and support as well as guarantee an adequate relationship to teaching practice.

The conclusion of a degree course at an institution of higher education, enabling access to preparatory service, is the first state examination or a Master of Education. In the majority of Länder in the meantime the consecutive structure of study with Bachelor and Master's degrees (BA/MA) has also been introduced in teacher training. Study courses which provide for Bachelor and Master's structures in teacher training are accepted in all Länder and their degrees are recognised if they meet the following requirements:

- integrative study at universities or equivalent higher education institutions of at least two subject areas and their didactics and of the educational sciences at the Bachelor level as well as at the Master level (the Länder are at liberty to specify exceptions in the subject areas art and music as well as in the vocational subject areas) in adherence to the common content requirements
- practical study in schools as early as during the Bachelor's course of study
- no extension of existing standard periods (without practical sections)
- differentiation of the curricula and diplomas by teaching position
- opening access to the preparatory service for a teaching position in accordance with Land law

Master's courses of study conveying the educational prerequisites for a teaching position have a specific teaching-related profile that is established in the course of the accreditation procedure in accordance with the specifications of the Foundation Accreditation Council (*Stiftung Akkreditierungsrat*) and is to be displayed in the *Diploma Supplement*. As a rule, the degree designations for Bachelor's and Master's study courses conveying the educational prerequisites for teaching positions are:

- Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.)
- Master of Education (M.Ed.)

The decision as to whether teacher training study programmes are concluded with the state examination or follow the graduated structure of higher education studies lies with the Länder. In Länder which have a consecutive study structure for teacher training, the Master's degree replaces the First State Examination as a rule. The (Second) State Examination must, however, be taken after the preparatory service.

Regardless of how the study is organised, the study courses have been modularised and provided with a credit point system.

Admission requirements

Early childhood education and care

For pedagogic staff in early childhood education and care, as a rule, the admission requirement for training is a *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* and either a relevant vocational 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.

Since 2004 higher education institutions in Germany have also been training child day-care professionals. There are now more than 100 Bachelor degree courses for pedagogic staff in (early) childhood education and care. The admission requirement is usually the higher education entrance qualification. One in three courses is offered part-time, while three are designed as integrated offers. Close cooperation between

Fachschulen and higher education institutions allows a double degree to be obtained: the vocational qualification and the Bachelor degree.

Teachers

The basic entry requirement for teacher training courses is the *Hochschulreife* (higher education entrance qualification), which is acquired after attending school for 12 or 13 years and passing the *Abitur* examination. The higher education entrance qualification can also be attained in other ways in specific cases (cf. chapter 7.5.), e.g. by adults who successfully complete a course of evening classes, or, in certain cases, following the successful completion of a non-university course of training in the tertiary sector.

A pass in the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination) or a similar higher education examination or, depending on the type of teaching career, a corresponding Master's degree examination, is the requirement for admission to the *Vorbereitungsdienst* (preparatory service). In the case of personal aptitude, it even constitutes entitlement to admission.

The *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination) or Master of Education forms the leaving qualification of a higher education course of study and on principle provides entitlement to doctoral studies. Details are regulated by the higher education institutions with the right to award doctorates (*Promotionsrecht*) in their doctoral regulations (*Promotionsordnungen*).

Curriculum, level of specialisation, learning outcomes

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, the following six types of teaching careers can be distinguished for reasons of clarity:

- Type 1 Teaching careers at the *Grundschule* or primary level
- Type 2 General teaching careers at primary level and all or individual lower secondary level school types (expiring)
- Type 3 Teaching careers at all or individual lower secondary level school types
- Type 4 Teaching careers for the general education subjects at upper secondary level or for the *Gymnasium*
- Type 5 Teaching careers in vocational subjects at upper secondary level or at vocational schools
- Type 6 Teaching careers in special education

In all *Länder* training is divided into studies at a university or equivalent institution of higher education including periods of practical training and practical training in a school setting (*Vorbereitungsdienst*). Teacher training courses are offered at universities, *Technische Hochschulen/Technische Universitäten*, *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (colleges of education) and colleges of art and music. Practical teacher training in the form of a *Vorbereitungsdienst* (preparatory service) takes place in teacher training institutes (*Studienseminare*) or comparable institutions and training schools. The preparatory service concludes with the Second State Examination; a pass in this examination confers the teaching qualification. The two stages of training must be closely related in terms of education and instruction provided and must take account of the specific requirements of each type of teaching career.

The training is based on the "Standards for teacher training: Educational sciences" ('Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften' – resolution of the Standing Conference of 16 December 2004, as amended) and the "Content requirements for subject-related studies and subject-related didactics in teacher training which apply to all Länder" ('Ländergemeinsame inhaltliche Anforderungen für die Fachwissenschaften und Fachdidaktiken in der Lehrerbildung' – resolution of the Standing Conference of 16 October 2008, as amended).

The basic pedagogical, subject-specific and didactic qualifications in the subject areas of heterogeneity, inclusion, basics of support diagnostics as well as teaching and learning in the digital world are of particular importance.

The "Standards for teacher training: Educational sciences" adopted by the Standing Conference in 2004 define the requirements to be met by teaching staff and refer to the education and training objectives formulated in the Education Acts of the Länder. The requirements are generated by the competences aimed for, which are subdivided into four areas:

- Teaching
- Education
- Assessment
- Innovation

These standards have since been supplemented by competences in the area of inclusion and updated with regard to the requirements of digitalisation. Teachers should be able to use digital media professionally and didactically in a meaningful way in their respective subject lessons and reflect on the content in accordance with the educational mandate.

The resolution of the Standing Conference "Content requirements for subject-related studies and subject-related didactics in teacher training which apply to all Länder" of 2008 has also since been updated with regard to inclusion and digitalisation. The content requirements for the subject-scientific and subject-didactic studies for a teaching profession are derived from the *requirements in the professional field of teachers*; they relate to the competences and thus to the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that a teacher must have in order to be able to cope with his or her tasks in relation to the respective teaching profession. With the specification of so-called specialist profiles (*Fachprofile*), the resolution contains a framework of the content requirements for the subject studies. Within this framework, the Länder and the teacher-training higher education institutions can themselves determine priorities and differentiations, but also additional requirements. The specialist profiles cover the description of the competences to be achieved during the course of studies as well as the individual substantive priorities needed for this. They relate to the subjects of general education and vocational teaching professions.

In accordance with these requirements on content binding for all Länder, the following competences should be acquired during the various phases of teacher training and in different education institutions:

- Basic competences with respect to the specialist sciences, their methods for acquiring and consolidating knowledge and way of working as well as the teaching methodology requirements will be largely built up during the course of studies.

- The development of competences that are defined more by teaching practices, on the other hand, is above all the job of the preparatory service; numerous bases for this will, however, be laid or initiated in the course of studies.
- After all, further development in a professional role as a teacher is the job of further and continuing education.

First stage of teacher training: Studies at a higher education institution

The characteristic elements of the courses for the six types of teaching career are described below in generalised form. The details are laid down in *Studienordnungen* (study regulations) of the higher education institutions, *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations) and *Prüfungsordnungen* (examination regulations) or corresponding legal provisions of the Länder. These include in particular provisions on the following:

- subjects/subject areas/special education focuses 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/special education focuses, including subjects relating to educational sciences and subject-related didactics as well as practical training at schools
- the type of certificates required for admission to examinations, the type and scope of individual parts of the examinations and assessment procedures

In principle, courses of study for a teaching position must be designed in such a way that they take into account the objectives of the corresponding school forms and types and lead to pedagogical professional competence in terms of subject and didactics.

Teaching career type 1: Teaching careers at the *Grundschule* or primary level

Courses of study for a teaching position at primary school or at primary level shall be designed at universities and equivalent higher education institutions in such a way that they take into account the objectives of primary school. Particular importance is attached to the educational and didactic components. The programme is geared to the scientific core areas of the respective subjects or learning areas studied and is intended to develop the ability to penetrate complex facts and also to work in an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary manner. Training for this type of teaching career consists of a course of study lasting at least seven semesters, which devotes particular attention to educational science and practical teaching components. The degree requirements total at least 210 credits as specified in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The course of study covers the following:

- Educational sciences, primary school pedagogy and primary school didactics.
- Subject-related and subject-didactic course contents from the subjects German and mathematics, as well as an additional subject or area of learning for the primary school or primary level. One of these subjects or areas of learning comprises at least 50 ECTS credits. In accordance with Land regulations, this may also make it possible to work beyond primary school or primary

level. The further subject or area of learning may be replaced by a special pedagogical focus.

- Practical experience at schools, which should begin in the first study semesters wherever possible. The course content in mathematics and German must meet the qualitative and quantitative requirements of a primary school teacher and the class teacher principle.
- A paper demonstrating the ability for independent scientific work.

The course of study concludes with a corresponding higher education qualification or the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination).

Teaching career type 2: General teaching careers at primary level and all or individual lower secondary level school types (expiring)

Training for this type of teaching career consists of a course of study lasting at least seven semesters. The degree requirements total at least 210 credits as specified in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The course of study covers the following:

- Educational sciences and practical training in schools.
- Studies and didactics relating to at least two subjects; the ratio of these subjects to the educational sciences should be approximately 2:1.
- A paper demonstrating the ability for independent scientific work.

Depending on the specific requirements for the individual teaching careers the relevant Land law may require one learning area or two subjects instead of one of the above two subjects.

The course of study concludes with a corresponding higher education qualification or the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination).

Teaching career type 3: Teaching careers at all or individual lower secondary level school types

Courses of study for a teaching position at lower secondary level must be designed at higher education institutions in such a way that they take into account the objectives of the corresponding school forms and types and lead to pedagogical professional competence in terms of subject and didactics.

Training for this type of teaching career consists of a course of study lasting at least seven semesters. The degree requirements total at least 210 credits as specified in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The course of study covers the following:

- Educational sciences and practical training in schools.
- Studies and didactics relating to at least two subjects; the ratio of these subjects to the educational sciences should be approximately 2:1.
- A paper demonstrating the ability for independent scientific work.

Depending on the specific requirements for the individual teaching careers the relevant Land law may require one learning area or two subjects instead of one of the above two subjects.

The course of study concludes with a corresponding higher education qualification or the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination).

Teaching career type 4: Teaching careers for the general education subjects at upper secondary level or for the *Gymnasium*

Courses of study for a teaching position at upper secondary level (general subjects) or the *Gymnasium* must be designed at higher education institutions in such a way that they take into account the objectives of the corresponding school forms and types and lead to pedagogical professional competence in terms of subject and didactics.

The *Regelstudienzeit* (standard period of study) for a study course for this type of teaching comprises a minimum of six semesters in a Bachelor's study course and a minimum of two semesters in a Master's study course. It comprises 10 semesters in total including periods of practical training in schools and is rated with 300 credits under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The standard period of study for teacher training courses ending with the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination) comprises a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 10 semesters and amounts to a volume of at least 270 ECTS credits.

The course of study covers the following:

- Educational sciences and practical training in schools.
- In-depth studies and didactics relating to two subjects comprising at least 180 ECTS credits divided more or less equally between both subjects.
- A paper demonstrating the ability for independent scientific work.

The course of study concludes with a corresponding Master's degree or the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination).

Teaching career type 5: Teaching careers in vocational subjects at upper secondary level or at vocational schools

Courses of study with the aim of fulfilling the subject-specific requirements for a teaching position at upper secondary level (vocational subjects) or for vocational schools (teaching career type 5) must be designed at higher education institutions in such a way that they take account of scientific findings and professional practice and lead to pedagogical professional competence in terms of subject matter and didactics.

The *Regelstudienzeit* (standard period of study) for a study course for this type of teaching comprises a minimum of six semesters in a Bachelor's study course and a minimum of two semesters in a Master's study course. It comprises 10 semesters in total including periods of practical training in schools and corresponds to 300 credits under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The standard period of study for teacher training courses ending with the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination) comprises 9 semesters and amounts to a volume of at least 270 ECTS credits.

A practical professional activity relating to the vocational subject area is also required lasting 12 months in principle.

The course of study covers the following:

- Educational sciences focusing on vocational or business education, subject-related didactics for the vocational subject area and the second teaching subject, and practical training in schools amounting to 90 ECTS credits.
- Subject-related studies within the vocational subject area (first subject) and subject-related studies for the teaching subject (second subject) totalling 180 ECTS credits.
- Bachelor's thesis and Master's thesis totalling 30 ECTS credits.

The Länder can deviate from this with 10 credit points upwards or downwards, but a total of 300 ECTS points must be achieved for consecutive degree programmes (or 270 ECTS points for Staatsexamen degree programmes).

Instead of the teaching subject a second vocational subject area or a subject area relating to special education may be chosen. The second subject can be an affine subject or an affine field in exceptional cases. The study and examination achievements in the second subject including subject didactics, in subject didactics for the vocational subject, in the educational sciences with a focus on vocational or business didactics as well as the practical school studies can in exceptional cases be fully completed in the Master's programme.

The course of study concludes with a corresponding Master of Education degree or the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination).

The following subject areas can be chosen for study: business and administration, metals technology, electrical engineering, construction engineering, wood engineering, textile technology and design, laboratory technology/process technology, print and media technology, colour technology, interior design and surface technology, health and personal hygiene, dietetics and domestic science, agriculture, youth and community work, nursing, automotive engineering, information technology/computer science. The Länder may admit other vocational subject areas.

Teaching career type 6: Teaching careers in special education

Courses for the teaching career in special education at universities and equivalent higher education institutions are to be structured such that they meet the requirements of the special needs education of pupils at all school types and foster the ability to act professionally in both specialist and educational terms.

Qualification as a special education teacher can be obtained either by passing the (Second) State Examination after obtaining a related higher education qualification, or by passing the First State Examination, and also through an additional course of study after qualifying for a different type of teaching career. In some Länder the two forms of training exist side by side or as alternatives.

The course of study covers the following:

- Educational sciences and practical training in schools, including in the subject areas relating to special education.
- Subject-related studies and didactics in at least one teaching area or area of learning.
- Study of special education; this should amount to around 120 ECTS credits.
- A paper demonstrating the ability for independent scientific work.

The ratio of subject-related studies to that of the educational sciences should be approximately 2:1.

To the extent that the teaching subject is based on subject-specific standards of teaching career type 4, the scope of the subject-specific and subject-didactic parts of the training is approximately 90 credit points (ECTS).

The *Regelstudienzeit* (standard period of study) for a study course comprises a minimum of eight semesters and is rated with 240 credits under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The course of study concludes with a corresponding higher education qualification or the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination).

Study of special education incorporates discipline-specific and cross-discipline components taking into account aspects of joint education of pupils with and without *Sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf* (special educational needs). The discipline-specific components include the following special educational focuses:

- education for the blind
- education for the deaf
- education for people with intellectual disabilities,
- education for the physically disabled
- education for children with learning difficulties
- education for those with speech defects
- emotional and social development

The Länder can also approve other subject areas.

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. It can last between 12 and 24 months. Preparatory service aims to provide practical training in schools building on subject-related science, subject-related didactics and educational science competences. It develops the competences laid down in the “Standards for teacher training: Educational sciences” (*Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften*) for teachers.

Training in the preparatory service takes place in different training formats at schools, teacher training colleges or similar establishments. It covers theoretical instruction, testing in lessons and theory-based reflection.

The following formats shape training in the preparatory service:

- introductory seminars
- sitting in on lessons
- accompanied teaching
- independent teaching
- training in seminar events.

The Länder may also credit relevant work placements abroad during the preparatory service, or after completing the first stage of teacher training to the duration of preparatory service. However, at least half of the preparatory service must be completed in Germany.

All applicants who have completed a teacher training course in accordance with the specifications of the Standing Conference are allowed equal access to the preparatory service for the type of teacher training that corresponds to their qualification. This applies irrespective of the Land in which the degree was acquired.

Depending on regulations under Land law up to 60 ECTS credits from the preparatory service can be credited to a Master’s degree.

Teacher educators

In the preparatory service teachers receive pedagogical and subject-related didactics training at teacher-training colleges. The Länder are responsible for the organisation

of these colleges. The head of a teacher-training college is, as a rule, appointed by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and reports directly to it.

Training at the teacher-training colleges is in the hands of teachers (lecturers/heads of department) with special scientific and practical expertise, who are given time off from their own lessons to teach at the colleges or are seconded to a teacher-training college full-time for a limited period.

In September 2025, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs adopted a “Job and Competency Profile for Subject Leaders at Teacher Training Colleges or Similar Institutions” (*‘Aufgaben- und Anforderungsprofil für Fachleitungen an den Studienseminaren oder vergleichbaren Einrichtungen’*). The profile precisely defines the core tasks and responsibilities that subject leaders undertake during the second phase of teacher training. The aim is to ensure that subject leaders develop a consistent understanding of their role and are able to organise their collaboration in a targeted and efficient manner (transparency and guidance function). Furthermore, by defining relevant areas of competence, the profile is intended to facilitate strategic planning of qualification and continuing professional development measures (qualification function). Finally, the clearly formulated standards for the tasks and competencies of subject leaders are intended to create a solid foundation for quality assurance and development in teacher training (evaluation function). Qualification measures and continuous professional development for subject leaders are based on the specific framework guidelines of each federal state and the profile of tasks and requirements.

Teachers at schools who are particularly highly skilled both professionally and methodologically are responsible for training trainee teachers in schools; the trainee teachers are assigned to these teaching staff for training.

The teachers involved in the preparatory service undergo continual in-service training.

Qualifications, evaluation and certificates

Regardless of whether the study course is organised in the tiered system or concludes with the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination), the courses of study are modularised and provided with a credit point system in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System. Examinations under the responsibility of universities are usually carried out during the courses of study. Credits which are acquired at *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH) as part of an accredited Bachelor’s or Master’s study course can be credited as part of the credit requirements in all teacher training courses. The details are regulated by *Studienordnungen* and *Prüfungsordnungen* (study and examination regulations). The successful completion of a teacher training course conveying the educational prerequisites for teaching positions entitles the holder of the degree to be accepted into the *Vorbereitungsdienst* (state preparatory service).

It is the task of the state examination boards, which are subordinate to the ministries responsible for the school system, to hold the First State Examination. Examinations that lead to a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree are carried out at the responsibility of the institutions of higher education. In Bachelor’s and Master’s study courses, which confer the qualification for admission to the preparatory service, the state responsibility for content requirements in teacher training is ensured through the involvement of

a representative of the highest Land education authority for the school system in the accreditation procedure; any accreditation of individual curricula requires the approval of this representative.

The preparatory service concludes with the (Second) State Examination. This is a prerequisite for, but not a guarantee of permanent employment in the state school sector. It has to be taken before a state examination board or a state examination commission and usually consists of four parts:

- in the majority of the Länder a major written paper relating to educational theory, pedagogic psychology or the didactics of one of the subjects studied;
- a practical teaching examination involving demonstration lessons in the chosen subjects;
- an examination on basic questions of educational theory, educational and civil service legislation and school administration and occasionally on sociological aspects of school education;
- an examination on didactic and methodological issues in the subjects studied.

The forms taken by the State Examination must be capable of recording the level of competence development pursuant to the "Standards for teacher training: Educational sciences" (*Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften*) as periodically amended. To ensure the quality of training in the preparatory service, external and internal evaluation measures are implemented.

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 (see also chapter 8.3.).

Alternative training pathways

Teacher training usually takes place in a teacher-training degree course at a university or equivalent institution of higher education followed by the *Vorbereitungsdienst* (preparatory service), and ending with a state examination. However, if there is an irrefutable need for specific teaching careers or disciplines in the Länder, and this cannot be met by teachers with formal teacher training, lateral entrants may be employed in order to meet short-term demands. Depending on the Land, type of school and specialisation, there is a varying degree of demand for lateral entrants. In 2024, 4,114 or 12.7 per cent of all newly recruited teachers in the public-school sector had no formal teacher training. Their number increased significantly compared to the previous year. The measures to employ lateral entrants are largely oriented by the latest versions of the standards adopted by the Standing Conference and the agreements on teacher training common to all Länder.

8.3. Conditions of Service for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education

The staff of pre-school establishments are employed by the respective maintaining bodies (local authorities, churches and privately-maintained bodies), and paid in

accordance with rates negotiated under collective agreements. As a rule, privately-maintained bodies are not subject to a collective agreement. At present and in the next few years there will be huge demand for skilled staff in pre-school education in some of the Länder. The reasons for this are above all the expansion of day care for children under three years of age and measures for quality assurance in the early childhood education and care sector. To cover the additional demand, the Länder concerned have increased their training capacities.

The legal position of teachers with civil servant status at public-sector schools is regulated by the civil service legislation of the Länder. Provisions on the salaries and old-age pensions received by teachers are contained in the civil servants' remuneration acts (*Beamtenbesoldungsgesetze*) and civil servants' pensions acts (*Beamtenversorgungsgesetze*) of the Länder. The basic structures of the status-related rights and obligations of local authority and Land civil servants is regulated by the federal Civil Servants Status Act (*Beamtenstatusgesetz*), which contains provisions inter alia on the cross-Länder secondment or transfer of civil servants.

The legal position of salaried teachers corresponds to general employment law as well as provisions under the collective wage agreement.

The Federation and the Länder can pass their own regulations for their area in order to guarantee performance levels, awards and allowances. Individual aspects of the terms and conditions of employment of teachers (e.g. compulsory hours and release from duties) and career matters (recruitment, transfer, secondment and promotion) are regulated at Land level through ordinances or administrative regulations issued by the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. A list of regulations of the Länder is available on the website of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*).

Planning policy

Teacher demand in Germany differs by Land, school type and subject. In some of the Länder, it will probably not be possible to meet the demand in certain regions for individual types of teaching posts and for certain subjects in the coming years. This is mostly due to the fact that there will be a large number of retirements from schools compared to an insufficient number of students entering study courses leading to a teaching qualification.

Since December 2018, the model calculation of teacher demand and teacher supply in the Federal Republic of Germany – summarized model calculations of the Länder (*Lehrereinstellungsbedarf und -angebot in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Zusammengefasste Modellrechnungen der Länder*) has been published annually. The report is based on Länder data and combines the current estimate of the demand for teachers in the various types of teaching career over the next few years with a forecast of students completing the *Zweite Staatsprüfung* (Second State Examination). The starting point for determining overall demand is the number of teachers considered necessary for existing and projected pupil numbers up to 2035. This should allow an assessment of how far demand for teachers in the various types of teaching career will be met by supply in the different Länder up to the year 2035.

According to the model calculation, the average annual need to recruit teachers will increase in almost all teaching fields. The main reasons for this are the consequences

of changing birth rates and further immigration. However, the supply of teachers will also increase for the most part.

In June 2024, the Standing Conference agreed on further measures to ensure the supply of teaching staff by implementing the concept “Measures to attract additional teachers and to structurally supplement teacher training” (*Maßnahmen zur Gewinnung zusätzlicher Lehrkräfte und zur strukturellen Ergänzung der Lehrkräftebildung*). The resolution “Designing additional pathways to teaching” (*Gestaltung von zusätzlichen Wegen ins Lehramt*) created a specific common framework for the design of qualification pathways to become a single-subject teacher as well as the introduction of so-called lateral entry master's programmes and dual study programmes. These are intended to supplement initial teacher education by enabling people to achieve a comparable or equivalent qualification for a teaching profession or for the teaching profession. The created pathways are intended to supplement, but not replace, the basic teacher training. There is no obligation to implement them. The existing resolutions on the content and structural framework for teacher training remain unchanged. These are additional measures that are based on the model of the two-phase initial teacher training in terms of the relevant standards of the Standing Conference for the educational and subject-specific sciences and the subject didactics, as well as in terms of their design. In view of this, the following order of precedence is recommended for access to the preparatory service for the state-specific regulations:

- (1) state examination or Master of Education
- (2) lateral entry with two derivable subjects
- (3) lateral entry with one derivable subject

One of the aims of the current decision is to integrate graduates of alternative teacher training programmes as seamlessly as possible into the preparatory service or into teaching at school, even if they move to another federal state. It is intended to make a decisive contribution to facilitating the cross-border mobility of teachers recruited through the additional measures.

Entry to the profession

Following successful completion of their *Vorbereitungsdienst* (preparatory service) newly-qualified teachers can apply for permanent employment at public-sector schools. Depending on the Land, the application should be sent to the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs or to the school supervisory authority responsible. A decision on recruitment is taken centrally on the basis of job vacancies and according to the criteria of aptitude, qualifications and record of achievement. In some Länder, some of the positions are also advertised with the profile of a particular school in mind and the respective school takes part in selecting the applicants. In such cases, the applications are sometimes to be sent directly to the respective school, however, the appointment is not made by the school itself but by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs or by the school authority that reports to it. Successful applicants are usually appointed as civil servants on probation. The probationary period, which for teachers, as a rule, has a duration of 2.5 years (higher service) or three years (senior service), and which under certain circumstances may be reduced or extended (up to five years at the most), serves to test and determine the probationary further review of applicants with regard to his future appointment as a permanent civil servant. Salaried teachers have a six-month probationary period.

All graduates of preparatory service in a teaching career meeting the requirements of the Standing Conference's agreements are given equal professional access to the type of teaching career corresponding to their degree.

Induction

According to the recommendations of the *Gemischte Kommission Lehrerbildung* of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs from 1999, the provisions for the deployment of young teaching staff are to aim at a gradual development of professional competence. Furthermore, a system of support for the induction period for newly qualified teachers is to be established, including measures of in-service training particularly adjusted to the needs of newly qualified teachers. An induction period has been set up in almost all Länder, and in three Länder participation is mandatory for those entering the profession. The design of the induction period varies in terms of duration and content in the individual Länder. As a rule, it lasts two or three years and includes further training events, collegial advice and support, handouts and other support measures. In the case of didactical and methodical problems, especially newly qualified teachers have the option to ask training staff from teacher training institutes (cf. chapter 8.1.) or institutions for in-service teacher training for advice.

Professional status

Teachers at public-sector schools in the Länder in western Germany are usually civil servants employed by the Länder.

Once a teacher has proved his suitability and aptitude in the probationary period (two and a half to three years depending on the career structure, one and a half to two years in Bayern), he or she is appointed as a permanent civil servant.

Teachers can be taken on as salaried employees on the basis of fixed-term or open-ended employment contracts as well.

Replacement measures

Faced with the need to provide cover for absent teachers, the head teacher first of all can rely on existing teaching staff. According to the general civil service regulations in effect, teachers are under obligation to temporarily perform extra work for which initially no financial compensation is awarded. If the number of periods teachers are required to spend in class is exceeded by more than three periods per month, extra work compensation may be granted. In Sachsen, the special regulation that overtime pay is granted for the entire amount of overtime worked in the case of ordered or approved overtime for teaching activities applies until the end of 2026. Extra work compensation for the single lesson is regulated by ordinances of the Länder.

Long term absences, such as maternity protection, parental leave, longer-term employment ban or sick leave of several months, may be covered by the appointment of teachers on a temporary contract. Another measure of providing cover for absent teachers can be the temporary merging of classes or courses. The regulations for the duration of this measure vary between the Länder.

Supporting measures for teachers

If problems arise in relationships with colleagues or pupils, all teachers can turn to the head teacher. In the case of difficulties with other colleagues, teachers can turn

to the staff council responsible for the school. In the case of a conflict with pupils, besides consulting the head teacher, teachers can call in the parents' council (*Elternbeirat*) or the lower-level school supervisory authorities (*Schulrat, Schulamtsdirektor*). This last option also exists if problems with colleagues cannot be solved on the level of the school. In the case of difficulties with colleagues or pupils that result from personality disorder or in the case of burn-out, the school psychologist can be consulted. Various health prevention measures are offered to prevent burnout.

Salaries

Pedagogical staff in early childhood education and care

Erzieherinnen and *Erzieher* (state recognised youth or child-care workers) are generally paid in remuneration group S 8a of the Collective Agreement for the Public Sector (*Tarifvertrag für den öffentlichen Dienst – TVöD*), with the salary levels of this remuneration group being based on professional experience. *Erzieherinnen* and *Erzieher* who already have professional experience are allocated to level 2 as a rule. Higher levels are achieved only after several years with the same employer. Employees in establishments bound by collective wage agreements are significantly better off than those in establishments not bound by collective wage agreements.

In public day care facilities for children, the average gross monthly salary for the pedagogical staff in 2023 was Euro 4,300 according to the Educational Finance Report (*Bildungsfinanzbericht*). The expenditure in the Länder varies between Euro 4,200 and Euro 4,500.

Teachers

For the remuneration of teachers with salaried employee status the provisions of the Collective Agreement for the Public Sector of the Länder (TV-L) apply.

Provisions on the remuneration of teachers with civil servant status are contained in the civil servants' remuneration acts (*Beamtenbesoldungsgesetze*) of the Länder. The following illustration of salaries for civil servants reflects the situation in the majority of Länder.

As civil servants, teachers as a rule are classified – depending on their training – under the higher or senior service or a specific entry-level office. Following their studies and the *Vorbereitungsdienst* (preparatory service), teachers are usually placed on scales A 12 or A 13. Taking some of the teaching careers described in chapter 8.1. as a basis, the general allocation of salary groups and possibilities of promotion are outlined below:

Teachers at <i>Grundschulen</i>		A 12 A 13	
Teachers at <i>Hauptschulen</i>		A 12 A13	
Teachers at <i>Realschulen</i>		A 12 A 13	
Teachers at special education institutions		A 13	

Teachers at <i>Gymnasien</i> with scope for promotion to:	<i>Studienrat</i>	A 13	(with or without post allowance)
	<i>Oberstudienrat</i>	A 14	(associated with as-
	<i>Studiendirektor</i>	A15	suming a function)
Teachers at vocational schools with scope for promotion to:	<i>Studienrat</i>	A 13	(with or without post allowance)
	<i>Oberstudienrat</i>	A 14	(associated with as-
	<i>Studiendirektor</i>	A 15	suming a function)

There are teachers in some Länder who are not trained for a particular type of school but for a certain school level (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary). These teachers are as a rule allocated to the salary groups as follows:

Teachers holding a primary level teaching certificate		A 12 A 13	
Teachers holding a teaching certificate for the lower secondary level	Starting On promotion	A 12 A 13	
Teachers holding a teaching certificate for the upper secondary level with scope for promotion to:	<i>Studienrat</i>	A 13	(plus post allowance)
	<i>Oberstudienrat</i>	A 14	(associated with assuming a function)
	<i>Studiendirektor</i>	A 15	

The remuneration received by teachers with civil servant status consists of a basic salary, family allowance and other allowances. The basic salary depends on the salary group and the salary grade. When a teacher first becomes a civil servant, he usually starts out on grade 1–5, moving up to the next salary grade after two or three years initially, and then every three, four or five years. The teachers' performance, as well as his experience, can be considered before promoting them to the next salary grade. The highest salary grade, depending on the pay seniority set at the time of a teacher becoming a civil servant, will be reached between the ages of 50 and 55.

The family allowance varies according to the salary group and the family circumstances of the civil servant. Level 1 relates to the family situation of the civil servant, while levels 2 and above relate to the number of children he or she has.

Allowances may be provided for certain extra responsibilities.

The remuneration may also include a so-called annual special payment, the amount of which Federation and Länder are free to determine for their respective sectors. The special payment is paid either per month or per year. In some Länder the annual special payment has been abolished; in others it has been incorporated into the basic salary. In addition to the annual special payment, a special payment can be made for each child.

Tax is deducted from civil servants' gross salaries but, unlike for salaried employees, no social security contributions (pension, health and unemployment insurance) are deducted. Pension and unemployment insurance deductions do not apply because of teachers' civil servant status, under which they are entitled to retirement benefits.

Health insurance contributions vary from case to case because civil servants usually have private health insurance, charges for which are not standard. In the event of illness, the employer grants his civil servants allowances. The civil servants' obligation to take out health insurance is limited to treatment costs that are not covered by the allowances.

The remuneration received by teachers with civil servant status is regularly adjusted by law to keep pace with the general economic and financial situation, taking into account the degree of responsibility associated with the duties of a civil servant. These adjustments correspond largely to the pay settlements for workers and salaried employees in the public sector.

As an illustration there follows a calculation of entry-level salary, salary after 15 years of professional experience and final salary of a teacher as a national average by education sector. The calculation is based on the legally or contractually agreed annual salaries of all teachers at public-sector schools. It includes allowances and special payments. The examples assume that the teachers have no children and are unmarried and that they are thus not entitled to a family allowance or to special payments for children.

Teacher at a *Grundschule*

- a) The *Grundschule* teacher receives the starting salary. His gross annual salary in the school year 2024/2025 is Euro 59,979.
- b) The *Grundschule* teacher has 15 years of professional experience. His gross annual salary in the school year 2024/2025 is Euro 71,844.
- c) The *Grundschule* teacher receives the maximum salary. His gross annual salary in the school year 2024/2025 is Euro 77,433.

Teacher at lower secondary level

- a) The teacher at lower secondary level receives the starting salary. His gross annual salary in the school year 2024/2025 is Euro 66,461.
- b) The teacher at lower secondary level has 15 years of professional experience. His gross annual salary in the school year 2024/2025 is Euro 78,436.
- c) The teacher at lower secondary level receives the maximum salary. His gross annual salary in the school year 2024/2025 is Euro 86,186.

Teacher at upper secondary level

- a) The teacher at upper secondary level receives the starting salary. His gross annual salary in the school year 2024/2025 is Euro 69,293.
- b) The teacher at upper secondary level has 15 years of experience. His gross annual salary in the school year 2024/2025 is Euro 81,121.
- c) The teacher at upper secondary level receives the maximum salary. His gross annual salary in the school year 2024/2025 is Euro 92,819.

Working time and holidays

Working Hours

The working hours of teachers comprise lessons and other responsibilities which teaching involves and which are very time-consuming and require considerable effort (e.g. preparing and reviewing lessons, marking pupils' work, attending meetings and organising and taking part in school trips and parents' evenings).

The number of periods which teachers are required to spend in class varies from one type of school to another as well as from Land to Land. A period is generally 45 minutes long. The following figures for the 2025/2026 school year serve as an example and are confined to types of school to be found in the majority of Länder:

<i>Grundschule</i>	26	to	28	periods per week
<i>Hauptschule</i>	26,5	to	28	periods per week
<i>Realschule</i>	24	to	28	periods per week
<i>Schularten mit zwei Bildungsgängen</i>	23	to	27	periods per week
<i>Gymnasium</i>	22,2	to	28	periods per week
<i>Schularten mit drei Bildungsgängen</i>	21,4	to	28	periods per week
<i>Förderschulen</i>	25	to	32	periods per week
Vocational schools	21	to	32	periods per week

In addition, the number of periods which teachers are required to give varies according to the type of school and also varies according to teaching qualifications and the subjects taught (e.g. the number of periods is higher for artistic/cultural and practical subjects). Teachers are also entitled to have the number of periods reduced for performing certain duties (such as administrative work in the case of head teachers and their deputies). In addition, the number of periods is also reduced for members of staff carrying out special tasks (e.g. teacher training, preparation of timetables and stand-in schedules, running of libraries for teachers and pupils and involvement in the work of pupils' representative bodies as a pupils' council advisor) as well as an age-related reduction of one to three periods a week from the age of 55 at the earliest.

Because of the current fluctuations in the overall number of pupils, the increasing shortage of public spending, the rising average age of teaching staff, and the new tasks schools are required to perform, e.g. the further development of offers for intramural all-day supervision, some Länder have established planning groups which are to discuss alternative concepts for the regulation of teachers' working time. Several Länder have by now introduced special models for teachers' working time (working time accounts, model of anticipated teaching periods) which are to adjust the working time of teachers flexibly to the fluctuations in pupil numbers: For some years, teachers will have to teach one additional period. At a later date, the number of periods they are required to teach will be reduced by one period for the same duration of time.

Holidays

Entitlement to leave for teachers with civil servant status is based on general civil service regulations. Annual leave is taken during the school holidays. Periods of holiday which extend beyond leave entitlement are used for in-service training, for preparing and reviewing lessons, for other professional duties such as organisational

preparations for the new school year and for compensation for extra work during teaching time extending beyond the standard working time in civil service. For salaried teachers, the corresponding regulations under collective agreements on wages apply.

Promotion, advancement

Before a change in the status as civil servant takes place, for example a promotion, the professional performance of the teacher is assessed. In some Länder, teachers are assessed not only before a change in the civil servant status takes place but at regular intervals. The Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs have issued appraisal guidelines for assessing teachers at public-sector schools. The guidelines lay down who is responsible for teachers' appraisals, state the reasons for them and when they should be carried out and specify the form such appraisals should take and what is done with them. Under these guidelines, an appraisal must cite the basis for assessment (e.g. talk with the teacher concerned, performance report by head teacher, visit to lesson) and the assessment criteria (knowledge of subject, teaching record, professional conduct). Apart from an overall verdict on the teacher's performance up to that point, the assessment usually ends with proposals on his future career. The professional performance of teachers who are employed as salaried employees is, as a rule, not regularly assessed.

The only relevant criteria for promotion are aptitude, qualifications and record of achievement, and not length of service. In the majority of Länder, senior positions may be established only in such cases where the functions associated with them are of tangibly greater value than those of the lower salary group. This means that nobody can be promoted to a higher scale or salary group without a change in his responsibilities or position.

Additionally, teachers may apply for the post of head teacher or, provided the teacher has the required aptitude, qualifications and record of achievement, be employed as a member of staff responsible for supervision of schools (see chapters 10.1. and 10.2.).

Teachers with civil service status who wish to work at a school in another Land within the Federal Republic require the consent of the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs responsible for their old school and that of the receiving Land. In an agreement adopted in May 2001, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder laid down two procedures for the Transfer of Teachers between Länder (*Übernahme von Lehrkräften aus anderen Ländern*). On the one hand, teachers can now participate at any time in the application procedure in another Land. In addition, they can apply for a posting in a different Land within the scope of the exchange procedure that was already in existence before the agreement of May 2001. This agreement is aimed, amongst other things, at increasing the mobility of teachers in Germany.

Salaried teachers are not bound by the regulations named; the contractually agreed notice periods apply for them if they wish to change to the education authority of another Land.

Transfers

A teacher with civil servant status may be transferred to another school if he or she applies to do so or if there are good professional reasons for a transfer. Teachers may be transferred without their consent only in cases where the new school is

answerable to the same authority as the old one and the new position belongs to the same or an equivalent career structure as the present post and attracts the same final basic salary. Good professional reasons for a transfer may be deemed to exist when schools have amalgamated, or the number of teaching positions has been reduced owing to declining school rolls. The reason may also be directly connected to the teacher, such as his/her being considered suitable for other duties. A transfer will always be the consequence where it is the only way to bring a teacher's duties into line with his position. The responsibilities of a civil servant towards his employer mean that the teacher must accept a transfer even if it does not accord with his wishes. However, the school supervisory authority is required to consider significant personal circumstances which may make a transfer unreasonable (e.g. advanced age or poor health).

Dismissal

A teacher with civil servant status can only be dismissed – unless he or she demands his own resignation – under extraordinary circumstances:

- if he loses his German citizenship or citizenship of another member state of the European Community
- if he refuses to swear the oath of office prescribed by law or to take a vow prescribed in its place
- if through the verdict of a German court of law in a criminal case he has been sentenced to a specific term of imprisonment

Disciplinary proceedings can also result in dismissal. Dismissal is possible during the probationary period if a teacher does not prove himself or if he commits a deed which, if committed by a permanent civil servant, would result in disciplinary measures as part of formal disciplinary proceedings.

Salaried teachers can terminate their working relationship under observance of the contractually agreed notice periods. Their contract of employment can also be terminated by the employer for reasons that lie within the individual themselves or that result from their behaviour, as well as for other reasons; the notice periods also have to be observed in such a case. The length of the notice period is proportional to the length of service.

Retirement and pensions

Until 2012 teachers retired at the end of the school year or the term (half year) preceding or following their 65th birthday.

Since 2012 the standard retirement age is gradually being raised, first by one month per age group, and from 2024 by two months per age group, so that, as a rule, those born in 1964 will retire at the age of 67. In Rheinland-Pfalz, teachers are exempt from this regulation.

It is possible for teachers to apply for early retirement without proving that they are unfit for work from age 63 onwards or – for people with severe disabilities – from age 60 onwards.

In 2017, the following regulations generally apply to the provision of teachers with civil service status:

Any civil servant who has worked for at least five years is entitled to a pension. However, there is no minimum service requirement in cases where the teacher was

prevented from carrying out his duties, for instance through illness. The pension is calculated on the basis of the basic salary, the family allowance and the pensionable allowances which the civil servant was receiving at the end of his service. The pension amounts to just less than 1.8 per cent of eligible earnings for each year of service which is counted towards superannuation, ranging from a minimum of 35 per cent up to a maximum of 71.75 per cent of pensionable pay.

The retirement pension of salaried teachers is regulated in Book Six of the Social Code (*Sechstes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Gesetzliche Rentenversicherung*). It corresponds to the amount of the pension contributions made and the length of time over which they were paid. In addition to the old-age pension, salaried teachers receive an additional pension from the Federal and State Government Employees' Retirement Fund (*Versorgungsanstalt des Bundes und der Länder – VBL*).

8.4. Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education

Organisational aspects

Pedagogic staff in early childhood education and care

Pedagogic staff are also offered numerous further and continuing education possibilities to allow them to broaden their vocational competence, respond to new demands in the workplace, upgrade their qualifications and specialise.

The continuing education market for pedagogic staff in early childhood education and care is only legally regulated to a small extent and is therefore characterised by an organisational diversity that is reflected in the structures of the maintaining bodies and types of courses. The providers of continuing education in this sector are mainly charitable free maintaining bodies and commercial providers. Only a small share of the continuing education providers belongs to a public maintaining body that operates on a federal and Länder level or on a municipal level. The course formats are heterogeneous: these range from short informative events through to continuing education programmes lasting many years. Apart from individual and team-related continuing education programmes, they cover supervision offers, quality circles or study trips.

Teachers

In-service training – like initial training – at public schools is the responsibility of the Länder. In each of the Länder the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs is responsible for in-service teacher training because it is the highest school supervisory authority and usually the employer of 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. Other details about organisations which provide in-service teacher training and about applications, admission and release from teaching duties for attendance of courses are regulated by directives. Some Länder have also formulated the fundamental aims and tasks of in-service teacher training in directives or publications and not in legal provisions. 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.

State in-service and further training of teachers in accordance with education policy guidelines includes in-service qualification measures that serve to maintain, update and further develop existing professional competences in the sense of lifelong learning. If necessary, it differentiates for different target groups and pursues specific goals that are implemented at central, regional (if necessary also transnational) and school-internal level. It should also contribute to initiating, realigning and coordinating development processes in the school so that organisational capacities are strengthened.

In-service training follows on from the first and second phases of teacher education in the sense of coherence in teacher education and combines science-based and practice-oriented training. The third phase of teacher education also includes in-service training. Through this, additional qualifications are acquired – largely through in-service scientific studies, but also through specialist further education courses.

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).

Further training usually extends over a longer period and includes various courses of several hours per week and, where necessary, additional intensive courses. For the length of the course participants are released from their teaching duties or from several of their weekly teaching commitments provided that the school supervisory authority recognises the need for the further training course concerned.

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.

In September 2025, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs adopted the “Requirements for In-Service Training Providers” (*Anforderungen an Fortbildner und Fortbildnerinnen*), which set out the minimum qualifications, skills and experience that in-service training providers should possess. They should either be fully qualified teachers in the subject in which they offer training, or possess proven expertise in the relevant subject area, acquired in various ways – through a degree, further training, in-service qualification, etc. Furthermore, trainers should possess the skills necessary to implement the didactic and methodological requirements for the design of training courses in a way that ensures their effectiveness. In addition, training events should be subject to regular mandatory evaluation.

Types of institutions

In March 2020, the Standing Conference adopted “Cross-Länder key principles for the continuing professional development of teachers as part of their professionalisation in the third phase of teacher training” (*Ländergemeinsame Eckpunkte zur Fortbildung von Lehrkräften als ein Bestandteil ihrer Professionalisierung in der dritten Phase der Lehrerbildung*). The resolution forms the basis for the following description, which relate exclusively to in-service teacher training.

As a rule, 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 for the most part 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 some Länder, the organisation of the central upgrade training for teachers is the responsibility of the Land institute for school development, which also goes under a different name depending on the Land.

In-service teacher training at regional level is conducted differently in each Land by the institutes responsible 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.

As far as the institutes are responsible for in-service training throughout the Land, there is no need to define areas of responsibility. Otherwise, there is usually coordination between the organisers of central and regional in-service training courses, for example, in the form of regular meetings or conferences. In-service training courses are thus conducted through cooperation between the parties concerned.

In-service training within schools is essentially organised by individual schools, although assistance with its preparation, execution and subsequent evaluation is available in some Länder from in-service training institutions and advisers from school supervisory authorities. In some Länder the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs is informed of the content and dates of courses held within schools and in other Länder in-service training sessions within schools are offered by the central institutes of the Länder in cooperation with the school supervisory authorities.

Training courses are also offered by churches and non-public bodies (e.g. foreign cultural institutions and associations which bring together school and industry). In some Länder, these bodies must be recognised by the school supervisory authorities or the central institutes. Universities and higher education institutions of equal status have set up courses of further studies (with a final examination) and supplementary and further training courses for teachers. The institute directory in the Appendix contains an overview of establishments in the Länder offering in-service teacher training and further training courses.

Admission requirements

The target groups for a training course and the entry criteria for in-service teacher training courses are shown on the relevant course programme which is published regularly by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs concerned, by in-service training institutions or other organisers of in-service teacher training. The courses are usually offered at central, regional or local level for specific target groups (for example, teachers at specific school types or levels, teachers with teaching qualifications in certain subjects or teachers from a specific region).

Every teacher who fulfils the formal admission criteria is entitled to attend the in-service training courses if attendance will be of benefit to him in his teaching duties and if teaching commitments do not prevent him from attending. As a rule, teachers are released from their teaching commitments on full pay in order to attend in-service training courses. In some Länder, the law stipulates that in-service training must take place during school holidays. The procedures for making an application, being released from teaching duties and receiving permission to attend the course differ from Land to Land. If in-service training sessions are to be held in lesson time an application for release from duties must be made in all Länder. Release from teaching duties is usually granted by the head teacher or the relevant school supervisory authority.

In some cases teachers apply directly to the organiser of in-service training and in other cases applications are made through official channels, i.e. through the head teacher and the school supervisory authority. The procedure for selecting teachers also varies from Land to Land; in some cases the school supervisory authority selects participants (sometimes with the involvement of the staff council). If the school supervisory authority selects candidates itself, they automatically release them from their teaching duties. In some Länder the organiser (for example, the central in-service training institution) may make the selection according to an approved list of criteria.

In view of the development towards working in multi-professional teams, in-service training programmes for teachers are increasingly being opened up to other target groups or corresponding programmes are being specifically developed.

Curriculum, duration of studies, specialisation

In-service training is an essential part of the professional activity of teachers and is anchored in the legal framework. This gives rise to a duty of care on the part of the employer to provide an appropriate range of courses tailored to needs and target groups and to ensure sufficient access. The continuous development of professional competences as well as the reflection of the individual activity are the responsibility of the respective teacher. The main aim of this development is to enable teachers to teach well, to achieve the respective educational goals of their pupils and to design successful school development processes. At the same time, it contributes directly to professional satisfaction and indirectly to the health of teachers. In-service training can thus be seen as a preventive factor for maintaining professional ability and should therefore be taken into account as a fixed component of personnel development at all management levels.

In terms of content, the concepts of state in-service training refer to the requirements in the professional field of teachers. They are based on the "Content requirements for subject-related studies and subject-related didactics in teacher training which apply to all Länder" (*Ländergemeinsame inhaltliche Anforderungen für die Fachwissenschaften und Fachdidaktiken in der Lehrerbildung*) (resolution of the Standing Conference in the respective valid version) and the "Standards for teacher training: Educational sciences" (*Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften*) (resolution of the Standing Conference in the respective valid version) as well as Land-specific focal points. The competences acquired in the first and second phase of teacher training are expanded and further developed as needed throughout the entire professional biography. The contents are embedded in the respective school and teaching

development processes and are oriented towards the concrete school, subject-related and personal needs.

Depending on the context, target group and topic, the content of in-service training takes into account in particular the scientific basis, the fit of format, objective and content, the potential impact of the in-service training on teaching as well as its sustainability.

The topics of in-service training are determined both by the requirements of the employer and by the needs of the schools and the teachers.

The range of subjects covered is extremely broad. Course content can relate to school subjects, types of school or educational and teaching goals. The subject matter includes topics relating to general and school pedagogy, sessions on subject-related didactics and studies, courses dealing with key current issues (e.g. intercultural learning or innovative technologies) and introductions to new curricula. Many in-service training measures serve to improve the close link between the elementary sector and the *Grundschule* (primary school) and are aimed at a smooth transition between the educational stages. For teachers at VET schools, there is also a significant need for further training due to the dynamic innovation processes in the vocational world of work and through cooperation with the business community. In central in-service training in particular, many courses are aimed at head teachers, counselling teachers, heads of department at teacher training institutes and school supervisory officials. In some Länder the main target group of central in-service training are the subject advisers who themselves organise and hold in-service training courses for teaching staff.

Forms of organisation

In-service training events can be conducted in the form of half-day, one-day or multi-day attendance events, as in-service training accompanying school and lesson development processes, as well as cumulative in-service training series within the school, regionally, centrally or transnationally. The in-service training formats are determined by their objectives and content. Depending on the addressees, context and topic, high-quality, evidence-based online formats are increasingly being used in in-service training, as are mixed formats in which classroom and online phases (blended learning formats) alternate.

In-service training within schools usually takes place in the afternoons or evenings. However, full-day courses which last from half a day to several days per school year are also held. Regional courses can be offered as a one-day session or as a series of full-day or afternoon and evening sessions once or several times a week.

In-service training courses are organised by lecturers who, if possible, have special academic and practical school experience as well as expertise in adult education and didactics of in-service training. The quality of the courses is ensured by the qualification of the lecturers as well as by participant-oriented needs analyses and goal-oriented evaluation measures. For the implementation of further training measures, as a general rule, the lecturers must therefore be appropriately qualified in terms of methodology, didactics, content and technology. The scientific basis of further training, but also the qualification of lecturers, can be achieved through cooperation with higher education institutions. The recruitment of lecturers for further training is to be designed as a long-term personnel development measure.

Evaluations, certifications

Teachers attending in-service training courses are not usually appraised. However, certificates which are then placed on personnel files are awarded in some Länder for certain in-service training courses.

Attendance of courses for in-service training for teachers has, as a rule, no impact on the appraisal or pay of teachers. However, it can have an indirect effect in that regular attendance of in-service training courses is viewed positively in applications for senior posts (such as head teacher). In Bayern teachers are obliged to undertake regular personal further training. Compliance with this obligation will be considered a criterion in the regular teacher assessment.

Courses for further teacher training, especially if they have taken the form of higher education, culminate in a supplementary examination (*Erweiterungsprüfung*) to the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination) which is held by the state examination boards. Below this level there are further training courses which lead to a teaching permit, meaning permission to teach a certain subject or at a certain type of school.

Incentives for participation in CPD activities

In-service teacher training – and to an even greater extent further training for teachers – opens up new career prospects in some cases, such as the opportunity of teaching a new subject, a new post and possibly promotion. However, there is no change in the status of the teacher, who is already a member of the teaching profession after all. Applicants for a teaching post are free to improve their chances of employment by studying a further subject at a university.

8.5. Initial Education for Academic Staff in Higher Education

Based on the provisions of the German Higher Education Framework Act (HRG), the full-time academic and artistic staff of the HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS traditionally consists of the following in particular:

- 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.

With the entry into force of the federalism reform on September 1, 2006, the Federation's framework legislative competence for the general principles of higher

education ceased to exist. Some of the Länder have introduced new personnel categories for full-time teaching staff, which are specified in the respective Higher Education Acts.

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.

Employment Requirements

Going back to the standardisation of standard employment requirements in the HRG, but currently in accordance with the Higher Education Acts of the Länder, the employment requirements for professors at institutions of higher education generally 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

Depending on the type of post the employment requirements may also include:

- 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
- proof of several years of school practice in professorships which involve the performance of educational or didactic tasks in teacher training

As a rule, professors at *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH) are not required to have any additional academic achievements. Instead, they must have at least five years' professional experience in the development and application of scientific methods and findings.

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

The higher education acts of the Länder contain provisions regarding the maximum permitted duration of the doctoral and employment phases prior to appointment as a junior professor.

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.

Professors at the state-run *Berufsakademie* in Sachsen must meet the same requirements as those appointed as professors at HAW/FH. They 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.

8.6. Conditions of Service for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education

Planning Policy

Staff planning in the higher education sector is implemented primarily on the basis of staff appointment plans laid down by the relevant Land ministry; however, the legal situation differs in each Land depending on whether there is a need for such plans and how binding they are. With the increasing autonomy of the higher education institutions, responsibility for staff planning is increasingly devolving on the institutions themselves.

The Higher Education Pact 2020 made it possible to admit an increased number of first-year students, among other things by hiring more academic staff. As a successor to the Higher Education Pact 2020 (*Hochschulpakt 2020*), the Federal Government and the Länder concluded the Contract for the Future of Higher Education and Teaching (*Zukunftsvertrag Studium und Lehre stärken*) for the period from 2021, which aims to improve the quality of studies and teaching and to maintain study place capacities. With the permanent and comprehensive funding of higher education institutions through the Contract for the Future of Higher Education and Teaching, in particular permanent higher education staff involved in studies and teaching are to be expanded. For more information on the Contract for the Future of Higher Education and Teaching, see chapter 2.3.

The aim of the Federal-Länder Programme for the Promotion of Young Academics (total running time 2017–2032), which is funded by the Federation with Euro 1 billion, is to make the career paths of academics in the early stages of their careers at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education easier to plan and more transparent. It is intended to increase the international attractiveness of the German science system and to help universities and equivalent institutions of higher education to attract the best academics in the early stages of their careers from Germany and abroad and to retain them as permanently as possible by establishing an internationally known and accepted career path to a professorship in the form of the tenure-track professorship.

With a total term from 2019 to 2028, the Bund Länder programme for the funding of the acquisition and development of professorial staff at *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH) aims to support HAW/FH in acquiring their professorial staff by introducing or expanding structurally effective instruments for staff recruitment and staff qualification.

Since 2008, the Federation and the Länder have also been running the Female Professors Programme, which entered its fourth programme phase at the beginning of 2023 (*Professorinnenprogramm 2030*). The aim of the programme is to increase the proportion of female professors at German institutions of higher education towards parity and at the same time to strengthen gender equality structures at institutions of higher education in the long term. More detailed information on the Female Professors Programme is available in chapters 3.3, 12.6 and 14.5.

Entry to the Profession

Professor positions are generally advertised internationally and filled through an appointment procedure. For this purpose, the Faculty sets up an appointment committee which consists of representatives of professors, scientific staff (*Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter*) and students. The appeals commission shall also include the equal opportunities officer and, as a general rule, an appeals officer and, where appropriate, the disability officer. Members of the management of the higher education institution, members of other faculties and external university teachers may also belong to the appointment committee. The group of the lecturers of the higher education institutions must have a majority of votes in the appointment committee. The appointment procedure mainly consists of the following steps:

- publication of the job advertisement or decision to waive public advertisement
- selecting the applications
- production of a ranking list of three candidates
- decision on appointment
- appointment negotiations
- signing of the contract or transfer to a permanent post with civil servant status.

Responsibility for the decision on appointment is incumbent on either the Ministry of Science of the relevant Land or, increasingly, the higher education institution itself. The appointment of a professor from the same institution is uncommon; there is generally a prohibition on internal appointments.

Professional status

As part of the process of increasing the autonomy of institutions of higher education, the responsibility for appointing Professors as civil servants with limited or unlimited tenure has in several Länder been transferred from the ministries responsible for science to the institutions of higher education. Professors can, however, also be taken on as employees.

Two-stage employment is planned for junior professors that shall not exceed a maximum of six years. In accordance with the regulations specific to the respective Land, the first phase can last up to four years. An extension for the second phase shall be given if the junior professor has proved to be a good teacher at a higher education institution. If this is not the case, the period of employment can be extended by a maximum period of one year. Junior professors are appointed as civil servants with limited tenure, or they can also be taken on as salaried employees.

SCIENTIFIC AND CREATIVE ARTS STAFF (*wissenschaftliche/künstlerische Mitarbeiter*) are also appointed for a limited or unlimited period as civil servants or salaried employees.

The Academic Fixed-Term Contract Law (*Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz – WisZeitVG*), offers institutions of higher education and research institutions options for fixed-term contracts that are adapted to the specific features of the science sector and extended compared to general labour law since 2007. Scientific and artistic staff can be employed on a fixed-term basis to acquire a qualification (maximum duration for the fixed-term is 6 years before and 6 years – in the field of medicine 9 years – after the doctorate plus the family and inclusion policy component) or on the basis of

third-party funding (fixed-term without a maximum duration, regularly for the duration of a third-party funded project). This opens up the possibility of gaining a scientific qualification at an institution of higher education or research institution to as many young scientists as possible. An amendment of the law in 2016 should above all prevent any incorrect, short-term employment contracts.

Salaries

Provisions on the remuneration of lecturers at higher education institutions are laid down in the Civil Servants' Remuneration Act (*Bundesbesoldungsgesetz*) of the Federation, the civil servants' remuneration acts (*Beamtenbesoldungsgesetze*) of the Länder, in the respective regulations on bonuses (*Leistungsbezügeverordnungen*) of the Federation and the Länder and in the corresponding rules of the individual higher education institutions.

Professors receive a basic salary and additional performance-related payment. According to the German Association of University Professors and Lecturers (*Deutscher Hochschulverband – DHV*), in December 2025 the basic salaries of professors, depending on the Land and, where applicable, their level of experience, are as follows:

- Salary group W 1
junior professor
Euro 5,292.82 to Euro 6,011.66
- Salary group W 2
professors
Euro 6,029.67 to Euro 8,040.79
- Salary group W 3
professors
Euro 7,247.15 to Euro 9,159.56

It should be noted that in some Länder the so-called annual special payment has been incorporated into the basic salary, and that in Bremen and Hamburg the basic salaries in pay grades W 2 and W 3 are supplemented by a monthly basic performance-related allowance. In Berlin, an allowance of Euro 330 is granted in addition to the W 1 basic salary.

Junior professors, once they have proven themselves as lecturers, receive a non-pensionable allowance of at least Euro 260 per month from the date of the first extension of their fixed-term civil service contract. In Sachsen, instead of this allowance, they are moved to experience level 2 of salary grade W 1.

The professors' basic salary in the salary groups W2 to W3 should not be confused with their starting salary. The salary consists of the basic salary and an additional payment which is to be individually negotiated with the institution of higher education, and which can be awarded in accordance with the negotiations regarding the appointment and the continuance in office at the institution in case the professor is offered a chair by another higher education institution (*Bleibeverhandlungen*). The additional payment can also be awarded for special performances in research, teaching, art, continuing education and the promotion of up-and-coming academics, as well as according to participation in the institution's self-administration (variable salary). According to the Education Finance Report, the average gross monthly salary for a W2 professorship is Euro 9,600, and for a W3 professorship it is Euro 12,200. The allocation of the posts of the professors to salary groups W 2 and W 3 is regulated by

Land legislation. The federal government, as well as Bayern, Hessen and Sachsen, have introduced experience grades for pay grades W 2 and W 3; Sachsen has also done so for W 1.

Working time and holidays

The teaching commitments of academic staff vary. The extent of teaching commitments of full-time academic staff is expressed in units (*Lehrveranstaltungsstunden*). Each unit stands for at least 45 minutes per week for the period when lectures are held during the semester.

Under a resolution adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) of June 2003, teaching commitments at universities and higher education institutions of equal status are as follows:

- eight units for professors
- four units for junior professors at the first stage of employment
- four to six units for junior professors at the second stage of employment
- four units at most for scientific staff (*wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter*) employed as civil servants for a limited period
- eight units at most for scientific staff employed as civil servants
- 12 to 16 units for teaching staff for special tasks (*Lehrkräfte für besondere Aufgaben*)

In the majority of the Länder, the teaching load for professors is now 9 teaching hours. Professors at *Hochschulen für angewandte Wissenschaften/Fachhochschulen* (HAW/FH) are generally expected to teach 18 units a week. Provision is made for deviations in these teaching commitments for professors at *Kunsthochschulen* in accordance with legislation at Land level.

If certain functions and responsibilities are taken on, teaching commitments can be reduced, for example, if managerial functions are performed within the higher education institution or research and development work is undertaken at a *Fachhochschule*. Furthermore, a temporary reduction of the teaching hours of individual teachers is possible if their teaching commitments during this period are fulfilled by other teachers. Depending on Land law, further reductions in the teaching load may be granted subject to the availability of courses.

The extent of teaching commitments at *Berufsakademien* is regulated by ordinances or administrative regulations issued by the ministries responsible for science and research in the relevant Länder.

Promotion and advancement

Professorships are generally advertised internationally. Applicants who meet the employment requirements for a professorship and prevail in the respective appointment procedure may be appointed to a chair. The organisation of the appointment procedure is regulated in the Länder laws governing higher education. The final decision on the appointment of an applicant is incumbent on the Minister of Science or the head of the higher education institutions depending on the Land.

Retirement and pensions

Professors with the status of civil servants are retired on reaching the retirement age. More details on the retirement of civil servants may be found in chapter 8.3.

8.7. Continuing Professional Development for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education

Organisational Aspects

Lecturers at institutions of higher education may be released from the obligation to teach courses at certain intervals, usually for the duration of a semester, for the purpose of their own research, further education and, depending on the state regulations, also science-related economic activities. In addition, the teaching commitments of professors are, as a rule, allocated in such a way that they are still left with sufficient time for research, for gaining scientific and academic knowledge and for the further development of teaching and study on academic foundations. In this respect in-service training for staff in the higher education sector is a component of their professional tasks.

Some higher education institutions offer in-service training courses in the field of didactics in higher education for teaching staff, attendance of which is, as a rule, voluntary.

Incentives for Participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities

At the moment no information on incentives for participation in continuing professional development is available.

8.8. Initial Education for Teachers and Trainers Working in Adult Education and Training

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*) 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 qualification plus several years of practical experience.

8.9. Conditions of Service for Teachers and Trainers Working in Adult Education and Training

According to a joint recommendation of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) and the Association of German Cities (*Deutscher Städtetag*) of 1981, institutions of continuing education generally are to employ full-time tutors. However, the majority of teachers are employed as freelancers or part-time on a fee basis.

8.10. Continuing Professional Development for Teachers and Trainers Working in Adult Education and Training

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.

9. MANAGEMENT AND OTHER EDUCATION STAFF

This chapter contains information on management staff, staff involved in monitoring educational quality, education staff responsible for guidance and other education staff working in the early childhood sector and school education, in tertiary education and in adult education and training.

9.1. Management Staff for Early Childhood and School Education

Requirements for appointment

Managers of day-care centres for children

Länder rules on the requirements for appointment as a manager of a day-care centre for children differ. Usually they require at least a further qualification in a profession (*Fachschulabschluss*), corresponding practical experience and sometimes also specific continuing training. In some cases an academic degree is also a prerequisite. Staff with a supervisory function in pre-school institutions often have an academic degree from an institution of higher education, e.g. as a *Sozialpädagoge* (graduate youth and community worker).

School heads

As a rule, the qualifications required for school heads are those of teachers at the relevant school level, with a teaching qualification plus several years of teaching and management experience.

Conditions of service

Trained pedagogical staff can be partly or fully exempted from educational group work to carry out management duties in day-care centres for children. This exemption is subject to different regulations in the Länder. In five Länder there are no specifications for time allocations. The remaining Länder specify different criteria for the provision of time allocations that are oriented on the number of children being cared for, the number of staff or the number of groups.

The responsibilities of the head teacher (*Schulleiter*) comprise staff management, administration, the school budget as well as the evaluation of teachers, school public relations and the development of a school-specific profile (for more detailed information on the responsibilities of the head teacher, see chapter 1.8.). For performing the duties of a head teacher, the classroom hours of the head are reduced.

The salaries of head teachers and deputy head teachers in principle depend on the number of pupils at the school. In exceptional cases, other aspects such as the composition of the student body, a special pedagogical concept or the supra-regional

importance of the institution may justify a higher salary. As a rule, the salary groups are as follows for schools with more than 360 pupils:

Deputy head/head of <i>Grundschulen</i>	A 13/A 14/A 14 plus allowance/A 15
Deputy head/head of <i>Hauptschulen</i>	A 13/A 14 plus allowance/A 15
Deputy head/head of <i>Realschulen</i>	A 14 plus allowance/A 15/A 15 plus allowance
Deputy head/head of <i>Gymnasien</i>	A 15 plus allowance/A 16
Deputy head/head of vocational schools	A 15 plus allowance/A 16

9.2. Staff Involved in Monitoring Educational Quality in Early Childhood and School Education

Requirements for appointment

Specialist advisors are available to the day-care centres for children and the staff of the day-care facilities for advice and professional support and play a significant role in quality assurance and development. Support in questions related to the development of concepts and organisations, for example, are amongst the tasks of the specialist advisors. Depending on how the specialist advisors are anchored in the structure, they may also supervise the work and qualification of the staff in a day-care centre for children. Specialist advisors are usually qualified as an *Erzieher/Erzieherin* or have completed a pertinent degree course at an institution of higher education. Several years of practical work in the vocation – for example as director of a day-care centre for children – is often an admission requirement for work as a specialist advisor.

A member of staff responsible for supervision in primary, lower or upper secondary education (*Schulaufsichtsbeamter*) has to provide evidence of the same qualifications as teachers at the school level concerned and have completed several years of teaching service. They must also as a rule have acquired several years of experience as head teachers or deputy head teachers or in a senior position in a teacher training institution.

In October 2025, the Conference of Education Ministers (*Bildungsministerkonferenz*) adopted a “Vision statement on the role and work of the school supervisory authority” (*Zielbild zur Rolle und Arbeit der Schulaufsicht*) on behalf of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*), thereby establishing a common framework for the work of the school supervisory authority. The statement describes school supervision both as an institution and in terms of the individuals involved. According to this, school supervision officers act as managers who must possess certain competencies. Furthermore, school supervision authorities are expected to possess the specialist knowledge in subject-matter, administrative and legal supervision required to fulfil their duties and to be prepared to continually expand this knowledge.

Conditions of service

The tasks of members of staff responsible for supervision (*Schulaufsichtsbeamte*) comprise the *Fachaufsicht* (academic supervision of teaching and educational activity) and the *Dienstaufsicht* (supervision of educational staff and head teachers). The

task of *Rechtsaufsicht* (legal supervision, carried out as a rule by lawyers) involves monitoring legal aspects of school administration (e.g. the establishment and maintenance of school buildings and the procurement of teaching materials). These staff are employed in the *Schulämter* (lower-level school supervisory authorities) or in the *Oberschulämter* or *Bezirksregierungen* (middle-level school supervisory authorities) and are civil servants employed by the Land. See also chapter 1.7.

9.3. Education Staff Responsible for Guidance in Early Childhood and School Education

Advice may be obtained from the pupil's teachers as well as what are known as COUNSELLING TEACHERS (*Beratungslehrkräfte*), i.e. members of staff with extra training in educational science and psychology. Depending on the Land, counselling teachers are responsible not only for their own school but other schools too. In addition, counselling teachers with pedagogical or psychological training work at schools or at external counselling and support centres. Their tasks generally include not only general counselling for schools, teachers and students but also advice on the school career as well as individual counselling for pupils if learning difficulties arise or if there are any anomalies in their emotional and social behaviour.

The activities of the SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST include individual psychological support, support for schools in crisis situations, prevention, supervision for teachers and school counselling in primary and secondary schools. In accordance with the regulations of the respective Land, applicants must either have successfully completed a higher education degree in psychology or have completed teacher training with at least one year of postgraduate studies in psychology and have worked in their profession for several years. After being employed in the so-called school psychological service or in an external school counselling centre, the school psychologist works outside the individual schools, usually in a counselling centre subordinate to the school supervisory authority. In Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, additional school psychologists work at selected priority schools and are permanently employed at these schools. In Bayern, school psychologists are always also teachers of one type of school and are therefore usually employed directly at a school and are responsible as the school's own staff for the school psychological counselling of their school and, if necessary, other schools. School psychologists are also responsible for networking extra-curricular support and counselling services and for cooperating with youth welfare offices and child and youth welfare institutions. School psychologists are mostly civil servants of the Land (see also chapter 11.5.).

If their work is to be successful, counselling staff must work closely together with other institutions like the local youth welfare office (*Jugendamt*).

The local public health office (*Gesundheitsamt*) with its school health service is responsible for primary (and secondary) SCHOOL HEALTH CARE. With a few exceptions, it is the Länder that enjoy administrative authority over the health services.

It is the job of the medical officer at the public health office to ensure that the work of the school health service, including dental care, meets the required standard. The work of school doctors is supervised by a public health officer (*Amtsarzt*). The school health service has the following responsibilities among others:

- to carry out medical screening, notably of children starting and leaving school

- to monitor those pupils whose state of health requires regular check-ups
- to perform dental screening
- to hold surgeries for parents, pupils and teachers
- to advise and instruct teachers on health care issues

The staffing of the school health service at the local public health offices varies from one place to another, with differences between urban and rural areas as to the number of school doctors and their selection according to qualification.

9.4. Other Education Staff or Staff Working with Schools

Non-teaching staff at schools

Full-day schools, schools with full-day offers and schools with a care offer employ pedagogic staff (*pädagogische Fachkräfte*), educators or *Sozialpädagogen* (graduate youth and community workers), social workers and honorary staff such as artists or volunteers, depending on the size of the school and the extent of the extra-curricular activities (see chapter 4.2.). Especially for all-day schools, the professionalisation of teams consisting of teachers, other pedagogic staff and extra-curricular staff is of significant importance.

At all schools, non-teaching staff are usually also employed in the school secretariats and in the building administration.

Other staff at special schools

Special needs education staff are employed in the course of inclusion at general education schools as well as at special needs education institutions. These are teachers and other specialised staff. *Sozialpädagogen*, graduate youth and community workers, and pedagogic staff (*Pädagogische Fachkräfte*), for example, carry out remedial work, assist the special teacher in artistic and technical lessons and are responsible for leisure activities. Physiotherapists, speech therapists and occupational therapists provide treatment in their respective fields. Other employees can provide complementary therapy in the areas of occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech therapy.

Instructors in the dual system of vocational education and training

Within the *duales System* (dual system) of vocational training, both the teaching staff in the *Berufsschulen* themselves and particularly the instructors in the partner companies are responsible for the vocational training of the students. The following remarks refer to the training of in-company instructors (for information on teaching staff at *Berufsschulen* see chapter 8.1.).

Legislative framework

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 Crafts and Trades Regulation 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 provide evidence of the required pedagogical knowledge of professional and work-related issues by means of a particular qualification certificate.

Contents of the training

The content of training is laid down in general terms in the Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude (*Ausbilder-Eignungsverordnung* – AEVO). Training is usually provided in courses taken alongside full-time employment with a total duration of 115 hours. Participation in these courses as a means of preparing for the instructor aptitude examination is not, however, compulsory.

Professional and pedagogical skills include the ability to plan, implement and control vocational training unaided in the following fields of action:

- Assess vocational training requirements and plan training,
- Prepare training and participate in trainee recruitment,
- Conduct training and
- Conclude training.

Assessment of performance and leaving certificates

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

The examination comprises a written test and a practical component consisting of a presentation and a technical discussion lasting up to thirty minutes. On passing the examination a certificate is issued confirming the required professional and pedagogical knowledge, skills and competences.

Responsibility for the examination

Responsibility for the examination of in-company instructors lies with the bodies responsible within the dual system of vocational education and 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.

9.5. Management Staff for Higher Education

Requirements for Appointment

Basically, higher education institutions are organised and administered as follows: Higher education institutions are governed either by a rector (or rector's body) or else by a president (or presidential body). The head of a higher education institution is either elected from among the professors belonging to it or elected from outside the institution. In the second case, the candidate appointed must have successfully completed higher education studies and provide evidence of a successful career of several years in a responsible position in educational or judicial administration, art, science or management.

Conditions of service

The responsibilities of the head of an institution of higher education comprise administration, finances, institutional development, the development of the study courses on offer, the implementation of evaluation, staff management and public relations. The head externally represents the institution. If the head is elected from among the group of professors, they may continue with teaching and academic research. The head of a higher education institution has temporary civil servant status and is employed by the Land concerned. The official title of the person appointed is

either *Rektor* or *Präsident*, depending on the legislation of the Land and the constitution of the institution.

9.6. Other Education Staff or Staff Working in Higher Education

The full-time and part-time non-scientific staff at higher education institutions includes, among others, civil servants and employees of the central and departmental administrations as well as of the various institutions such as computer, computer and media centres, laboratories or libraries. Nursing staff also work at the university clinics.

9.7. Management Staff Working in Adult Education and Training

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*) in 1970, members of administrative staff at institutions of continuing education are supposed to have a higher education degree.

9.8. Other Education Staff or Staff Working in Adult Education and Training

There are no data available on other education staff or other staff working in adult education.

10. QUALITY ASSURANCE

10.1. Introduction

The debate about evaluation in the education system, in other words the systematic assessment of organisational structures, teaching and learning processes and performance criteria with a view to improving quality, did not start in Germany until the end of the 1980s, later than in other European countries. Although the actual concept of evaluation may not yet have been institutionalised before, this does not mean that no control mechanisms existed. State supervisory authorities for schools and higher education, statistical surveys carried out by the Federal Statistical Office and by the Statistical Offices of the Länder as well as educational research in institutes that are subordinate to federal or Land ministries or jointly funded by the Federal Government and the Länder are used for quality assurance and evaluation purposes.

Within the school system, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz*), in the so-called *Konstanzer Beschluss* of October 1997, took up quality assurance processes that had already been introduced in several Länder in the school sector and declared these a central issue for its work. Since then the Länder have developed evaluation instruments in the narrower sense which may be employed depending on the objective.

In June 2006, the Standing Conference adopted a comprehensive strategy for educational monitoring which was revised in June 2015 and provides for the following procedures and instruments:

- participation in international school performance studies
- the review and implementation of educational standards
- quality assurance procedures at school level
- joint education reporting by the Federation and the Länder

For further information on the procedures and tools of the educational monitoring, see chapter 10.2.

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. The higher education acts of the Länder and the relevant regulations set out the details regarding the evaluation of degree programmes. In a resolution of March 2002, the Standing Conference laid down the future development of quality assurance for all Länder and institutions of higher education; in the long-term, this should lead to an overall concept for quality assurance, taking account of all types of higher education institution and all study courses. With the introduction of the accreditation of study courses, the setting up of the common Foundation Accreditation Council (*Stiftung Akkreditierungsrat*), the foundation of accreditation agencies and the adoption of joint structural requirements for all Länder for Bachelor's and Master's study courses, standards and procedures were established for the teaching sector. These should provide students and employers with reliable orientation and create transparency in international cooperation with regard to the study offer and study qualifications in Germany. For further information on quality assurance for all Länder and higher education institutions, see chapter 10.3.

Pursuant to Article 91b, paragraph 2 of the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) the Federation and the Länder may mutually agree to cooperate for the assessment of the

performance of the education system in international comparison and in drafting relevant reports and recommendations. A principal element of this collaboration and also of the comprehensive strategy of the Standing Conference on educational monitoring is the joint reporting of the Federation and of the Länder. For more detailed information on joint education reporting by the Federation and the Länder, see chapter 10.2.

The joint task of the Federal Government and the Länder under Article 91b(2) of the Basic Law (assessing the performance of the education system in an international comparison) also includes, in accordance with the relevant administrative agreement, the regular reporting on education finances. The Education Finance Report (*Bildungsfinanzbericht*) was published annually until 2023; from 2025 onwards, it will be published every two years. In the intervening years, starting in 2024, the Statistical Report 'Public Expenditure on Education' will be published.

Specific legislative framework

Primary and secondary education

The authority of the Länder 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. The school legislation of most Länder provides for measures of external and internal evaluation beyond state supervision. The full texts of the current Education Acts are available on the website of the Standing Conference. (<https://www.kmk.org/en/downloads-dokumente/rechtsvorschriften/-lehrplaene/uebersicht-schulgesetze.html>)

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 Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung – BIBB*). The Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz – BBiG*) places a high value on quality assurance and quality development. Within the framework of their activities the vocational training boards of the competent authorities (Section 79, paragraph 1, sentence 2 *Berufsbildungsgesetz*) and of the Länder committees for vocational education and training (Section 83 paragraph 1, sentence 2 *Berufsbildungsgesetz*) are thus also responsible for steadily improving the quality of vocational education further.

Higher education

Under Section 59 of the Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*) and the higher education legislation in place in the Länder, higher education institutions are subject to state supervision which is exercised by the Länder. The full texts of the Higher Education Acts can also be accessed via the website of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. (<https://www.kmk.org/en/downloads-dokumente/rechtsvorschriften/-lehrplaene/uebersicht-hochschulgesetze.html>)

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 of 1998.

Higher education legislation of the Länder includes regulations regarding both internal and external evaluation.

Continuing education

With the amendment of the Vocational Training Act in 2020, a multi-level system of nationally regulated further training qualifications was created to strengthen further vocational education and training with the titles of *Geprüfter Berufsspezialist/Geprüfte Berufsspezialistin* (Certified Specialist), Bachelor Professional and Master Professional.

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 the offer.

10.2. Quality Assurance in Early Childhood and School Education

Responsible bodies

Early childhood education and care

Unlike the school sector, in pre-school education responsibility for the quality of a day-care centre for children lies with the maintaining body for that centre, which undertakes the *Fachaufsicht* (academic supervision of teaching and education activity) and the *Dienstaufsicht* (supervision of educational staff and head teachers) for its employees.

The maintaining bodies of day-care centres for children are obliged to explain how quality assurance and development are guaranteed in their concept. A number of methods are used in practice. A method of quality monitoring that is binding for the whole Land only exists at present in Berlin. This stipulates an annual internal evaluation as well as external evaluations every five years by certified agencies.

The youth welfare offices (*Jugendämter*) have the task of supporting the private-sector maintaining bodies (as well as regularly self-employed child-minders) through appropriate measures in exercising their promotional mission. This is less a matter of control, and more a matter of specialist support, for instance through practical or specialist advice, which have a significant role in this context. Thus support on concept and team development issues and organisational development specific to the establishment, inter alia, count among the tasks of specialist support.

In the Länder, there are manifold measures to ensure and develop the quality of day-care centres and day care for children. With the Second Act on the Further Development of Quality and Participation in Child Daycare (*Zweites Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Qualität und zur Teilhabe in der Kindertagesbetreuung*), the so-called KiTa Quality Act, the Federation is supporting the measures of the Länder from 2023 to 2026.

Within the scope of the needs-based and quality-oriented expansion of day care for children, the Federal Ministry of Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women

and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMBFSFJ*) is additionally financing various other programmes for the further development of quality in day care for children. The Federal Government's quality assurance initiative is being accompanied by the Working Party of the Highest Youth and Family Authorities of the Länder (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Obersten Landesjugend- und Familienbehörden – AGJF*) in an advisory capacity, on behalf of the Conference of Ministers of Youth and Family Affairs (*Jugend- und Familienministerkonferenz – JFMK*). Since 2018, the BMBFSFJ and the German Children and Youth Foundation (*Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung*) have awarded the German Kita Prize for special commitment to child day care.

Primary and secondary education

School supervisory authorities exercise *Fachaufsicht* (academic supervision), *Rechtsaufsicht* (legal supervision) and *Dienstaufsicht* (staff supervision) within the school system. Special educational support and academic evaluation is provided in school pilot projects carried out by the school supervisory authorities and the institutes for school development (*Landesinstitute für Schulentwicklung*) of the Länder. Accompanying research examines the effectiveness of the reform measures and the framework that should be created if they are to be successfully implemented. The introduction of new curricula is often preceded by a test phase. In some Länder, for example, teachers are surveyed in order to establish whether the new guidelines have proved successful or require amendment.

By providing advice and assistance and recommending changes in schools and by reporting to higher-ranking education authorities, the school supervisory authorities and institutes for school development are to make a contribution to the evaluation and further development of the school system.

In the majority of the Länder, schools are evaluated by external quality or evaluation agencies and inspection procedures. 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 development.

The vocational education and training committees and the Land committees shall, within the framework of their duties, work towards a continuous improvement of the quality of vocational education and training.

In June 2004, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) set up the Institute for Educational Quality Improvement (*Institut zur Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungswesen – IQB*) at the Humboldt University in Berlin. Since then, the IQB has been entrusted with the supervision of the operationalisation of the educational standards, the coordination of the development of corresponding standard-oriented tasks and the review of their achievement. Using representative samples, the so-called IQB Educational Trends study (formerly: IQB Länder Comparison Study) checks the extent to which the competence requirements set out in the educational standards have been achieved on primary level and lower secondary level in the individual Länder before completion of the relevant educational stage. The comparative tests (VERA) are used for state-wide and grade-related examinations of the performance of all pupils at school and class level for the purpose of teaching and school development. With the IQB

Education Trends and VERA, the IQB makes a key contribution to the implementation of the Standing Conference's comprehensive strategy for educational monitoring. More detailed information on the educational standards and the comprehensive strategy of the Standing Conference for educational monitoring can be found in the description of measures for quality assurance in the school sector below.

As part of the joint task "assessment of the performance of the German educational system in international comparison" in October 2010 the Standing Conference and the then Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* – BMBF) set up the Centre for International Student Assessment (*Zentrum für Internationale Bildungsvergleichsstudien* – ZIB). A network formed by the Technical University of Munich (TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology), the German Institute for International Educational Research (*Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung* – DIPF) in Frankfurt am Main, and the DIPF | Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education (*DIPF | Leibniz Institut für Bildungsforschung und Bildungsinformation*) in Kiel, the ZIB is responsible for implementing PISA studies in Germany, including drafting national reports. Other tasks of the ZIB are ensuring and coordinating continuous participation in international academic committees on educational comparative studies, research and the promotion of up-and-coming academics in the field of empirical educational research and in-depth analyses of data from international performance studies. In addition, the data records from national and international school performance studies are archived and documented as well as provided for re- and secondary analysis in the Research Data Centre (*Forschungsdatenzentrum* – FDZ) of the ZIB at the IBQ.

In general, it is to contribute to securing the educational monitoring in an international comparison which is jointly funded by the Federation and the Länder, and to increasing the extent and presence of German educational research in the context of international educational comparative studies.

Approaches and methods for quality assurance

Early childhood education and care

On 1 January 2019, the Act on the Further Development of the Quality and Participation in Child Day Care (*Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Qualität und zur Teilhabe in der Kindertagesbetreuung*) came into force. With the so-called Good Daycare Facilities Act (*Gute-KiTa-Gesetz*), the Federation supported measures of the Länder to further develop the quality of childcare. With the Second Act on the Further Development of Quality and Participation in Child Day Care (*Zweites Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Qualität und zur Teilhabe in der Kindertagesbetreuung*), the so-called Day-Care Centre Quality Act (*KiTa-Qualitätsgesetz*), the Federal Government is providing the Länder with a total of an additional Euro 4 billion for 2023 and 2024.

The Day-Care Centre Quality Act enables new measures in seven priority fields of action, for example to create a needs-based offer, a good skilled worker-child key, to recruit and secure qualified skilled workers or to strengthen the management of child day care facilities. The Federation and the Länder conclude individual agreements which specify the action and financing concepts with which they intend to promote quality improvement and improved participation in child day care. To review progress in improving quality and participation, the law provides for monitoring.

Furthermore, the then Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend* – BMFSFJ) supported the development of quality in day care for children with several federal programmes.

The BMFSFJ's Skilled Labour Initiative for Staff in Early Childhood Education and Care (*Fachkräfteoffensive für Erzieherinnen und Erzieher*) helped the Länder from 2019 to 2022 to attract more young people to the profession of child-care worker, to ensure good training practice and to open up opportunities for the professional development of experienced specialists. In May 2024, the BMFSFJ presented an "overall strategy for skilled workers in day-care centres and all-day schools", which was developed in co-operation with the Länder and civil society stakeholders. The recommendations of the overall strategy serve as a common basis for the stakeholders involved in the strategy process for further steps to secure skilled workers within the scope of their responsibilities. The Länder have taken up and further developed the recommendations addressed to them in the resolution of the joint working group on skilled workers of the Standing Conference and JFMK of December 2024.

With the federal programme Language Day Care Centres for Children – Because Language Is the Key to the World (*Sprach-Kitas: Weil Sprache der Schlüssel zur Welt ist*), which ran from 2016 to June 2023, the BMFSFJ particularly promoted the teaching of language education integrated into everyday life in daycare facilities, inclusive pedagogy and cooperation with families. The programme is primarily aimed at daycare facilities with an above-average proportion of children from educationally disadvantaged families and from families with a non-German family language. At the end of June 30, 2023, the structures of the federal programme Language Day Care Centres for Children – Because Language Is the Key to the World were transferred to the responsibility of the Länder. All Länder have created the conditions to continue the "Sprach-Kitas" in their state structures, either with state funds or with funds for the implementation of the Second Act on the Further Development of Quality and Participation in Child Daycare.

The further training initiative for early childhood teaching professionals (*Weiterbildungsinitiative Frühpädagogische Fachkräfte – WiFF*), launched by the federal ministry of education in conjunction with the Robert Bosch Foundation (*Robert Bosch Stiftung*), and implemented in collaboration with the DJI, aims to strengthen elementary education as the basis of the education system. The three partners advocate establishing greater transparency in the early childhood further training system in Germany, securing the quality of the offers and enabling educational paths that can be built on. In 2023, the WiFF Transfer action line was launched under the WiFF umbrella. The work and research programme aims to help connect science and early education practice, intensify the discourse and make knowledge available for practical use in the childcare system.

Primary and secondary education

School supervisory authorities

School supervisory authorities exercise *Fachaufsicht* (academic supervision), *Rechtsaufsicht* (legal supervision) and *Dienstaufsicht* (staff supervision) within the school system. *Academic supervision* concerns the teaching and educational work carried out by schools. The school inspectors support and foster the work of the school,

ensure that curricula and other legal provisions are being adhered to and that teaching and education are being conducted professionally using appropriate methods and further improved wherever possible. Academic supervision is carried out by visiting schools, observing lessons and providing advice at school level. *Legal supervision* is a further element in school supervision. It involves monitoring the legality of management of what is called external school affairs (for example, the construction and maintenance of school buildings) by the *Schulträger*, the school's maintaining body. Finally, school supervisory authorities exercise *staff supervision* over teachers and head teachers at public-sector schools, thus ensuring that teaching staff are carrying out their duties. Civil service guidelines stipulate the need for the appraisal of teachers on specific occasions (end of probationary period, promotion, transfer) and in some cases at periodic intervals. This serves both to advance the career of the individual teacher and to maintain the efficiency of the school system. Teaching ability and aptitude are assessed, as are the teacher's professional competence. Assessment is based on visits to classes by the head teacher and school inspectors, performance reports by the head teacher on the teacher concerned, conversations with the teacher and inspection and assessment of pupils' work.

Evaluation measures in schools

In recent decades, initiatives have been taken in all Länder in order to further develop the measures taken so far for assuring the quality of education at both the level of the school system and the level of the individual schools; this goes beyond the customary range of instruments of the school supervisory authority and project supervision. The Länder have taken a number of evaluation measures in which various quality assurance and quality development procedures interact. These procedures include

- the development or further development of framework curricula and quality tableaux or reference frames for school quality
- comparative tests across the Länder and schools in core subjects
- the further development of external evaluation
- the development and updating of standards and their review
- the development of quality management in schools
- centralised final examinations (lower and upper secondary education)
- the provision of instruments, procedures and consulting services to support internal evaluation

These measures are embedded in the comprehensive strategy of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) for educational monitoring as well as in strategies of 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.

An external evaluation of schools is carried out on a regular basis in some Länder (*Schulvisitation*, *Schulinspektion*). Some Länder continue to develop their procedures on a needs-oriented basis or conduct them on an ad hoc basis; other Länder have suspended external evaluation procedures for several years. The Ministries of Education or the institutes for school development of the Land are usually responsible for the

external evaluation. The goal is to record and improve the quality of school education. Depending on the Land, external evaluations are carried out on an ad hoc basis or on a rotational basis every three to six years. Characteristic methods include the analysis of data and documents, observations (visits to classes, inspections), standardised questionnaires and interviews. The evaluation procedures for schools in the Länder are in line with the educational standards of the Standing Conference. These cross-Länder target criteria are in most Länder complemented by the provisions of the frameworks for school quality or quality tableaux which by means of indicators of school and teaching practice quality provide schools with a frame of reference.

As part of these strategies, increasing weight is given to measures for the evaluation of individual schools. In the majority of Länder, the obligatory development of school-specific programmes or school development programmes plays a vital role. In the school-specific programmes, the individual schools specify the main focuses and objectives of their work on the basis of Land regulations regarding the content and qualifications obtained after completing the courses or educational policy goals. At the same time, the school-specific programmes determine internal evaluation methods and criteria based on the requirements specific to the Land (e.g. curricula, timetables). The areas to be evaluated are determined autonomously by the schools in the school-specific programmes. School-specific programmes should take account of the social and demographic requirements of the individual school. The frameworks for school quality referred to above are of crucial importance for the implementation of school-specific programmes.

The Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*) puts great emphasis on quality assurance within the dual system of vocational education and training. This focus includes a flexibilisation of the training quality control instruments and their supplementation by a number of new quality assurance guidelines, amongst other measures. Moreover, procedures are to be drawn up for the external evaluation of quality assurance in continuing vocational training and education.

Comprehensive strategy for educational monitoring

The overall strategy of the Standing Conference for educational monitoring provides for the following methods and instruments:

- participation in international school performance studies (PIRLS/IGLU, TIMSS, PISA)
- monitoring and implementation of educational standards for the primary sector, the lower secondary level and the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*
- method to ensure quality at the level of schools
- the joint report on education of the Federation and Länder

The four pillars of the overall strategy on educational monitoring will be presented in more detail in the following and the considerations of the Standing Conference described as to how more application-oriented knowledge can be obtained for educational policy and pedagogical practice on the basis of the instruments and methods of the overall strategy on educational monitoring as well as further empirical data.

Participation in international comparative studies of pupil achievement

The joint task pursuant to Article 91b, paragraph 2 of the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) includes the cooperation of the Federation and the Länder for the assessment of the

performance of educational systems in international comparison and drafting relevant reports and recommendations. A corresponding administrative agreement has entered into force in 2007.

Germany is taking part in international comparative studies of pupil achievement such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the OECD project entitled Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) as a means of determining the performance of the German education system in an international comparison and so as to be able to derive appropriate measures for quality assurance from the results.

After the publication of the results of the PISA 2000 OECD study in December 2001, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder named seven areas in which the Länder and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs will become active and are still active:

- measures to improve linguistic competence as early as early childhood education
- measures to strengthen the link between the early childhood sector and primary school with the aim of an early school entry
- measures for the improvement of primary education and the continuous improvement of reading literacy and basic understanding of mathematical and scientific concepts
- measures for efficient support of educationally disadvantaged children with particular regard to children and young people with a migrant background or non-German language of origin
- measures to thoroughly develop and assure the quality of teaching and schools on the basis of binding educational standards and result-oriented evaluation
- measures to improve professionalism in teaching with particular regard to diagnostic and methodical competence as an element of systematic school development
- measures to expand provision of all-day activities and care with the aim of increasing opportunities for education and support with particular regard to pupils with educational deficits and especially gifted pupils

The results of PISA 2022 were published at the end of 2023. They show that the performance of 15-year-olds in Germany in mathematics, reading and the natural sciences has declined noticeably compared to 2018. In mathematics and reading, pupils are only achieving the average level of the OECD countries. Only in the natural sciences are their results still above average. The Standing Conference has emphasized that the results of PISA 2022 show an urgent need for action that goes beyond the school sector and that the causes and factors underlying the results are to be thoroughly analysed. It also points out that the composition of the student body has changed significantly in a short space of time.

More detailed information on the measures of the Standing Conference can be found on the website of the Standing Conference (<https://www.kmk.org/aktuelles/artikelansicht/kultusministerkonferenz-fasst-beschluss-zu-pisa-2022.html>).

The results of the TIMSS 2023, which was commissioned to be conducted by a scientific consortium led by Prof. Dr Knut Schwippert from the University of Hamburg, were presented in December 2024. The fourth-grade students in Germany tested show consistent performance in mathematics and science compared to 2019, despite pandemic-related restrictions on school operations in 2020 and 2021. As before, there is a close link between the socio-economic status of families and the educational success of children in both competence areas. This finding has remained stable since 2007. The proportion of students who do not meet the minimum requirements is very high in both competence areas.

The results of the international primary school reading study PIRLS/IGLU 2021 were published in May 2023. They showed that pupils' reading performance has fallen since 2016 and is now average internationally. In addition to the increasingly heterogeneous student body, the measures against the COVID-19 pandemic posed major challenges for primary schools in Germany during the reporting period. From the point of view of the Standing Conference and the federal ministry of education, the results of the study once again underline the importance of reading and language promotion measures in the school sector and the pre-school sector. The increasing heterogeneity of the student body calls for the best possible individual support for all pupils, whereby a targeted promotion of pupils with special difficulties in reading is required.

Within the framework of the joint tasks pursuant to Article 91b paragraph 2 GG (German Basic Law), the federal ministry of education also supports the International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS). The information and computer-related competences of grade 8 pupils are hereby tested in an international comparison. The Länder opened up field access to the schools for the study. The results of the last cycle were published in November 2024. Despite a significant decline in competence compared to previous studies, the computer and information-related skills of eighth-graders in Germany continue to be above the international average. The technical equipment of schools has improved significantly in the last ten years. Teachers also use digital media much more frequently than before. The Digital Pact for Schools (*DigitalPakt Schule*) of the Federation and the Länder is having a positive effect here. However, only a small percentage of about one per cent of young people reach the top level of performance, and a good forty percent have only basic knowledge. Skills vary greatly depending on the type of school attended, and there are clear differences in terms of social background, immigration and language. The disparities are above average in both international and EU comparisons.

In 2027, Germany will take part in the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) at national level for the first time. ICCS is an international comparative study on political and democratic education in schools, which examines the conceptual political knowledge and basic reasoning skills in the field of political education, as well as the attitudes, sense of belonging and willingness to participate among pupils in grade 8.

Monitoring and implementation of educational standards for the primary sector, the lower secondary level and the Allgemeine Hochschulreife

In order to provide a joint frame of reference for all Länder on the quality of school education, the Länder have defined certification-related educational standards for all

school levels. The standards are based upon the areas of competence of the individual subject and

- take up the basic principles of the respective subject
- determine the subject-specific competences including basic levels of knowledge that pupils should have achieved by a certain stage of their school career
- are aimed at systematic learning and learning in networks and thus follow the principle of cumulative acquisition of competence
- describe expected levels of performance as part of requirement profiles
- are related to the core area of the respective subject and provide scope for pedagogical measures taken by the schools
- relate to a medium level of requirements
- are illustrated by examples for test questions

The Länder have pledged to adopt the educational standards as a basis of their relevant subject-specific requirements. They want to support competence-oriented teaching and targeted individual support for all pupils by implementing the educational standards. At the same time, the Länder combine this with the claim of making school requirements on pupils more transparent, educational systems more mobile and qualifications more comparable.

As a basis for the implementation of educational standards, particularly for primary education and lower secondary education, the Standing Conference the “Concept for the Use of Educational Standards in Curriculum Development” (*‘Konzeption zur Nutzung der Bildungsstandards für die Unterrichtsentwicklung’*) in December 2009, which outlines the key areas of action for implementing the educational standards. For the area of educational standards for the General Higher Education Entrance Qualification, the ‘Concept for the Implementation of Educational Standards for the General Higher Education Entrance Qualification’ (*‘Konzeption zur Implementation der Bildungsstandards für die Allgemeine Hochschulreife’*), adopted by the Standing Conference in 2013, is available; this serves as a common basis for the implementation process in the Länder and for cross-Länder cooperation. Among other things, it involves a systematic exchange regarding necessary changes to the federal states’ teaching guidelines and examination regulations, as well as measures to support teachers.

As a contribution to the implementation of the further developed educational standards, the Standing Conference published brochures between 2022 and 2024 which, on the one hand, set out the procedures, objectives and results of the further development of the previous educational standards on a subject-by-subject basis and, on the other hand, clearly and concisely compare the continuities and innovations.

There are currently nationwide applicable educational standards that have been adopted by the Standing Conference.

- for the primary sector (grade 4) for the subject German (2022),
- for the primary sector (grade 4) for the subject mathematics (2022)
- for the lower secondary sector (*Erster Schulabschluss* and *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*) for the subject German (2022)
- for the lower secondary sector (*Erster Schulabschluss* and *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*) for the subject mathematics (2022)

- for the lower secondary sector (*Erster Schulabschluss* and *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*) for the first foreign language (English/French) (2023)
- for the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* for the subject biology (2024)
- for the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* for the subject chemistry (2024)
- for the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* for the subject physics (2024)
- for the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* for the subjects German, mathematics and the continued foreign language (English/French) (2012)
- for the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* for the natural science subjects (biology, chemistry and physics) (2020)

The following nationwide educational standards which are available in the new versions listed above are still valid for a transitional period:

- for the primary sector (grade 4) for the subjects German and mathematics (2004),
- for the *Hauptschulabschluss* (grade 9) for the subjects German, mathematics and the first foreign language (English/French)(2004),
- for the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* (grade 10) for the subjects German, mathematics and the first foreign language (English/French) (2003),

The educational standards in the subjects German and mathematics from 2004 for the primary level as well as the First School Certificate and the Intermediate School Certificate were revised and further developed in 2022. The educational standards for the first foreign language for the *Erster Schulabschluss* from 2003 and the educational standards for the first foreign language for the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* from 2004 were revised and further developed in 2023.

The educational standards for the natural sciences (biology, chemistry, physics) for the intermediate school leaving certificate from 2004 were revised and further developed in 2024.

In June 2020, the Standing Conference established uniform performance requirements for the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* and the *Abitur* in the natural sciences in all 16 Länder. To this end, binding educational standards were adopted in the natural science subjects of biology, chemistry and physics. The educational standards for the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* in the natural sciences are implemented in the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* on an incremental basis since the 2022/2023 school year. From the 2024/2025 school year, the *Abitur* examinations in biology, chemistry and physics are conducted nationwide on the basis of the new educational standards.

With the exception of *Berufsoberschulen*, which have a special profile, the educational standards adopted for the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* for the subjects German, mathematics and the continued foreign language (English/French) as well as for the three natural science subjects apply to all courses of study leading to the general higher education entrance qualification.

Furthermore, the specifications on the design of *Abitur* examinations that are binding for all Länder have been further developed for the relevant subjects. These specify the formats of tasks that can be used in the *Abitur* examination, define guidelines for evaluating the pupils' performance and describe framework conditions for the examinations that have to be observed.

Since the school year 2016/2017, the educational standards for the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* in the subjects German, mathematics and in the advanced foreign languages (English, French) apply as a binding basis for the *Abitur* examinations. General criteria are available for the design, correction and assessment of standard-based *Abitur* examination tasks and suitable written *Abitur* examination tasks including the necessary evaluation sheets will be provided in a pool of *Abitur* examination tasks. This pool has been made available to the Länder as of the school year 2016/2017 for possible use in the *Abitur*. This goes hand in hand with the goal of

- aligning the tasks to the educational standards,
- guaranteeing the comparability of the requirements level of *Abitur* tasks,
- to ensure the overall quality of the *Abitur* examination tasks through the normative effect.

For the educational standards for the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* in the three science subjects of biology, chemistry and physics, which were adopted by the Standing Conference in June 2020, a joint *Abitur* task pool has been set up since fall 2021, which has been used for the first time in the *Abitur* examinations in 2025.

The Länder and IQB work closely together in the ongoing work on the pool of *Abitur* examination tasks.

The competence expectations set out in the educational standards of the Standing Conference for primary and lower secondary education are operationalised through test tasks to verify the achievement of the educational standards and exemplary tasks to implement the educational standards in school practice. These tasks are being continuously developed under the leadership of the IQB in cooperation with teaching staff and specialists for subject-related didactics.

The IQB Educational Trends studies to verify the achievement of the educational standards (formerly: IQB Länder Comparison Study), which are aligned more to school practice in Germany than international surveys, are carried out every five years at the primary level in grade 4 and every three years at the lower secondary level in grade 9 by means of representative random samples as well as on the basis of competence level models verified with regard to teaching methodology and learning psychology. The design of the test (test domains, instruments and test cycles), which aims for continuity, guarantees valid and long-term trend observations.

The language group of subjects (German and the first foreign language: English, French) alternate with mathematics and natural sciences as the subject matter of the investigation in grade 9. The subjects German and mathematics are included in each Länder comparison in grade 4. The reports on the IQB Educational Trends study are published twelve to eighteen months after the data collection. They provide information on the extent to which the pupils have achieved the competence expectations of the educational standards.

In October 2025, the Institute for Quality Development in Education (*Institut zur Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungswesen* – IQB) presented the findings of the IQB Education Trends 2024 study. The study examines the extent to which pupils in grade 9 meet the nationally binding educational standards in mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics, and for the first time enables an analysis of trends over a twelve-year period. The results show a significant decline in proficiency in all four subjects since 2018, but also a high level of satisfaction with school and positive

developments in integration and the use of digital media. Whilst motivation and psychosocial stress are causes for concern, the findings also highlight that committed teachers and targeted support have a positive impact.

Quality assurance measures at school level

The Länder conduct Land-specific as well as cross-Länder tests, in addition to national and international performance comparisons. This includes for example measurement of language proficiency for different age groups, surveys on learning levels, or comparative studies in different grades as well as Land-specific performance comparisons. Contrary to international studies and to the Educational Trends study (formerly: Länder Comparison studies) conducted by the IQB through representative samples, comparative studies (VERA, in some Länder also called performance level study or competence test) serve to investigate the performance levels of pupils at school and class level and aim at school development and the improvement of teaching. Comparison tests are conducted in the Länder for grades 3 and 8 (VERA 3 and VERA 8) on the basis of a framework agreed upon by all Länder. Appropriate supporting and continuing education offers will be provided for the teaching staff.

The key function of the comparative work lies in support for the development of teaching and schools for every single school through feedback oriented on the educational standards as an assessment of its current position with reference to the results in the Länder. At the same time, comparative studies have an important mediating function for the introduction of the specialist and teaching methodology concepts of the educational standards.

Comparative studies are part of a bundle of measures with which the Länder guarantee evidence-based quality development and assurance on the level of the individual schools. These include in almost all Länder methods for an external evaluation of the individual school, within the framework of which schools receive regular and systematic feedback on strengths and weaknesses, in particular on the quality of teaching processes. Complementary to this, the Länder support the internal evaluation of schools by providing corresponding methods and counselling. So-called reference frameworks for school quality and/or quality tableaus are available in the Länder as points of reference for this; these are based on both the findings of empirical educational research and Länder-specific normative specifications.

Joint education reporting by the Federation and the Länder

Education reporting is a key part of the joint tasks pursuant to Art. 91b paragraph 2 of the German Basic Law along with participation in international school performance comparisons. The report *Bildung in Deutschland* (education in Germany) is prepared every two years under the responsibility of an academically independent group of authors under the leadership of the DIPF | Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education (*DIPF | Leibniz-Institut für Bildungsforschung und Bildungsinformation*).

Under the guiding principle of “Bildung im Lebenslauf” (education in the CV) the education report systematically presents developments in the various fields of the educational system, from the elementary via the school sector, vocational education and training and university education right through to continuing education in adulthood. In this way, reliable information is provided on framework conditions as well as the progress and results and/or yields of educational processes. The particular

importance of the education report lies in the fact that it shows the interaction between the different educational areas and identifies overriding challenges in the German educational system. Since 2006, the education report has thus served as an important basis for decisions on education policy and ensures transparency on the situation in the educational system as a whole.

The core of education reporting is a certain set of indicators, each of which reflects a key aspect of an educational area in its various manifestations. The performance indicators on which this is based are primarily drawn from official statistics, though also scientific surveys. Continuing the performance indicators over time allows a systematic report on the development of the educational system as a whole as well as its respective areas over time.

In order to allow a comparison with developments in member states of the European Union and OECD (e.g. *Education at a Glance* of the OECD), certain indicators are aligned to international reports. Furthermore, the contents of the report are differentiated according to various Länder depending on the data situation.

Each education report contains a feature chapter on a topic of special significance for educational policy that is dealt with in more depth and presented across all educational areas. The education report has focused on the following key topics:

- Education and migration (2006),
- Transitions: school – vocational education and training – university – employment market (2008),
- Perspectives for the educational system in demographic change (2010),
- Cultural/musical-aesthetic education in a CV (2012),
- People with disabilities in the educational system (2014),
- Education and migration (2016),
- Effects and benefits from education (2018),
- Education in a digitalised world (2020),
- Education staff: structure, development, quality and professionalisation (2022),
- Vocational education and training (2024),
- Inequality in education.

Apart from the report *Bildung in Deutschland* there are now also a number of Länder-specific and regional education reports that are based on the *Bildung in Deutschland* report in terms of their conceptual orientation, choice of indicators and even the structure of their chapters.

The comprehensive strategy as a basis for application-related knowledge for educational policy and pedagogical practice

The comprehensive strategy of the Standing Conference for educational monitoring creates important premises for an even greater use of instruments to monitor the results and yields of educational processes so as to provide application-related knowledge for educational policy and practice. The key question here is how developments in the educational system can not only be described but also explained with the help of test methods and further empirical data. This should be linked to concrete tips on what has to be done to solve the problems that have been identified wherever possible.

The Standing Conference has agreed on subjects for research of key importance for educational policy that are regularly updated, and which relate to key practical questions for the development of schools and teaching.

In the year 2021, the Standing Conference has concretized its research topics. The current topics are of particular relevance:

- Development of teaching in the context of digitisation
- Speaking, writing, reading, listening
- Dealing with the heterogeneity and individual learning prerequisites
- Data-supported teaching development

The experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic should be taken into account for all research topics, and accompanying professionalisation research appears desirable for all suitable research topics.

The subjects for research of the Länder related to these thematic areas are taken into account as far as possible within the framework of the IQB programme of work as well as the ZIB. In addition, available scientific results and findings should be used more in future to answer questions of key importance for educational policy. In this context, the task of the Land institutes and quality institutions of the Länder lies in processing and distributing research knowledge in cooperation with academic and scientific institutions for schools, education administration and educational policy in a manner that is appropriate for the addressees.

The federal ministry of education supports efforts to ensure the performance of the educational system and the quality of education within the framework of general institutional research support, e.g. the German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* – DFG), the Max-Planck Society (*Max-Planck-Gesellschaft* – MPG) or the Leibniz Association (*Wissenschaftsgemeinschaft Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz* – WGL), in the context of departmental research, e.g. the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB) and through support for projects. The Framework Programme for Empirical Educational Research (*Rahmenprogramm empirische Bildungsforschung*) funds research projects that can make important contributions to overcoming challenges in the field of education – for example with regard to improving educational equity, dealing with diversity, quality development or actively shaping digitisation in the field of education. Current research includes language education, the dismantling of educational barriers, digitisation in the field of education, inclusive education and cultural education, as well as the protection of children and young people from sexualised violence in educational contexts. The funded research programmes include all stages and areas of education, including non-formal and informal learning opportunities.

10.3. Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Responsible bodies

The supervision of higher education institutions is exercised by the relevant Land Ministry of Science and Research. External evaluation is performed by regional evaluation agencies at Land level or by networks or associations of higher education institutions covering all Länder. The German Science and Humanities Council (*Wissenschaftsrat*) carries out the institutional accreditation procedures for non-state higher education institutions and the concept review for non-state higher education

institutions in the process of being established. The Länder are responsible for the state recognition of non-state institutions as higher education institutions.

For the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes, the Länder have established a Foundation Accreditation Council (*Stiftung Akkreditierungsrat*). The Foundation Accreditation Council is a joint institution of the Länder for accreditation and quality assurance in studies and teaching at German higher education institutions. Through the Foundation, the Länder jointly perform their tasks within the framework of quality assurance and quality development and thus fulfil their national responsibility in the higher education sector for ensuring the equivalence of corresponding study and examination achievements as well as degrees and the possibility of changing higher education institutions. The bodies of the Foundation are the Accreditation Council, the Executive Board and the Foundation Council.

According to the Interstate Treaty on the organization of a joint accreditation system to ensure the quality of teaching and learning at German higher education institutions (Interstate study accreditation treaty) (*Staatsvertrag über die Organisation eines gemeinsamen Akkreditierungssystems zur Qualitätssicherung in Studium und Lehre an deutschen Hochschulen – Studienakkreditierungsstaatsvertrag*), the Foundation Accreditation Council serves the fulfilment of the following tasks in detail:

- To accredit and re-accredit study programmes and internal quality assurance systems of higher education institutions as well as other quality assurance procedures by awarding the seal of the foundation.
- To define the conditions for the recognition of accreditations by foreign institutions, taking into account developments in Europe.
- To promote international cooperation in the field of accreditation and quality assurance.
- To regularly report to the Länder on the development of the consecutive system of study and on quality development within the framework of accreditation.
- To admit the agencies for the assessment and preparation of an expert opinion with decision and evaluation recommendations.
- To support the Länder in the further development of the German quality assurance system.

The Accreditation Council as responsible body decides on all matters of the Foundation Accreditation Council. The Accreditation Council comprises eight professors from institutions of higher education, one representative of the German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz – HRK*), four representatives of the Länder, five representatives from among professional practitioners, including one representative from the ministries of the Länder responsible for legislation governing service and wages, two students, two foreign representatives with accreditation experience as well as one representative of the accreditation agencies in an advisory capacity.

Approaches and methods of quality assurance

Supervision of higher education institutions

Higher education institutions are subject to state supervision which is exercised by the Länder (for the statutory framework of higher education supervisory authorities, see chapter 10.1.). Legal supervision encompasses all activities of the higher education institution. It is checked here whether the higher education institution has, by

its actions or omissions, infringed laws or other statutory provisions. A more wide-ranging academic supervision is carried out in those areas for which the state is responsible, as opposed to academic affairs. This includes staff administration and economic, budgetary and financial management, i.e. participation in the preparation of the responsible ministry's budget and in its implementation, the organisation of the higher education institution and the establishments affiliated to it, the management of budgetary funds, and so on. Within the relevant Land Ministry of Science and Research, the higher education supervisory authority examines whether actions taken are appropriate and economically efficient and whether targets are being fulfilled. Economic efficiency is also monitored by the audit office of the relevant Land.

The tasks of determining training capacity and setting admission figures are also subject to supervision by the higher education supervisory authority. Higher education institutions or rather the respective Land ministries issue ordinances or regulations on admission figures for the number of available places in higher education. These require education and training capacity to be used to the full, subject to budgetary constraints and the available premises, and to subject-related factors. The quality of research and teaching, and the proper performance of the functions of the higher education institution, particularly in research, teaching and study, must be guaranteed.

A legal obligation to submit regular reports on teaching and study 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.

The assessment of the quality of teaching has been provided for since 1998. In accordance with the principle of academic freedom, professors and junior professors perform their research and teaching duties independently. The scope and organisation of teaching is subject to supervision by the higher education supervisory authorities only in so far as the scope of teaching commitments is laid down in a teaching load ordinance, the contents of Bachelor's and Master's degree courses must comply with the requirements of the applicable study and examination regulations and must provide a qualification for a profession.

Evaluation in the higher education sector

In its resolution on quality assurance in teaching at higher education institutions from September 2005, the Standing Conference 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).

Meanwhile, to support internal evaluation and implement external evaluation of the different tasks of the institutions of higher education, an infrastructure of Land-level and supraregional-level establishments has now come into being (agencies at Land

level, networks/associations at supraregional level). 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.

At both the level of the institutions of higher education and at ministry level, various international cooperative measures 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.

Student criticism of classes, in some cases involving graduates, has now also become a widespread method of evaluating teaching in the sector of higher education. Such criticism primarily serves the purpose of optimising teaching within the higher education institution and is not an official means of monitoring teaching staff. The aim is for higher education teaching staff to listen to criticism so that they can assess themselves better and rectify shortcomings.

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 are increasingly being taken into account in the Länder as a basis for allocating resources to higher education institutions (cf. chapter 2.3.). Attempts to evaluate higher education institutions should generally be viewed against the overall background of renewal of the higher education sector, the main elements of which include reform of the structure of study, greater financial autonomy for higher education institutions and improved management.

Quality of teaching

The agreement between the Federation and the Länder Innovation in Higher Education Teaching (*Innovation in der Hochschullehre*) concluded in June 2019 as the successor to the Teaching Quality Pact (*Qualitätspakt Lehre*) from 2010 has been promoting the further development of higher education teaching and its strengthening in the higher education system as a whole since 2021. To this end, the Foundation for Innovation in Higher Education Teaching (*Stiftung Innovation in der Hochschullehre*) was established under the auspices of the Toepfer Stiftung gGmbH. Euro 150 million are available annually in the long term – initially from the Federal Government alone and, from 2024, with a Länder contribution of over Euro 40 million. Appropriate funding formats are intended to motivate institutions of higher education to continue their efforts to improve quality and innovations in teaching and learning. In addition, the exchange and networking of relevant actors as well as knowledge transfer is to be supported.

Even before the conclusion of the Teaching Quality Pact the Länder had taken measures to ensure and improve quality, e.g. to improve student-teacher ratios and other initiatives to develop the quality of teaching.

Another major challenge for institutions of higher education is the digitalisation of teaching and the associated integration of elements of digital learning into the regular curriculum.

Accreditation of study courses

In 2017, the Länder agreed on the Interstate Treaty on the organization of a joint accreditation system to ensure the quality of teaching and learning at German higher education institutions (Interstate study accreditation treaty) (*Staatsvertrag über die Organisation eines gemeinsamen Akkreditierungssystems zur Qualitätssicherung in Studium und Lehre an deutschen Hochschulen – Studienakkreditierungsstaatsvertrag*), which came into force at the beginning of 2018. Deviating from the previously practised procedure of accreditation-by-accreditation agencies, a distinction is now made between assessment and preparation of the expert opinion with decision and evaluation recommendations on the one hand, which are to be carried out by the agencies, and the accreditation decision on the other hand, which is made by the Foundation Accreditation Council as an administrative act.

The assurance and development of quality in studies and teaching is primarily the task of the higher education institutions, which fulfil this task through internal measures of quality assurance and quality development. The procedures used by the higher education institutions generally relate either to ensuring the efficiency of internal quality management systems with external participation (system accreditation) or to quality assurance and quality development of individual study programmes with external participation (programme accreditation). It is the task of the Länder within the framework of quality assurance and quality development to ensure the equivalence of corresponding study and examination achievements and degrees as well as the possibility of changing higher education institutions. Programmes whose quality is assured on the basis of the Interstate study accreditation treaty are recognised in all Länder as equivalent in terms of quality assurance under higher education legislation.

Formal criteria for quality assurance are study structure and duration, study programme profiles, admission requirements and transitions between study programmes, degrees and degree designations, modularisation, mobility and credit point systems, equalisation of Bachelor's and Master's programmes with previous *Diplom*, *Staatsexamen* and *Magister* programmes, measures to recognise achievements in the event of a change of higher education institution or study programme and achievements outside the higher education institution.

The subject-content criteria include:

- The qualification objectives of a degree programme corresponding to the desired level of qualification, which relate, among other things, to the area of scientific or artistic aptitude as well as aptitude for qualified employment and personal development.
- The conformity of the qualification objectives with a conclusive study programme concept and its implementation through an adequate equipment

with resources, appropriate qualification of the lecturers and corresponding competence-oriented examinations as well as studyability.

- Technical and content-related standards that are state-of-the-art in science and research.
- Measures to ensure adequate academic success.
- Measures for gender equality and compensation of disadvantages.
- The concept of the quality management system and the measures to implement the concept.

The procedures of higher education institutions for ensuring and developing quality in studies and teaching with regard to system accreditation and programme accreditation are generally carried out:

- At the request of the higher education institution, to be submitted to the Accreditation Council
- On the basis of a self-evaluation report of the higher education institution containing at minimum information on the quality objectives of the higher education institutions and the above-mentioned criteria
- With the decisive participation of external independent experts from the social sectors relevant to quality assurance
- Through assessment and preparation of an expert opinion with recommendations for decisions and evaluation by an agency approved by the Foundation Accreditation Council.
- Under participation of subject-related lecturers at higher education institutions

Before the final decision on accreditation is made, the higher education institution is given the opportunity to comment. The decision of the Accreditation Council comprises the determination of compliance with the formal criteria and the technical-content criteria. The procedure is documented. The expert opinion and the decisions are published in an appropriate manner.

The Länder determine the details of the formal criteria, the technical-content criteria and the procedure by ordinance. These regulations are based on a specimen decree drawn up jointly by the Länder, adopted by the Standing Conference in 2017 and amended in 2024, and are essentially identical.

The vast majority of Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes are subject to accreditation in accordance with the relevant Land legislation, including Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes which convey the educational prerequisites for a teaching post.

Accreditation and recognition of non-state institutions of higher education

The procedures of institutional accreditation (institutional (re-)accreditation, award of the right to confer doctoral degrees and concept review) are carried out by the German Science and Humanities Council (*Wissenschaftsrat*) on behalf of the Länder. In doing so, it examines whether a non-state institution of higher education is capable of fulfilling its tasks in accordance with recognized scientific standards. After successful accreditation, the higher education institutions receive the seal of the German Science and Humanities Council. Furthermore, the accreditation procedures, as a rule, supplement the information base of the Länder with a scientific assessment in the procedures for state recognition.

10.4. Quality Assurance in Adult Education and Training

Responsible bodies

In accordance with the statutory provisions and on the basis of additional agreements, the relevant federal departments, representatives of the employees' and employers' sides and the Länder are responsible for quality assurance of the regulated further training of the Federation and the competent bodies. Supervision of the competent bodies is exercised by the relevant departments of the Länder.

The employment agencies entrusted external certification bodies (so-called *Fachkundige Stellen*) with the task of inspecting maintaining bodies for continuing education in the area of vocational continuing education as promoted by the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit*).

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 distance learning course is to be approved.

Approaches and methods for quality assurance

The quality of continuing vocational education and training is guaranteed on three levels:

- legal requirements of the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz – BBiG*) and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (*Handwerksordnung – HwO*)
- systematic regulatory procedures involving the relevant protagonists;
- through public examinations

At the level of federally regulated continuing vocational education and training, a distinction is made between federally regulated continuing vocational education and training in which the federal government regulates certain content for qualifications by ordinance (§§ 53 ff BBiG, §§ 42 ff HwO). In addition, federal law also provides for regulations by the competent bodies which are permissible if there is no federally regulated further training and which can be issued by the competent bodies in this case (§ 54 BBiG, § 42 f HwO).

The statutory regulations require that the following key qualification features be stipulated in the statutory instruments for both types of further training:

- title of the qualification
- examination objective
- content and requirements of the examination with which the individual achievement of the objective and thus the quality of the qualification process are determined
- admission requirements to the examination
- examination procedure

In the case of federally regulated continuing education courses, the continuing education level must also be indicated.

Uniform nationally regulated training courses are being developed through regulatory procedures under the leadership of the Federation and with the close involvement of experts from the employee and employer sides. In the further process, the Länder will also be involved. The procedure is based on agreements and practice over

many years and – to ensure the broadest possible acceptance on the labour market – on the principle of consensus. Regulations of the competent bodies are decided by vocational training committees at the competent bodies.

The individual proof of qualification in the federally regulated further vocational training takes place within the framework of an examination under public law. The competent bodies or the competent state examination boards for the master craftsman examination are responsible for organizing and conducting the examinations on site.

The examination procedure is governed by the legal requirements of the examination regulations of the competent bodies, which must be approved by the legal supervisory authorities. The board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB) issues guidelines in this regard.

The Federation's procedural regulation for the master craftsman's examination applies for the approval and general examination procedure for the master craftsman's examination in the craft sector and in craft-like trades.

The procedure to perform continuing education examinations stipulates a number of quality assurance elements, in particular:

- the creation of expert and independent examination boards at the competent body
- the organisation of the preparation of the examination questions on equal terms
- the admission to the examination
- credit transfer modalities

The examination is an external evaluation that is not the responsibility of the teachers but of the publicly appointed examination boards. Appointing occupational experts to the examination boards ensures that the latest developments and innovations in the vocational field of action are taken into account in the examination process.

The procedures agreed on a federal level for the political committees and departments responsible for vocational education and training flank the elements of the quality assurance systems that are specified under law. The main committee of the BIBB (paragraph 91 BBiG), which brings together the quality assurance protagonists institutionally, has a major role to play for the continuing training regulations.

Apart from the education committees specified under law, working committees of the Federation exercise quality-assuring roles.

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. In a further reform in 2011, the scope of compulsory registration was extended in order to further improve the quality of

labour market services and thus the performance and efficiency of the labour market policy support system. The Accreditation and Licensing Regulation for Employment Promotion (*Akkreditierungs- und Zulassungsverordnung Arbeitsförderung – AZAV*), which was introduced as part of this reform, essentially governs the authorisation procedure for organisations and measures aimed at promoting employment. According to the AZAV, the competent bodies (*Fachkundige Stellen*) must decide, unlike in the past, not only on the approval of continuing vocational training providers, but also on the approval of all providers who want to offer measures of active employment promotion under Book Three of the Social Code III (*Drittes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Arbeitsförderung*). Licensing of the maintaining body of a continuing education measure by an expert body is a prerequisite before participants can obtain support in accordance with Book Three of the Social Code. Amongst other things, maintaining bodies of continuing education must prove that they apply a recognised quality assurance system. One exception in the context of employee development is the qualification allowance, for which only certification by the provider is required.

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*). 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 by the Central Office for Distance Learning of the Länder. In 2007, the new quality standard PAS 1037 for providers of distance-learning courses, distance-teaching and E-learning was introduced. The new standard meets the specifications of the Federal Employment Agency for the certification of bodies of further education and furthermore relates to international standards of quality management. For newly developed distance-learning courses from providers who have already been certified in accordance with the new quality standard, a simplified admission procedure with the ZFU can be anticipated.

11. EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

11.1. Introduction

The promotion of underrepresented social groups in the education system is achieved through a number of measures which aim to overcome social obstacles and enable equal participation.

Specific legislative framework

The right of disabled persons with disabilities to education and training appropriate to their needs is enshrined in the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*, Art. 3), in equality legislation, in Book Nine of the Social Code (*Neuntes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Rehabilitation und Teilhabe von Menschen mit Behinderungen*) and in the Länder constitutions. More detailed provisions are set out in the school legislation of the Länder.

The special concerns of students with disabilities are taken into account in the Higher Education Acts of the Länder. In many Länder, the appointment of representatives for the concerns of students with disabilities and chronic illnesses at higher education institutions is now anchored in law. The regulations on the participation rights differ from Land to Land.

In 2009, Germany ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) of December 13, 2006, committing itself to “ensure and promote the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons with disabilities without discrimination on the basis of disability”.

Early childhood education and care

Different offers for education, support and development in early childhood before entering school are available for children with disabilities. The majority of children who receive integration support related to an institution in accordance with Book Eight of the Social Code (*Achtes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Kinder- und Jugendhilfe*) and/or Book Nine of the Social Code or for whom special educational needs have been identified and who attend a day care facility for children will be supported there along with other children without disabilities.

Special education needs provision in the school sector

The aim of special educational support is to enable children and young people who either have disabilities or face the threat of disablement to exercise their right to a form of schooling, training and education that is tailored to their personal capabilities and needs. Children and young people receive support in the form of individual assistance measures so that they can achieve the highest possible level of integration at school and at work, participate in society and lead an independent life as far as possible. Support for special educational needs in inclusive educational schooling encourages children and youths with and without disabilities to work together.

The “Recommendations on special needs education in the schools of the Federal Republic of Germany” (*Empfehlungen zur sonderpädagogischen Förderung in den Schulen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Resolution of May 1994) the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK*) have in recent decades initiated important developments aiming to dismantle barriers and promote the equal participation of young people with disabilities in education. In spring 2008 the Standing Conference decided to revise the

Recommendations in order to take account of the intentions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Länder inter alia. On 18 November 2010, the Standing Conference adopted a position paper on “Educational and legal aspects in the implementation of the United Nations Convention of 13 December 2006 on the rights of persons with disabilities in school education” (*‘Pädagogische und rechtliche Aspekte der Umsetzung des Übereinkommens der Vereinten Nationen vom 13. Dezember 2006 über die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen (Behindertenrechtskonvention – VN-BRK) in der schulischen Bildung’*). In October 2011, the Standing Conference adopted the decision on “Inclusive education of children and young people with disabilities in schools” (*‘Inklusive Bildung von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Behinderungen in Schulen’*). The recommendations are guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They build on the basic positions of the 1994 “Recommendations on special needs education in the schools of the Federal Republic of Germany” (*‘Empfehlungen zur sonderpädagogischen Förderung in den Schulen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland’*) and set out the framework conditions for increasingly inclusive educational practice in general education and vocational schools. The aim of the recommendations is to enable children and young people to be educated and trained together and to guarantee and develop the standards achieved in special education teaching, advisory and support services.

The recommendations of the Standing Conference apply to children with special educational needs, regardless of whether their parents wish for them to receive support at a mainstream school or at a special educational institution. The implementation of parents’ right to choose between mainstream schools and special schools is a distinctive feature of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Germany. The recommendations of the Standing Conference apply to pupils with special educational needs, regardless of whether support takes place at a mainstream school or at a special education institution. The following recommendations of the Standing Conference on the individual focuses of special needs education as well as on the teaching of sick pupils are in effect on a complementary basis for the time being, provided that the statements they make do not contradict the above Recommendations. A differentiation is made between eight funding priorities:

- sight
- learning
- emotional and social development
- speech
- mental development
- hearing
- physical and motor development
- instruction for sick pupils

The recommendations on special educational needs are currently being successively revised. The “Recommendations on school education, guidance and support for children and young people with health conditions” (*‘Empfehlungen zur schulischen Bildung, Beratung und Unterstützung von erkrankten Kindern und Jugendlichen’*) were last revised in March 2025.

School career advice and vocational guidance

School career advice at lower secondary level consists of not only counselling on questions of transferring to other schools and the choice of the further educational path but also advice on study courses leading to a professional qualification in the educational system. It also cooperates with the Employment Agencies (*Agenturen für Arbeit*) in providing career advice for pupils.

Vocational Orientation (*Berufsorientierung*) offers for pupils exist in all Länder for all educational programmes; in all Länder, Vocational Orientation is now a firm part of the curricula and guidelines or ordinances.

The Employment Agencies also offer Careers Information Centres (*Berufsinformationszentren – BIZ*), facilities where anyone facing vocational or career decisions can find out more for themselves, in particular about training, professional activities and requirements, further education and training as well as developments on the labour market.

Higher education

The goal of support measures in higher education is to eliminate social obstacles for hitherto underrepresented groups and allow their equal participation. Hitherto underrepresented groups in the German higher education system include women (in certain subject groups and among scientific staff), students with children, students with disabilities and chronic illnesses, children from low-income or educationally disadvantaged origin groups, and students with a migrant background. Support for underrepresented social groups in the higher education sector is provided through a number of measures. More detailed information is available in chapter 11.6.

11.2. Special Education Needs Provision within Mainstream Education in the Elementary Sector and the School Sector

Cooperation between special education institutions and mainstream schools exists independently of approaches to inclusive teaching. When a pupil is transferred from one type of school to another, the teachers and head teachers at the schools concerned work together. It is principally possible for pupils to return to mainstream schools. In the majority of the Länder, the education authority makes the decision on whether to transfer a pupil following a request from the special education or general education institution or from the parents or legal guardians. Through the implementation of the Disability Convention of the United Nations, the Länder have created the prerequisites for teaching pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools with the same learning objectives as other pupils, and in some cases with different learning objectives. Particularly schools for children and young people with the special educational focus on speech, learning or emotional and social development are designed as transitional schools; their objective is to compensate for impairments in learning and language development or behavioural problems sufficiently that pupils can attend a mainstream school. In addition, the Länder have different forms of access to the mainstream school system or joint teaching also for pupils who are taught according to different learning objectives.

Within the framework of inclusive education, recently diverse forms of institutional and educational cooperation between mainstream schools and special education institutions have developed.

Definition of the target group(s)

It can be presumed that pupils have special educational needs if their opportunities for education, development and learning are limited in such a way that they cannot be sufficiently promoted within the scope of instruction at mainstream schools without additionally receiving special educational assistance. In this regard, therapeutic and social aid provided by other external institutions may be required as well.

Special educational needs are to be determined in relation to the tasks, the requirements and the support measures the respective school can provide. Furthermore, a determination of the special educational needs of the child must take into account the environment of the child, including the school as well as the pupil's personal abilities, interests and expectations for the future. In some cases, formal assessment procedures accompany enrolments and transitions to different types of schools.

The procedure of determining special educational needs comprises establishing the individual need for support as well as deciding on the course of education. The responsibility for the procedure lies in most cases with the school supervisory authorities: Either the authorities themselves have the competence for special educational needs as well as sufficient experience in the field of educational support for children and young people with special educational needs, or they consult experts in the field of special educational support.

The procedure of determining special educational needs may, according to the regulations of the individual Länder, be applied for by the parents or legal guardians of the pupil, by the pupil, by the school or, if applicable, by other competent services, and is to take into account the competences of the persons who participate or are to participate in the measures of support and instruction in a suitable manner.

Specific support measures

Inclusive education for pupils with special educational needs

Children and young people with special educational needs can attend mainstream schools. With the action plans adopted in all Länder, the expansion of the inclusive school system is being further developed with different legal regulations and implementation strategies in the Länder. Special education teachers are deployed at mainstream schools that meet special educational needs, e.g. by providing mobile assistance and advice as well as for cooperative instruction with another teacher. Teachers qualified in special needs education cooperate with the teachers and educators of the general schools with regard to individualised forms of planning, implementation and control of the teaching processes and a coordinated cooperation of the teachers and specialists involved. Special needs education is usually an intrinsic part of joint teaching. Educational institutions incorporate the necessary technical resources and specialist teaching and learning materials into their lessons. In addition, therapeutic, nursing and social support from other extracurricular service providers can also be included.

Special educational support in the form of cooperative measures

Many special education institutions and mainstream schools have developed close educational cooperation. Cooperative or inclusive forms of organisation benefit both lessons and the general life of the school. This favours the permeability of school types and their educational pathways, the further development of the quality of

teaching, the increase in the proportion of joint teaching and the transfer of pupils from special needs education institutions to mainstream schools.

In its "Recommendations on school education, counselling and support for children and young people with a special educational focus on LEARNING" (*Empfehlungen zur schulischen Bildung, Beratung und Unterstützung von Kindern und Jugendlichen im sonderpädagogischen Schwerpunkt LERNEN*'), the Standing Conference emphasises that offers for these children and young people should be closely linked to general education and its offers. The educational, counselling and support services of the special schools are to be linked regionally with the educational services of the general schools. To this end, the special educational institutions should cooperate with general schools. Pupils with special educational, counselling and support needs in the area of emotional and social development should also be taught in mainstream schools as a rule. The aim is to support strong educational relationships and contact with the peer group in the familiar social environment.

11.3. Separate Special Education Needs Provision in Early Childhood and School Education

In order to take into account the individual circumstances of the pupils as well as the parental right to choose the place of learning at school, pupils with special educational needs can also be educated at special educational establishments (e.g. special schools, special needs centres, schools with a special educational focus, special educational and advisory centres).

The structure of the special school system may vary from Land to Land. Educational institutions provide the necessary technical resources as well as specialist teaching and learning materials. In addition, therapeutic, nursing and social support from other non-school institutions can also be included. Special education institutions vary according to the type of special education on which they focus and the educational courses they offer. They provide support to pupils in any developments which may lead to their transfer to a mainstream school and to training.

The aim of special education centres (*sonderpädagogische Förderzentren*), either as regional or supra-regional institutions, is to meet individual special needs or a range of different needs (e.g. physical and motor development, hearing and sight, and so on) and to guarantee special education in inclusive or specific forms. This form of education is based as near to the home as possible and provided by specialists. Within the scope of the responsibility of special education centres for preventive measures, support can be provided even before the determination of special educational needs has taken place, sometimes as early as *Kindergarten*.

Definition of the target group(s)

For the definition of the target groups of special educational support at special schools, the information in chapter 11.2. applies.

Admission requirements and choice of school

Children and young people with disabilities or special educational needs are required to attend school, just as are their non-disabled peers.

When compulsory schooling begins, the legal guardians register their child at a school with primary level. The school with primary level usually organises the

transition to school attendance together with the day care centre. When a child reaches school age, his/her parents or legal guardians register their child at a school with primary level. The school with primary level usually organises the transition to school attendance together with the day care centre.

In principle the parents or legal guardians decide whether their child attends a general school or a special school. If their preference is not acceded to, they can seek redress out of court or through the courts.

Age levels and grouping of pupils

Special education institutions can be classified according to educational courses, grades and year groups. Various types of special education institutions (e.g. for those with sensory impairments) combine the courses of education leading to the First School Leaving Certificate (*Erster Schulabschluss*) or the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate (*Mittlerer Schulabschluss*) and in some Länder also the course of education leading to the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (*Abitur*). As at mainstream schools, these educational courses are divided up into the primary and secondary levels and organised in grades according to age, although instruction may be spread over more years than at mainstream schools.

Special education institutions with a special educational focus on learning are organised in grades according to age or performance levels. Special education institutions with a special educational focus on mental development, as a rule, comprise three levels, each of which is made up of several grades, the last of which is known as *Werkstufe*, *Berufsschulstufe* or *Abschlussstufe*. These focal points can also be established at other special education institutions, e.g. at a special school for those with sensory impairments.

Curriculum, subjects

Apart from special education institutions with a special educational focus on mental development and partly those with a special educational focus on learning, all special schools work on the basis of curricula or education plans which in terms of educational goals, lesson content and performance requirements match those of mainstream schools (so-called *lernzielgleiche Unterrichtung*). However, the didactics, methods and assessment of performance employed must take into account the specific conditions and effects on learning with regard to the special educational focuses. As a rule, special education institutions with special educational focuses on learning and mental development work according to their own guidelines which, like all other curricula or education plans, are issued by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of the relevant Land. General information on the development of curricula can be found in chapter 4.3.

Teaching methods and materials

Special education institutions are often schools with all-day offers. They are sometimes also run as a boarding school. Comprehensive assistance for pupils with disabilities is part of the teaching concept and instruction and education complement each other.

Instruction is designed to particularly meet individual needs, and some lessons are held in small groups or on an individual basis. As a rule, class sizes at special education institutions are lower than at general schools.

Depending on the type of disability, therapeutic measures such as physiotherapy, behavioural therapy, speech therapy, and so on, may be added to lessons at special education institutions.

Progression of pupils

Continuous assessment of performance takes place in special education institutions in a similar form to that of mainstream schools. In the case of pupils with intellectual disabilities, the assessments take the form of reports on their cognitive, social and emotional development.

Special education institutions examine regularly whether the needs of the pupil can still be catered for there and in which grade he or she should be placed or, alternatively, whether the pupil should move to another special school or to a mainstream school. The decision on which grade a pupil should be placed in is, as a rule, a matter for the school but it is the school supervisory authority that decides on a school transfer, following consultation with the parents or at their request and consideration of commissioned opinions or reports.

Certification

As far as the type of disability or illness allows, special education institutions award the qualifications obtained from mainstream schools (*Erster Schulabschluss*, *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* and also *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*), provided that instruction was based on the curricula of the respective school type and the educational course was completed successfully. In some Länder, specific qualifications are offered for the special educational focuses *Learning* and *Mental Development*.

For pupils who were not taught using the curricula of mainstream schools, as a rule, the teachers' conference deems that an educational course has been successfully completed when the pupil has passed through all the stipulated school levels successfully.

11.4. Support Measures for Learners in Early Childhood and School Education

For children who have reached compulsory schooling age but for whom it can be assumed that they will not be able to participate successfully in the initial lessons, *Schulkindergärten*, *Vorklassen* oder *Grundschulförderklassen* have been established in some Länder. Attendance is usually voluntary, although in most of the Länder in question the authorities are entitled to make it compulsory. As a rule, these institutions have organisational links with *Grundschulen* (primary schools) or special education institutions. *Schulkindergärten* seek to create and optimise the conditions for a form of schooling, training and education that is tailored to the children's needs by nurturing – as far as possible on an individual basis – the children's ability to gain perceptions and express themselves, through exercises and the handling of materials designed to arouse and develop attention on the part of the children. The development of skills for a successful transition to school should be promoted by supporting the child's interests, motivations and activities in play and everyday situations that make sense to the child, without prejudging the goals and content of school learning. Playing and learning in social contexts is of great importance.

Some Länder have established so-called *Vorklassen* (pre-school classes) for five-year-olds who have not reached compulsory schooling age but whose parents wish them to receive assistance with their preparation for primary school. Attendance of

Vorklassen in *Grundschulen* is voluntary. The purpose of such pre-school classes at primary school is to encourage the children to learn by playing but without anticipating the subject-matter dealt with in grade 1 of the *Grundschule*.

In individual *Länder*, children with disabilities of pre-school age can receive support in a *Schulkindergarten* if the parents so wish and the school administration determines the need for early childhood special needs education.

Definition of target group(s)

In recent years, the *Länder* have made intensive efforts to establish diagnostic procedures as a basis for individual support. These include for instance establishing language levels prior to enrolment at school, studies of learning backgrounds on starting school, establishing learning levels, comparative and orientation work, and competence analyses in different primary and lower secondary level grades. On this basis, essential individual support measures can be initiated, which are systematically developed in individual learning plans and in individual support plans if there is a special need for support.

The efforts of the *Länder* are supported by the federal ministry of education with the research funding guideline "Support-related diagnostics in inclusive education" (*'Förderungsbezogene Diagnostik in der inklusiven Bildung'*). The funding guideline examines how support-related and everyday integrated diagnostics can succeed and what framework conditions are required for this. The aim is to improve the conditions for inclusive education for children, young people and adults in all areas of education. This includes the important transitions.

Specific Support Measures

Language proficiency diagnostics and language support in the early childhood sector

As part of the measures to improve language competence in early childhood, there are now a large number of important and established observation and documentation procedures in the *Länder* to determine the level of language competence before school enrolment and, if necessary, subsequent language support measures. These and other measures are designed to particularly support children and young people with a migrant background or a non-German language of origin and children with deficits in language development as well as to compensate for social disadvantages. In recent years, almost all *Länder* have introduced procedures for language status observation and assessment in early childhood education and in some cases have established obligatory language promotion measures.

Starting Opportunities Programme

In Spring 2024, the federal ministry of education and the *Länder* agreed on the Starting Opportunity Programme (*Startchancen-Programm*). The largest education programme in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany to date, it started on 1 August 2024 and will run for ten years. The federal and state governments are each providing Euro 1 billion per year in funding.

With the Starting Opportunity Programme, the federal and state governments are addressing the fact that educational success in Germany still depends heavily on social background. The aim is to improve educational and opportunity equality and break the strong link between educational success and social background. It complements the activities of the *Länder* in increasing equal opportunities, decoupling

educational success from social background, and establishing training maturity and employability.

The programme targets schools in challenging situations, i.e. schools with a high proportion of socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. Approximately 4,000 schools are participating, of which around 60 per cent are primary schools and 40 per cent are secondary schools and vocational schools, with the latter primarily offering vocational and training preparation courses.

The Starting Opportunities Schools will receive investments in better infrastructure and equipment that is more conducive to learning but needs-based school and teaching development measures and targeted support for multi-professional teams will also be promoted.

Specifically, the Startchancen programme comprises three pillars: Pillar I implements an investment programme for modern infrastructure and equipment that is more conducive to learning. Pillar II supports needs-based measures for school and teaching development, and Pillar III provides targeted support for multi-professional teams in schools. The programme also aims to initiate systemic changes in the education system. It will be scientifically monitored and evaluated.

Education through Language and Writing

To further develop quality in the field of language promotion and language diagnostics following a phase of intensive development and expansion, the Standing Conference, the Conference of the Ministers of Youth and Family Affairs (*Jugend- und Familienministerkonferenz – JFMK*), the then Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – BMBF*) and the then Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMFSFJ*) agreed in October 2012 to implement a joint initiative to develop language promotion, language diagnostics and reading promotion. The research and development programme Education through Language and Writing (*Bildung durch Sprache und Schrift – BiSS*) scientifically developed and further tested the linguistic education of children and the effectiveness of measures introduced in the Länder for language promotion, language diagnostics and reading promotion from primary to lower secondary level.

Following BiSS, the initiative of the Federation and the Länder “Transfer of Language Education, Reading and Writing Promotion” (*‘Transfer von Sprachbildung, Lese- und Schreibförderung’ – BiSS-Transfer*) was launched in March 2020. The aim of the five-year transfer phase is to bring the results of BiSS to the wider community. To this end, more than 3,300 schools and day-care centres are working in networks – with the support of the institutes for school development and quality assurance of the Länder – to firmly anchor improved measures of language education as well as reading and writing promotion in their institutions. The federal ministry of education is funding the overall coordination as well as the research network, in which the conditions for the success of the transfer are being investigated. The Länder bear the costs for the personnel and coordination expenses of the participating schools as well as for the advisory and support tasks of school supervision and Länder institutions.

Support Strategy for poorer-performing pupils

In March 2010, the Standing Conference adopted a targeted Support Strategy for Poorer-Performing Pupils (*Förderstrategie für leistungsschwächere Schülerinnen und*

Schüler), which includes prevention, intervention and compensation measures. The support strategy is closely linked to the “Action framework to reduce the number of pupils leaving school without a first general education qualification, to secure transition from the lower secondary school to the next educational level or to vocational education and training in the dual system and to lower the number of trainee drop-outs” (*Handlungsrahmen zur Reduzierung der Zahl der Schülerinnen und Schüler ohne Schulabschluss, Sicherung der Anschlüsse, Verringerung der Zahl der Ausbildungsabbrecher*) from 2007. The aim of the support strategy is to significantly reduce the number of pupils not achieving a minimum competence development level by the end of their course of education. At the same time this should considerably improve their chances of achieving a school-leaving qualification and successfully participating in society and the world of work.

In this context particular attention is given to children and young people with a migrant background. The support strategy resolved by the Standing Conference relates to the achievement of the minimum standards for the *Hauptschulabschluss* or a comparable qualification. This also includes pupils with special educational needs covered by the individual focus Learning, more of whom are to be given the chance to achieve a *Hauptschulabschluss* or comparable qualification.

The guidelines of the promotion strategy include:

- individual support in teaching geared to the educational standards;
- facilitation of and targeted support for longer learning periods;
- hands-on lesson planning;
- greater support for pupils with a migrant background or non-German language of origin;
- help for pupils with special educational needs to achieve a *Hauptschule* leaving certificate;
- development of suitable all-day offers and strengthening of educational partnerships;
- the professionalisation of Vocational Orientation, and the shaping and securing of transitions;
- development of teacher training;
- evaluation of results.

Various approaches and measures are already being pursued in the Länder to promote poorer-performing pupils. These can be grouped into five strategy areas:

- improving individual support;
- restructuring learning: development of teaching geared to competences, new forms of acquisition of competences;
- facilitating qualifications, structuring transitions and safeguarding connections;
- connecting partners, coordinating action, building networks and cooperation;
- strengthening quality assurance and quality development, intensifying educational research.

In April 2024, the Standing Conference presented its fourth “Report on the status of implementation of the support strategy for poorer-performing pupils” (*Bericht zum Stand der Umsetzung der Förderstrategie für leistungsschwächere Schülerinnen und*

Schüler'). The successful approaches and measures to promote poorer-performing pupils will be continued in the coming years and the objectives associated with the promotion strategy will be pursued continuously and emphatically.

Remedial Teaching (*Förderunterricht*)

Pupils with learning difficulties usually receive remedial teaching within the framework of teaching in mixed ability classes. To support these pupils, learning groups may also be set up for a certain period of time. However, these measures are accompanied by integrative work in class. The primary focus is on differentiating forms of planning, teaching and organising the teaching and education processes. In December 2003, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) adopted basic principles for the individual promotion of pupils experiencing particular difficulties with reading and writing.

Plans for remedial teaching are to be developed to support these children that, as part of the overall schooling concept, will be agreed with all the teaching staff involved, as well as with the parents and pupils. For this group of pupils, the schools provide general remedial instruction during school hours or complementary remedial instruction after hours. The resolution of December 2003 was revised in November 2007 and enhanced by principles governing the individual promotion of pupils experiencing particular difficulties in mathematics.

As well as the compulsory sports lessons at schools, adapted physical education may be offered. This is designed above all for pupils with motor deficits and psychosocial problems. In accordance with the resolution of the Standing Conference "Principles for the implementation of sports promotion lessons" (*Grundsätze für die Durchführung von Sportförderunterricht*) of May 2022, it aims to impact positively on their motor development and improve their health and hence well-being.

Pupils who are experiencing difficulties in the learning process and who are liable to fail to achieve the educational goals of a school year may be given learning support individually in small groups in addition to the instruction they receive in class. Remedial programmes mainly concern German and mathematics as well as foreign languages. Additional instruction may be given in any timetabled subjects. The instruction is normally provided in the afternoon.

Support for children of occupational travellers

For children and young people whose life is characterised by continual moves and a consequent lack of continuity in their school development, an improvement in the schooling situation must aim above all at continuity, a stable relationship between pupil and teacher, and at elements which stabilise their school career and motivate those pupils to attend school. Children of circus artists, fairground entertainers and other occupational travellers have to change school up to thirty times a year. This particular situation calls for coordinated supporting systems that also work across Länder in order to take into account the special learning conditions of these children and young people, allowing them to gain a school-leaving qualification and thus guaranteeing a successful transfer to working life.

The Länder have developed several schemes to improve the school education of the children of professional travellers. In all Länder, special regulations apply for instructing the children of professional travellers. This teaching is based on a system of *Stammschulen* and *Stützpunktschulen* (regular and base schools) that has been

introduced in all Länder. The *Stammschule* is the school attended by the children of travelling families during the periods when they are not travelling. This is usually a school at the primary residence or winter quarters of the family. This is where the pupils' files are kept, the individual learning plan is drawn up, the learning materials and, as a rule, the school diaries are handed out and the report cards are issued. The *Stützpunktschule* are schools that the children attend when travelling. They are normally located near fairgrounds or the residential locations of the travelling family and are specially adjusted to meet the needs of travelling children.

In addition to the established home and base system, mobile schools in Nordrhein-Westfalen and Hessen supplement the regular teaching of children of occupational travellers at primary and lower secondary level.

During the travel times of the children of occupational travellers, remote supervision by the main schools or the mobile area teachers can also supplement the face-to-face lessons.

The *Bereichslehrer* (regional teachers) make an important contribution to supporting and encouraging the travelling children in all Länder. They look after not only the children from their own Federal State but also travelling children and act as a link between the school and parents, the *Stammschule* and *Stützpunktschule* as well as the relevant teachers. They particularly offer counselling, information and coordination during the child's entire school career, accompany the children outside the lessons and in some of the Länder can also offer homework supervision and remedial teaching.

The school logbook for the subjects German, mathematics and the first foreign language, introduced by resolution of the Standing Conference, enables the children of occupational travellers to continue working on their individual learning status during the trip. Furthermore, the school logbook documents the individual learning development and is proof of their attendance at school. A supplementary handout for teachers contains all the necessary information on how to use the school logbook.

The cross-Länder pilot project "DigLu – Digital Learning on the Road" was designed as a further development on a digital basis. It creates a new type of digital learning infrastructure for children of occupational travellers that is compatible with data protection and cross-Länder. In September 2024, the Standing Conference decided to transfer the digital school diary "DigLu" to regular operation. From the 2025/2026 school year onwards, DigLu will be compulsory in all Länder.

Teachers at the main and support schools as well as the *Bereichslehrkräfte* have the opportunity to supervise and support the children on the journey with the necessary continuity and to keep a constant eye on the learning development of the child during the journey. DigLu was successfully launched as a pilot project on 1 November 2020 with the pilot states of Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Hessen, Niedersachsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Sachsen and Thüringen. The successive entry of further Länder into the trial phase took place until December 2022. After successful completion of the trial phase, it is planned to transfer DigLu to regular operation by all Länder and thus to firmly establish it as a cross-Länder system. DigLu is funded by the *DigitalPakt Schule*.

The above-mentioned support services and documents, current and further information on the pedagogical concept as well as access to institutions active in this field,

to the contact persons in the Länder as well as to the *Bereichslehrkräfte* and much more can be found on the homepage of www.schule-unterwegs.de. The website is maintained by the Federal Association for the Promotion of Education and Training of Children and Adolescents of Travelling Professionals in Germany (*Bundesverband zur Förderung von Erziehung und Bildung der Kinder und Jugendlichen von reisenden Berufsgruppen in Deutschland e.V. – BERiD e. V.*) with the support of the district government of Arnsberg (Nordrhein-Westfalen).

Beyond the general education sector, young people who are required to attend vocational school, especially from the showman's trade, can acquire job-specific skills at three locations in Hessen, Nordrhein-Westfalen and Schleswig-Holstein. (Project BeKoSch – Vocational Competence for Showmen). Circus members can also take part in the vocational training measures, which are offered to young people from all Länder.

The Standing Conference discusses educational issues for travelling children and related questions, in particular on schooling and support schemes, in annual joint conferences with representatives of the associations and parents of professional travellers.

Measures to promote high-achieving pupils

In June 2015, the Standing Conference resolved a Support Strategy for High-Achieving Pupils (*Förderstrategie für leistungsstarke Schülerinnen und Schüler*). The recommendation emphasises the role of teaching staff in identifying high performance potentials and thus determining the initial learning situation in classes.

The target group covers pupils who already display particularly good performances as well as pupils whose potentials are to be identified and developed by targeted encouragement and support. The successful development of potentially capable and high-achieving pupils essentially depends on an early identification of their abilities and needs. A careful observation and diagnosis of the learning conditions of pupils is particularly important as the basis for an individualised plan of support in the school.

Apart from the primary encouragement of general intellectual abilities, support for the musical, sports and emotional abilities are also important.

In November 2016, the Federation and Länder resolved a Joint Initiative to Encourage High-Achieving and Potentially High-Achieving Pupils (*Gemeinsame Initiative von Bund und Ländern zur Förderung leistungsstarker und potenziell besonders leistungsfähiger Schülerinnen und Schüler – 'Leistung macht Schule'*). The 'Leistung macht Schule' initiative was launched in January 2018. Against the background of an education policy aimed at equal opportunities and educational justice, it contributes to the development of sustainable structures for the promotion of high-performing and potentially particularly high-performing pupils within the framework of the regular school system. To this end, the 300 participating schools were supported in a first five-year phase (2018–2023) by an interdisciplinary research network in the development of practical strategies and concepts for school and classroom development.

The core of the second phase (2023–2027) is the transfer of the results to as many schools as possible: The schools who had participated in the first phase serve as multipliers for other schools. In this way, the strategies, concepts and measures developed and tested jointly by science and schools in the first phase will contribute to sustainable school and teaching development in as many schools as possible.

The initiative will run for ten years. The Federal Government and the Länder are providing a total of Euro 125 million in equal shares for the initiative.

Support programmes for children and young people with migrant backgrounds

The language abilities of all children and young people with migrant backgrounds or non-German language of origin who have deficits in the German language are to be promoted, enabling them to take part in instruction and education on an equal footing with others. This is considered a task for all teachers and all subjects. Measures for the promotion of language skills are to be provided at all types of school and at all levels if demand exists. Additional funds are to be provided for facilities that are mainly or largely attended by children with a migrant background or non-German language of origin, e.g. to increase the number of teachers from a migrant background or to support teachers with socio-educational staff from child and youth welfare, so as to enable an effective, compensatory promotion of language skills, taking into account the legal framework. In the area of early childhood education and care increasing numbers of *Erzieherinnen* and *Erzieher* (state-recognised youth or child-care workers) with a migrant background are to be trained and employed.

To integrate children and young people with migrant backgrounds or non-German language of origin, various support programmes are run by the schools to help the children and young people learn German and obtain German school qualifications. Measures to promote the educational success of children and young people with migrant backgrounds include, for example, specially assigned teachers for German as a second language and the recruitment of teachers from migrant families. Programmes to integrate children and young people with migrant backgrounds or non-German language of origin into German schools are variously organised in each Land:

- preparatory classes for children and young people with migrant backgrounds or non-German language of origin, partly with acquisition of the German Language Diploma of the Standing Conference – First Level (DSD I) and First Level for Vocational Schools (DSD I PRO) (Vorbereitungskurse, Vorkurse Deutsch or Deutschförderkurse)
- special classes which combine instruction in the core subjects with intensive study of the German language (*Sprachlernklassen*, *Deutschförderklassen* or *Übergangsklassen*)
- bilingual classes (held in the native language and German)
- intensive courses in German as a foreign language
- special support lessons outside school hours for children and young people with migrant backgrounds who are already taught in integrated classes with German children and need to improve their German skills
- greater cooperation between home and school

In addition, adapted potential analysis methods are used to estimate the children's talent and to support them according to their abilities.

To preserve their cultural identity and to promote bilingual competences, in many Länder, children and young people with migrant backgrounds receive supplementary instruction in their native language for up to five periods a week, which covers the geography, history and culture of their native country.

Measures shall also be offered at vocational schools to promote the language skills of young people with migrant backgrounds or non-German language of origin. This is

supplemented by vocational orientation measures with analyses of potential and practical investigations of professional fields. Additional funds are to be made available for vocational schools with a high proportion of young people with a migration background or non-German language of origin, e.g. to increase the proportion of teachers with a migration background or to support teachers with socio-educational experts from child and youth welfare.

The significant rise in the number of refugees of compulsory school age poses a big problem for the Federation and Länder, a problem that can only be overcome by using a considerable number of resources. This relates to additional funds to create spatial capacities and the employment of teachers, social workers and integration helpers. The integration of young refugees in schools also calls for special support measures, socio-educational and psychological care as well as a complex cooperation between all persons and institutions involved in caring for and supporting refugees. Furthermore, the Länder are greatly expanding their schemes for teacher training as well as continued education and training for teachers in the field of inter-cultural education and German as a second language or German as a foreign language. The Federation and the Länder hold regular talks to coordinate the responsibilities, the organisation and the financing of these schemes.

Measures of support for transition from school to vocational education and training

In recent years, the number of young people who have been unable to find a training place after attending a general education school has decreased. According to the joint report by the Federation and Länder Education in Germany 2024 (*Bildung in Deutschland 2024*), in 2023 27 per cent of all new entrants to the vocational education and training system first completed pre-vocational measures in the transition system (*Übergangsbereich*). A common factor of the many different courses on offer in the transition system is that they do not provide a vocational qualification, but endeavour to improve the trainability of individuals and sometimes enable participants to obtain a general education qualification. The main transition system general education course providers are *Berufsfachschulen* which do not award a vocational qualification, *Berufsschulen* offering courses for pupils with no training contract, the *Berufsvorbereitungsjahr* at school (a year of pre-vocational training) and the *Berufsgrundbildungsjahr* at school (i.e. basic vocational training year). At the end of compulsory full-time schooling, the Employment Agency offers pre-vocational schemes of the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit – BA*) and, like the Jobcenter, supports the vocational access qualification (EQ), a long-term work placement scheme lasting six to twelve months in preparation for the actual training. In individual cases, part of pre-vocational training programmes and access qualification may be able to be credited to the subsequent vocational training.

In October 2013, the Standing Conference adopted a “Recommendation on optimising and standardising school provision in the transition system” (*Empfehlung zur Optimierung und Vereinheitlichung der schulischen Angebote im Übergangssystem*). The transition from school to working life is to be guided inter alia by the following principles:

- creating a flexible set of instruments that leads to a qualification in a recognised occupation requiring formal training, through differentiated transition offers

- offering all young people who are ready and willing to train an apprenticeship in a recognised occupation requiring formal training, preferably in the system of dual vocational education and training
- efficient, targeted and standardised use of resources with close coordination between the Federation, the Länder and the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit* – BA) to develop a sustainable support system
- strategic and operative management of the transition system at Land level between all stakeholders under reliable framework conditions
- coordinating measures and educational offers between all stakeholders and monitoring in a regional transition management.

A mandatory Vocational Orientation (*Berufliche Orientierung*) at all general education schools should open the opportunity for young people to develop their potential and make an informed career choice (more detailed information on Vocational Orientation and on the “Recommendation on Vocational Orientation at schools” of the Standing Conference is available in chapter 11.5.). Consistently orienting the transition system to the above principles should, moreover, facilitate individual, tailored support for young people with difficulties getting off the ground. In the long term the transition system should, therefore, become such an efficient instrument that it only has to be available for young people with particular support needs.

In 2010, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* – BMBF) launched the Education Chains Initiative (*Initiative Bildungsketten*) to promote training opportunities for young people and strengthen vocational education and training. It has developed into a central cooperation model between the federal government, the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit* – BA) and the Länder. The Länder play a significant role in this because they implement a large part of the measures, embedded in the respective state concept.

For the Education Chains Initiative, the federal ministry of education, the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (*Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales* – BMAS) and the BA coordinate their activities and programmes with the Länder. Together, they assume responsibility for accompanying and supporting young people at the transition from school to work. The central fields of action here are vocational orientation, individual support at school, at the transition to vocational training or university and during training.

Young people should recognize their strengths and interests as early as possible. The career orientation process, which works towards a conscious decision for a profession, usually begins as early as year 5. Those who need additional support and motivation before and during their training will receive individual support until they complete their training if required, so that they can successfully integrate into the world of work.

Young people with social disadvantages, learning difficulties or handicaps and young people with migrant backgrounds with an inadequate command of German need special assistance in order to begin and successfully complete a course of training. Various possibilities exist to achieve this. Disadvantaged young people can, for instance, attend a *Berufsvorbereitungsjahr* at school (a year of pre-vocational training) aimed at preparing them for the requirements of in-company vocational training. In this context, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs

has passed recommendations on measures in vocational schools for young people requiring particular support in the acquisition of professional qualifications owing to learning difficulties. Or the disadvantaged young people can be supported by the Employment Agency or the Jobcenter. These programmes are designed to provide preparation for vocational education and training to young people who have been unable to secure a training place, to provide parallel training assistance to young people who are currently undergoing in-company training or to provide disadvantaged young people with non-company vocational training.

Companies can convey training-relevant basic knowledge as well as initial vocational in-company experience to disadvantaged or less competitive young people by means of individual preparatory training courses and hence introduce them to in-company vocational training.

11.5. Guidance and Counselling in Early Childhood and School Education

Academic guidance

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 (see chapter 5.2.), 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.

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 (for information on counselling teachers, see chapter 9.3.). The school guidance services also collaborate with local employment agencies to provide the pupils with vocational guidance.

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*).

For school career advice at vocational schools, the information given on school career advice at general education schools essentially applies. At most vocational schools, preparation for working life (*Arbeitslehre*, *Wirtschaft-Arbeit-Technik* or *Arbeit-Wirtschaft-Technik*) is a subject in its own right.

Pursuant to the Vocational Training Act (Art. 76 Section 1 – *Berufsbildungsgesetz*), the competent body shall provide support in the form of advice to the persons involved in vocational education and training preparation or initial vocational education and training. To this end, the competent body shall appoint training advisers.

Psychological counselling

School psychological services are either part of the school supervisory authorities at lower or middle level school administration, or they are separate institutions. In Bayern school psychologists are always teachers in a certain kind of school and are therefore usually employed directly in a school and are responsible for the school psychological service in their school, and possibly other schools too, as members of the

school's own staff. They offer individual assistance using psychological diagnosis and counselling methods. They do so in collaboration with the pupil concerned and his/her parents and teachers. Comprehensive counselling with reference to individual pupils can only be carried out with the consent of the parents or the pupil concerned (if of age). Special data protection regulations apply to the handling of personal data (test results, counselling protocols, etc.).

The reasons for seeking the help of the psychological service may be of various kinds, from learning difficulties and psycho-social problems to conflicts at school, uncertainty about the choice of the school career, etc. To provide effective and solution-oriented assistance that tackles the problems at their root, school psychological services collaborate with other counselling services such as the school health service of the local public health office, the careers advice service or the service for vocational psychology at the employment agency, the counselling units of the public youth and welfare authorities, paediatricians, neurologists and psychiatrists.

School psychological services, however, do not only deal with individual cases. They advise teachers and schools on key issues with a psychological component like the assessment of performance, individual promotion and on conflicts. They may be involved in school pilot projects and help with in-service teacher training, particularly courses for counselling teachers (see also chapter 9.3.). School psychologists also offer supervision for teachers and are responsible for help and assistance in school crises and emergencies.

Career guidance

As early as 1969, in its "Recommendation on the *Hauptschule*" (*Empfehlung zur Hauptschule*), the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) stressed the need to prepare pupils for the adult world, especially working life. This approach is currently continued in the "Agreement on types of schools and courses of education at lower secondary level" (*Vereinbarung über die Schularten und Bildungsgänge im Sekundarbereich I*), in which Vocational Orientation is laid down as an obligatory component of all educational programmes. Teaching takes place either in a separate subject (*Arbeitslehre*) or as part of the material covered in other subjects. Company internships are intended to provide exemplary insights into the world of work and contribute to the orientation of the student in his or her choice of occupation.

According to the "Agreement on the structure of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* in the upper secondary level" (*Vereinbarung über die Gestaltung der gymnasialen Oberstufe in der Sekundarstufe II*) of July 1972, teaching in the upper secondary school also includes appropriate information about higher education institutions, occupational fields as well as structures and requirements of higher education study and the world of work and occupation.

According to the "Recommendation on Vocational Orientation in schools" (*Empfehlung zur Beruflichen Orientierung an Schulen*) adopted by the Standing Conference in December 2017, the educational mission of schools is essentially to prepare pupils adequately for life in society and to enable them to participate actively and responsibly in cultural, social, political, professional and economic life. This includes preparing the pupils for the world of work and occupation. An early, practice-oriented, individual Vocational Orientation (*Berufliche Orientierung*) is of vital importance for

a successful transition into education, study and occupation for all pupils. The Länder understand Vocational Orientation to mean a process that begins at school and continues until it leads to training, studies and employment. The framework requirements of the Länder for Vocational Orientation are anchored in systematic and coherent school concepts.

Vocational Orientation based on these principles of the Recommendation should be anchored in all secondary schools and further developed where necessary. As part of Vocational Orientation, pupils receive information about different occupations and practice-oriented insights, partly in their own subject and partly across disciplines. In particular, the internships, some of which last several weeks, in companies, business enterprises, administrative authorities or social institutions enable them to develop a picture of the world of work close to practice. This contributes to the fact that the young people can make their career choice on the basis of a realistic assessment. The concrete implementation of Vocational Orientation measures is the responsibility of the schools and of vocational counselling by the local employment agencies.

The Federal Employment Agency is closely involved in the implementation of the school and Land concepts for Vocational Orientation. In the "Framework Agreement on Cooperation between Schools and Careers Guidance between the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Federal Employment Agency" (*'Rahmenvereinbarung über die Zusammenarbeit von Schule und Berufsberatung zwischen der Kultusministerkonferenz und der Bundesagentur für Arbeit'* from 2004, as amended in June 2017, the cooperation partners are committed to enabling all young people to make a successful transition from general education and vocational schools into training or studies and then into qualified employment. To this end, the effectiveness of cooperation between schools and careers guidance services is to be increased by applying joint action strategies and systematically building on each other. Through the increased use of modern means of communication, among other things, each individual pupil should be able to benefit from continuous advice and support in order to be able to make an independent and reflective decision about their further educational path.

The coordination of regional advisory and accompanying structures between schools, the Employment Agency, Jobcenter, youth welfare institutions and other advisory services will be further intensified.

The Employment Agency is also responsible for career advice for young people in accordance with Book Three of the Social Code (*Drittes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Arbeitsförderung*). Their career advice service is an important partner for schools and counselling teachers. It advises pupils from all kinds of schools, trainees, students and graduates as well as anyone looking for vocational training for the first time or who wants to strike out in a new direction professionally.

Counselling in schools takes the form of regular consultation hours in the school and in the Employment Agency as individual counselling. In some cases, Vocational Orientation measures are also held on site during regular lessons in agreement with those concerned. Furthermore, the career advice service can also take part in parents' evenings and occupational events at the school locations with its counselling and training placement measures. Employment Agency offers usually begin three years before the school-leaving qualification in the lower and upper secondary levels, in the lower secondary level too in schools with an *Oberstufe*. The Employment Agencies

also offer Careers Information Centres (*Berufsinformationszentren* – BIZ), facilities where anyone facing vocational or career decisions can find out more for themselves about education, training, the labour and training markets for free. These provide access to descriptions of the professional activities and requirements, opportunities for further qualification as well as developments on the labour and training market for every profession.

In all Länder, Vocational Orientation is a fixed part of the curricula and guidelines or regulations. In all Länder there are also supraregional or Land-wide offers for advanced Vocational Orientation agreed between the relevant ministries and the regional directorates of the Federal Employment Agency and financed in part by the European Social Fund (ESF). The advanced Vocational Orientation at general education schools incorporates inter alia information on professional fields, exploration of interests, establishment of aptitudes and skills, teaching of decision-making strategies, practical professional experience in companies, and improved reflection on aptitudes, interests and abilities.

Systematic skills profiling procedures (e.g. competence analysis, career choice passport (*Berufswahlpass*), skills passport, competence portfolio, *Profilpass*, etc.) are used in all Länder on an occasional basis or across-the-board for the individual support of pupils. These offers are systematised and further developed with respect to further Vocational Orientation measures within the scope of the initiative Qualification and Connection – Education Chains through to the Completion of Training (*Abschluss und Anschluss – Bildungsketten bis zum Ausbildungsabschluss*). In this, the federal ministry of education together with the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (*Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales* – BMAS) and the Federal Employment Agency are concluding bilateral agreements also with the Länder to make the transition from school to training and work or a choice of studies more efficient. More detailed information can be found in chapter 11.4.

An important contribution is being made by the Vocational Orientation measures in inter-company and similar vocational education and training centres, which have been supported by the federal ministry of education since 2008. The programme is partly supported by the Länder through supplemental financing. Following a pilot phase, the vocational guidance programme became permanent in June 2010. The support is aimed at all pupils in grades 7 and 8 of general education schools. It promotes an analysis of potential, which takes place as a rule at the end of grade 7, and workshop days in grade 8. During the analysis of potential pupils initially establish their preferences and strengths. During the workshop days they then have the opportunity of learning about at least three vocational fields over a period of two weeks. The funds are being allocated to the Länder on a regional basis in line with the respective proportion of pupils leaving school without qualifications. Within the scope of the Education Chains Agreements (*Bildungsketten-Vereinbarungen*), the federal programs can be adapted to the specific Länder, whereby the programme's basic approach is retained. The Länder supplement the offer and expand Vocational Orientation in an ongoing process.

11.6. Support Measures for Learners in Higher Education

Definition of the Target Group(s)

Germany has, within the framework of the Bologna Process, committed to the social requirement that students entering higher education, participating in higher education and completing a degree should, at all levels, reflect the composition of the population at large. Given the growing need for highly qualified higher education graduates, and their better-than-average labour market and career opportunities, there is therefore a need to overcome social barriers and facilitate equal participation for previously underrepresented groups.

Hitherto underrepresented groups in the German higher education system include women (in certain groups of subjects and amongst scientific staff), students with children, students with disabilities and chronic illnesses, children from low-income or educationally disadvantaged origin groups, and students with a migrant background.

Specific Support Measures

With a view to ensuring the equal participation of the sexes, the distribution in various subject groups and its consequences for social development (school sector, MINT subjects) has to be followed up on. At many higher education institutions, gender commissioners or offices support the promotion of gender equality.

For students with children, the 57 student support organisations (*Studierendenwerke*) in particular offer places in child care, either through their own child-care services or with the support of other providers. More than half of the places available are for children under the age of three. Many student support organisations supplement the classic care offers with care provision outside standard operating times, at the weekend and in holiday periods, and flexible short-term care arrangements. The latter is also offered by higher education institutions. Students receiving funding under the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz – BAföG*) receive a childcare supplement for each child under 14 years of age, as well as an appropriate extension of their training funding. For questions relating to the compatibility and funding of study and family life, some higher education institutions have set up family offices. Other support measures of student support organisations include the provision of special housing for students with children, playrooms, baby-changing rooms and nursing rooms, and children's equipment and eating areas in student cafeterias. When setting up family-friendly study conditions, higher education institutions cooperate inter alia with student support organisations, local authorities and other higher education institutions, partly within in the framework of the *audit familiengerechte hochschule* ("family-friendly university" audit).

Under the Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*) and the Länder legislation on higher education, the higher education institutions are responsible for ensuring that students with disabilities are not disadvantaged and can take up courses without assistance where possible. The examination regulations must take account of the particular requirements of students with disabilities in order to ensure equal opportunities. Advocates representing the needs of students with disabilities, and lobbies for students with disabilities have an important function as an intermediary between the students and the higher education institution's governing boards. Most student support organisations (*Studierendenwerke*) also offer advice for

students with a disability or chronic illness. In April 2009, the German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* – HRK) adopted a recommendation on study with a disability or chronic illness.

Information on support measures for students from low-income families may be found in chapter 2.3. on the financing of the tertiary sector.

Special promotion opportunities for international students in training programmes and programmes for gifted students have been expanded in recent years. Private foundations are also increasingly becoming involved in supporting young people with a migrant background.

In the higher education sector, measures to promote equity, diversity and inclusiveness include the following:

- The *Professorinnenprogramm* (women professors programme) of the Federation and Länder contributes to an increase in the number of female professors at institutions of higher education towards parity; another central goal of the programme is to sustainably strengthen the equal opportunities structures at institutions of higher education through specific measures;
- within the framework of the alliance for Women in MINT (mathematics, IT, natural sciences and technology) professions (*Nationaler Pakt für Frauen in MINT-Berufen*), the share of new female entrants and female graduates in natural science and technical professions is also to be increased;
- The federal ministry of education has launched three funding guidelines to provide impetus for greater gender equality and to strengthen the course towards parity between women and men in science and research: "Innovative Women in Focus" (*'Innovative Frauen im Fokus'* – IFIF), "Mission MINT - Women Shaping the Future" (*'Mission MINT – Frauen gestalten Zukunft'*) and "Gender Aspects in Focus" (*'Geschlechteraspekte im Blick'* – GiB).
- As part of the initiative of the German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* – HRK) "Diversity at German higher education institutions" (*'Vielfalt an deutschen Hochschulen'* funded by the federal ministry of education, higher education institutions were supported in the further development of holistic diversity concepts.
- the Network "Pathways to Study" (*Netzwerk "Wege ins Studium"*) is carrying out an information campaign to increase the propensity to study;
- the needs of students in exceptional circumstances are to be considered in terms of admission to study, workload and examinations including, inter alia, as part of the accreditation of study courses and the system accreditation of entire higher education institutions;
- at the recommendation of the Standing Conference, the federal ministry of education has since 1982 been promoting the information and advisory service for study and disability (*Informations- und Beratungsstelle 'Studium und Behinderung'* – IBS) at the German Student Services Association (*Deutsches Studierendenwerk*); the IBS is the nationwide centre of excellence for inclusive higher education and is the central point of contact for all stakeholders involved in creating accessible study conditions, implementing reasonable accommodation and advising prospective and current students with disabilities (<https://www.studierendenwerke.de/themen/studieren-mit-behinderung>);

- higher education institutions are to be made aware of the specific needs of students in exceptional circumstances;
- study organisation should be made more flexible and part-time study programmes expanded.

11.7. Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education

Academic guidance

The Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*) 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. One of the tasks of the student advisory services is to support students with personal difficulties and questions regarding 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). Some institutions and departments provide tutorials and refresher courses to students during their first semesters. These courses are conducted by undergraduate and research assistants and have the following functions:

- to furnish information about facilities, academic/scientific working methods, the structure of the course of study and examination requirements
- to help in overcoming difficulties understanding and learning the material and encourage self-study in study groups
- to provide long-term individual support and further social relations between students

Some higher education institutions also offer orientation semesters, which vary in structure. The aim of the orientation semester is to give students the opportunity to get to know different departments and/or courses of study before deciding on a degree programme. To do this, they sometimes use individual timetables.

The quality of the counselling and care programmes for all students, in particular for students in exceptional circumstances and international students, has been extended and is to be assured. For international students, central administrative bodies such as international offices or international centres are as a rule the first points of contact at higher education institutions. Networking their central procedural knowledge with non-centralised advisory offices affiliated with the different university departments is important and essential to successful academic counselling. The establishment of posts for independent ombudsmen, which are filled voluntarily, by lecturers

for instance, should be promoted. These may also be service centres with an arbitration role.

Student support organisations (*Studierendenwerke*) also play a significant role in academic counselling. The institutions of higher education and student welfare organisations have set up a variety of independent offers especially for international students. The central point of contact at the German National Association for Student Affairs (*Deutsches Studierendenwerke*) is the *Servicestelle Interkulturelle Kompetenz* (service office for intercultural competence); this is supported by the federal ministry of education. Services offered at higher education locations include, for example, student residence tutors and contact programmes, special advice and information services, financial support and welcome events. Cooperation between academic counselling offices should be promoted, for instance to enable problems encountered by foreign students to be resolved quickly, including with regard to their residence status. The Federal Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) has for many years been financing various funding programmes of the German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* – DAAD) providing general counselling and care services for international students at German higher education institutions. In addition in recent years various pilot projects on the sustainable internationalisation of German institutions of higher education and the integration of international students with or without a refugee background could be developed and implemented.

Special counselling offers also exist for prospective students with a refugee background. In recent years, structures have been developed at the institutions of higher education to provide customised counselling for refugees and students with a refugee background who want to study, in order to cover the specific needs of these target groups. For example, the DAAD, with the support of the federal ministry of education, provides information for refugees in a special portal (<https://www.study-in-germany.de/fluechtlinge/>).

Advances have also been made in the counselling of students with disabilities. The higher education acts of all Länder now legally require the appointment of commissioners for the concerns of students with impairments. The commissioners and advisors for students with disabilities and chronic illnesses at the higher education institutions and student services organisations provide advice on issues of disadvantage compensation and support in organising studies. They provide information about disability-related services at their higher education institution and work to remove barriers.

The Counselling and Advisory Services and Studying with Children Unit (*Servicestelle Familienfreundliches Studium*) at the German National Association for Student Affairs supports the provision of a family-friendly infrastructure at higher education locations and ensures the creation of a sustainable culture of family friendliness for students. It is funded by the federal ministry of education.

Psychological counselling

The student services organisations' psychosocial counselling services support students with personal problems and learning disorders. They specialise in challenges typical to studying, such as work disorders, exam anxiety and difficulties in graduating. In addition, the counsellors provide assistance in times of crisis, such as

identity crises, self-esteem issues, fears, depression or psychosomatic complaints. Their goal is to support students individually and strengthen their mental health.

Social counselling

The social counselling services of the student services organisations are central points of contact for social, legal, financial and (inter)cultural issues related to studying. They advise students on topics such as part-time jobs while studying, alternative sources of financing outside of regular student funding, maintenance obligations, health insurance, housing benefit and exemption from radio licence fees. The aim is to support students in social and economic matters, to provide orientation in the complex field of social law and thus to improve their study conditions.

Career Guidance

Since the start of the Bologna Process increasing numbers of higher education institutions have set up so-called career centres or career services to support students in their professional orientation.

Career centres or career services inform and advise students in the transitional phase from study into their professional or academic career path. The specific offers can be varied and range from job application training to individual coaching. Mentoring programmes which bring together students and graduates who are already established in their career have proven particularly successful.

Career services can also help improve the practical relevance of the study programmes, by strengthening exchange between teaching and the working world. Specifically, this can take place through the processing of contemporary practical examples in lectures, and through in-company projects and final papers, employing skilled teaching staff from the professional sphere, or through practical training stages accompanied by teachers.

A third strand of the work of the career centres is to facilitate contact management between higher education institutions and employers, and to place trainees and graduates. Examples include traineeship and job boards, “career books” with portraits of graduates, and career fairs. Even in career planning for young scientists, career centres can help ensure reliability and point to opportunities outside academia.

11.8. Support Measures for Learners in Adult Education and Training

Definition of the Target Group(s)

The diversity of the target groups is reflected in the diversity of the educational offers. In order to promote equal opportunities, the focus of the funding provided by the Federal Government and the Länder is on offering basic education measures for adults that are as broad and low-threshold as possible. The focus is on low-income, educationally disadvantaged or newly immigrated population groups.

Specific Support Measures

In November 2016, the Federation and Länder proclaimed the National Decade of Literacy and Basic Education 2016–2026 (*Nationale Dekade für Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung*), which takes up the findings and results of the National Strategy for Literacy and Basic Education of Adults 2012–2016 (*Nationale Strategie für Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung Erwachsener*) that was launched in 2012. As a broad social alliance the strategy includes, among others, the local authorities (*Kommunen*), trade

unions, churches, the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit* – BA) and *Volkshochschule* associations. The goal of the National Decade is to raise the reading and writing skills as well as the level of basic education amongst adults in Germany.

More detailed information is available in chapter 7.5.

The *Volkshochschulen* (local adult education centres) make a significant contribution to improving the situation of people who cannot read or write.

11.9. Guidance and Counselling in a Lifelong Learning Approach

Career and Further Training Guidance

Within the framework of lifelong learning, lifelong career and further training guidance has become increasingly important in recent years. It helps to safeguard the individual right to education and to create greater permeability and equality of opportunity within the education system. Career and further training guidance in Germany remains highly diverse due to the multitude of institutions and responsibilities, as well as differing legal regulations. Since 2020, the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit* – BA) has been offering Germany-wide career and further training guidance for working people as part of its own “Career Guidance in Working Life” (*Berufsberatung im Erwerbsleben*) programme, advising them on, among other things, individual further training opportunities and options for obtaining a vocational qualification later in life. The BA’s national continuing education portal “meinNOW” makes it easier for individuals interested in continuing education and employers to access information on vocational continuing education.

Academic Guidance

Within the framework of lifelong learning, educational guidance has become increasingly important in recent years. It is perceived as a prerequisite for the assurance of the individual right to education and creating more permeability and equal opportunities in the education system. Despite increased efforts, given the numerous institutions and competences and the different legal rules, educational guidance is still very heterogeneous.

Psychological Counselling

For students on continuing education courses, for example, there are psychosocial counselling services offered by the *Studierendenwerke*. Further information can be found in chapter 11.7.

12. MOBILITY AND INTERNATIONALISATION

12.1. Introduction

Basic legislation

In the Federal Republic of Germany, governmental functions and responsibilities are divided between the Federation and the Länder. This is due to the federal principle which is laid down in the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*, Art. 20, paragraph 1). For the educational sector, there is no explicit and comprehensive attribution of competence to the Federation. Therefore, according to Articles 30 and 70 of the Basic Law educational and cultural legislation is primarily the responsibility of the Länder. The Federation, on the other hand, is responsible for foreign affairs and thus for cultivating international relations in the field of education at the level of the state (Art. 73, paragraph 1 and Art. 32, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Basic Law). The responsibility of the Federation for foreign affairs, and the cultural sovereignty of the Länder have in the day-to-day routine established the necessity of a close cooperation based on partnership and mutual trust between the Federation and the Länder.

The rights of participation of the Länder in EU affairs are laid down in Article 23 of the Basic Law and in the Law on Cooperation between the Federation and the Länder in issues of the European Union of March 1993 (EUZBLG). Accordingly, the Federal Government has to take into account the statements of the *Bundesrat* on European Union issues when the legislative powers or administrative procedures of the Länder are affected by the proposals of the European Union. When legislative powers exclusive to the Länder in school education, culture or broadcasting are primarily affected, the exercise of the rights belonging to the Federal Republic of Germany as a member state of the European Union is delegated to a representative of the Länder designated by the *Bundesrat*.

Cooperation through the Standing Conference

According to a "Position paper of the Standing Conference on policies in the fields of education, science and culture with regard to projects of the European Union" (*Positionspapier der Kultusministerkonferenz zur Bildungs-, Wissenschafts- und Kulturpolitik im Hinblick auf Vorhaben der Europäischen Union*) of December 2007, the formation of opinion within the Standing Conference is geared to the following framework conditions:

- Quality assurance and quality development in the areas of school and higher education
- Furthering and securing mobility in teaching and learning
- Maintenance and promotion of cultural diversity in Germany
- Representation of Länder interests in national and international context

In its agreement, the Standing Conference expresses support for European cooperation in education, science and culture affairs in a Europe that safeguards its cultural wealth and the diversity of educational systems in line with the respective traditions of the Member States. Furthermore, it emphasises the significance of policies in the fields of education, science and culture as core elements of the sovereignty of the Länder, as well as the autonomy of cooperation in this area which cannot be subordinated to economic, social or employment policies.

Guidelines of foreign cultural and educational policy

The Federal Government regards foreign cultural and educational policy as the “third pillar” of German foreign policy alongside political and economic relationships. It is part of the peace policy of the Federal Republic of Germany. Its aim is to create mutual understanding through international exchange of culture and education, to promote Germany and to enable international participation in social progress in culture, education and science.

12.2. Pupil and student mobility

As the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport, Erasmus+ had a budget of just less than Euro 14.8 billion. The programme was designed – in support of the aims of the Europe 2020 strategy – to improve competences and employability, and advance the modernisation of the education, training and youth work systems. In the programming period over 4 million people in Europe – particularly pupils, students, trainees, teachers and young volunteers – received grants and subsidies for a stay abroad for learning purposes.

A new seven-year generation of Erasmus+ programmes started in 2021. The total volume of programme funding has been increased to around Euro 26.2 billion. Erasmus+ aims to promote lifelong learning, enable sustainable growth, strengthen social cohesion and European identity, and drive innovation. The programme focuses on the closely interlinked themes of inclusion and diversity, media literacy and digital education, citizenship education and European values, and sustainability.

In the school sector, Erasmus+ promotes the mobility of pupils, teachers, head teachers and pedagogical staff in schools and pre-school institutions (job shadowing, in-service training, etc.) under Key Action 1 – Learning mobility of individuals, Short-term Mobility Projects. In addition to short stays abroad, long-term stays abroad of up to a school year are also possible. Under Key Action 2 – Cooperation among organisations and institutions – smaller partnerships or larger cooperation partnerships of institutions from the school sector or pre-school institutions are funded, which focus on European cooperation and the development of high-quality materials and concepts for the school sector.

The National Agency for Erasmus+ in the field of school education is the Educational Exchange Service (*Pädagogischer Austauschdienst* – PAD) of the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Sekretariat der Kultusministerkonferenz*). On behalf of the Länder, the National Agency for Erasmus+ School Education (NA-PAD) is responsible for programme management, advising applicants, organising information events and evaluating project results. NA-PAD is also the National Coordination Point for eTwinning, a digital platform for networking and digital collaboration between schools in Europe and, via eTwinning Plus, with other countries outside Europe, provided by the European Commission as part of the Erasmus+ programme. More information about Erasmus+ school education is available at <https://erasmusplus.schule/> and on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/kmcpad>, <https://www.instagram.com/kmcpad/> and <https://de.linkedin.com/company/p%C3%A4dagogischer-austauschdienst>.

In vocational education and training, the National Agency Education for Europe (*Nationale Agentur Bildung für Europa*) at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB) supports stays abroad by

trainees in the dual system, pupils under state law and all learners at vocational schools in accordance with the definition catalogue of the Standing Conference.

Personal contact is essential in deepening understanding of other cultures. Therefore, exchanges have been carried out for decades, often as part of school partnerships or cross-border regional cooperation programmes, which are carried out at Länder level, as well as coordinated by the Educational Exchange Service of the Secretariat of the Standing Conference with funding from the Federal Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) and the European Union, respectively, or other sponsoring bodies (e.g. foundations, youth organisations).

In 2025, around 40,000 pupils took part in PAD exchange programmes, including around 6,200 in school partnership programmes funded by the Federal Foreign Office. As part of these school partnership programmes, pupils visit their partners in Germany or abroad and attend school together. For many years, the Federal Foreign Office has provided funding for partnerships with the United States, with countries in Eastern, Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe, and with Israel. Since 2008, the Federal Foreign Office's 'Schools: Partners for the Future' (PASCH) initiative has provided grants for exchange programmes with schools in many parts of the world.

Due to the significant reduction in budgetary funding since 2024, the PAD has had to significantly scale back its funding for school partnerships, which has led to reduced interest from schools and, consequently, a decline in the number of funded student exchanges. Although the number of applications rose slightly in 2025 compared with 2024, there has nevertheless been a decline of around 30 per cent in the number of funded exchanges in the PASCH school partnerships, for example, compared with 2023 – the year prior to the significant budget cuts. Further development will depend, on the one hand, on the financial resources and, on the other hand, to a large extent on world political events (including the war in Ukraine, developments in the Middle East, and cooperation in the transatlantic context).

In addition, as part of the bilateral government initiative *UK-German Connection*, school partnerships with the United Kingdom have been supported by Germany since 2005 with funding from the Federal Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt* – AA). Since August 2023, there has been a German office at the PAD for the school sector in addition to the existing UK-German Connection office in London. Schools can apply to UK-German Connection for funding for German-British school partnerships and exchange visits.

Furthermore, the European and international dimension has also been promoted by the *Deutschland Plus* programme, which has been run by PAD on behalf of the Federal Foreign Office since 1959. In this programme, foreign pupils in national groups spend between two and three weeks in a host family. During this stay they receive special lessons in German as a foreign language, sit in on lessons with their host brothers and sisters and undertake excursions. Afterwards, they spend several days in Berlin. In 2025, 287 students from 18 nations, accompanied by 25 foreign teachers, took part in 'Deutschland Plus'. The sister programme "International Prize Winners' Programme to Promote the Training of Foreign Students in the German Language" (*'Internationales Preisträgerprogramm (IPP) zur Förderung der Ausbildung ausländischer Schülerinnen und Schüler in der deutschen Sprache'*), which has also existed since 1959, was discontinued in 2024 due to cuts in the federal budget.

An agreement has been in place with France since 1986 on a medium-term individual pupil exchange incorporating a two to three-month stay in the partner country with a return visit from the exchange partner (BRIGITTE-SAUZAY Programme). In addition, the one-year exchange programme (six months in Germany, six months in France) VOLTAIRE has been in existence since the school year 2000/2001.

Additionally there are further individual exchange programmes at Länder level which are carried out together with partner schools abroad.

Periods of learning and study abroad for pupils in the upper secondary level lasting between at least six months and up to one year (this minimum duration does not apply to stays in the EU or Switzerland) are supported with up to Euro 666 a month, depending on the parents' and the pupil's own income through the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz* – BAföG). If, however, the period of learning and study abroad takes place within the scope of a cooperation agreed with the vocational education and training that is attended, a shorter period of at least twelve weeks is also eligible for support. A supplement of Euro 250 each way may additionally be paid for outward and return travel if the place of training is in Europe, or Euro 500 each way outside Europe. Financial support through the BAföG for pupils is a grant which does not have to be paid back.

Trainees have the opportunity to spend limited periods of their vocational education and training abroad. The period abroad is treated legally as part of the vocational education and training, provided it serves the objective of the training.

Within the framework of Erasmus+, the National Agency Education for Europe is supporting mobility projects for learners and teaching staff in the field of vocational education and training. For the learners, the acquisition of international qualifications and linguistic and intercultural competences helps develop an international vocational expertise which is of growing importance to the labour market and individual career planning. The average length of training placements abroad is between two and five weeks. In 2024, 48,149 grants were awarded within the framework of projects to learners in vocational education and training, the majority of whom were trainees and pupils at *Berufsschulen* (part-time vocational schools).

From 2020 to 2025, around 1,085 companies and VET institutions have received accreditation for the Erasmus+ programme, which allows them to benefit from simplified procedures when applying for and implementing projects. Accreditation certifies that institutions have, as part of a comprehensive organisational development programme, drawn up a plan for delivering high-quality programmes for study abroad and have strategically and permanently embedded such programmes within their organisation.

Periods of study and learning abroad by trainees as well as trainers in countries that do not participate in the Erasmus+ programme can also be supported via the support programme “Vocational Training Worldwide” (*‘AusbildungWeltweit’*) of the federal ministry of education. The federal ministry of education has commissioned the National Agency at the BIBB to carry out the programme. “Vocational Training Worldwide” enables training companies, chambers, vocational schools and other organisations to extend and flexibly organise learning stays in partner countries outside the EU. From 2018 to 2025, around 4,200 stays abroad in over 60 countries on all continents were approved. On the website www.ausbildung-weltweit.de all information

on application and project implementation as well as reports on the experiences of former participants and training officers can be found.

The bilateral exchange programmes of the federal ministry of education in vocational education and training are aimed at cooperative measures that go beyond the EU programmes with partner countries of particular importance to Germany. The exchange measures are generally embedded in longer term partnerships between training companies, vocational schools, chambers and other professionals in vocational training and, in addition to the promotion of mobility of trainees and those responsible for vocational training, are also aimed at the development and testing of innovative vocational education and training models.

Since 1980 the federal ministry of education has been promoting, together with the French ministry of education and ministry of labour, ProTandem, the German-French Agency for exchange in vocational education and training with the aim of intensifying cross-border collaboration in the field of vocational education and training. By establishing permanent cooperation structures and simultaneously strengthening cooperation between vocational education and training actors, vocational education and training experience is supported during vocational training. In 2025, the programme supported around 1,500 participants from 35 professional fields in 59 group exchange measures. Since 1980, a total of just less than 113,900 people have taken part in exchange measures.

The German-Israeli Programme on Cooperation in vocational education and training is a cooperation between the Israeli Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the federal ministry of education. The programme gives vocational education and training experts as well as trainees from different vocational fields the opportunity to learn professionally from each other, to experience the different everyday reality and thus deepen an understanding of each other. The programme is carried out by the BIBB on behalf of the federal ministry of education.

Teacher mobility

With regard to the European and international dimension of teaching, within training, further training and in-service training of teachers special importance is attached to experience acquired abroad. A large number of teacher training students are taking up the opportunity of spending a period of study abroad, whether as part of the Erasmus+ programme, which not only enables periods of study abroad at higher education institutions, but also placements abroad at host schools or through the programme for the exchange of foreign-language assistants operated by the Educational Exchange Service of the Secretariat of the Standing Conference, in which aspiring foreign language teachers are exchanged.

In this oldest international exchange programme in the school sector, foreign language assistants (FSA) have been promoting the acquisition and dissemination of the German language among foreign pupils since 1905. As Germany's language and cultural ambassadors, the assistants support the teachers at the host schools in German lessons as well as in other subjects and extracurricular activities. The FSA programmes are intended to awaken the joy of learning foreign languages, perfect the speaking skills of participating students from partner countries or from Germany, support them in their personal development and contribute to the professional qualifications of the participants. The PAD places German students at schools and

institutions of higher education in partner countries. In return, foreign students are placed as FSAs at schools in the German Länder. The PAD currently runs the FSA programme with 13 countries worldwide, including France, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In the 2025/26 exchange year, which also marks the 120th anniversary of the programme, an FSA programme with Taiwan is offered for the first time. For the FSA placement in France, in addition to students of the teaching profession, students of all other degree programmes who are interested in a paid school placement in France are also eligible for the PAD's on-line application procedure.

In the 2025/2026 programme year, around 910 German and foreign students are taking part in the PAD's FSA programme. A global trend of declining numbers of applicants can be observed.

Since 2019, the DAAD has been supporting the internationalisation of teacher training in Germany with its newly launched *Lehramt.International* programme. The guiding objectives of the *Lehramt.International* programme are as follows:

- Prospective teachers and lecturers at institutions of higher education acquire intercultural, linguistic and (professional) practical skills. Scholarships for school internships enable particularly less mobile groups among the teacher training students to gain concrete experience abroad. The scholarship offers are intensively advertised to the target group.
- Participating institutions of higher education establish and expand international cooperation and offer internationalised teacher training programmes.
- Creation and provision of expertise on internationalisation in teacher training programmes.
- Initiation of improvements in the (higher education) policy framework for the internationalisation of teacher training.

Within the framework of *Lehramt.International*, a total of 403 prospective teachers were supported with a scholarship for a school internship in 48 countries in 2025. The model projects at 36 German higher education institutions with teaching posts maintain cooperation with 235 partner higher education institutions in 58 countries worldwide.

The further and continuing education of teachers and other educational staff in the school sector is served by various bilateral work shadowing and exchange programmes under the auspices of the Educational Education Service of the Secretariat of the Standing Conference, which are currently being carried out with Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and the United States. Moreover, as part of the initiative "Schools: Partners for the Future" (*'Schulen: Partner der Zukunft' – PASCH*) of the Federal Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*), for example, further training measures and work shadowing programmes are implemented in Germany for foreign German teachers from Africa, Asia, Latin America as well as Eastern and Southern Europe. Teachers from all school types and levels can participate in these programmes. Having risen significantly to a total of 430 participants by 2023 – compared with previous years – the number of German and foreign participants in the PAD's work shadowing and professional development programmes fell by more than a third to around 260 in the following year, 2024, due to cuts in the federal budget, and by almost half to a total of around 240 participants in 2025.

Furthermore, the German Länder and the federal government have been financing the continuing training programme of the Standing Conference for local teachers at DSD (German Language Diploma) schools and German schools abroad and for over 50 years: Until 2022, around 30 local teachers a year took part in this programme. In the following years, the number of applications fell, so that in 2023 and 2024, around 20 local teachers came to Germany under this programme and spent a year observing and teaching at a German school and by 2025, just 10 local teachers. The aim of the programme is to immerse participants in everyday life and the school system in Germany, to promote language, cultural studies and didactic knowledge, and to update the participants' image of Germany. Many of the teachers who have enjoyed this kind of continuing training then assume more responsible tasks in their home schools.

Other further training measures for German teachers abroad or foreign teachers in Germany are available under programmes offered by the European Union (Erasmus+), and through bilateral courses such as the German-French qualification programme for teachers at schools with bilingual teaching or through the federal ministry of education -funded programme "Europe meets school" (*'Europa macht Schule'*), in which European guest students participate in lessons in a German school class and present their home country through a special project.

Other exchange programmes for teachers also exist at Länder level.

Vocational education and training staff play a key role in the internationalisation of vocational education and training in Germany. Through the LEONARDO DA VINCI sub-programme of the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme (2007–2013), therefore, the National Agency Education for Europe also supported training placements abroad for persons active in vocational education and training. Many vocational education and training institutions use the funding opportunities in this area in order to support the necessary staff development measures as part of their increasingly international orientation.

In addition to the target group of learners, the Erasmus+ programme also supports periods spent abroad by VET staff under the key action 1 "Learning Mobility of Individuals". The aim is the individual further training of staff and the promotion of the internationalisation of training departments and vocational training institutions. On average, the stays last less than a week. In 2025, 11,904 stays abroad were approved for VET specialists as part of mobility projects.

12.3. Mobility in Higher Education

Student mobility

Globalisation, the ever-closer integration of Europe and the progressive establishment of a European Higher Education Area are opening up new prospects for students and graduates. Good knowledge of foreign languages and personal experience of both the economic and social conditions and the culture and mentality of other countries are nowadays regarded as basic requirements for graduates in many sectors of the labour market. It is this trend that has prompted the development of EU programmes to promote cooperation in higher education and student mobility and also the national, regional and bilateral initiatives that provide incentives for study/placements abroad and fund and develop new courses of study. National initiatives include, amongst other examples, the increased promotion of study abroad and in particular of a full course of study in another EU country or in Switzerland as part of the Federal

Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz – BAföG*) and likewise special support programmes implemented by some Länder.

In June 2024, the Federation and the Länder adopted a new Strategy of the Federal and Länder Ministers of Science for the Internationalisation of Institutions of Higher Education in Germany (*Strategie der Wissenschaftsminister/innen von Bund und Ländern für die Internationalisierung der Hochschulen in Deutschland*). It follows on from the 2013 internationalisation strategy and is intended to strengthen the higher education location in the face of new technological and political developments and increasing global risks, and to make it more resilient. At the same time, the Federation and the Länder want to take a strategic approach to the social, economic and technological developments of recent years that are relevant to the internationalisation of higher education institutions. The sustainability agenda and the growing socio-political demand for more equal opportunities and diversity are creating new expectations and requirements for the internationalisation of research and teaching. In addition, the potential of digitisation is to be exploited in the context of the internationalisation of higher education institutions.

In this context, the Federal Government and the Länder aim to:

- further increase the attractiveness of German higher education and research institutions for international students and researchers and to further reduce potential hurdles to their recruitment, integration and retention in order to attract more qualified people to research and industry.
- enabling high-quality internationalisation experiences for as many students, researchers and other higher education staff as possible – both by promoting physical and virtual mobility and by “internationalising at home”.
- while safeguarding the autonomy of higher education institutions and the EU's division of competences in the higher education sector, to work towards further expanding and deepening the quality of European and international cooperation in research and teaching, from smaller projects to larger networks and strategic alliances.

The implementation of the internationalisation goals is carried out by the Länder and the Federation on their own responsibility within the framework of the constitutional competences and while maintaining the autonomy of higher education institutions and the EU's division of competences in the higher education sector.

Through placements abroad during courses of study, prospective academics can acquire additional competences and develop personally. International experiences are moreover becoming increasingly important on the labour market and in science. The Federation and the Länder are therefore seeking to expand the possibility of at least a low-threshold internationalisation for all students.

Mobility is already well developed even now. Germany is one of the top five host countries and countries of origin for internationally mobile students worldwide. In total in the 2024/2025 winter semester around 492,000 international students studied at German higher education institutions. This corresponds to around 17 percent of all students in Germany. The most important countries of origin are India (ca. 59,000 students or 12% of all international students) China (just less than 39,000 or 8%), Turkey (20,900 or 4%) and Austria (15,700 or 3%). At the same time many German students are studying abroad with the aim of obtaining a higher

education qualification: in 2023 in total 137.000 German students were enrolled at higher education institutions abroad. This corresponds to a share of around 4.7 per cent of all students at German higher education institutions. The most popular host countries are Austria (around 40,000 students or 29% of all students abroad), the Netherlands (21,100 or 15%), Switzerland (12,600 or 9%) and the United Kingdom (8,400 or 6%).

Information on the foreign language assistant exchange programme of the Educational Exchange Service (*Pädagogischer Austauschdienst* – PAD) of the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*), in which prospective foreign language teachers are exchanged, can be found in the section on teacher mobility in chapter 12.2.

In Germany, the task of promoting the relations of higher education institutions with other countries through the exchange of students and academics is primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions themselves and, in particular, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) as a self-governing organization of German higher education institutions and, where available, their student bodies. The programmes of the DAAD to promote internationalisation at German higher education institutions aim at creating the organisational and financial framework for studies/ a placement abroad, international cooperation and the establishment of strategic partnerships between higher education institutions as well as further development of courses of study and higher education qualifications. Furthermore, the measures already carried out shall be incorporated into a strategy for internationalisation involving the entire institution of higher education.

The internationalisation of higher education institutions is regarded as a complex process which links the interests of students and academics, the higher education institutions, the aims of foreign cultural and education policy, national science policy, development cooperation, and the requirements of all international partners.

Providing scholarships remains the DAAD's "core business." In 2024, it was able to support 21,366 German and international students, doctoral candidates and researchers with scholarships and individual programmes. Within the framework of the PROMOS programme (www.daad.de/promos) to enhance the mobility of German students, 8,204 scholarships were awarded in 2024.

Within the scope of Erasmus+ (2021-2027), the DAAD has also been designated by the federal ministry of education as a National Agency (NA) and is thus responsible for the implementation of Erasmus+ in the higher education sector. Within this framework, the NA DAAD promotes, among other things, the international mobility of students (studies and internships) within Europe and also worldwide. Prerequisites for funding are cross-border higher education agreements and the obligation that full recognition by the home institution of higher education of study achievements made abroad is guaranteed. In addition, participating higher education institutions must be in possession of a valid *Erasmus Charter for Higher Education*. For the 2021–2027 programme generation, funding rates for students will be increased to strengthen participation in the programme; the special additional financial support for certain groups and the introduction of new funding formats also promote the European Commission's goal for more (social) participation and inclusion in the programme. Between the beginning of June 2023 and the end of July 2025 on the 2023 Erasmus funding call, a total of 40,258 students from Germany were given funding for a period of

study abroad, and 8,759 students for a work placement abroad. Conversely, 22,019 Erasmus students from other countries spent a study-related stay at a German higher education institution during the same period. In addition, 10,270 students from foreign higher education institutions completed an internship in Germany through Erasmus+. More information can be found on the Internet (<http://eu.daad.de>).

In addition, the DAAD NA is responsible for the selection and promotion of Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnerships as well as for providing information and advice on the Erasmus+ cooperation projects administered centrally in Brussels (Erasmus Mundus Action, European Higher Education Institutions, Capacity Building Projects in Higher Education, Alliances for Innovation, Jean Monnet Actions, Teacher Academies and Future-Oriented Projects). More information is available on the internet (<https://eu.daad.de/infos-fuer-hochschulen/programmlinien/foerderung-von-hochschulkooperationen/de/>).

Grants for periods of study abroad are also provided under the Federal Training Assistance Act (see also chapter 2.3.). Students are able to receive assistance under the Federal Training Assistance Act for a full course of study in a member state of the European Union or in Switzerland. Furthermore, financial assistance is provided for practical training and studies of limited duration inside and outside of Europe.

Alongside these funding opportunities at national level, in some Länder there are Land-level programmes to support international student mobility.

Academic staff mobility

In foreign educational and cultural policy, special importance is also attached to exchange measures in the sector of research and higher education institutions. The exchange of individuals takes place under grant programmes and award winners programmes for lecturers and other higher education staff which are predominantly organised by the DAAD and the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation (AvH). Evaluation of international exchange programmes is generally performed by independent agencies or experts.

In 2024, around 68,000 foreign scientists will be employed at German institutions of higher education, including around 4,200 professors. The most important region of origin of international academic staff is Western Europe. The most important countries of origin are India, China, Italy and Austria. Of the international professors, most come from Austria, Italy and Switzerland.

In 2023, around 17,500 employed scientists with foreign nationality worked at the institutions of the four largest extramural science organisations, the Max Planck Society, the Fraunhofer Society, and the Helmholtz and Leibniz Associations. Between 2018 and 2023, growth totalled 34 per cent, and between 2022 and 2023 alone, it was 5 per cent.

In addition to the international scientific staff employed at higher education institutions, international guest scientists also spend time in Germany for teaching and research purposes, funded by organisations in Germany and abroad. In 2023, this amounted to around 29,900 stays. The most important regions of origin for the guest scientists were Western Europe (just less than 22% of visits), Asia and the Pacific (each accounting for 23% of visits), while the most important countries of origin were India, China and Italy. Visiting researchers are persons with foreign citizenship who stay in

Germany for a limited period of time without being employed within the framework of financial support and who are active in teaching and research at institutions of higher education or other research institutions. There are three major funding organisations in particular that support the vast majority of stays by visiting researchers in Germany: German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* – DFG), DAAD and Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

The Erasmus+ programme of the European Union also supports temporary stays abroad by guest lecturers. These guest lectureships within Europe can last between two and 60 days. The funding covers teaching stays by academic staff and professors at higher education institutions and research institutions as well as employees in companies. During the Erasmus year 2023 (beginning of June 2023 to end of July 2025), a total of around 2,100 Erasmus guest lecturers came to Germany for a teaching stay. This figure for guest lectureships has thus largely returned to the level it was at before the coronavirus pandemic, which had led to a temporary decline to below 1,000 guest lectureships in the two previous years.

On the one hand, German academics in other countries work permanently at institutions of higher education and research institutions. On the other hand, many German guest researchers complete a temporary research and teaching stay abroad with the support of various institutions.

According to the available data, most German academics work at higher education institutions in Switzerland (9,400), followed by universities in Austria (6,500) and the UK (5,100). In 2023, the largest proportions of Germans among all foreign academics can be observed in Austria with 42 per cent and in Switzerland with 30 per cent. In terms of the number of German professors abroad, Switzerland is the most important host country (1,262) and Austria (1,000) the second most important. German professors account for the largest proportion of all international professors in Austria at 69 per cent and in Switzerland at 42 per cent.

In 2023, around 9,800 stays by German guest researchers abroad were funded by domestic and foreign organisations. The most important host region was Western Europe (30% of stays). Other significant host regions are North America (17%) and Asia (15%). The most important host country for German guest researchers abroad was the USA, followed by the United Kingdom and France.

In the 2023 funding period¹, a total of 1,912 guest lecturers from Germany undertook a teaching visit abroad with Erasmus+ support, a decrease of 29 per cent compared to the 2022 funding period. This figure is thus still well below the level of the funding periods preceding the pandemic. In the 2023 funding period, the largest group of Erasmus guest lecturers from Germany travelled to Southern Europe (28%). However, Central Eastern Europe (21%), Western Europe (almost 18%), as well as Northern Europe and Southeastern Europe (12% each) were also popular host regions for Erasmus guest lecturers from Germany.

Statistics on the international mobility of scientists and researchers may be found in the publication *Wissenschaft weltoffen* (www.wissenschaftweltoffen.de/index_html?lang=en).

12.4. Mobility in Adult Education

Learner Mobility

In the field of initial and continuing vocational education and training, promoting cross-border collaboration is intended to lead to the development of quality and innovations as well as to intensifying the European dimension in initial and continuing vocational education and training.

The Educational Exchange Service (*Pädagogischer Austauschdienst* – PAD) of the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) is the biggest partner of the German UNESCO Commission (DUK) in organising the international voluntary service “kulturweit” that is supported by the Federal Foreign Office. The voluntary service offers young people the chance to spend six or twelve months working in the field of foreign cultural and educational policy. Since 2009, the PAD in cooperation with the Federal Office for Foreign Affairs – Central Agency for German Schools Abroad (ZfA), has been sending young volunteers from Germany to foreign schools (DSD schools) where the German Language Diploma of the Standing Conference (*Deutsches Sprachdiplom* – DSD) is awarded as well as to German schools abroad within the scope of “kulturweit”. The majority of the schools are in central and eastern European countries; other work locations are in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Depending on their previous knowledge and skills, the volunteers, who are aged between 18 and 26, support the local schools by supervising homework, for example, offering teaching projects on various topics, by getting involved in the school theatre group, supplementing sports, arts or music lessons, organising PR or alumni work etc. Every year the PAD places about 200 volunteers.

In cooperation with the Franco-German Youth Organisation (*Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk* – DFJW), the French Agence du Service Civique and the majority of the Länder, the PAD has been organising a German-French voluntary service at schools since the academic year 2012/2013. This voluntary service is aimed at young people between the ages of 18 and 25 who want to work in a school in the partner country for ten months. They have the opportunity to take part in school and extracurricular activities and can participate according to their interests and skills. They can take part in everyday school life and enrich this with their culture and language. Every year, about 110 to 130 German and French volunteers are placed within the framework of this programme.

As part of the new Erasmus+ programme generation, the National Agency Education for Europe (*Nationale Agentur Bildung für Europa*) at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB) has also been managing mobility projects for learners in adult education since 2021. In 2025, 1,920 people have been sent on learning visits to other European countries.

Teacher and Trainer Mobility

Within the framework of Erasmus+ the National Agency Education for Europe is supporting mobility projects for staff in the field of adult education. In 2025, these projects supported 3,463 study abroad stays for adult education instructors. In 2024, the number of participants supported was 2,731.

12.5. Other Dimensions of Internationalisation in Early Childhood and School Education

European, Global and Intercultural Dimension in Curriculum Development

Education for Europe

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) first presented its general outlines on the European dimension in the school system in June 1978 in its Recommendation “Europe in the classroom” (*Europa im Unterricht*), which was last amended in October 2020. School education has the task to promote European competence, i.e. in addition to European-related knowledge, above all intercultural competence, participation and creative competence as well as multilingual competence, in children and young people and thus to enable the awareness of a European identity as a complement to local, regional and national identities. The school should also help to create an awareness of European togetherness and to develop an understanding of the fact that European references are at work in many areas of life and in the regions and that European decisions are necessary. The school also has the task of awakening and developing interest in and acceptance of the diversity of languages and cultures.

In principle, all subjects and learning areas of the school contribute to the development of the European dimension in teaching and education in all grades and types of school. From their own perspective, they contribute to European education across the grades. European education builds on subject knowledge and subject-specific competences. The curricula and education plans of the Länder contain explicit goals, competency expectations and content areas for the acquisition of European competency. Enabling pupils to participate in social, cultural, political and economic events in Europe is one of the primary and obligatory aims of teaching.

The subjects of the social sciences and the foreign languages make a significant contribution to this, while the artistic subjects provide direct access to the cultural traditions of Europe. The active contributions of all other subjects in general and vocational schools to the promotion of European awareness are indispensable components of an overall European concept in schools. In this context, the development of European awareness as a competence of judgement and action is to be extended to experiences in living democracy (e.g. election of the class representative, participation in junior elections and in panel discussions on the occasion of the elections to the European Parliament, etc.).

European education is a task for the whole school community and an integral part of school life. In this context, aspects of European education are embedded in the learning environment of a school.

In addition, in October 2020 the Standing Conference adopted the resolution “Vocational Education and Training as an Opportunity for Europe” (*Berufliche Bildung als Chance für Europa*). The resolution states that European education cannot be the exclusive task of a single subject. In accordance with the pedagogical concept of action orientation, Europe-related topics should not be treated in isolation in vocational education and training courses but should be anchored as integrative components across several subjects, learning fields, school years and training years in the sense of a holistic teaching culture. Wherever possible, the heterogeneity of the student

body at vocational schools, the different individual and professional experiences as well as the diverse cultural backgrounds of the individuals should be used for teaching.

German pupils and teachers take up the opportunities provided by the education programmes of the EU for the acquisition of subject-specific, methodical, linguistic and intercultural competences.

Foreign languages

FOREIGN-LANGUAGE TEACHING makes a key contribution when it comes to learning about European neighbours and Europe's common cultural legacy. It cultivates a willingness and an ability to communicate whilst imparting intercultural and linguistic and communication skills. Great importance has traditionally been attached to foreign-language teaching in Germany and in recent years teaching of foreign languages has been both intensified and diversified.

In all Länder, foreign language teaching is already firmly established in the curriculum of the primary schools as compulsory subject in grades 3 and 4 (see chapter 4.3.). This is partly in the form of cross-border regional projects to promote cooperation between schools. Foreign-language teaching, including terminology related to the professional field, is being stepped up at vocational schools. The number of pupils learning the less common foreign languages of Italian and Spanish has increased appreciably over the last years, and Danish, Dutch, Polish and Czech are taught in the relevant neighbouring regions.

Bilingual educational courses were first established at the *Gymnasium* and are now increasingly available at primary schools, *Realschulen*, types of school offering several different courses of education, and in the vocational education and training sector. In all Länder bilingual education is offered both as part of bilingual branches and as bilingual subject lessons, particularly in social sciences subjects. In all Länder bilingual education involves the languages English and French. More information can be found in the Standing Conference report "Concepts for bilingual teaching" (*Konzepte für den bilingualen Unterricht*) of October 2013.

The bilingual Franco-German course of education in which pupils aim to attain both the German *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* and the French *Baccalauréat* is a special variant of this bilingual concept and is currently on offer at over 80 schools in Germany and France, respectively. Under certain conditions, a Middle Years Programme (MYP) qualification obtained in accordance with the regulations of the International Baccalaureate Organisation/Office du Baccalauréat International (IBO/OBI) is recognised as equivalent to the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* (Intermediate School Leaving Certificate) or as higher education entrance qualification. The basis for this is provided by the "Agreement on the Recognition of the 'Middle Years Programme'" (*Vereinbarung über die Anerkennung des "Middle Years Programme"*) and the "Agreement on the Recognition of the 'International Baccalaureate Diploma/Diplôme du Baccalauréat International'" (*Vereinbarung über die Anerkennung des "International Baccalaureate Diploma/Diplôme du Baccalauréat International"*) Both agreements were updated in 2022.

In the "Treaty of Aachen" on Franco-German cooperation and integration of January 2019, Germany and France each agreed to develop a strategy to help increase the number of pupils and students learning the partner language. Cross-border

encounters contribute to intercultural education. The "Strategy for the Promotion of the French Language in Germany and the Strategy for the Promotion of the German Language in France" of November 2022 was adopted by the Standing Conference and the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Jeunesse. Both strategies are preceded by a Joint Declaration in which the historically grown special friendship between Germany and France in Europe is emphasised and the elementary importance of language as a key to mutual understanding between young people from both countries is particularly acknowledged.

In March 2015, the Standing Conference adopted a new "Framework agreement on the *Berufsschule*" (*Rahmenvereinbarung über die Berufsschule*). In order to be able to better react to the requirements of a globalised working world, the opportunities to spend time abroad during education and training were greatly improved. These include foreign language teaching offers that build on the skills acquired at general education schools and extend these for the specific vocation. By sitting an examination, interested trainees can obtain a certificate documenting the language level achieved in accordance with the specifications of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Intercultural education

For more information on intercultural education in schools, see chapter 5.3. on teaching and learning in general lower secondary education.

Partnerships and networks

Under Key Action 2 – Cooperation among organisations and institutions – Erasmus+ promotes one to three-year partnerships in various types of projects (smaller partnerships, cooperation partnerships) and with a combination of cost modules in the school sector. In Germany, the action is run by the National Agency Erasmus+ School Education, based at the Educational Exchange Service (PAD) of the Secretariat of the Standing Conference. Not only schools and pre-school institutions can take part in "Cooperation among organisations and institutions" in the school sector but also different protagonists with a thematic relationship to the school sector, for example further training institutes for teachers, institutions of higher education or government authorities. Projects that cover several educational areas with a thematic focus on the school sector are also possible. Institutions from at least three programme countries are usually involved in a partnership of this time.

Within the framework of Erasmus+, the digital eTwinning network allows teachers in all subjects, types of school and academic years to make contact with partner schools throughout Europe and to realise internet-based teaching projects. eTwinning offers a protected learning environment with tools to realise media projects. Through the cooperation with partner classes in Europe, pupils can learn foreign languages authentically via eTwinning and improve their media competence.

In 2008 the Federal Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) launched the initiative "Schools: partners for the future" (*Schulen: Partner der Zukunft*). The initiative connects more than 2,000 schools worldwide where German is particularly important. The PASCH partners advise school administrators, ministries and schools on the development of German lessons. Seconded experts from the PASCH partners support the schools on site and help them to expand their German teaching. The exchange between international and German PASCH schools is particularly encouraged. The aim is to promote

pupils' interest in Germany and the German language worldwide, and to win teachers, parents, head teachers and education authorities over to committing themselves to the German language and its permanent integration in the respective national education system. The Federal Foreign Office coordinates the partner schools initiative and is implementing it in cooperation with the Federal Office for Foreign Affairs – Central Agency for Schools Abroad (*Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen – ZfA*) –, the *Goethe-Institut*, the German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst – DAAD*) and the Educational Exchange Service of the Standing Conference.

The Educational Exchange Service of the Standing Conference also supports schools that organise international exchange schemes by cooperating with foundations. For example, the initiative "JIA School Partnerships" (*JIA-Schulpartnerschaften*) of the Deutsche Telekom Foundation supports schools who organise MINT-based projects with schools in Eastern Europe. Together with the PAD, the *Deutsche Telekom-Stiftung* (German Telekom Foundation) also helps future MINT teachers from eastern Europe sit in on classes.

Partner schools include 135 German schools abroad (*Auslandsschulen*), and about 1,100 schools in the national education systems of partner countries which offer the German Language Certificate (*Deutsches Sprachdiplom – DSD*) of the Standing Conference. The German Language Diploma – Level I (DSD I) and German Language Diploma – Level I for Vocational Schools (DSD I PRO) examinations verify a command of the German language to the A2/B1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). DSD I and DSD I PRO diplomas– and thus language competences in German certified to B1 – are considered proof of the necessary German language skills for admission to a *Studienkolleg* in Germany. The German Language Diploma –Level II (DSD II) examination verifies a command of the German language to the B2/C1 level of the CEFR. A DSD II serves as proof of the necessary German language skills for admission to a degree course at an institution of higher education in Germany.

Furthermore, around 700 schools overseen by the Goethe-Institute are part of the PASCH network and have introduced or wish to expand German as an academic subject ("Fit-Schools"), 27 German Profile Schools as well as more than 100 schools in Germany that have a partnership with a PASCH school abroad. The PAD is responsible for long-term school partnerships which are intended to make a contribution to promoting the teaching of German at foreign schools and promote interest in modern Germany and its society. Targeted placement measures have facilitated the development of numerous partnerships with schools abroad. In addition, through 2025, school partnerships were arranged through a virtual exchange (www.partnerschulnetz.de). More than half a million pupils are taught at German schools abroad and at national schools in the partner countries that offer the German Language Diploma of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (DSD Schools), as well as at the "Fit Schools" run by the Goethe-Institut; the number of pupils is rising continuously.

In addition, DSD I examinations are carried out within the framework of binational cooperation (DSD country projects/regional cooperation in the DSD field) at participating schools on the basis of joint declarations of intent or framework agreements.

Schools abroad are a central element of foreign cultural and educational policy. The guidelines for schools abroad are encounter between the society and the culture of Germany and the host country, securing and expanding on school provision for German children abroad, and promoting German teaching in foreign school systems. German schools abroad are places of encounter and intercultural dialogue. With bilingual courses and binational courses and certificates, German schools abroad contribute to the appreciation and internationalisation of German qualifications abroad. Joint coordination between the Federal Government and the Länder concerning school work abroad is carried out in the Joint Committee of the Federation and the Länder on School Affairs Abroad (*Bund-Länder-Ausschuss für schulische Arbeit im Ausland* – BLASchA), which is explained in chapter 1.7.

At the end of their schooling, students usually graduate with a German or binational qualification: the German *Erster Schulabschluss*, the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss*, the *Fachhochschulreife* and the *Abitur*. In addition, degrees from the home country and degrees from the International Baccalaureat Organisation (IBO) can be awarded, which under certain conditions can lead to admission to higher education in Germany.

At lower secondary level, German schools abroad generally offer all courses of education. The forms of differentiation are applied as required and are based on the objectives and specifications of the Standing Conference as described in chapter 5.2. The qualifications and entitlements at the end of lower secondary level are acquired on the basis of centrally organised written examination tasks or tests of the Standing Conference that have been conducted since 2008.

The Standing Conference has introduced the German International Abitur for teaching and examinations at the gymnasiale Oberstufe (upper secondary school) at German schools abroad from 2016.

The Standing Conference has introduced the German International *Abitur* for Teaching and Examinations at German Schools Abroad (*Deutsches Internationales Abitur für Unterricht und Prüfungen der gymnasialen Oberstufe*) worldwide from 2016. Within the German *Abitur*, up to half of the lessons can take place in English or in the language of the country in which the German school is located. Under certain preconditions, the German International *Abitur* also makes it possible for subjects and examinations in the home country to be taken into account.

By strengthening the position of bilingual and foreign-language or national-language elements in the degrees, the Standing Conference sets an example for intercultural encounters and exchanges with other educational systems and traditions. All German courses of study abroad continue to aim at permeability to courses of study in Germany and connection to higher German courses of study and degrees.

Further information on the placement of volunteers within the framework of the voluntary service “*kulturweit*” and on the exchange of volunteers with France in cooperation with the German-French Youth Organisation (*Deutsch-Französisches Jugendwerk* – DFJW) by the Educational Exchange Service of the Standing Conference can be found in the section on mobility in adult education.

Continuing education and training for teachers and future teachers is organised in the USA together with the Fulbright Commission.

12.6. Other Dimensions of Internationalisation in Higher Education

European, Global and Intercultural Dimension of Teaching

Higher education institutions are committed in many different ways to strengthening the international dimension and are supported in their efforts by the Federation and the Länder and by intermediary organisations, including the German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* – DAAD) and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (*Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung*) as well as the German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* – HRK). Of note are the intensive efforts to expand the setting up of international study courses and study courses leading to a double degree or a joint degree, the formation of Bachelor's study courses with integrated periods abroad, the creation of international doctoral programmes and European alliances of institutions of higher education as well as the employment of foreign guest lecturers and programmes for the digitalisation of international co-operation or for addressing special target groups.

In order to facilitate academic recognition between partner institutions of higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and promote the mobility of students, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) has been introduced in Germany. The ECTS is applied to all consecutive study courses. Within the framework of Key Action 1 – Mobility of individuals – in the higher education institution sector of the EU Erasmus+ programme, the conclusion of *Learning Agreements* is obligatory, in which a programme of study is agreed between the home institution of higher education, the foreign guest institution of higher education and students. The *Diploma Supplement* serves the better acceptance abroad of qualifications and degrees awarded by higher education institutions; this was developed from a joint initiative of the EU, the Council of Europe and UNESCO in Germany in 1999. It is generally written in English. The higher education institutions award a *Diploma Supplement* to all graduates of Bachelor's and Master's study courses, while graduates of diploma and state examination study courses receive the *Diploma Supplement* on demand.

European and international courses of study are characterised by being based on a study concept that, from the outset, includes an international dimension and involves one or several periods of study at a foreign higher education institution as a compulsory component of the course. Some higher education cooperation schemes and exchange programmes have been developed by the higher education institutions involved to such an extent that foreign degrees are awarded as well as German degrees (double or multiple degree or joint degree). The course and examinations are conducted according to a curriculum and examination schedule which has been agreed on between the partner institutions. In the winter semester 2025/2026, 316 first degree and 547 graduate courses of study leading to international double degrees are on offer at German higher education institutions.

German higher education institutions are also active in the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMD) programme. Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees are international programmes of excellence offered jointly by at least three European higher education institutions from three European countries, leading to a multiple degree or a joint degree.

A growing number of higher education institutions are offering a range of European-oriented special graduate study courses, especially in law, economics and engineering.

An overview of selected international degree courses offered by institutions of higher education and research institutions is included on the website of the German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* – DAAD) in the database “International Programmes in Germany.” Overall, according to the Higher Education Compass of the German Rectors’ Conference German higher education institutions in Germany offer just less than 2,400 international first degree and special graduate courses of study. In this way, German institutions of higher education are continuing to play their part in the process of enhancing Germany’s international competitiveness in the field of higher education. The DAAD programme “Transnational Education – Study Programmes of German Higher Education Institutions Abroad” which has been promoted since 2001, also contributes towards this. The programme provides for the development of curricula modelled on German study programmes in cooperation with local partners. These offers serve to promote internationalisation at German higher education institutions and foreign interest in studying in Germany. Furthermore, the Federation and the Länder in cooperation with the academic organisations (DAAD, HRK) have established an international image campaign which since 2008 has been continued by the DAAD and the federal ministry of education with the title “Studying in Germany” under the roof of the initiative “Germany – Land of Ideas.”

To facilitate improved care and integration of foreign students, doctoral students and academics in Germany, in recent years new service centres (e.g. welcome centres) have been established, as have various general, academic and social offers at higher education institutions, and digital channels have been employed increasingly. Through the web seminar series “Higher Education Markets Worldwide” (*Hochschulmärkte weltweit*), the DAAD, in close cooperation with its worldwide network, provides background information on foreign higher education markets for German higher education institutions. With a view to a targeted recruitment of skilled employees these offers and structures for the considerable number of foreign and doctoral students are to be increased and expanded. This involves in particular the stage of orientation and preparation, the observation of the course of study, and also offers facilitating the transition from study to work.

Since 2024, the DAAD’s “Campus Initiative for International Professionals” (*Campus-Initiative Internationale Fachkräfte*) programme, with support from the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (*Bundesministerium für Forschung, Technologie und Raumfahrt* – BMFTR), has been strengthening structures and provision at German higher education institutions to improve the preparation, academic success and transition of international students into the labour market. In 2025, the DAAD’s “Academic Horizons – Attracting Global Minds” programme was also launched. It supports higher education institutions in attracting highly qualified young international talent to Germany for Master’s and doctoral programmes in key technologies. The BMFTR funds the programme as part of the “Global Minds Initiative Germany”.

The *Graduiertenkollegs*, or graduate colleges, of the German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* – DFG) are becoming increasingly attractive for foreign doctoral students. In 2024, the DFG supported a total of 243 graduate colleges,

31 of which were international graduate colleges. The share of foreign PhD students is much higher in the graduate colleges than in other forms of PhD training. The proportion of such students at the *Graduiertenkollegs* is considerably higher than in other forms of doctoral study programmes. There is also international demand for the International Doctoral Programmes of the DAAD, the International Max-Planck Research Schools and the Graduate Schools.

Partnerships and networks

Erasmus+ Key Actions 2 and 3 support cooperation projects between European institutions in the framework of cooperation partnerships, alliances between European higher education institutions, teacher academies, innovation alliances, future-oriented projects and policy support. On the other hand, they promote networking in the Erasmus Mundus Action, capacity-building projects in higher education, and policy debate and European integration in the Jean Monnet Actions with partner countries worldwide.

All of these partnerships promote the internationalisation of the participating institutions of higher education, foster the quality of teaching and contribute to the networking of the higher education institutions with each other as well as with society and the economy. In this way, a sustainable contribution is to be made to the further development of the European Education Area. In Germany, the action is carried out by the National Agency for Erasmus+ Higher Education Cooperation of the DAAD.

The Franco-German University (*Deutsch-Französische Hochschule – DFH*) is an association of 210 German and French members with its own legal personality and secretariat in Saarbrücken. The aim of the DFH is to strengthen the collaboration between Germany and France in higher education and research. It supports the establishment of joint integrated study courses and awards grants to participants. In the winter semester 2025/2026, the DFH offered 199 integrated binational and trinational study courses in different disciplines and supported around 5,700 students.

Apart from the DFH, which is active nationwide, networks for institutions of higher education also exist in the Länder, within the scope of which joint integrated courses of study are offered and an exchange of students and research collaborations are coordinated.

German higher education institutions participate very successfully in the Erasmus+ funding line “European Higher Education Institutions” and receive significant financial and organisational support from a national DAAD accompanying programme and various flanking measures. By the end of 2025, 64 German universities were funded in 56 European higher education networks.

12.7. Other Dimensions of Internationalisation in Adult Education and Training

Global and Intercultural Dimension in Curriculum Development

On 29 November 2021, the EU Council of Education Ministers adopted the current version of the European Agenda for Adult Learning for 2021 to 2030, based, inter alia, on the new generation of the strategic framework – ET2030. The national coordination unit for the European Adult Learning Agenda is based at the National Agency Education for Europe (*Nationale Agentur Bildung für Europa*) at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung – BIBB*).

Both as part of further education monitoring, in the Adult Education Survey (AES) for instance, and also with respect to European further education networks such as the European Association of Regional & Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL), the European and international dimension of further education is becoming increasingly important. This applies to the sphere of competence of the Federation as well as that of the Länder.

Partnerships and networks

Erasmus+ Key Action 2 promotes partnerships for cooperation in adult education and vocational education and training. Partnerships for cooperation enable participating organizations to gain experience in international cooperation and strengthen their capacities. Depending on the type of project, they can also produce high-quality, innovative project results. Depending on the project objectives, the organizations involved or the desired impact, these projects can vary in size and scope and adapt their activities accordingly. In Germany, the National Agency Education for Europe (*Nationale Agentur Bildung für Europa*) at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung – BIBB*) is responsible for the partnerships for cooperation in adult education and vocational education and training. The national coordination office for the "e-platform for adult education in Europe" (EPALE) is also based there. The multilingual online platform is a service provided by the European Commission that helps adult education organizations and professionals to network across borders.

Promoting international cooperation and initiating collaboration and business relations in in-company vocational training and vocational further education is the aim of the centre International Marketing of Vocational Education (iMOVE) of the federal ministry of education, which is based within the BIBB in Bonn. iMOVE supports primarily small and medium-sized educational enterprises with the strategic planning and implementation of their commitments abroad through extensive service provision which includes publications, seminars and conferences, and trips by delegations. With its brand "Training – Made in Germany" iMOVE also carries out publicity abroad for German competence in initial and continuing vocational education and training.

12.8. Bilateral Agreements and Worldwide Cooperation

Bilateral Agreements

The traditional exchange programmes for pupils, foreign language assistants and teachers of the Educational Exchange Service (*Pädagogischer Austauschdienst – PAD*) of the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) are for the most part based on bilateral agreements on cooperation in the cultural and educational sector. With regard to international contacts and the international education in schools, the PAD is partner of the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Senate Departments of the Länder. Furthermore, the PAD implements cultural relations and education policy measures on behalf of the Federal Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*). The PAD cooperates closely with bilateral youth organisations as well as competence centres and funding agencies for international youth work to support cooperation between schools from two states and also sits on numerous commissions and committees.

Within the European Union, the conviction has grown that targeted efforts are needed towards practically-oriented education and training for the transition into

employment, on the one hand to improve the employability of the individual and thus on the other hand to combat the high level of youth unemployment. Many European states consequently initiated national reforms and also began to amend laws in the field of vocational education and training.

In order to support the international cooperation on vocational education and training, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* – BMBF), in close cooperation with the relevant departments and organisations, created the *Zentralstelle der Bundesregierung für internationale Berufsbildungskooperation* at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB) in September 2013. The *Zentralstelle* acts abroad as the German Office for Cooperation in Vocational Education & Training (GOVET) and is in charge of the following fields of work:

- FUNCTIONS AS THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE FOR THE ROUND TABLE on international vocational education and training cooperation, in which the departments and stakeholders involved in the international vocational education and training cooperation vote under the leadership of the federal ministry of education.
- ONE-STOP-SHOP, i.e. central point of contact for inquiries from national and international protagonists in vocational education and training cooperation.

Cooperation and Participation in Worldwide Programmes and Organisations

Copenhagen Process in the Vocational Education and Training Sector

With the Copenhagen Declaration of November 2002, the ministers of the EU member states responsible for education together with the European social partners defined specific areas and steps for intensifying European collaboration in vocational training.

Milestones of the Copenhagen process, in which strategic priorities, common goals and measures are regularly agreed, were the Bruges Communiqué of 2010, which emphasised in particular the need for greater labour market relevance through high-quality VET with integrated company practice, and the so-called Riga Conclusions of 2015, in which the ministers of education, together with social partners and the European Commission, set priorities for the period 2015–2020 to strengthen employment and competitiveness.

Germany has been actively involved in shaping the Copenhagen process from the very beginning and is represented in all the main working groups set up to implement the process. The Copenhagen Declaration identifies the promotion of transparency, recognition of qualifications and quality assurance in vocational education and training as the most important fields of action for the EU. At the European level, the following instruments are being developed or further developed as a matter of priority:

- European Qualifications Framework (EQF): The EQF is a common European reference framework consisting of eight competence levels to which national qualifications frameworks are assigned. As a translation tool between the different national systems, it makes qualifications in Europe more transparent and comparable and promotes the cross-border mobility of learners and employees. With the German Qualifications Framework (DQR), the

recommendation on the establishment of a European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning has been implemented at national level since 2013.

- European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET): The German Reference Agency for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (DEQA-VET) is part of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training EQAVET (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training) and is based at BIBB.
- ESCO (European Skills, Competences, and Occupations) is the multilingual European classification for skills, competences, qualifications and occupations. ESCO aims to promote mobility of workers in Europe through transparency in communication and comparability.

Another valuable tool is the Europass to promote transparency and understanding of skills and qualifications (<https://europass.europa.eu>). It was introduced across Europe in 2005 and modernised and made more flexible in 2018 through a revised legal framework. The Europass is one of 12 measures under the European Skills Agenda 2020 and a key element of the Communication on the Skills Union published by the European Commission in 2025.

The offers of Europass serve to make the skills and qualifications of EU citizens clearly and easily understood in Europe, and therefore simplify and promote the mobility for learning and working. In Germany, the National Europass Centre (NEC) is the contact for all questions relating to the Europass (www.europass-info.de). The NEC is located at the National Agency Education for Europe (*Nationale Agentur Bildung für Europa*) at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* – BIBB). It administers the national database to apply for Europass mobility. Issuing agencies of the Europass Mobility are the PAD for the school sector, the German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* – DAAD) for the higher education sector as well as trade organisations and social partner organisations for vocational training.

The framework for enhanced cooperation between all VET stakeholders in the current decade is set by the European Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience and the Osnabrück Declaration on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies from 2020. The Osnabrück Declaration relies on VET to overcome the challenges related to demographic change, digitalisation and the need for eco-conscious action. Vocational education and training is placed in the context of lifelong learning and the need for better permeability in the education systems and equal value of academic and vocational education is emphasised. For the period 2021 to 2025, the Osnabrück Declaration defines four main objectives of cooperation in VET:

- Resilience and excellence through high-quality, inclusive and flexible VET.
- Establishing a new culture of lifelong learning – the importance of vocational training and digitalisation
- Sustainability – a green perspective in VET
- European VET Area and international VET

The respective objectives are backed up with concrete measures. These measures are to be implemented taking into account the principle of subsidiarity and the characteristics of the respective VET and education systems.

In order to concretise the implementation, the member states were requested to submit National Implementation Plans (NIP) to the European Commission by the end of May 2022. For Germany, the BMBF developed the National Implementation Plan (NIP) with the participation of social partners (business associations and trade unions), federal ministries and Länder bodies as well as other VET institutions. The NIP addresses, among other things, the further development of the digital infrastructure for in-company and school learning and teaching, the qualification of teaching and training staff, the strengthening of vocational education and training for sustainability, the expansion of further and advanced training courses and European and international VET cooperation.

The Bologna Process

Further major impulses for the internationalisation of German higher education institutes are provided by the intergovernmental Bologna Process, which builds on the Sorbonne Declaration adopted in 1998 by the ministers responsible for higher education in France, Italy, the United Kingdom and Germany. The Bologna Process was introduced in 1999 with the aim of creating a European Higher Education Area by 2010, characterised by a free mobility to be achieved through the transparency and compatibility of consecutive study structures, quality assurance systems on the basis of European standards and guidelines as well as the mutual recognition of academic achievements and qualifications. The objectives of the Bologna Process correspond with the reform efforts of the Federation and the Länder in the higher education sector.

In order to take stock once again, the twelfth conference of the ministers responsible for higher education of the now 47 active signatory states was hosted by the Albanian Bologna Secretariat in May 2024. In view of the current political and economic crises, the commitment to preserve, promote and protect the following fundamental values of higher education was emphasised:

- academic freedom
- academic integrity
- institutional autonomy
- participation of students and staff
- public responsibility for higher education
- responsibility of higher education institutions to society

In order to further develop cooperation within the framework of the Bologna Process and to ensure the implementation of the basic commitments, the ministers decided in their final communiqué, among other things, to provide further support to participating states that have problems implementing the agreed core areas:

- a three-stage system compatible with the overarching Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area, the first two stages of which are equipped with an ECTS system;
- adequate implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention;
- Quality assurance in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

Germany has implemented the objectives of the Bologna Process in these three core areas and is making its experience available to other participating states. While the fundamental structural reforms in Germany have been implemented and thus all systemic agreements and requirements in the Bologna Process have been met, new goals as well as national and international events are presenting Germany and the other participating countries and their higher education systems with new challenges that make a continuous further development of the European Higher Education Area necessary. According to the joint national report by the Standing Conference and the BMBF on the implementation of the objectives of the Bologna Process 2021–2024 from a German perspective, a particular focus is on communication in times of crisis.

The ‘Continuation of the Bologna Process’ working group, which is chaired by the Federal Government and the Länder and consists of representatives of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), the DAAD, students, the German Accreditation Council, the social partners and the German National Association for Student Affairs, advises on current developments and practical problems in implementing the Bologna Process. The Federation and the Länder support the reform of the German higher education system with numerous measures. These include inter alia the Contract for the Future of Higher Education and Teaching (*Zukunftsvertrag Studium und Lehre stärken*) and the agreement Innovation in Higher Education Teaching (*Innovation in der Hochschullehre*) as well as study financing instruments (Federal Training Assistance for study abroad, educational credit and scholarships). This is in addition to the mobility promotion offered by the Federation via the German Academic Exchange Service and the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung, the funding offered by the German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz – HRK*) project “Modus”, which supports higher education institutions in implementing study reforms in Germany, and the team of Bologna experts which is coordinated by the DAAD (http://eu.daad.de/der_bologna_prozess/de/).

Recognition of Foreign Qualifications

Germany ratified the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Convention), which was resolved on 1 April 1997, on 1 October 2007. The Convention provides for the simplified recognition of foreign coursework and qualifications and aims on the one hand at recognition for the purpose of higher education admission and on the other at the assessment of higher education qualifications for the purpose of entering the German labour market. The higher education institutions are responsible for recognition for the purpose of higher education admission, for admission to further study courses and for the crediting of specific courses and examinations. The right to carry titles conferred by foreign higher education institutions is regulated by the Land higher education laws. Information on this is distributed by the Länder education ministries. Holders of foreign higher education qualifications can apply to the Central Office for Foreign Education (*Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen – ZAB*), based in the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder, for an evaluation of their certificate for the classification of their degree in the German education system. An administrative fee currently amounting to Euro 208 is charged for this assessment, further assessments cost Euro 104. The procedure has been end-to-end digitalised since 2024 and can be requested from

abroad. Detailed information on certificate assessment can be found on the ZAB website (<https://zab.kmk.org/de/zeugnisbewertung>).

The ZAB is the competent information and expert body for the rating and ranking of foreign academic certificates in the Federal Republic of Germany. On an international level the ZAB cooperates closely with the national centres of equivalence in the countries of the European Union (NARIC), the European Council and UNESCO (ENIC). The ZAB provides information on the education systems, institutions and qualifications in around 190 countries, as well as on health professions, via the anabin information system (<https://anabin.kmk.org>). The database contains information on around 35,000 foreign educational institutions and around 40,000 foreign higher education qualifications, as well as around 850 vocational qualifications in the healthcare sector, and is available to the public.

13. ONGOING REFORMS AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

13.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a thematic and chronological overview of national reforms and policy developments since 2023.

The introduction of the chapter describes the overall education strategy and the key objectives across the whole education system. It also looks at how the education reform process is organised and who the main actors in the decision-making process are.

The section on ongoing reforms and policy developments groups reforms in the following broad thematic areas that largely correspond to education levels:

- Early childhood education and care
- School education
- VET and adult learning
- Higher education
- Transversal skills and employability.

Inside each thematic area, reforms are organised chronologically. The most recent reforms are described first.

Overall national education strategy and key objectives

There is a consensus that, in light of demographic changes in Germany, and with a view to the emerging need for skilled workers, but also because of the challenges posed by digitisation, significant efforts must be made to develop the German education system in the years ahead.

In connection with the Agreement on the Common Basic Structure of the School System and the National Responsibility of the Länder in Central Questions of Education Policy (*Ländervereinbarung über die gemeinsame Grundstruktur des Schulwesens und die gesamtstaatliche Verantwortung der Länder in zentralen bildungspolitischen Fragen*) of October 2020, the Länder agreed in the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) on a series of “political projects” which were to be implemented in the next few years. In December 2024, the Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Länder (*Bildungsministerkonferenz*) published the final report on the status of implementation of the political projects for the Länder agreement. The report provides a detailed overview of the wide range of measures that the ministers of education have taken to further improve the quality and comparability of education in Germany:

- The educational standards for the primary sector (fourth grade) and for the lower secondary level have been revised, among other things, to further increase compatibility and consistency between school levels and subjects and to meet the requirements of an increasingly digitalised world.
- The agreements on the types of school and courses of education in the lower secondary sector and on the design of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* and the *Abitur* examination have been updated, further increasing comparability and transparency. The former “Recommendations for Work in Primary School” (*Empfehlungen zur Arbeit in der Grundschule*), have been thoroughly revised

and adopted by the Standing Conference as a “Agreement” (*‘Vereinbarung’*) with a higher degree of obligation.

- Together with the federal ministry of education, a “Pact for Vocational Schools” (*‘Pakt für berufliche Schulen’*) was launched, which, together with the institutions and stakeholders involved in vocational training, is intended to ensure the innovative and integrative capacity of vocational schools as important partners in vocational training on a permanent and reliable basis.
- In the context of digitalisation and accelerated by the coronavirus pandemic, the focus was on the (further) development of cross-phase concepts for the training, further education and continuing education of teachers, and in particular on expanding offers for the acquisition of digitalisation-related teaching skills.
- In order to counter the shortage of teachers, additional routes into teaching have been defined that enable training to become a single-subject teacher, a dual teacher training course and a lateral entry master's degree (Q-Master), supplementing the existing regulations for undergraduate teacher training.
- Promoting digital learning environments: As part of the Digital Pact for Schools, considerable progress has been made in expanding the digital infrastructure in schools. This includes the provision of digital end devices, the development of online learning platforms and the training of teachers in the use of digital media.
- Through the ‘Mein Bildungsraum’ infrastructure, the German government is promoting, among other things, the digitisation of educational qualifications. A key focus is on the digital issuance and certification of the *Abitur* certificate, as well as its acceptance and verification by higher education institutions. The aim is to enable educational qualifications to be made available via the EUDI Wallet (digital wallet) in future.
- The Standing Conference has created an orientation framework for the qualification of school principals that can be used in the Länder as a basis for the design of corresponding further training programmes. This orientation framework takes into account the importance of school principals for a successful school and the diversity of their pedagogical and system-oriented management tasks in schools.

As a central educational and family policy project, the Federal Government has anchored a legal entitlement to all-day support for children of primary school age in Book Eight of the Social Code (*Achtes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – SGB VIII*). This will be introduced in stages from 2026, starting with the first grade, and will be extended by one grade each year. From the school year 2029/2030, the legal entitlement will apply to all children in grades 1–4. In preparation for this legal entitlement, the Federal Government is supporting the Länder and local authorities with financial assistance amounting to Euro 3.5 billion for the expansion of all-day education and care services. These funds are distributed to the Länder in two investment programmes. The Länder and municipalities had Euro 750 million at their disposal from the end of 2020 to 2022 under the “Investment Programme for the Accelerated Infrastructure Expansion of All-Day Care for Primary School Children” (*‘Investitionsprogramm zum beschleunigten Infrastrukturausbau der Ganztagsbetreuung für Grundschul Kinder’* (Acceleration Programme – *Beschleunigungsprogramm*). The funds not spent from this will be added to the funds of the subsequent “All-day Expansion

Investment Programme" (*Investitionsprogramm Ganztagsausbau*) and will thus not be lost.

The administrative agreement concluded between the Federation and the Länder for the "All-Day Expansion Investment Programme" in accordance with Section 10 of the All-Day Financial Aid Act for the implementation of the Act on Federal Financial Aid for the Expansion of All-Day Education and Care Services for Children of Primary School Age (VV II) came into force in May 2023.

In view of the ongoing costs incurred by the Länder as a result of the phased introduction of the legal entitlement (operating costs), the Federation is providing the Länder with gradual relief, increasingly from 2026 and permanently from 2030, by means of changes to the distribution of value added tax revenues in favour of the Länder, amounting to Euro 2.49 billion for the years 2026 to 2029 and a permanent Euro 1.3 billion per year from 2030. The operating costs associated with all-day care are the responsibility of the Länder. The Länder and local authorities have already taken numerous measures and made investments with financial aid provided by the Federation to date.

An amendment to Article 104c of the Basic Law entered into force in April 2019 which enables the Federation to grant financial aid to the Länder for investments by the Länder and local authorities that are significant for the nation as a whole in order to increase the efficiency of the municipal education infrastructure without limiting aid to "financially weak" municipalities. The amendment enables the federal government, among other things, to provide targeted support for municipal investments in the renovation, conversion and expansion of school buildings. The new Article 104c is also the constitutional basis for the DigitalPact School 2019–2024 (*DigitalPakt Schule 2019–2024*), with which the Federation and the Länder, among other things, pursue the goal of creating digital education infrastructures suitable for the future. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the DigitalPact could be used to address the challenges that have emerged from moving to teaching and learning from home. In December 2025, the Digital Pact 2.0 (2026–2030) was adopted.

Overview of the education reform process and drivers

In the Federal Republic of Germany responsibility for the education system is determined by the federal structure of the state. Unless the Basic Law awards legislative powers to the Federation, the Länder have the right to legislate. Within the education system, this applies to the school sector, the higher education sector, adult education and continuing education. Administration of the education system in these areas is almost exclusively a matter for the Länder.

The Federation bears responsibility particularly for the regulations governing the following domains of education, science and research:

- Extra-curricular vocational education
- Admission to higher education institutions and higher education degrees (here the Länder may enact laws at variance with the legislation of the Federation after the Federation has made use of its competence)
- Financial assistance for pupils and students
- Promotion of scientific and academic research and technological development
- Public welfare, which also includes child and youth welfare services

- Regulations on entry to the legal profession
- Regulations on entry to medical and paramedical professions
- Employment promotion measures as well as occupational and labour market research

More detailed information on the distribution of legislative competences in the education sector is available in chapter 1.7.

In addition to the division of responsibilities described above, the Basic Law also provides for particular forms of cooperation between the Federation and the Länder within the scope of the so-called joint tasks (*Gemeinschaftsaufgaben*). Joint tasks in the field of science and education are regulated in Article 91b, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Basic Law. Pursuant to Article 91b, the Federation and the Länder may mutually agree to cooperate in cases of supra-regional importance in the promotion of science, research and teaching (paragraph 1) as well as for the assessment of the performance of educational systems in international comparison and in drafting relevant reports and recommendations (paragraph 2).

Federalism has proved successful as a state structure which encourages diversity and competition. The Federal Government and the Länder will introduce the appropriate measures and initiatives within their respective areas of responsibility. At the same time, there has been an increase in the common responsibilities of the Länder and the need to agree objectives and coordinated measures on the part of the Federal Government and the Länder in fields of national relevance.

The Länder work together in the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany (*Kultusministerkonferenz*), which was founded in 1948. Its goal to this day is to ensure the necessary degree of commonality and comparability in the education system of the Federal Republic of Germany through coordination.

In June 2024, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs decided on a strategic reorientation. With effect from 1 July 2024, consultations will take place within the framework of independent ministerial conferences for education, science and culture. The Education MK, the Science MK and the Culture MK will independently represent the decisions on sector-specific issues to the outside world as part of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. They will be supported in this by the joint secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs.

The following account includes measures resolved by all Länder in the Standing Conference and measures by the Federal Government. Within their own areas of responsibility, the Länder take various and far-reaching measures which cannot be separately described. The reform measures of the Länder, mostly with substantial support or in cooperation with the Federation, affect the following areas in particular:

- Expansion of all-day programmes with the aim of expanding educational and support opportunities in implementation of the legal entitlement to all-day care for children of primary school age
- Measures to raise the educational and competence levels of disadvantaged groups
- Measures to secure the potential of skilled workers
- Measures to improve linguistic competence

- Measures to improve dovetailing of the early childhood sector and primary school
- Measures to improve school education, reading competence and the understanding of mathematical and scientific correlations
- Vocational orientation measures and measures to improve transition from school to work
- Measures to strengthen the link between vocational and higher education
- Laws to improve the identification and recognition of professional qualifications acquired abroad by the Federation and the Länder
- Measures to increase the higher education graduation rate and that of comparable qualifications
- Measures for digitalisation in the school and higher education sector

13.2. National Reforms in Early Childhood Education and Care

2025

Expansion of childcare

In 2025, there will be no federal funding for the expansion of childcare.

As part of the Special Fund for Infrastructure and Climate Neutrality (*Sondervermögen 'Infrastruktur und Klimaneutralität' – SVIK*), additional funds amounting to Euro 3.76 billion (Euro 940 million per year) will be available for the expansion of childcare from 2026 to 2029. The plan is to implement the investments in daycare centres from the SVIK via an “Investment Programme for Childcare” (*Investitionsprogramm Kindertagesbetreuung*) run by the Federal Ministry of Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMBFSFJ*).

Third Act on the Further Development of Quality and Participation in Child Daycare

Quality development in child day care facilities and in child day care is seen as a task for society as a whole. Since 2019, the Federation has therefore been supporting the Länder with additional funding for quality development measures in child daycare in order to further develop quality nationwide and contribute to creating equal living conditions for children growing up in Germany. On 1 January 2025, the Third Act for the Further Development of Quality and Participation in Child Day Care (*Drittes Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Qualität und zur Teilhabe in der Kindertagesbetreuung*) entered into force. The Federal Government is thus continuing its financial commitment to improving early childhood education and care and will support the Länder with a total of around Euro 4 billion over the next two years. With the further developed law, the Länder will be able to invest in seven priority fields of action that are of particular importance for the quality of care:

- Needs-based services
- Child-staff ratio
- Recruitment and retention of qualified staff
- Strengthening of management
- Promotion of needs-based, balanced and sustainable catering and sufficient exercise
- Promotion of language education
- Strengthening of child day care

https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Gesetzestexte/Gesetze_Gesetzesvorhaben/Abteilungen/Abteilung_II/20_Legislaturperiode/2024-08-15-Veranschlagung-von-Zinsausgaben/1-Gesetzentwurf.pdf?__blob=publication-File&v=4

2024

Expansion of childcare

Since 2008, the Federal Government has launched five investment programmes entitled “Childcare Financing” (*‘Kinderbetreuungsfinanzierung’*) with a total budget of Euro 5.4 billion to expand childcare provision in line with demand. These programmes have created more than 750,000 additional places for children up to school age. The massive expansion of childcare in Germany has more than doubled the average childcare coverage rate for children under three years of age from 17.6 per cent (2008) to 37.4 per cent (2024).

Overall strategy for skilled workers in day-care centres and all-day schools

In May 2024, the then Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Kinder, Frauen und Jugend* – BMFSFJ) presented recommendations for short-, medium- and long-term measures to recruit and retain skilled workers, which were developed with the involvement of the Länder and a broad range of experts. Various levers were considered in order to counter the shortage of skilled workers – from education and training, to facilitating career changes and retraining, the recognition of foreign professional qualifications, and working conditions and framework conditions.

<https://www.bmbfsfj.bund.de/bmbfsfj/service/publikationen/gesamtstrategie-fachkraefte-in-kitas-und-ganztag-240070>

13.3. National Reforms in School Education

2026

There were no reforms in the area of school education during the reporting period.

2025

Role of the school supervisory authority

In October 2025, the Conference of Education Ministers (*Bildungsministerkonferenz*) adopted a ‘vision statement on the role and work of the school supervisory authority’ on behalf of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*), thereby establishing a common framework for the work of the school supervisory authority. The vision describes school supervision both as an institution and as an active agent. It is based on four pillars: attitude, tasks, competencies and tools. The focus is on close cooperation between school supervisors, school management and support systems, a clear division of responsibilities and adequate resources. In addition, school supervision staff are to receive regular training. Data and digital technologies are to help provide targeted support to schools in their further development.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2025/2025_10_16-Schulaufsicht.pdf

Framework for Global Development

In October 2025, the Standing Conference and the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (*Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung* – BMZ) jointly published the new “Framework for Global Development – Education for Sustainable Development in Upper Secondary Schools” (*Orientierungsrahmen Globale Entwicklung – Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung in der gymnasialen Oberstufe*) as part of the 5th Conference of Education Ministers. As a contribution to the implementation of the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda and the German Sustainability Strategy, this standard reference work provides a comprehensive basis for systematically embedding Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in secondary schools, and particularly in upper secondary education.

The framework is based on the guiding principles of sustainable development, with four dimensions that must be balanced: social justice, environmental sustainability, democratic governance and economic performance. Action should be guided by the planetary boundaries that must not be exceeded and by the fundamental needs of all people. Each subject chapter contains didactic concepts, sample topics and lesson plans that are aligned with the educational standards and examination requirements of the Standing Conference for upper secondary schools. The framework is supplemented, among other things, by chapters on digitalisation, teacher training and the whole-school approach.

The aim of the framework is to strengthen education for sustainable development as an educational principle in upper secondary schools and to provide conceptual support to all stakeholders in the education sector, such as education authorities, teacher training providers, textbook publishers and civil society.

<http://www.engagement-global.de/de/orientierungsrahmen>

Requirements for continuing education trainers

In September 2025, the Standing Conference adopted the “Requirements for continuing education trainers” (*Anforderungen an Fortbildnerinnen und Fortbildner*), which set out the minimum qualifications, competences and experience that trainers should possess. They should either be fully qualified teachers in the subject in which they offer training, or possess proven expertise in the relevant subject area, acquired in various ways – through a degree, further training, in-service qualification, etc. Furthermore, trainers should possess the skills required to take into account the didactic and methodological requirements for designing training courses in a way that ensures their effectiveness. In addition, training events are to be evaluated on a regular and mandatory basis.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2025/2025_09_17-Fortbildner-Anforderungen.pdf

Job and requirements profile for subject leaders

In September 2025, the Standing Conference adopted a “Job and requirements profile for subject leaders at teacher training colleges or comparable institutions” (*Aufgaben- und Anforderungsprofil für Fachleitungen an den Studienseminaren oder vergleichbaren Einrichtungen*). The profile precisely defines the core tasks and responsibilities that subject leaders assume within the framework of the second phase of teacher training. The aim is to ensure that subject leaders develop a uniform

understanding of their role and are able to organise their collaboration in a targeted and efficient manner (transparency and guidance function). Furthermore, by defining relevant areas of competence, the profile is intended to facilitate strategic planning of qualification and continuing professional development measures (qualification function). Finally, the clearly formulated standards for the tasks and competencies of subject leaders are intended to create a solid foundation for quality assurance and development in teacher training (evaluation function). Qualification measures and the continuous professional development of subject leaders are based on the framework guidelines specific to each federal state and the profile of tasks and requirements.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2025/2025_09_17-Fachleiter-Anforderungen.pdf

New recommendations on school education, counselling and support for sick pupils

In March 2025, the Conference of Ministers of Education presented new recommendations on school education, counselling and support for sick children and young people. The recommendations aim to improve the opportunities for participation and overall personal development of sick pupils and provide important impetus for the further development of appropriate educational opportunities at various learning locations.

Joint recommendation by the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and the Conference of Education Ministers on dealing with antiziganism in schools

In March 2025, the Conference of Education Ministers (*Bildungsministerkonferenz*) and the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma (*Zentralrat deutscher Sinti und Roma*) adopted and presented their first joint recommendations on preventing and specifically combating antiziganism in schools.

„Schools must be learning environments that are critical of antigypsyism and free of antigypsyism, thereby ensuring equal opportunities for all children and young people,“ the recommendations state. Children and young people should develop an awareness of and advocate for the protection of Sinti and Roma from discrimination in society.

The main points of the recommendations are:

1. **Awareness and knowledge:** The recommendations emphasise the need to spread knowledge about antigypsyism and to raise awareness of its various manifestations. This is crucial in order to be able to effectively counter antigypsyism.
2. **Mandatory curriculum content:** The persecution and Holocaust of Sinti and Roma must be an indispensable part of the curriculum. However, the discussion must not be reduced to the perspective of the victims.
3. **Self-empowerment and resistance:** The recommendations emphasise the importance of teaching forms of self-empowerment and resistance among Sinti and Roma. The integral contribution of Sinti and Roma to German culture should also be made visible.
4. **Cooperation with self-organisations:** The conference recommends cooperation with Sinti and Roma self-organisations and anti-discrimination agencies to ensure comprehensive education and support.

The Conference of Ministers of Education will support the implementation of the recommendations in the individual Länder and evaluate them after a certain period of time to determine whether the goal of sustainably combating antigypsyism in schools is being achieved.

In December 2022, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*), the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and the Alliance for Solidarity with the Sinti and Roma of Europe published a joint declaration on teaching the history and present situation of Sinti and Roma in schools.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2025/2025_03_20-Empfehlung-Antiziganismus.pdf

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2022/2022_12_08-Gemeinsame_Erklaerung-Sinti-Roma.pdf

2024

New recommendations for school support for children and young people with special educational needs in the area of emotional and social development

In December 2024, the Conference of Ministers of Education (Bildungs-MK) adopted „Recommendations on school education, counselling and support for children and young people with special educational needs in the area of emotional and social development“ (*Empfehlungen zur schulischen Bildung, Beratung und Unterstützung von Kindern und Jugendlichen im sonderpädagogischen Schwerpunkt emotionale und soziale Entwicklung*).

The recommendations aim to improve special educational support for pupils with emotional and social difficulties and to place greater emphasis on prevention, individual support and cooperation between all those involved.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2024/2024_12_13-Empfehlung-EmSoz-Entwicklung.pdf

Declaration on the portrayal of Judaism in educational media

In December 2024, the Conference of Ministers of Education adopted a comprehensive joint declaration and recommendations on the appropriate and differentiated portrayal of Judaism in educational media. The declaration aims to break down prejudices, stereotypes and distortions in the teaching of Jewish history, culture and religion. The declaration and recommendations are aimed at creators of educational media, education authorities and teachers.

The declaration comprises twelve key points that are of crucial importance for a factually correct, didactically appropriate and unbiased portrayal of Judaism and related topics. The most important aspects include:

- **Topicality and diversity:** Jewish life should be presented in its present form and diversity. The declaration emphasises that Judaism in Germany, Europe and the world is a living part of society whose voices must be heard in educational media.
- **Integration into society:** Jews are an integral part of German society. Educational media should avoid portraying them as ‘strangers’ or ‘others’ and instead emphasise their role as part of the community.

- **Differentiated perspectives:** The portrayal of Judaism must take into account the different ways of life, both religious and secular, and reflect the diversity of Jewish identities.
- **Avoiding stereotypes:** Educational media are called upon to avoid stereotypical representations that can lead to anti-Semitic prejudices. This includes a critical examination of historical and contemporary representations.
- **Anti-Semitism as a subject:** Anti-Semitism should be treated not only as a historical phenomenon, but also in its current manifestations. The declaration calls for educational media to provide age-appropriate information about anti-Semitism and explain its manifestations.

The twelve points of the declaration are followed by detailed practical recommendations on the central topics of „Jewish life today“, „Jewish religion, ethics and culture“, „Jewish history from antiquity to the present“, „The State of Israel“ and „Historical and contemporary anti-Semitism“. Furthermore, cross-thematic pedagogical and methodological-didactic aspects such as language, materials and sources, and tasks are addressed.

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs has already passed resolutions on this topic in the past, including:

- Joint Declaration on Teaching Jewish History, Religion and Culture in Schools (2016)
https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2016/2016-12-08_KMK-Zentralrat_Gemeinsame-Erklaerung.pdf
- Recommendations for dealing with anti-Semitism in schools (2021)
https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2021/2021_06_10-Gemeinsame_Empfehlung-Antisemitismus.pdf
- Annotated collection of materials for teaching about Judaism
<https://www.kmk-zentralratderjuden.de/>

These resolutions form the basis for ongoing work on an appropriate and differentiated representation of Judaism in educational media.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2024/2024_12_13-Darstellung-Judentum-in-Bildungsmedien.pdf

Framework for the qualification of school leaders

In December 2024, the Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Länder (*Bildungsministerkonferenz*) adopted the „Framework for the Qualification of School Leaders“ (*‘Orientierungsrahmen für die Qualifizierung von Schulleitungen’*) This framework represents a significant step towards ensuring and promoting the quality of school education in Germany and is intended to strengthen school leaders in their central role as managers.

The framework was developed by the Commission on Teacher Education and comprises six central areas of responsibility:

- School development with a particular focus on teaching development and quality management,
- Personnel management and development,
- Health promotion and management,
- Internal school communication and cooperation,

- External school communication and networking,
- Organisation, administration, digitisation and law.

In addition, the orientation framework presents examples of how objectives can be formulated in specific school management actions, which illustrates the different directions in which a focus and continuous professional development can be set within each area of responsibility.

The Conference of the Ministers of Education sees the introduction of the orientation framework as an important measure for meeting the challenges of today's educational landscape, such as inclusion, digitalisation and the diversity of the student body.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2024/2024_12_13-Orientierungsrahmen-Schulleitungen.pdf

Media literacy and digital literacy in primary schools

In November 2024, the Standing Conference adopted a “Key Points Paper on the Integration of Media Literacy and Digital Literacy in Primary Schools” (*‘Eckpunktepapier zur Verankerung von Medienbildung und informatischer Bildung in der Grundschule’*). The paper provides guidance on digital media literacy and digital literacy in primary schools and focuses on the interfaces between early years education, primary education and lower secondary education.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2024/2024_11_28-Medien-inform-Bildung-Grundschule.pdf

Recommendation for action for the education administration on the use of artificial intelligence in school education processes

In October 2024, the Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Länder (*Bildungsministerkonferenz*) adopted a „Recommendation for action for the education administration on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in school education processes“ (*‘Handlungsempfehlung für die Bildungsverwaltung zum Umgang mit Künstlicher Intelligenz (KI) in schulischen Bildungsprozessen’*). This recommendation aims to enable schools to deal with AI in a constructively critical way and to make the best possible use of the potential of these technologies for learning and teaching.

The recommendation for action covers several key topics:

1. Influence of AI on learning and didactics: AI applications should support teachers and create a personalised learning environment that addresses the individual needs of students.
2. Changing the examination culture: The Standing Conference calls for an adaptation of examination formats to take into account the skills needed to use AI and to make performance assessment transparent and fair.
3. Professionalisation of teachers: Teacher training and professional development should systematically integrate the use of AI in order to be able to adequately assess the opportunities and risks of these technologies.
4. Regulation and legal framework: The KMK is committed to clear legal requirements that ensure the protection of students' personal rights while promoting the use of AI applications in the school context.

5. Equal opportunities: All learners should be given the opportunity to develop skills in dealing with AI in order to be able to act as responsible citizens in a world characterised by digitalisation.

The recommendation for action is based on important preliminary work by the federal states. This includes the supplementary recommendation of the Standing Conference 'Teaching and Learning in the Digital World' (*'Lehren und Lernen in der digitalen Welt'*) (2021) to the strategy 'Education in the Digital World' (*'Bildung in der digitalen Welt'*) and the impulse paper of the Standing Scientific Commission of the Standing Conference KMK 'Large Language Models and their Potential in the Education System' (*'Large Language Models und ihre Potenziale im Bildungssystem'*) (2024). These documents and the drawing on of further scientific expertise, including at a specialist conference on the topic and through a written consultation process, have created the basis for the current recommendations. In the sense of an orientation framework, they form the common position of the Länder on the use of AI applications in school education processes.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2024/2024_10_10-Handlungsempfehlung-KI.pdf

Recruitment and training of teachers

In June 2024, the Standing Conference agreed on further measures to ensure the supply of teaching staff by implementing the concept "Measures to attract additional teachers and to structurally supplement teacher training" (*'Maßnahmen zur Gewinnung zusätzlicher Lehrkräfte und zur strukturellen Ergänzung der Lehrkräftebildung'*). The resolution "Designing additional pathways to teaching" (*'Gestaltung von zusätzlichen Wegen ins Lehramt'*) created a specific common framework for the design of qualification pathways to become a single-subject teacher as well as the introduction of so-called lateral entry master's programmes and dual study programmes. These are intended to supplement initial teacher education by enabling people to achieve a comparable or equivalent qualification for a teaching profession or for the teaching profession. The created pathways are intended to supplement, but not replace, the basic teacher training. There is no obligation to implement them. The existing resolutions on the content and structural framework for teacher training remain unchanged. These are additional measures that are based on the model of the two-phase initial teacher training in terms of the relevant standards of the Standing Conference for the educational and subject-specific sciences and the subject didactics, as well as in terms of their design. In view of this, the following order of precedence is recommended for access to the preparatory service for the state-specific regulations:

- (1) state examination or Master of Education
- (2) lateral entry with two derivable subjects
- (3) lateral entry with one derivable subject

One of the aims of the current decision is to integrate graduates of alternative teacher training programmes as seamlessly as possible into the preparatory service or into teaching at school, even if they move to another federal state. It is intended to make a decisive contribution to facilitating the cross-border mobility of teachers recruited through the additional measures.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2024/2024_03_14-Lehrkraeftebildung.pdf

StarS – A strong start in primary school

In June 2024, the Standing Conference initiated a three-year development phase for the “A Strong Start in Primary School” (*‘StarS – Stark in die Grundschule starten’*) project, which is being carried out by the Institute for Educational Quality Improvement (*Institut für Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungswesen – IQB*) and is intended to expand educational monitoring. In order to assess how well the transition from pre-school to primary school is going, diagnostic tools are to be developed to assess the learning situation at the beginning of school and learning development at the beginning of the second grade, which will serve to monitor both the system and the individual.

More detailed information on StarS is available in the chapter on quality assurance in early childhood and school education.

Agreement on Work in Primary School

In March 2024, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) adopted an “Agreement on Work in Primary School” (*‘Vereinbarung zur Arbeit in der Grundschule’*). The agreement is based on the 2015 resolution “Recommendations for Work in Primary School” (*‘Empfehlungen zur Arbeit in der Grundschule’*), which thus acquires a binding character and is intended to provide a uniform framework for work in primary schools throughout Germany.

This implements another political project of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs from 2020. It also presents “Key Points for a Spelling Framework” (*‘Eckpunkte für einen Rechtschreibrahmen’*) and a Concept for Teaching Connected Handwriting” (*‘Konzept zur Vermittlung einer verbundenen Handschrift’*).

The agreement draws on current pedagogical, subject-specific and didactic findings in order to meet the challenges of a changing society and the changing needs of pupils. Changed social and individual conditions place great demands on primary schools in particular, and primary schools must respond to these in order to provide pupils with the foundations for a successful future educational career.

The agreement includes the consent of the Länder to establish a minimum number of 94 hours for the Land-specific timetables for grades 1 to 4. In addition, the range of subjects taught at primary school ensures a common course of education and thus forms the basis for successful further learning for all pupils. The core subjects taught in primary school – German, mathematics and social studies – have been strengthened in the new agreement with a minimum of 53 hours and with these subjects now accounting for more than half of the total number of hours. For more information on the ‘Agreement on Work in Primary School’, see the chapters on the organisation of primary school and teaching and learning in primary school.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2024/2024_03_15-Vereinbarung-Grundschule.pdf

Starting Opportunities Programme

In Spring 2024, the federal ministry of education and the Länder agreed on the Starting Opportunity Programme (*Startchancen-Programm*). The largest education programme in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany to date, it started on 1

August 2024 and will run for ten years. The federal and state governments are each providing Euro 1 billion per year in funding.

With the Starting Opportunity Programme, the federal and state governments are addressing the fact that educational success in Germany still depends heavily on social background. The aim is to improve educational and opportunity equality and break the strong link between educational success and social background. It complements the activities of the Länder in increasing equal opportunities, decoupling educational success from social background, and establishing training maturity and employability.

The programme targets schools in challenging situations, i.e. schools with a high proportion of socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. Approximately 4,000 schools are participating, of which around 60 per cent are primary schools and 40 per cent are secondary schools and vocational schools, with the latter primarily offering vocational and training preparation courses. The programme places a strong emphasis on developing basic skills.

Specifically, the Startchancen programme comprises three pillars: Pillar I implements an investment programme for modern infrastructure and equipment that is more conducive to learning. Pillar II supports needs-based measures for school and teaching development, and Pillar III provides targeted support for multi-professional teams in schools.

The programme also aims to initiate systemic changes in the education system. It will be scientifically monitored and evaluated.

13.4. National Reforms in Vocational Education and Training and Adult Learning

2026

There were no reforms in the area of vocational education and training and adult learning during the reporting period.

2025

Validation of professional competences

In the 'ValiKom' collaborative project, funded by the federal ministry of education, a total of 17 Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHKs), 13 Chambers of Crafts (HWKs) and 2 Chambers of Agriculture (LWKs) developed and tested a procedure for validating informally and non-formally acquired vocational competences between 2015 and 2024.

The Vocational Training Validation and Digitalisation Act (*Berufsbildungsvalidierungs- und -digitalisierungsgesetz – BVaDiG*) introduced, with effect from 1 January 2025, a procedure for assessing vocational competence against the standards of a dual vocational training programme, as set out in the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz – BBiG*) and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (*Handwerksordnung – HwO*).

With this assessment procedure, people without a formal vocational qualification are, for the first time, entitled to have their vocational competences assessed and certified against the standards of a dual vocational training occupation. The basic requirement is that they are at least 25 years old and that their competences cover at

least the majority of the job profile. Exceptions apply to people with disabilities, provided that this has a corresponding impact on their professional competence (no age limit; partial comparability is sufficient). High standards are set both for access to this assessment procedure and for the actual assessment of the applicant's professional competence, in order to ensure that the assessment is comparable to a standard final examination.

It is essential that applicants have worked in the profession for at least one and a half times the standard training duration prescribed for the reference profession for which they are applying for an assessment. During this period, their work must have covered the relevant job profile almost entirely if they are seeking full comparability. Only then can the procedure be initiated at all.

In order to support all Chambers of Industry and Commerce, Chambers of Crafts and Chambers of Agriculture responsible for assessing individual professional competence in fulfilling their new statutory duty – the organisation and conduct of procedures for assessing professional competence – during the initial years, a 'Validation' service centre has been established with funding from the federal ministry of education.

<https://www.validierungsverfahren.de/servicestelle-validierung>

2024

Vocational Training Validation and Digitalisation Act

The Vocational Training Validation and Digitisation Act (Berufsbildungsvalidierungs- und -digitalisierungsgesetz – BVaDiG) came into force on 1 August 2024. With the newly introduced assessment procedure, people without a formal vocational qualification but with professional experience have been entitled, for the first time, to have their professional skills assessed and certified against the standard of a dual training occupation since 1 January 2025.

The assessment procedure is aimed at people over the age of 25. If the assessment procedure is successfully completed, a certificate of full comparability is issued, which opens up access to further training and trainer aptitude.

In addition, the BVaDiG consistently enables digital documents and digital (administrative) processes in vocational education and training that are free of media discontinuity.

13.5. National Reforms in Higher Education

2026

Science in Germany – Outlook to 2040

In its paper "Science in Germany – Outlook to 2040", the German Science Council (*Wissenschaftsrat*) takes a strategic look at the German science system. The paper describes academic freedom as the foundation of the science system, identifies expectations placed upon it, analyses current strengths and weaknesses, and outlines trends and scenarios. It sets out a vision for 2040 and an agenda for the comprehensive further development of the science system based on ten areas of action.

2025

Position paper by the German Science Council on staffing structures in the German research system

With its position paper on staffing structures in the German research system, the German Science Council has set out a vision for functional staffing structures that enhance the sector's appeal, with the aim of boosting the overall performance of the German research system. It proposes a generic staffing structure model that provides for four job profiles for academic and research-related activities. The position paper recommends that the federal government, the Länder and research institutions adopt and implement the staffing structure model, and provides detailed recommendations to this end.

2024

Study Start Grant

From the 2024/2025 winter semester, the "Study Start Grant" ('*Studienstarthilfe*') was introduced as a new funding scheme under the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz* – BAföG). This is a one-off financial grant of Euro 1,000 paid at the start of studies. The Study Start Grant is aimed at people under the age of 25 who are receiving certain social security benefits prior to commencing their studies and are enrolling in a degree programme for the first time. Funding through the Study Start Grant is provided independently of any monthly BAföG payments.

In 2024, 10,700 people received Start-up Grant funding. The federal government therefore spent Euro 10.7 million on the Start-up Grant.

Strategy for the Internationalisation of Institutions of Higher Education

In June 2024, the Federation and the Länder adopted a new Strategy of the Federal and Länder Ministers of Science for the Internationalisation of Institutions of Higher Education in Germany (*Strategie der Wissenschaftsminister/innen von Bund und Ländern für die Internationalisierung der Hochschulen in Deutschland*). It replaces the 2013 internationalisation strategy and is intended to strengthen the higher education location in the face of new technological and political developments and increasing global risks, and to make it more resilient. At the same time, the Federation and the Länder want to take a strategic approach to the social, economic and technological developments of recent years that are relevant to the internationalisation of higher education institutions. The sustainability agenda and the growing socio-political demand for more equal opportunities and diversity are creating new expectations and requirements for the internationalisation of research and teaching. In addition, the potential of digitisation is to be exploited in the context of the internationalisation of higher education institutions.

In this context, the Federal Government and the Länder aim to:

- **further increase the attractiveness of German higher education and research institutions for international students and researchers** and to further reduce potential hurdles to their recruitment, integration and retention in order to attract more qualified people to research and industry.
- **enabling high-quality internationalisation experiences for as many students, researchers and other higher education staff as possible** – both by promoting physical and virtual mobility and by internationalising at home.

- while safeguarding the autonomy of higher education institutions and the EU's division of competences in the higher education sector, **to work towards further expanding and deepening the quality of European and international cooperation in research and teaching**, from smaller projects to larger networks and strategic alliances.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2024/2024_06_14-Strategie-Internationalisierung-Hochschulen.pdf

Dealing with and combating anti-Semitism at higher education institutions

In response to the terrorist attacks by Hamas on Israel, the federal and state governments, as well as the German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* – HRK) and the higher education institutions, have condemned these attacks, reaffirmed their solidarity with Israel and dealt intensively with the protests that have been developing in Germany and the associated attacks.

By 2023, the Standing Conference (higher education plenary) and the federal ministry of education have adopted a “Action plan against anti-Semitism and hostility towards Israel” (*‘Aktionsplan gegen Antisemitismus und Israelfeindlichkeit’*). In June 2024, the Standing Conference (higher education plenary) issued a “Declaration for an open promotion of scientific exchange” (*‘Erklärung für eine offene Förderung des wissenschaftlichen Austausches’*) and against calls for a boycott of Israeli researchers and Israeli research institutions. In addition to intensive exchange between the Länder on their experiences with the measures taken and their effectiveness, the committees in the Standing Conference are also exchanging views with representatives of Jewish organisations and the German Rectors' Conference.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2023/2023_12_07-Aktionsplan-gegen_Antisemitismus-und-Israelfeindlichkeit.pdf

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2024/2024_06_14-386-KMK-Erklaerung-Unterstuetzung-Israel.pdf

Act amending the Federal Training Assistance Act

The 29th Act amending the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz* – BAföG) addressed key projects to strengthen equal opportunities in education. In addition to an increase in the needs-based rates, the housing allowance for recipients not living with their parents and the parental allowances, it also included structural adjustments such as the introduction of a study start grant for students from financially disadvantaged families, a flexibility semester and a simplified change of subject. The law came into force at the beginning of the school year and the winter semester of 2024/2025.

13.6. National Reforms Related to Transversal Skills and Employability

2026

During the reporting period, there were no reforms in the area of transferable skills and employability.

2025

During the reporting period, there were no reforms in the area of transferable skills and employability.

2024

During the reporting period, there were no reforms in the area of transferable skills and employability.

APPENDIX

LEGISLATION

Constitutions, laws and legal regulations of the Federation and the Länder as of December 2025

Constitution law / Federal law

Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland vom 23.05.1949 (BGBl. 1949, S. 1), das zuletzt durch Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 22. März 2025 (BGBl. I 2025, Nr. 94) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz zu dem Vertrag vom 31. August 1990 (BGBl. II 1990, S. 889) zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik über die Herstellung der Einheit Deutschlands – Einigungsvertragsgesetz – und der Vereinbarung vom 18. September 1990 vom 23.09.1990 (BGBl. II 1990, S. 885), das zuletzt durch Verordnung vom 15.08.2022 (BGBl. I 2022, S. 1401) geändert worden ist.

Verfassungsgesetz zur Bildung von Ländern in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik – Ländereinführungsgesetz – vom 22.07.1990 (GBl. I 1990, S. 955), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 04.03.2005 (GVBl. Berlin 2005, S. 125) geändert worden ist.

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Gerichtsverfassungsgesetzes (GVG) vom 09.05.1975 (BGBl. I 1975, S. 1077), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 27.12.2024 (BGBl. I 2024, Nr. 438) geändert worden ist.

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetzes (VwVfG) vom 23.01.2003 (BGBl. I 2003, S. 102), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 15.07.2024 (BGBl. I 2024, Nr. 236) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz zum Schutz der arbeitenden Jugend (Jugendarbeitsschutzgesetz – JArbSchG) vom 12.04.1976 (BGBl. I 1976, S. 965), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 23.10.2024 (BGBl. I 2024, Nr. 323) geändert worden ist.

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Bundesbesoldungsgesetzes vom 19.06.2009 (BGBl. I 2009, 34, S. 1434), das zuletzt durch Artikel 18 des Gesetzes vom 22. Dezember 2025 (BGBl. I 2025, Nr. 370) geändert worden ist.

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Beamtenversorgungsgesetzes (BeamtVG) vom 24.02.2010 (BGBl. I 2010, S. 150), das zuletzt durch Artikel 11 des Gesetzes vom 27. Februar 2025 (BGBl. I 2025, Nr. 72) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz zur Regelung des Status der Beamtinnen und Beamten in den Ländern (Beamtenstatutsgesetz – BeamStG) vom 17.06.2008 (BGBl. I 2008, S. 1010), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 20. Dezember 2023 (BGBl. I 2023, Nr. 389) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz über die Zusammenarbeit von Bund und Ländern in Angelegenheiten der Europäischen Union (EUZBLG) vom 12.03.1993 (BGBl. I 1993, S. 313), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 22.09.2009 (BGBl. I 2009, S. 3031) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz über die religiöse Kindererziehung (KerzG) vom 15.07.1921 (RGBl. 1921, S. 939), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 04.05.2021 (BGBl. I 2021, S. 882) geändert worden ist.

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

Gesetz über das Sekretariat der Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (KMK-Sekretariats-Gesetz) (Art. 13 des Gesetzes über die Anerkennung ausländischer Berufsqualifikationen) vom 07.02.2014 (GVBl. Berlin 2014, S. 39), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 09.05.2016 (GVBl. Berlin 2016, S. 226) geändert worden ist.

Constitutions of the Länder

Verfassung des Landes Baden-Württemberg vom 11.11.1953 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 1953, S. 173), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 26.04.2022 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2022, S. 237) geändert worden ist.

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung der Verfassung des Freistaates Bayern vom 15.12.1998 (GVBl. Bayern 1998, S. 991), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 11.11.2013 (GVBl. Bayern 2013, S. 642) geändert worden ist.

Verfassung von Berlin vom 23.11.1995 (GVBl. Berlin 1995, S. 779), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 10.07.2025 (GVBl. Berlin 2025, S. 269) geändert worden ist.

Verfassung des Landes Brandenburg vom 20.08.1992 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 1992, S. 298), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 05.07.2022 (GVBl. I Brandenburg, Nr. 19) geändert worden ist.

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung der Landesverfassung der Freien Hansestadt Bremen vom 12.08.2019 (GBl. Bremen 2019, S. 524), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 19.06.2024 (GBl. Bremen 2024, S. 374) geändert worden ist.

Verfassung der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg vom 06.06.1952 (GVBl. Hamburg 1952, S. 117), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 20.04.2023 (GVBl. I Hamburg 2023, S. 169) geändert worden ist.

Verfassung des Landes Hessen vom 01.12.1946 (GVBl. Hessen 1946, S. 229, berichtigt in GVBl. Hessen 1947, S. 106; GVBl. Hessen 1948, S. 68), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 12.12.2018 (GVBl. Hessen 2018, S. 752) geändert worden ist.

Verfassung des Landes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern vom 23.05.1993 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 1993, S. 372), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 21.12.2021 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2021, S. 1806) geändert worden ist.

Niedersächsische Verfassung vom 19.05.1993 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 1993, S. 107), die zuletzt durch Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 16. Dezember 2025 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 2025, Nr. 103) geändert worden ist.

Verfassung für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen vom 28.06.1950 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 1950, S. 127), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 30.06.2020 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2020, S. 644) geändert worden ist.

Verfassung für Rheinland-Pfalz vom 18.05.1947 (VOBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 1947, S. 209), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 19.06.2024 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2024, S. 253) geändert worden ist.

Verfassung des Saarlandes vom 15.12.1947 (ABl. Saarland 1947, S. 1077), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 07.02.2024 (ABl. Saarland 2024, S. 147) geändert worden ist.

Verfassung des Freistaates Sachsen vom 27.05.1992 (GVBl. Sachsen 1992, S. 243), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 11.07.2013 (GVBl. Sachsen 2013, S. 502) geändert worden ist.

Verfassung des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt vom 16.07.1992 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 1992, S. 600), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 20.03.2020 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2020, S. 64) geändert worden ist.

Bekanntmachung der geltenden Fassung der Verfassung des Landes Schleswig-Holstein vom 02.12.2014 (GVOBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2014, S. 344), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 22.10.2024 (GVOBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2024, S. 749) geändert worden ist.

Verfassung des Freistaats Thüringen vom 25.10.1993 (GVBl. Thüringen 1993, S. 625), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 21.05.2024 (GVBl. Thüringen 2024, S. 89) geändert worden ist.

Civil service legislation of the Länder

Landesbeamtengesetz (LBG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Reform des öffentlichen Dienstrechts) vom 09.11.2010 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2010, S. 793), das zuletzt durch Artikel 12 des Gesetzes vom 17.12.2024 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2024, Nr. 114) geändert worden ist.

Bayerisches Beamtenengesetz (BayBG) vom 29.07.2008 (GVBl. Bayern 2008, S. 500), das zuletzt durch die §§ 1 und 2 des Gesetzes vom 23. Dezember 2025 (GVBl. Bayern 2025, S. 643) geändert worden ist.

Landesbeamtenengesetz (LBG: Art. 1 des Dienstrechtsänderungsgesetzes) vom 19.03.2009 (GVBl. Berlin 2009, S. 70), das zuletzt durch Artikel 6 des Gesetzes vom 10.07.2025 (GVBl. Berlin 2025 S. 270, 281) geändert worden ist.

Beamtenengesetz für das Land Brandenburg (Landesbeamtenengesetz – LBG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuordnung des Beamtenrechts im Land Brandenburg) vom 03.04.2009 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 2009, S. 26), das zuletzt durch Artikel 6 des Gesetzes vom 21.06.2024 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 2024, Nr. 29) geändert worden ist.

Bremisches Beamtenengesetz (BremBG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuregelung des Beamtenrechts in der Freien Hansestadt Bremen) vom 22.12.2009 (GBl. Bremen 2010, S. 17), das zuletzt durch Geschäftsverteilung des Senats vom 02.09.2025 (GBl. Bremen 2025, S. 674) geändert worden ist.

Hamburgisches Beamtenengesetz (HmbBG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuregelung des hamburgischen Beamtenrechts) vom 15.12.2009 (GVBl. I Hamburg 2009, S. 405), das zuletzt durch Artikel 2 des Gesetzes vom 22.01.2025 (GVBl. I Hamburg 2025, S. 166, 173) geändert worden ist.

Hessisches Beamtenengesetz (HBG: Art. 1 des Zweiten Gesetzes zur Modernisierung des Dienstrechts in Hessen) vom 27.05.2013 (GVBl. I Hessen 2013, S. 218; berichtigt in GVBl. I Hessen 2013, S. 508), das zuletzt durch Artikel 8a des Gesetzes vom 1. April 2025 (GVBl. I Hessen 2025, Nr. 24) geändert worden ist.

Beamtenengesetz für das Land Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Landesbeamtenengesetz – LBG M-V: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuordnung des Beamtenrechts für das Land Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) vom 17.12.2009 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2009, S. 687), das zuletzt durch Artikel 5 des Gesetzes vom 14. Mai 2024 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2024, S. 154, 183) geändert worden ist.

Niedersächsisches Beamtenengesetz (NBG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Modernisierung des niedersächsischen Beamtenrechts) vom 25.03.2009 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 2009, S. 72), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 06.11.2024 (GVBl. Niedersachsen, Nr. 93) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz über die Beamtinnen und Beamten des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (Landesbeamtenengesetz – LBG NRW: Art. 1 des Dienstrechtsmodernisierungsgesetzes für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen) vom 14.06.2016 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2016, S. 310; berichtigt in GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2016, S. 642), das zuletzt durch Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 2. Dezember 2025 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2025, S. 1126) geändert worden ist.

Landesbeamtenengesetz (LBG) vom 20.10.2010 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2010, S. 319), das zuletzt durch Artikel 3 des Gesetzes vom 19.11.2025 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2025, S. 693, 696) geändert worden ist.

Saarländisches Beamtenengesetz (SBG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes Nr. 1675 zur Anpassung dienstrechtlicher Vorschriften an das Beamtenstatusgesetz) vom 11.03.2009 (ABl. Saarland 2009, S. 514), das zuletzt durch Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 9. Dezember 2025 (ABl. Saarland 2025, S. 1089) geändert worden ist.

Sächsisches Beamtenengesetz (SächsBG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuordnung des Dienst-, Besoldungs- und Versorgungsrechts im Freistaat Sachsen (Sächsisches Dienstrechtsneuordnungsgesetz) vom 18.12.2013 (GVBl. Sachsen 2013, S. 970), das zuletzt durch Artikel 3 des Gesetzes vom 27.06.2025 (GVBl. Sachsen 2025, S. 285) geändert worden ist.

Beamtenengesetz des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt (Landesbeamtenengesetz – LBG LSA: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuordnung des Landesbeamtenrechts) vom 15.12.2009 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2009, S. 648), das zuletzt durch Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 07.10.2024 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2024, S. 274) geändert worden ist.

Landesbeamtengesetz (LBG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuregelung des Beamtenrechts in Schleswig-Holstein) vom 26.03.2009 (GVOBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2009, S. 93), das zuletzt durch Artikel 3 des Gesetzes vom 13.12.2023 (GVOBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2023, S. 634) geändert worden ist.

Thüringer Beamtengesetz (ThürBG: Art. 1 des Thüringer Gesetzes zur Änderung beamtenrechtlicher Vorschriften) vom 12.08.2014 (GVBl. Thüringen 2014, S. 472), das zuletzt durch Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 15.12.2025 (GVBl. Thüringen 2025, S. 271) geändert worden ist.

Civil servants' remuneration acts of the Länder

Landesbesoldungsgesetz Baden-Württemberg (LBesGBW: Art. 2 des Gesetzes zur Reform des öffentlichen Dienstrechts) vom 09.11.2010 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2010,19, S. 793), das zuletzt durch Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 18.11.2025 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2025, Nr. 122) geändert worden ist.

Bayerisches Besoldungsgesetz (BayBesG: § 1 des Gesetzes zum neuen Dienstrecht in Bayern) vom 05.08.2010 (GVBl. Bayern 2010, S. 410, berichtigt in GVBl. Bayern 2010, S. 764, berichtigt in GVBl. Bayern 2012, S. 60, berichtigt in GVBl. Bayern 2012, S. 92), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 23. Dezember 2025 (GVBl. Bayern, S. 643) geändert worden ist.

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Landesbesoldungsgesetzes (LBesG) vom 09.04.1996 (GVBl. Berlin 1996, S. 160, berichtigt in GVBl. 2005, S. 463), das zuletzt durch Artikel 5 des Gesetzes vom 18.12.2025 (GVBl. Berlin 2025, S. 689, 691) geändert worden ist.

Besoldungsgesetz für das Land Brandenburg (Brandenburgisches Besoldungsgesetz - BbgBesG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuregelung des brandenburgischen Besoldungsrechts und des brandenburgischen Beamtenversorgungsrechts) vom 20.11.2013 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 2013,32, S. 1; berichtigt in GVBl. I Brandenburg 2013,34, S. 1), das zuletzt durch Bekanntmachung vom 16.07.2024 (GVBl. I Brandenburg, Nr. 42) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz über die Besoldung der bremischen Beamtinnen und Beamten sowie Richterinnen und Richter (Bremisches Besoldungsgesetz – BremBesG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuregelung des Besoldungsrechts in der Freien Hansestadt Bremen) vom 20.12.2016 (GBl. Bremen 2016, S. 924), das zuletzt durch Geschäftsverteilung des Senats vom 02.09.2025 (GBl. Bremen 2025, S. 674) geändert worden ist.

Hamburgisches Besoldungsgesetz (HmbBesG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuregelung des Hamburgischen Besoldungs- und Beamtenversorgungsrechts) vom 26.01.2010 (GBl. I Hamburg 2010, S. 23, berichtigt in GVBl. I Hamburg 2010, S. 126), das zuletzt durch Artikel 2 des Gesetzes vom 22. Januar 2025 (GVBl. I Hamburg 2025, S. 174, 179, berichtigt in GVBl. I Hamburg 2025, S. 245) geändert worden ist.

Hessisches Besoldungsgesetz (HBesG: Art. 1 des Zweiten Gesetzes zur Modernisierung des Dienstrechts in Hessen) vom 27.05.2013 (GVBl. Hessen 2013, S. 218, berichtigt in GVBl. Hessen 2013, S. 508), das zuletzt durch Artikel 4 des Gesetzes vom 10.12.2025 (GVBl. Hessen 2025, Nr. 97) geändert worden ist.

Besoldungsgesetz für das Land Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Landesbesoldungsgesetz – LBesG M-V: Artikel 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuregelung des Besoldungsrechts und zur Änderung weiterer dienstrechtlicher Vorschriften des Landes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) vom 11. Mai 2021 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2021, S. 600), das zuletzt durch die Artikel 3 bis 6 des Gesetzes vom 30.06.2024 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, 407) geändert worden ist.

Niedersächsisches Besoldungsgesetz (NBESG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuregelung des Besoldungsrechts, zur Anpassung der Besoldung und der Versorgungsbezüge in den Jahren 2017 und 2018 sowie zur Änderung anderer dienstrechtlicher Vorschriften) vom 20.12.2016 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 2016, S. 308), das zuletzt durch Artikel 2 des Gesetzes vom 18.12.2025 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 2025, Nr. 106) geändert worden ist.

Besoldungsgesetz für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen (Landesbesoldungsgesetz – LBesG NRW: Art. 2 des Dienstrechtsmodernisierungsgesetzes für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen) vom 14.06.2016 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2016, S. 310), das zuletzt durch Artikel 3 des Gesetzes vom 27.05.2025 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2025, S. 464) geändert worden ist.

Landesbesoldungsgesetz (LBesG: Art. 1 des Landesgesetzes zur Reform des finanziellen öffentlichen Dienstrechts) vom 18.06.2013 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2013, S. 157), das zuletzt durch Artikel 2 des Gesetzes vom 19.11.2025 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2025, S. 693, 696) geändert worden ist.

Saarländisches Besoldungsgesetz (SBesG: Artikel 1 des Gesetzes Nr. 2042 zur Neuregelung des Beamtenbesoldungs- und -versorgungsrechts im Saarland) vom 13.10.2021 (ABl. Saarland 2021, S. 2547), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 27.08.2025 (ABl. Saarland 2025, S. 812) geändert worden ist.

Sächsisches Besoldungsgesetz (SächsBesG: Art. 6 des Vierten Dienstrechtsänderungsgesetzes) vom 06.07.2023 (GVBl. Sachsen 2024, S. 467, 476), das zuletzt durch Artikel 4 des Gesetzes vom 27.06.2025 (GVBl. Sachsen 2025, S. 285) geändert worden ist.

Besoldungsgesetz des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt (LBesG LSA: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuregelung des Besoldungsrechts des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt) vom 08.02.2011 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2011, S. 68), das zuletzt durch Artikel 2 des Gesetzes vom 17.12.2025 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2025, S. 843, 846) geändert worden ist.

Besoldungsgesetz Schleswig-Holstein (Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuregelung des Besoldungs- und Beamtenversorgungsrechts in Schleswig-Holstein) vom 26.01.2012 (GVBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2012, S. 153), das zuletzt durch Art. 3 des Gesetzes vom 11.12.2025 (GVBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2025, Nr. 165) geändert worden ist.

Neubekanntmachung des Thüringer Besoldungsgesetzes vom 18.01.2016 (GVBl. Thüringen 2016, S. 1; berichtigt in GVBl. Thüringen 2016, S. 166, berichtigt in GVBl. Thüringen 2016, S. 202), das zuletzt durch Artikel 4 des Gesetzes vom 02.07.2024 (GVBl. Thüringen 2024, S. 340, 355) geändert worden ist.

Basic legal regulations on early childhood education

Federation

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Achten Buches Sozialgesetzbuch (Kinder- und Jugendhilfe) vom 11.09.2012 (BGBI. I 2012, S. 2022), das zuletzt durch Artikel 2 des Gesetzes vom 03.04.2025 (BGBI. I 2025, Nr. 107) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz zur Förderung von Kindern unter drei Jahren in Tageseinrichtungen und Kindertagespflege (Kinderförderungsgesetz – KiföG) vom 10.12.2008 (BGBI. I 2008, S. 2403), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 25.06.2021 (BGBI. I 2021, S. 2020) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz zum weiteren quantitativen und qualitativen Ausbau der Kindertagesbetreuung vom 23.06.2017 (BGBI. I 2017, S. 1893).

Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Qualität und zur Verbesserung der Teilhabe in Tageseinrichtungen und in der Kindertagespflege (KiTa-Qualitäts- und-Teilhabeverbesserungsgesetz – KiQuTG) vom 19.12.2018 (BGBI. I 2018, S. 2696), das zuletzt durch Artikel 3 des Gesetzes vom 21.11.2024 (BGBI. I 2024, Nr. 361) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz zur ganztägigen Förderung von Kindern im Grundschulalter (Ganztagsförderungsgesetz – GaFöG) vom 02.10.2021 (BGBI. I 2021, S. 4602), das durch Artikel 6 des Gesetzes vom 21.11.2024 (BGBI. I 2024, Nr. 361) geändert worden ist.

Länder

Baden-Württemberg

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Kindertagesbetreuungsgesetzes vom 19.03.2009 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2009, S. 161), das zuletzt durch Artikel 1 und 2 des Gesetzes vom 29.07.2025 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2025, Nr. 81) geändert worden ist.

Bayern

Bayerisches Gesetz zur Bildung, Erziehung und Betreuung von Kindern in Kindergärten, anderen Kindertageseinrichtungen und in Tagespflege und zur Änderung anderer Gesetze – Bayerisches Kinderbildungs- und -betreuungsgesetz und Änderungsgesetz (BayKiBiG und ÄndG) vom 08.07.2005 (GVBl. Bayern 2005, S. 236), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 21.11.2025 (GVBl. Bayern 2025, S. 570) geändert worden ist.

Berlin

Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung des bedarfsgerechten Angebotes und der Qualität von Tagesbetreuung (Kindertagesbetreuungsreformgesetz) vom 23.06.2005 (GVBl. Berlin 2005, S. 322) das zuletzt durch Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 11.12.2025 (GVBl. Berlin 2025, S. 629) geändert worden ist.

Brandenburg

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Zweiten Gesetzes zur Ausführung des Achten Buches des Sozialgesetzbuches – Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – Kindertagesstättengesetz (KitaG) vom 27.06.2004 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 2004, S. 384), das zuletzt durch Artikel 5 des Gesetzes vom 23.06.2025 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 2025, Nr. 12) geändert worden ist.

Bremen

Bremisches Gesetz zur Förderung von Kindern in Tageseinrichtungen und in Tagespflege (Bremisches Tageseinrichtungs- und Kindertagespflegegesetz – BremKTG: Art. 1 des Dritten Gesetzes zur Ausführung des Achten Buches Sozialgesetzbuch) vom 19.12.2000 (GBl. Bremen 2000, S. 491), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 26.08.2025 (GBl. Bremen 2025, S. 658) geändert worden ist.

Hamburg

Gesetz zur Neuregelung der Hamburger Kinderbetreuung vom 27.04.2004 (GVBl. I Hamburg 2004, S. 211), das zuletzt durch § 1 des Gesetzes vom 03.12.2024 (GVBl. Hamburg 2024, S. 628) geändert worden ist.

Hessen

Gesetz zur Zusammenführung und Änderung von Vorschriften der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe (HKJGB) vom 18.12.2006 (GVBl. I Hessen 2006, S. 698), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 10.12.2025 (GVBl. I Hessen 2025, Nr. 93) geändert worden ist.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Gesetz zur Einführung der Elternbeitragsfreiheit, zur Stärkung der Elternrechte und zur Novellierung des Kindertagesförderungsgesetzes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Kindertagesförderungsgesetz – KiföG M-V) vom 04.09.2019 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern-2019, S. 558), das zuletzt durch Artikel 7 des Gesetzes vom 16.12.2025 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2025, S. 781, 790) geändert worden ist.

Niedersachsen

Niedersächsisches Gesetz über Kindertagesstätten und Kindertagespflege (NKiTaG) vom 07.07.2021 (GVBl. Niedersachsen, S. 470), das zuletzt durch Artikel 15 des Gesetzes vom 13.12.2024 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 2024, Nr. 118) geändert worden ist.

Nordrhein-Westfalen

Gesetz zur frühen Bildung und Förderung von Kindern (Kinderbildungsgesetz – KiBiz: Artikel 1 des Gesetzes zur qualitativen Weiterentwicklung der frühen Bildung) vom 03.12.2019 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2019, S. 894), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 13.04.2022 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2022, S. 509) geändert worden ist.

Rheinland-Pfalz

Landesgesetz über die Erziehung, Bildung und Betreuung von Kindern in Tageseinrichtungen und in Kindertagespflege (KiTaG: Art. 1 des Landesgesetzes über die Weiterentwicklung der Erziehung, Bildung und Betreuung von Kindern in Tageseinrichtungen und in Kindertagespflege vom 03.09.2019) (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2019, S. 213).

Saarland

Gesetz Nr. 2056 für ein Saarländisches Ausführungsgesetz nach § 26 des Achten Buches Sozialgesetzbuch für Kindertageseinrichtungen und Kindertagespflege – Saarländisches Bildungs-, Erziehungs- und Betreuungsgesetz (SBEBG) vom 19. Januar 2022, das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 26.04.2023 (Abl. Saarland I 2023, S. 370) geändert worden ist.

Sachsen

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Gesetzes über Kindertageseinrichtungen vom 15.05.2009 (GVBl. Sachsen 2009, S. 225.), das zuletzt durch Artikel 13 des Gesetzes vom 27.06.2025 (GVBl. Sachsen 2025, S. 285) geändert worden ist.

Sachsen-Anhalt

Gesetz zur Förderung und Betreuung von Kindern in Tageseinrichtungen und in Tagespflege des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt (Kinderförderungsgesetz – KiFöG) vom 05.03.2003 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2003, S. 48), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 05.07.2025 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2025, S. 446) geändert worden ist.

Schleswig-Holstein

Gesetz zur Förderung von Kindern in Kindertageseinrichtungen und in Kindertagespflege (Kindertagesförderungsgesetz – KiTaG: Artikel 1 des Gesetzes zur Stärkung der Qualität in der Kindertagesbetreuung und zur finanziellen Entlastung von Familien und Kommunen (KiTa-Reform-Gesetz)) vom 12.12.2019 (GVBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2019, S. 759), das zuletzt durch Artikel 4 des Gesetzes vom 23.07.2025 (GVBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2025, Nr. 108) geändert worden ist.

Thüringen

Thüringer Gesetz über die Bildung, Erziehung und Betreuung von Kindern in Tageseinrichtungen und in Kindertagespflege als Ausführungsgesetz zum Achten Buch Sozialgesetzbuch (Thüringer Kindertagesbetreuungsgesetz – ThürKitaG) vom 18.12.2017 (GVBl. Thüringen 2017, S. 276), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 02.07.2024 (GVBl. Thüringen 2024, S. 202) geändert worden ist.

Basic legal regulations on primary and secondary education

Federation

Berufsbildungsgesetz in der Fassung der Bekanntmachung vom 16.04.2025 (BGBl. I 2025, Nr. 117, 129), das durch Artikel 9 des Gesetzes vom 28.10.2025 (BGBl. I 2025, Nr. 259) geändert worden ist.

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung der Handwerksordnung (HwO) vom 24.09.1998 (BGBl. I 1998, S. 3074), die zuletzt durch Artikel 2 des Gesetzes vom 03.04.2025 (BGBl. I 2025, Nr. 106) geändert worden ist.

Ausbilder-Eignungsverordnung (AusbEignV) vom 21.01.2009 (BGBl. I 2009, S. 88).

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Bundesgesetzes über individuelle Förderung der Ausbildung (Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz – BAföG) vom 07.12.2010 (BGBl. I 2010, S. 1952), das zuletzt durch Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 19.07.2024 (BGBl. I 2024, Nr. 249) geändert worden ist.

Gemeinsames Abkommen der Länder

Ländervereinbarung über die gemeinsame Grundstruktur des Schulwesens und die gesamtstaatliche Verantwortung der Länder in zentralen bildungspolitischen Fragen (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 15.10.2020).

School legislation of the Länder

Baden-Württemberg

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Schulgesetzes für Baden-Württemberg vom 01.08.1983 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 1983, S. 397), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 29.01.2025 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2025, S. 1 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Bayern

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Gesetzes über das Erziehungs- und Unterrichtswesen (BayEUG) vom 31.05.2000 (GVBl. Bayern 2000, S. 414, berichtigt in GVBl. Bayern 2000, S. 632), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 25.07.2025 (GVBl. Bayern 2025, S. 260 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Berlin

Schulgesetz für das Land Berlin (Schulgesetz – SchulG) vom 26.01.2004 (GVBl. Berlin 2004, S. 26), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 10.07.2024 (GVBl. Berlin 2024, S. 465 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Brandenburg

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Brandenburgischen Schulgesetzes vom 02.08.2002 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 2002, S. 78), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 23.06.2025 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 2025, S. 1 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Bremen

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Bremischen Schulgesetzes vom 28.06.2005 (GBl. Bremen 2005, S. 260, berichtigt in GBl. Bremen 2005, S. 388, zuletzt berichtigt in GBl. Bremen 2005, S. 398), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 14.12.2021 (GBl. Bremen 2021, S. 913 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Hamburg

Hamburgisches Schulgesetz (HmbSG) vom 16.04.1997 (GVBl. I Hamburg 1997, S. 97), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 27.05.2024 (GVBl. I Hamburg 2024, S. 124) geändert worden ist.

Hessen

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Hessischen Schulgesetzes vom 30.06.2017 (GVBl. Hessen 2017, S. 150), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 28.03.2023 (GVBl. Hessen 2023, S. 183 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Schulgesetzes vom 10.09.2010 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2010, S. 462, berichtigt in GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011, S. 859,) das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 24.03.2025 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2025, S. 138, berichtigt in GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2025, S. 183) geändert worden ist.

Niedersachsen

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Niedersächsischen Schulgesetzes vom 03.03.1998 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 1998, S. 137), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 25.06.2025 (SVBl. Niedersachsen 2025, S. 418 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Nordrhein-Westfalen

Schulgesetz für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen (Schulgesetz NRW – SchulG) vom 15.02.2005 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2005, S. 102), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 27.05.2025 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2025, S. 501 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Rheinland-Pfalz

Schulgesetz (SchulG) vom 30.03.2004 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2004, S. 239), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 20.12.2024 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2024, S. 473 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Saarland

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Gesetzes Nr. 812 zur Ordnung des Schulwesens im Saarland (Schulordnungsgesetz: SchoG) vom 21.08.1996 (ABl. Saarland 1996, S. 846, berichtet in ABl. Saarland 1997, S. 147), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 27.08.2025 (ABl. I Saarland 2025, S. 566 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Allgemeine Schulordnung (ASchO) vom 10.11.1975 (ABl. Saarland 1975, S. 1239), die zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 20.08.2024 (ABl. I Saarland 2024, S. 642) geändert worden ist.

Sachsen

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Sächsischen Schulgesetzes (Schulgesetz für den Freistaat Sachsen (Sächsisches Schulgesetz – SächsSchulG)) vom 27.09.2018 (GVBl. Sachsen 2018, S. 648), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 17.06.2024 (GVBl. Sachsen 2024, S. 662 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Sachsen-Anhalt

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Schulgesetzes des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt (SchulG LSA) vom 09.08.2018 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2018, S. 244), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 05.07.2025 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2025, S. 432 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Schleswig-Holstein

Schleswig-Holsteinisches Schulgesetz (Schulgesetz – SchulG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Weiterentwicklung des Schulwesens in Schleswig-Holstein) vom 24.01.2007 (GVOBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2007, S. 39, berichtet in GVOBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2007, S. 276), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 29.01.2025 (GVOBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2025, S. 1 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Thüringen

Neubekanntmachung des Thüringer Schulgesetzes (ThürSchulG) vom 30.04.2003 (GVBl. Thüringen 2003, S. 238), das zuletzt durch Verordnung vom 06.06.2025 (GVBl. Thüringen 2025, S. 179 f.) geändert worden ist.

Neubekanntmachung des Thüringer Förderschulgesetzes

Vom 30.04.2003 (GVBl. Thüringen 2003, S. 233 ff.), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 31.01.2013 (GVBl. Thüringen 2013, S. 22 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Legislation of the Länder on privately-maintained schools

Baden-Württemberg

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Privatschulgesetzes vom 01.01.1990 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 1990, S. 105), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 20.05.2025 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2025, S. 1 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Bremen

Gesetz über das Privatschulwesen und den Privatunterricht (Privatschulgesetz) vom 03.07.1956 (GBl. Bremen 1956, S. 77), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 20.10.2020 (GBl. Bremen 2020, S. 1172) geändert worden ist.

Hamburg

Hamburgisches Gesetz über Schulen in freier Trägerschaft (HmbSfTG) vom 21.09.2004 (GVBl. I Hamburg 2004, S. 365), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 19.03.2024 (GVBl. Hamburg 2024, S. 77) geändert worden ist.

Rheinland-Pfalz

Landesgesetz über die Privatschulen in Rheinland-Pfalz (Privatschulgesetz – PrivSchG) vom 04.09.1970 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 1970, S. 372), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 17.06.2025 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2025, S. 237 f.) geändert worden ist.

Saarland

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Gesetzes Nr. 751 Privatschulgesetz (PrivSchG) vom 22.05.1985 (ABl. Saarland 1985, S. 610), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 24.06.2020 (ABl. I Saarland 2020, S. 529) geändert worden ist.

Sachsen

Sächsisches Gesetz über Schulen in freier Trägerschaft (SächsFrTrSchulG) vom 08.07.2015 (GVBl. Sachsen 2015, S. 434), das zuletzt durch Verordnung vom 10.07.2025 (GVBl. Sachsen 2025, S. 313 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Thüringen

Thüringer Gesetz über Schulen in freier Trägerschaft (ThürSchfTG) vom 20.12.2010 (GVBl. Thüringen 2010, S. 522), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 02.07.2024 (GVBl. Thüringen 2024, S. 277 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Teacher training legislation of the Länder

Bayern

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Bayerischen Lehrerbildungsgesetzes vom 12.12.1995 (GVBl. Bayern 1996, S. 16), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 24.03.2023 (GVBl. Bayern 2023, S. 102) geändert worden ist.

Berlin

Gesetz über die Aus-, Fort- und Weiterbildung der Lehrerinnen und Lehrer im Land Berlin (Lehrkräftebildungsgesetz – LBiG) vom 07.02.2014 (GVBl. Berlin 2014, S. 49), das zuletzt durch Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 16.10.2025 (GVBl. Berlin 2025, S. 525) geändert worden ist.

Brandenburg

Gesetz über die Ausbildung und Prüfung für Lehrämter und die Fort- und Weiterbildung von Lehrerinnen und Lehrern im Land Brandenburg (Brandenburgisches Lehrerbildungsgesetz – BbgLeBiG - Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Weiterentwicklung der Lehrerbildung und zur Änderung des Brandenburgischen Besoldungsgesetzes) vom 18.12.2012 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 2012, S. 1), das zuletzt durch Artikel 11 des Gesetzes vom 23.06.2025 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 2025, S. 7) geändert worden ist.

Bremen

Gesetz über die Ausbildung für das Lehramt an öffentlichen Schulen (Bremisches Lehrerausbildungsgesetz: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Änderung der Gesetze zur bremischen Lehrerausbildung) vom 16.05.2006 (GBl. Bremen 2006, S. 259), das zuletzt durch Geschäftsverteilung des Senats vom 02.09.2025 (GBl. Bremen 2025, S. 674) geändert worden ist.

Hessen

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Hessischen Lehrerbildungsgesetzes vom 28.09.2011 (GVBl. I Hessen 2011, S. 590), das zuletzt durch Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 12.12.2024 (GVBl. Hessen 2024, Nr. 84) geändert worden ist.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Lehrerbildungsgesetzes vom 25.11.2014 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2014, S. 606) das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 16. Juli 2024 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, S. 474; berichtigt in GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2025, S. 382) geändert worden ist.

Nordrhein-Westfalen

Gesetz über die Ausbildung für Lehrämter an öffentlichen Schulen (Lehrerausbildungsgesetz – LABG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Reform der Lehrerausbildung) vom 12.05.2009 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2009, S. 308), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 27.05.2025 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2025, S. 501) geändert worden ist.

Saarland

Gesetz Nr. 1434 zur Neufassung des Saarländischen Lehrerbildungsgesetzes (SLBiG) und zur Änderung weiterer Gesetze vom 23.06.1999 (Abl. Saarland 1999, S. 1054), das zuletzt durch Artikel 2 des Gesetzes vom 11.09.2024 (Abl. Saarland. I 2024, S. 722, 723) geändert worden ist.

Schleswig-Holstein

Lehrkräftebildungsgesetz Schleswig-Holstein (LehrBG) vom 15.07.2014 (GVBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2014, S. 134), das zuletzt durch Artikel 7 des Gesetzes vom 29.01.2025 (GVBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2025, Nr. 17) geändert worden ist.

Thüringen

Thüringer Lehrerbildungsgesetz (ThürLbG) vom 12.03.2008 (GVBl. Thüringen 2008, S. 45), das zuletzt durch Artikel 39 des Gesetzes vom 02.07.2024 (GVBl. Thüringen 2024, S. 277, 289) geändert worden ist.

Compulsory schooling acts of the Länder

Saarland

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Gesetzes Nr. 826 über die Schulpflicht im Saarland (Schulpflichtgesetz) vom 21.08.1996 (Abl. Saarland 1996, S. 864, berichtet in Abl. Saarland 1997, S. 147), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 08.12.2021 (Abl. Saarland I 2021, S. 2629) geändert worden ist.

Legislation on school participation of the Länder

Saarland

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Gesetzes Nr. 994 über die Mitbestimmung und Mitwirkung im Schulwesen – Schulmitbestimmungsgesetz (SchumG) vom 21.08.1996 (Abl. Saarland 1996, S. 869, berichtet in Abl. Saarland 1997, S. 147), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 25.06.2025 (Abl. I Saarland 2025, S. 854 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Basic legal regulations on tertiary education

Federation

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Hochschulrahmengesetzes vom 19.01.1999 (BGBl. I 1999, S. 18), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 15.11.2019 (BGBl. I 2019, S. 1622) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz zur Neuregelung der Professorenbesoldung und zur Änderung weiterer dienstrechtlicher Vorschriften (Professorenbesoldungsneuregelungsgesetz)

Vom 11.06.2013 (BGBl. I 2013, S. 1514), geänd. durch Gesetz vom 20.09.2021 (BGBl. I 2021, S. 3932).

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Bundesgesetzes über individuelle Förderung der Ausbildung (Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz – BAföG) vom 07.12.2010 (BGBl. I 2010, S. 1952), das zuletzt durch Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 19.07.2024 (BGBl. I 2024, Nr. 249) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz über befristete Arbeitsverträge in der Wissenschaft (Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz – WissZeitVG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Änderung arbeitsrechtlicher Vorschriften in der Wissenschaft) vom 12.04.2007 (BGBl. I 2007, S. 506), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 25.05.2020 (BGBl. I 2020, S. 1073) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz zur Schaffung eines nationalen Stipendienprogramms (Stipendienprogramm-Gesetz – StipG) vom 21.07.2010 (BGBl. I 2010, S. 957), das zuletzt durch Artikel 74 des Gesetzes vom 29.03.2017 (BGBl. I 2017, S. 626) geändert worden ist.

State Treaties of the Länder

Staatsvertrag über die Hochschulzulassung vom 21.03.2019.

Staatsvertrag über die Organisation eines gemeinsamen Akkreditierungssystems zur Qualitätssicherung in Studium und Lehre an deutschen Hochschulen (Studienakkreditierungsstaatsvertrag) vom 12.06.2017.

Legislation of the Länder on higher education

Baden-Württemberg

Gesetz über die Hochschulen in Baden-Württemberg (Landeshochschulgesetz – LHG: Art. 1 des Dritten Gesetzes zur Änderung hochschulrechtlicher Vorschriften) vom 01.04.2014 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2014, S. 99), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 17.12.2024 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2024, S. 1 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Bayern

Bayerisches Hochschulinnovationsgesetz (BayHIG) vom 05.08.2022 (GVBl. Bayern 2022, S. 414), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 23.11.2024 (GVBl. Bayern 2024, S. 632 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Berlin

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Berliner Hochschulgesetzes (BerlHG) vom 26.07.2011 (GVBl. Berlin 2011, S. 378), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 10.07.2025 (GVBl. Berlin 2025, S. 270 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Brandenburg

Brandenburgisches Hochschulgesetz – BbgHG (Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuordnung des Brandenburgischen Hochschulsystems) vom 09.04.2024 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 35.2024, S. 1 ff.), das durch Gesetz vom 21.06.2024 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 2024, S. 1 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Bremen

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Bremischen Hochschulgesetzes vom 09.05.2007 (GBl. Bremen 2007, S. 339), das zuletzt durch Geschäftsverteilung des Senats vom 02.09.2025 (GBl. Bremen, S. 674) geändert worden ist.

Hamburg

Hamburgisches Hochschulgesetz (HmbHG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuordnung des Hochschulrechts) vom 18.07.2001 (GVBl. I Hamburg 2001, S. 171), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 19.02.2025 (GVBl. I Hamburg 2025, S. 241 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Hessen

Hessisches Hochschulgesetz (HessHG) vom 14.12.2021 (GVBl. I Hessen 2021, S. 931), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 10.10.2024 (GVBl. Hessen, 2024, 56, S. 1 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Landeshochschulgesetzes vom 25.01.2011 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011, S. 18), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 21.06.2021 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2021, S. 1018) geändert worden ist.

Niedersachsen

Neubekanntmachung des Niedersächsischen Hochschulgesetzes vom 26.02.2007 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 2007, S. 69), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 23.03.2023 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 2023, S. 218) geändert worden ist.

Nordrhein-Westfalen

Gesetz über die Hochschulen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (Art. 1 des Hochschulzukunftsgesetzes) vom 16.09.2014 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2014, S. 547), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 30.06.2022 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2022, S. 780) geändert worden ist.

Rheinland-Pfalz

Hochschulgesetz (HochSchG) vom 23.09.2020 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2020, S. 461), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 17.06.2025 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2025, S. 202 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Saarland

Saarländisches Hochschulgesetz (SHSG) vom 30.11.2016 (ABl. I Saarland 2016, S. 1080), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 10.07.2024 (ABl. I Saarland 2024, S. 555 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Sachsen

Gesetz über die Hochschulen im Freistaat Sachsen (Sächsisches Hochschulgesetz - SächSHSG) vom 31.05.2023 (GVBl. Sachsen 2023, 12, S. 329 ff.), das durch Gesetz vom 31.01.2024 (GVBl. Sachsen 2024, 2, S. 83 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Sachsen-Anhalt

Hochschulgesetz des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt (HSG LSA) vom 01.07.2021 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2021, S. 368).

Schleswig-Holstein

Neubekanntmachung der geltenden Fassung des Hochschulgesetzes vom 05.02.2016 (GVOBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2016, S. 39), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 25.03.2025 (GVOBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2025, S. 1 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Thüringen

Thüringer Gesetz zur Stärkung der Mitbestimmung an Hochschulen sowie zur Änderung weiterer hochschulrechtlicher Vorschriften (Thüringer Hochschulgesetz – ThürHG) vom 10.05.2018 (GVBl. Thüringen 2018, S. 149), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 02.07.2024 (GVBl. 2024, S. 371) geändert worden ist.

Legislation of the Länder on colleges of art and music

Nordrhein-Westfalen

Gesetz über die Kunsthochschulen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (Kunsthochschulgesetz – KunstHG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuordnung des Kunsthochschulrechts) vom 13.03.2008 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2008, S. 195), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 03.11.2021 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2021, S. 1180) geändert worden ist.

Saarland

Gesetz über die Hochschule der Bildenden Künste – Saar (Kunsthochschulgesetz – KhG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes über die Hochschule der Bildenden Künste Saar und die Hochschule für Musik Saar) vom 04.05.2010 (ABl. I Saarland 2010, S. 1176, berichtigt in ABl. I Saarland 2010, S. 1378), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 15.02.2023 (ABl. I Saarland 2023, S. 270) geändert worden ist.

Gesetz Nr. 1338 über die Hochschule für Musik Saar (Musikhochschulgesetz – MhG: Art. 2 des Gesetzes über die Hochschule der Bildenden Künste Saar und die Hochschule für Musik Saar) vom 04.05.2010 (ABl. I Saarland 2010, S. 1176), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 15.02.2023 (ABl. I Saarland 2023, S. 270) geändert worden ist.

Legislation of the Länder on *Berufsakademien*

Hamburg

Hamburgisches Berufsakademiegesetz (HmbBAG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes über die Bildung von Berufsakademien in Hamburg) vom 29.06.2005 (GVBl. I Hamburg 2005, S. 253), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 28.11.2017 (GVBl. I Hamburg 2017, S. 365) geändert worden ist.

Hessen

Gesetz über die staatliche Anerkennung von Berufsakademien vom 15.09.2016 (GVBl. Hessen 2016, S. 162), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 14.12.2021 (GVBl. Hessen 2021, S. 931) geändert worden ist.

Niedersachsen

Niedersächsisches Berufsakademiegesetz (Nds. BAKadG) vom 06.06.1994 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 1994, S. 233), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 15.12.2015 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 2015, S. 384) geändert worden ist.

Saarland

Gesetz Nr. 1368 – Saarländisches Berufsakademiegesetz (Saarl. BAKadG) vom 27.03.1996 (ABl. Saarland 1996, S. 438), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 27.08.2025 (ABl. I Saarland 2025, S. 854 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Sachsen

Gesetz über die Berufsakademie im Freistaat Sachsen (Sächsisches Berufsakademiegesetz – SächsBAG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Neuregelung der Berufsakademie im Freistaat Sachsen und Aktualisierung von gesetzlichen Regelungen für den tertiären Bildungsbereich) vom 09.06.2017 (GVBl. Sachsen 2017, S. 306), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 31.04.2024 (GVBl. Sachsen 2024, S. 83 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Schleswig-Holstein

Schleswig-Holsteinisches Berufsakademiegesetz (Berufsakademiegesetz – BAG) vom 01.10.2008 (GVBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2008, S. 522), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 10.06.2016 (GVBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2016, S. 342) geändert worden ist.

Legislation of the Länder on assistance for graduates**Baden-Württemberg**

Gesetz zur Förderung des wissenschaftlichen und künstlerischen Nachwuchses (Landesgraduiertenförderungsgesetz – LGFG) vom 23.07.2008 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2008, S. 252), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 12.11.2024 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2024, S. 1 ff.) geändert worden ist.

Bayern

Bayerisches Eliteförderungsgesetz (BayEFG) vom 26.04.2005 (GVBl. Bayern 2005, S. 104), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 26.03.2019 (GVBl. Bayern 2019, S. 98) geändert worden ist.

Berlin

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Nachwuchsförderungsgesetzes (NaFöG) vom 07.06.2005 (GVBl. Berlin 2005, S. 338).

Brandenburg

Graduiertenförderungsverordnung – (GradV) – vom 15.09.2000 (GVBl. II Brandenburg 2000, S. 325), die zuletzt durch Verordnung vom 05.03.2024 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 2024, S. 1) geändert worden ist.

Hamburg

Hamburgisches Gesetz zur Förderung des wissenschaftlichen und künstlerischen Nachwuchses (HmbNFG) vom 07.11.1984 (GVBl. I Hamburg 1984, S. 225), das zuletzt durch Verordnung vom 28.10.2014 (GVBl. I Hamburg 2014, S. 462) geändert worden ist.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Gesetz zur Förderung des wissenschaftlichen und künstlerischen Nachwuchses im Land Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Landesgraduiertenförderungsgesetz – LGFG) vom 20.11.2008 (GVBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2008, S. 455), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 22.04.2023 (GVBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2023, S. 602) geändert worden ist.

Sachsen

Verordnung des Sächsischen Staatsministeriums für Wissenschaft, Kultur und Tourismus über die Vergabe von Sächsischen Landesstipendien (Sächsische Landesstipendienverordnung – SächsLStipVO) vom 23. Oktober 2024 (GVBl. Sachsen 2024, S. 908).

Sachsen-Anhalt

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Graduiertenförderungsgesetzes (GradFG) vom 30.07.2001 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 12.2001, S. 318), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 10.12.2015 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2015, S. 613) geändert worden ist.

Schleswig-Holstein

Landesverordnung über die Förderung des wissenschaftlichen und künstlerischen Nachwuchses (Stipendiumsverordnung – StpVO) vom 10.06.2022 (GVOBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2022, S. 696).

Thüringen

Thüringer Graduiertenförderungsverordnung (ThürGFVO) vom 14.03.2011 (GVBl. Thüringen 2011, S. 56), das zuletzt durch Verordnung vom 29.06.2022 (GVBl. Thüringen 2022, S. 312) geändert worden ist.

Basic legal regulations on adult and continuing education

Federation

Berufsbildungsgesetz in der Fassung der Bekanntmachung vom 16.04.2025 (BGBl. I 2025, Nr. 117, 129), das durch Artikel 9 des Gesetzes vom 28.10.2025 (BGBl. I 2025, Nr. 259) geändert worden ist. Bekanntmachung der Neufassung der Handwerksordnung (HwO) vom 24.09.1998 (BGBl. I 1998, S. 3074), die zuletzt durch Artikel 2 des Gesetzes vom 03.04.2025 (BGBl. I 2025, Nr. 106) geändert worden ist.

Ausbilder-Eignungsverordnung (AusbEignV) vom 21.01.2009 (BGBl. I 2009, S. 88).

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Bundesgesetzes über individuelle Förderung der Ausbildung (Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz – BAföG) vom 07.12.2010 (BGBl. I 2010, S. 1952), das zuletzt durch Artikel 1 des Gesetzes vom 19.07.2024 (BGBl. I 2024, Nr. 249) geändert worden ist.

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Hochschulrahmengesetzes vom 19.01.1999 (BGBl. I 1999, S. 18), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 15.11.2019 (BGBl. I 2019, S. 1622) geändert worden ist.

Sozialgesetzbuch (SGB) Drittes Buch (III) – Arbeitsförderung – Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Reform der Arbeitsförderung (Arbeitsförderungs-Reformgesetz – AFRG) vom 24.03.1997 (BGBl. I 1997, S. 594), das zuletzt durch Artikel 6 des Gesetzes vom 22.12.2025 (BGBl. I 2025, Nr. 371) geändert worden ist.

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Zweiten Buches Sozialgesetzbuch (Grundsicherung für Arbeitsuchende) vom 13.05.2011 (BGBl. I 2011, S. 850), das zuletzt durch Artikel 8 des Gesetzes vom 22.12.2025 (BGBl. I 2025, Nr. 363) geändert worden ist.

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetzes (FernUSG) vom 04.12.2000 (BGBl. I 2000, S. 1670), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 10.08.2021 (BGBl. I 2021, S. 3483) geändert worden ist.

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetzes vom 12.08.2020 (BGBl. I 2020, S. 1936), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 17.07.2023 (BGBl. I 2023, Nr. 191) geändert worden ist.

Continuing education legislation of the Länder

Baden-Württemberg

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Gesetzes zur Förderung der Weiterbildung und des Bibliothekswesens (Weiterbildungsförderungsgesetz) vom 20.03.1980 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 1980, S. 249), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 01.07.2004 (GBl. Baden-Württemberg 2004, S. 469) geändert worden ist.

Bayern

Bayerisches Gesetz zur Förderung der Erwachsenenbildung (Bayerisches Erwachsenenbildungsförderungsgesetz – BayEbFöG) vom 31.07.2018 (GVBl. Bayern 2018, S. 662), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 10.08.2023 (GVBl. Bayern 2023, S. 501) geändert worden ist.

Brandenburg

Gesetz zur Regelung und Förderung der Erwachsenenbildung im Land Brandenburg (Brandenburgisches Erwachsenenbildungsgesetz – BbgEBG) vom 20.12.2023 (GVBl. I Brandenburg 2023, Nr. 29).

Bremen

Gesetz über die Weiterbildung im Lande Bremen (Weiterbildungsgesetz – WBG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes zur Änderung von Weiterbildungsvorschriften) vom 18.06.1996 (GBl. Bremen 1996, S. 127, berichtigt in GBl. Bremen 1996, S. 243), das zuletzt durch Geschäftsverteilung des Senats vom 02.09.2025 (GBl. Bremen 2020, S. 674) geändert worden ist.

Hessen

Gesetz zur Förderung der Weiterbildung und des lebensbegleitenden Lernens im Lande Hessen (Hessisches Weiterbildungsgesetz – HWBG) vom 25.08.2001 (GVBl. I Hessen 2001, S. 370), das zuletzt durch durch Gesetz vom 17.11.2025 (GVBl. Hessen 2025, Nr. 82) geändert worden ist.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Gesetz zur Förderung der Weiterbildung in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Weiterbildungsförderungsgesetz – WBFöG M-V) vom 20.05.2011 (GVBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011, S. 342).

Niedersachsen

Niedersächsisches Erwachsenenbildungsgesetz (NEBG) vom 17.12.1999 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 1999, S. 430), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 17.05.2022 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 2022, S. 348) geändert worden ist.

Nordrhein-Westfalen

Weiterbildungsgesetz (WbG); Bekanntmachung der Neufassung vom 14.04.2000 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2000, S. 390), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 08.07.2021 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2021, S. 894) geändert worden ist.

Rheinland-Pfalz

Weiterbildungsgesetz (WBG) vom 17.11.1995 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 1995, S. 454), das zuletzt durch Artikel 44 des Gesetzes vom 20.12.2024 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2024, S. 473) vom 22.12.2015 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2015, S. 461) geändert worden ist.

Saarland

Saarländisches Weiterbildungsförderungsgesetz (SWFG: Art. 2 des Gesetzes 1704 zur Weiterentwicklung des Saarländischen Weiterbildungs- und Freistellungsrechts) vom 10.02.2010 (Abl. Saarland I 2010, S. 28), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 08.12.2021 (Abl. Saarland I 2021, S. 2629) geändert worden ist.

Sachsen

Gesetz über die Weiterbildung im Freistaat Sachsen (Weiterbildungsgesetz – WBG) vom 29.06.1998 (GVBl. Sachsen 1998, S. 270), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 20.12.2022 (GVBl. Sachsen 2022, S. 705) geändert worden ist.

Sachsen-Anhalt

Gesetz zur Förderung und Weiterentwicklung der Erwachsenenbildung im Land Sachsen-Anhalt (Erwachsenenbildungsgesetz Sachsen-Anhalt – EBG LSA) vom 25.03.2021 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2021, S. 126), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 05.04.2024 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2024, S. 99) geändert worden ist.

Schleswig-Holstein

Weiterbildungsgesetz Schleswig-Holstein (WBG) vom 06.03.2012 (GVOBl. Schleswig-Holstein 2012, S. 282), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 16.12.2025 (GVOBl. Schleswig-Holstein, Nr. 2) geändert worden ist.

Thüringen

Thüringer Erwachsenenbildungsgesetz (ThürEBG) vom 18.11.2010 (GVBl. Thüringen 2010, S. 328), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 15.12.2025 (GVBl. Thüringen 2025, S. 282) geändert worden ist.

Employment release legislation of the Länder

Berlin

Berliner Bildungszeitgesetz (BiZeitG) vom 05.07.2021 (GVBl. Berlin 2021, S. 849).

Bremen

Bremisches Bildungszeitgesetz (BremBZG) vom 18.12.1974 (GBl. Bremen 1974, S. 348), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 26.09.2017 (GBl. Bremen 2017, S. 388) geändert worden ist.

Hamburg

Hamburgisches Bildungsurlaubsgesetz vom 21.01.1974 (GVBl. I Hamburg 1974, S. 6), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 15.12.2009 (GVBl. I Hamburg 2009, S. 444, 448) geändert worden ist.

Hessen

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Hessischen Gesetzes über den Anspruch auf Bildungsurlaub vom 28.07.1998 (GVBl. I Hessen 1998, S. 294, berichtigt in GVBl. I Hessen 1998, S. 348), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 13.10.2022 (GVBl. Hessen 2022, S. 499) geändert worden ist.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Gesetz zur Freistellung für Weiterbildungen für das Land Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Bildungsfreistellungsgesetz – BfG M-V) vom 13.12.2013 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2013, S. 691) das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 11.12.2020 (GVOBl. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2020, S. 1386) geändert worden ist.

Niedersachsen

Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Niedersächsischen Bildungsurlaubsgesetzes (NBildUG) vom 25.01.1991 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 1991, S. 29), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 17.12.1999 (GVBl. Niedersachsen 1999, S. 430) geändert worden ist.

Nordrhein-Westfalen

Gesetz zur Freistellung von Arbeitnehmern zum Zwecke der beruflichen und politischen Weiterbildung – Arbeitnehmerweiterbildungsgesetz (AWbG) – vom 06.11.1984 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 1984, S. 678), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 06.12.2022 (GVBl. Nordrhein-Westfalen 2022, S. 1064) geändert worden ist.

Rheinland-Pfalz

Landesgesetz über die Freistellung von Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmern für Zwecke der Weiterbildung (Bildungsfreistellungsgesetz – BFG) vom 30.03.1993 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 1993, S. 157), das zuletzt durch Artikel 46 des Gesetzes vom 20.12.2024 (GVBl. Rheinland-Pfalz 2024, S. 473) geändert worden ist.

Saarland

Saarländisches Bildungsfreistellungsgesetz (SBFG: Art. 1 des Gesetzes 1704 zur Weiterentwicklung des Saarländischen Weiterbildungs- und Freistellungsrechts) vom 10.02.2010 (Abl. Saarland 2010, S. 28) das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 24.04.2024 (Abl. Saarland 2024, S. 311) geändert worden ist.

Sachsen-Anhalt

Gesetz zur Freistellung von der Arbeit für Maßnahmen der Weiterbildung (Bildungsfreistellungsgesetz) vom 04.03.1998 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 1998, S. 92), das zuletzt durch Gesetz vom 18.11.2005 (GVBl. Sachsen-Anhalt 2005, S. 698) geändert worden ist.

Thüringen

Thüringer Bildungsfreistellungsgesetz (ThürBfG) vom 15.07.2015 (GVBl. Thüringen 2015, S. 114), das zuletzt durch Artikel 13 des Gesetzes vom 02.07.2024 (GVBl. Thüringen 2024, S. 277, 284) geändert worden ist.

INSTITUTIONS

List of Ministries and institutions under their purview as well as other institutions of importance in the field of education, science and research at federal and Land level

Federation

Auswärtiges Amt

Werderscher Markt 1

10117 Berlin

Tel.: 030/1817-0

Website: www.auswaertiges-amt.de

Bundesamt für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten

– Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen –

Adenauerallee 99–103

53113 Bonn

Website: <https://www.auslandsschulwesen.de>

Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales

Wilhelmstr. 49

10117 Berlin

Tel.: 030/18527-0

Website: www.bmas.de

Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend

Glinkastr. 24

10117 Berlin

Tel.: 030/18555-0

Website: www.bmfsfj.de

Bundesministerium der Finanzen

Wilhelmstraße 97

10117 Berlin

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Website: www.bundesfinanzministerium.de

Bundesministerium für Gesundheit

Rochusstr. 1

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Website: www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de

Bundesministerium des Innern

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Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz

Anton-Wilhelm-Amo-Str. 37

10117 Berlin

Tel.: 030/18580-0

Website: www.bmj.de

Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie

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Website: www.bmwk.de

Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
Dahlmannstr. 4
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Website: <https://www.hamburg.de/politik-und-verwaltung/behoerden/bsfb>

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Website: <https://kultusministerium.hessen.de>

Hessisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung, Kunst und Kultur
Rheinstr. 23–25
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E-Mail: poststelle@hwmwk.hessen.de
Website: <https://wissenschaft.hessen.de>

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Ministerium für Bildung und Kindertagesförderung
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Website: www.regierung-mv.de/Landesregierung/bm

Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Kultur, Bundes- und Europaangelegenheiten
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Ministerium für Schule und Bildung
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Ministerium für Kultur und Wissenschaft
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Website: www.wissenschaft.nrw.de

Rheinland-Pfalz

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Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Gesundheit
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Saarland

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Ministerium der Finanzen und für Wissenschaft
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66121 Saarbrücken
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Website: www.saarland.de/mfw/DE/home/home_node.html

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Sächsisches Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft, Kultur und Tourismus

Wigardstr. 17

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E-Mail: poststelle@smwk.sachsen.de

Website: www.smwk.sachsen.de

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Turmschanzenstr. 32

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Website: www.mb.sachsen-anhalt.de

Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Energie, Klimaschutz und Umwelt des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt

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39112 Magdeburg

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Website: www.mwu.sachsen-anhalt.de

Schleswig-Holstein

Ministerium für Allgemeine und Berufliche Bildung, Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur des Landes Schleswig-Holstein

Brunswiker Str. 16–22

24105 Kiel

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E-Mail: info@bimi.landsh.de

Website: www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Landesregierung/ministerien-behoerden/III/iii_node.html

Thüringen

Thüringer Ministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur

Werner-Seelenbinder-Str. 7

99096 Erfurt

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E-Mail: poststelle@tmbwk.thueringen.de

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Joint institution of the Länder for the coordination between the ministries for education, cultural affairs and science and for the cooperation of these ministries and the Federation

Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister

der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (KMK)

Graurheindorfer Str. 157

53117 Bonn

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Website: www.kmk.org

Berliner Büro:
Taubenstr. 10
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Joint institution of the Federation and the Länder for cooperation in the promotion of science and research

Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz (GWK)
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Bayerisches Staatsinstitut für Hochschulforschung und Hochschulplanung (IHF)
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Berliner Landesinstitut für Qualifizierung und Qualitätsentwicklung an Schulen (BliQ)
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Landesinstitut für Schule (LIS)
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Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Institut für Qualitätsentwicklung Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (IQ M-V)
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Niedersächsisches Landesinstitut für schulische Qualitätsentwicklung (NLQ)
Keßlerstr. 52
31134 Hildesheim
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Website: www.nlq.niedersachsen.de

Nordrhein-Westfalen

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Paradieser Weg 64
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Rheinland-Pfalz

Institut für Lehrerfort- und -weiterbildung (ILF)
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Pädagogisches Landesinstitut Rheinland-Pfalz (PL)
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Erziehungswissenschaftliches Fort- und Weiterbildungsinstitut der
Evangelischen Kirchen in Rheinland-Pfalz (EFWI)
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Sachsen-Anhalt

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Schleswig-Holstein

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Thüringen

Thüringer Institut für Lehrerfortbildung, Lehrplanentwicklung und Medien (ThILLM)
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Other institutions that are important for the area of education and science

Bundeselternrat
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Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V.
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Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung (DIE)
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Leibniz-Institut für die Pädagogik der Naturwissenschaften und Mathematik
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Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung

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Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung

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Adenauerallee 73

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Wissenschaftsrat (WR)

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Overview of literature quoted within the dossier

Chapter 1

Schüler, Klassen, Lehrer und Absolventen der Schulen 2014 bis 2023.

Statistische Veröffentlichungen der Bildungsministerkonferenz. Dokumentation Nr. 1 – Januar 2025.

Berlin: 2024.

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Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 10./11.8.1951.

Hochschulrektorenkonferenz, Hochschulen in Zahlen 2025.

Bonn: 2025.

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Qualifikationsrahmen für Deutsche Hochschulabschlüsse. Im Zusammenwirken von Hochschulrektorenkonferenz und Kultusministerkonferenz und in Abstimmung mit dem Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung erarbeitet.

Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 16.2.2017.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2017/2017_02_16-Qualifikationsrahmen.pdf

Neustrukturierung der Kultusministerkonferenz.

Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 13.06.2024.

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Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 15.10.2020.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2020/2020_10_15-Laendervereinbarung-gemeinsame-Grundstruktur.pdf

Zielbild zur Rolle und Arbeit der Schulaufsicht.

Beschluss der Bildungsministerkonferenz vom 16.10.2025 für die Kultusministerkonferenz.

https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2025/2025_10_16-Schulaufsicht.pdf

Gemeinsames Ergebnisprotokoll betreffend das Verfahren bei der Abstimmung von Ausbildungsordnungen und Rahmenlehrplänen im Bereich der beruflichen Bildung zwischen der Bundesregierung und den Kultusministern (-senatoren) der Länder (Vom 30.05.1972).

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Statistischer Bericht: Allgemeinbildende Schulen, Schuljahr 2024/2025.

Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), 2025.

https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bildung-Forschung-Kultur/Schulen/Publicationen/Downloads-Schulen/statistischer-bericht-allgemeinbildende-schulen-2110100257005.xlsx?__blob=publicationFile&v=2

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Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), 2025.

https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bildung-Forschung-Kultur/Schulen/Publikationen/Downloads-Schulen/statistischer-bericht-berufliche-schulen-2110200257005.xlsx?__blob=publicationFile&v=2

Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), Genesis-Online, <Tageseinrichtungen: Deutschland, Stichtag, Altersgruppen der Kinder>, abgerufen am 08.12.2025.

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Ländergemeinsame Umsetzungsrichtlinien für die Anpassung von Regelungen und Verfahren bei der Einstellung in Vorbereitungs- und Schuldienst sowie für die Anerkennung von Studien- und Prüfungsleistungen in Studiengängen der Lehrerausbildung

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Educating teachers to embrace diversity Joint recommendations by the German Rectors' Conference and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States in the Federal Republic of Germany

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Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 14.03.2024.

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Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 13.06.2024.

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Übersicht über die Pflichtstunden der Lehrkräfte an allgemeinbildenden und beruflichen Schulen. Ermäßigungen für bestimmte Altersgruppen der Voll- bzw. Teilzeitlehrkräfte. Besondere Arbeitszeitmodelle. Schuljahr 2024/2025. Stand Oktober 2024.

Sekretariat der Kultusministerkonferenz.

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Ländergemeinsame Eckpunkte zur Fortbildung von Lehrkräften als ein Bestandteil ihrer Professionalisierung in der dritten Phase der Lehrerbildung.

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Anforderungen an Fortbildnerinnen und Fortbildner.

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Besoldung und Vergütung hauptberuflicher Mitarbeiter und pädagogischer Leiter an Volkshochschulen.

Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 12.3.1970.

Chapter 9

Zielbild zur Rolle und Arbeit der Schulaufsicht.

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https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2024/2024_12_13-Orientierungsrahmen-Schulleitungen.pdf

Chapter 10

Grundsätzliche Überlegungen zu Leistungsvergleichen innerhalb der Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Konstanzer Beschluss –

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https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/1997/1997_10_24-Konstanzer-Beschluss.pdf

Gesamtstrategie der Kultusministerkonferenz zum Bildungsmonitoring.

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Durchführung von Schulversuchen und gegenseitige Anerkennung der entsprechenden Abschlüsse.

Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 16.2.1990 i. d. F. vom 21.6.2012.

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Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 10.12.2009.

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Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 08.03.2012 i. d. F. vom 15.3.2018.

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GLOSSARY

Abendgymnasium

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

Abendhauptschule

Establishment of the so-called →Zweiter Bildungsweg at which adults can attend evening classes to obtain the →Erster Schulabschluss (First School Leaving Certificate).

Abendrealschule

Establishment of the so-called →Zweiter Bildungsweg at which adults can attend evening classes to obtain the →Mittlerer Schulabschluss (Intermediate School Leaving Certificate).

Abitur

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

Abiturprüfung

Examination leading to the →Allgemeine Hochschulreife usually taken upon conclusion of the upper Gymnasium level (→gymnasiale Oberstufe). In the Abitur examination, candidates are examined in 4 subjects. In some →Länder, candidates are examined in a fifth subject or a particular achievement (*besondere Lernleistung*) is incorporated in the examination. Each of the following three subject areas must be represented: languages, literature and the arts; social sciences; mathematics, natural sciences and technology.

Akkreditierung

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

Allgemeine Hochschulreife

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

Anerkannter Ausbildungsberuf

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

Arbeitslehre

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

Ausbildungsordnung

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

Bachelor

The Bachelor's degree as a first higher education qualification provides qualification for a profession. It can be obtained after a standard period of study (→Regelstudienzeit) of six, seven or eight semesters at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education, at colleges of art and music and at →Fachhochschulen. Together with the →Master's degree, the Bachelor's degree is part of a graduation system of consecutive degrees which is to replace the traditional system of higher education qualifications (→Diplom and →Magister). Bachelor's qualifications provide the same rights as Diplom qualifications of Fachhochschulen. The Bachelor may also be obtained as a tertiary education qualification providing qualification for a profession at →Berufsakademien.

Bachelorarbeit

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

Bachelorgrad

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

Bachelor Professional

Further training qualification at the second level of further training. The standard condition for admission to an examination at the second level of further training is either the qualification in a recognised training occupation (→anerkannter Ausbildungsberuf) or a qualification at the first level of further training.

Bachelorprüfung

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

Berufliches Gymnasium

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

Berufsakademie

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

Berufsfachschule

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

Berufsoberschule

Vocational school at upper secondary level existing in a few →Länder. Offers those who have completed vocational training in the dual system the opportunity to obtain a

higher education entrance qualification. Providing two years of full-time education or correspondingly longer part-time education, the Berufsoberschule leads to the →Fachgebundene Hochschulreife and, with a second foreign language, to the →Allgemeine Hochschulreife.

Berufsschule

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

Berufsvorbereitungsjahr

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

Bezirksregierung

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

Bildungsstandards

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

Dienstaufsicht

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

Diplom

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

Diplomarbeit

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

Diplomgrad

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

Diplomprüfung

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

Doktorgrad

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

Drittmittel

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

Duales System

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

Ergänzungsschule

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

Ersatzschule

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

Erzieher

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

Erster Schulabschluss

First School Leaving Certificate. General school-leaving certificate after grade 9 that can be obtained at lower secondary schools. In addition to the standardized cross-Länder qualification designation, the Land-specific qualification designation can also be recognised as equivalent.

Fachaufsicht

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

Fachgebundene Hochschulreife

Qualification entitling holder to study particular subjects at a higher education institution. May be obtained through certain courses of vocational education at upper secondary level.

*****Fachgymnasium**

→Berufliches Gymnasium

Fachhochschule

University of applied sciences. Type of higher education institution established in the 1970s, which has the particular function of providing application-oriented teaching and

research, particularly in engineering, business, administration, social services and design.

Fachhochschulreife

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

Fachoberschule

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

Fachschule

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

Fernuniversität

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

Förderschule

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

Förderschullehrer

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

Freie Waldorfschule

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

Ganztagsschule

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

Gemeinschaftsschule

Type of school in Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, Saarland, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein and Thüringen offering several courses of education leading to different qualifications (→Erster Schulabschluss, →Mittlerer Schulabschluss, entitlement to proceed to the →gymnasiale Oberstufe, →Abitur).

Geprüfter Berufsspezialist/Geprüfte Berufsspezialistin

Further training qualification at the first level of further training. The standard condition for admission to an examination at the first level of further training is a final qualification in a recognised training occupation (→anerkannter Ausbildungsberuf).

Gesamtschule

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

Graduiertenkolleg

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

Grundordnung

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

Grundschule

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

Gymnasiale Oberstufe

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

Gymnasium

Type of school covering both lower and upper secondary level (grades 5–13 or 5–12) and providing an in-depth general education aimed at the general higher education entrance qualification.

Habilitation

Post-doctoral qualification proving ability to teach and engage in research in an academic subject (lecturing qualification). Additional academic performances can replace the Habilitation procedure. See also →Juniorprofessor.

Habilitationsrecht

Higher education institution's right to award lecturing qualification. As a rule, universities and equivalent higher education institutions have this right and, under certain conditions, also colleges of art and music.

Halbtagsschule

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

*****Hauptschulabschluss**

→Erster Schulabschluss

Hauptschule

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

Hochschulprüfung

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

Hochschulreife

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

Hort

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

Integrativer Kindergarten

Pre-school establishment for children with disabilities – also known as *Sonderkindergarten* or *Förderkindergarten*.

Integrierte Sekundarschule

Type of school in Berlin offering several courses of education leading to different qualifications (→Erster Schulabschluss, →Mittlerer Schulabschluss, entitlement to proceed to the →gymnasiale Oberstufe, →Abitur).

Juniorprofessor

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

Kindergarten

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

Kinderkrippe

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

Kolleg

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

Kommune

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

Kultusministerium

The ministries of education and cultural affairs are the supreme authorities at →Land level with respect to education, science and culture. Their work includes, above all, schools, higher education and adult education, the general preservation of art and culture, and relations between the state and religious communities (known as

Kultusangelegenheiten). The majority of the Länder, in addition to a ministry for schools, also have separate ministries to cover science and research.

Land

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

Master

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

Masterarbeit

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

Mastergrad

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

Master Professional

Further training qualification at the third level of further training. The standard condition for admission to an examination at the third level of further training is a qualification at the second level of further training.

Masterprüfung

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

Mittelschule

Type of lower secondary school with several courses of education in Bayern leading to different qualifications (→*Erster Schulabschluss*, →*Mittlerer Schulabschluss*).

Mittelstufenschule

Type of lower secondary school with several courses of education in Hessen leading to different qualifications (→*Erster Schulabschluss*, →*Mittlerer Schulabschluss*).

Mittlerer Schulabschluss

Intermediate School Leaving Certificate. General education school leaving certificate obtained on completion of grade 10 at lower secondary level school types. It can also be obtained at a later stage during vocational training at upper secondary level.

Oberschulamt

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

Oberschule

Type of lower secondary school with several courses of education in Brandenburg, Niedersachsen, and Sachsen leading to different qualifications (→Erster Schulabschluss, →Mittlerer Schulabschluss). Type of school with several courses of education in Bremen leading to different qualifications (→Erster Schulabschluss, →Mittlerer Schulabschluss, entitlement to proceed to the →gymnasiale Oberstufe, →Abitur).

Oberstudienrat

Senior position within the teaching career of the →Studienrat.

Orientierungsstufe

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

Pädagogische Hochschule

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

Praxissemester

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

Promotion

Award of a doctoral degree on the basis of a doctoral thesis and either an oral examination or a defence of the student's thesis. As a rule, the doctorate is embarked on after completing a first study course culminating in the →Magister, →Diplom or →Staatsprüfung, as well as after obtaining a Master's qualification, and the promotion serves as proof of ability to undertake in-depth academic work.

Promotionsrecht

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

Prüfungsordnung

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

Rahmenlehrplan

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

*****Realschulabschluss**

→Mittlerer Schulabschluss

Realschule

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

Realschule plus

Type of lower secondary school with several courses of education in Rheinland-Pfalz leading to different qualifications (→Erster Schulabschluss, →Mittlerer Schulabschluss).

Rechtsaufsicht

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

Regelschule

Type of lower secondary school with several courses of education in Thüringen leading to different qualifications (→Erster Schulabschluss, →Mittlerer Schulabschluss).

Regelstudienzeit

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

Regionale Schule

Type of lower secondary school with several courses of education in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern leading to different qualifications (→Erster Schulabschluss, →Mittlerer Schulabschluss).

Sachunterricht

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

Schulamt

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

Schularten mit mehreren Bildungsgängen

Schools with several courses of education – a category used in school statistics which applies to types of school which provide the courses of education leading to the →Erster Schulabschluss and the →Mittlerer Schulabschluss. Outside statistics, Schularten mit mehreren Bildungsgängen also include schools which additionally offer the →Gymnasium course of education.

Schulkindergarten

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

Schulkonferenz

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

Schulordnung

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

Schulprogramm

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

Schulträger

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

Sekundarschule

Type of lower secondary school with several courses of education in Sachsen-Anhalt leading to different qualifications (→Erster Schulabschluss, →Mittlerer Schulabschluss). Type of school with several courses of education in Nordrhein-Westfalen leading to different qualifications (→Erster Schulabschluss, →Mittlerer Schulabschluss, entitlement to proceed to the →gymnasiale Oberstufe, →Abitur).

Sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf

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

Sozialpädagoge

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

Staatsprüfung

State examination concluding a course of study in certain subjects (e.g. medical subjects, teaching, law). Also refers to examination taken by law students and teaching students at the end of their preparatory service (known as the Second State Examination). The examinations are administered by examination committees staffed not only by professors from the institutions of higher education but also by representatives of the state examination offices of the →Länder.

Stadtteilschule

Type of school in Hamburg offering several courses of education leading to different qualifications (→Erster Schulabschluss, →Mittlerer Schulabschluss, entitlement to proceed to the →gymnasiale Oberstufe, →Abitur).

Studiendirektor

Senior position within the teaching career of the →Studienrat.

Studienordnung

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

Studienrat

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

Studierendenschaft

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

Technische Hochschule

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

*****Technische Universität**

→Technische Hochschule

Verbundene Haupt- und Realschule

Type of lower secondary school with several courses of education in Hessen leading to different qualifications (→Erster Schulabschluss, →Mittlerer Schulabschluss).

Verwaltungsfachhochschule

→Fachhochschule maintained by the Federation or a →Land which trains young people to take up higher civil service grade posts in a particular sector of public administration.

Volkshochschule

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

Volksschule

Former name for compulsory school (today known as →Grundschule and →Hauptschule).

Vorbereitungsdienst

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

Vorklasse

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

Weiterführende Studiengänge

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

Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife

The certificate of Allgemeine Hochschulreife entitles holders to admission to all subjects at all higher education institutions. It is usually obtained by passing the →Abitur

examination and incorporates examination marks as well as continuous assessment of pupil's performance in the last two years of upper →Gymnasium level (*Qualifikationsphase*).

Zweiter Bildungsweg

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

