

Use of Academic Degrees

A. Registration of Academic Degrees in Documents (*Eintragungsrichtlinien*)

The Federal Ministry for Science and Research will give recommendations for the registration of academic degrees in documents in line with the following principles:

1. Legal basis

- 1.1. Austrian study law
 - According to art. 88 para. 1 of the Universities Act 2002 – UG, BGBl. I No. 120/2002, as amended, persons who have been awarded an academic degree by a recognized Austrian or foreign institution of post-secondary education are entitled to use this degree in the form which is determined by the document of award. A suffix which indicates the sex of the holder may be added.
 - For holders of academic degrees of EU and EEA countries, this includes, according to art. 88 para. 1a UG, the right to demand the registration of the degree in public documents in an abbreviated form, without the suffix indicating the sex of the holder. Regarding Swiss and Pontifical higher education institutions, see lit. d. For Austrian academic degrees, art. 88 para. 2 UG, in line with the international tradition, makes provisions for putting the academic degrees in front of or, respectively, behind the name: Diploma, Magister and doctoral degrees – i.e. those academic degrees which in Austria are frequently used while addressing a person – shall be put in front of, bachelor and master degrees as well as “PhD” behind the name. This shall apply also to academic degrees which have been awarded in present EU and EEA countries, even if the award has taken place before the access to EU or EEA.
 - This provisions apply not only to academic degrees which have been awarded by public universities, but equally to those awarded by private universities and by universities of applied sciences, because neither the Private Higher Education Act – PrivHG, BGBl. I No. 77/20120, nor the University of Applied Sciences Act – FHG, BGBl. No. 340/1993, each as amended, make own provisions. Art. 66 of the Teacher Education Act 2005 – HG, BGBl. I No. 30/2006, makes clear that, as far the

use of academic degrees which have been awarded by University Colleges of Education is concerned, the UG shall apply. – Academic degrees do not form part of the name.

- The term "recognized institutions of post-secondary education" means, according to Austrian law, those educational institutions which offer programmes of study with a duration of at least six semesters, admission to which is conditional on the possession of a general university entrance qualification or, in the case of art studies, evidence of artistic ability, and which are recognized as educational institutions in the meaning of this definition by the laws of the country in which they are domiciled (art. 51 para. 2 subpara. 1 UG et al.). What is essential is the recognition of institution as such and not only of the single programme of study. – Academic degrees which have been awarded by university-level courses (art. 124 para. 6 and 6a UG in connection with art. 28 of the Universities Studies Act – UniStG, BGBl. I No. 48/1997, as amended) shall be registered, too, although these institutions are not recognized institutions of post-secondary education.
- Academic degrees are, according to the present study law, only those titles which have been awarded upon completion of programmes of study and which are, due to the respective legal provisions, recognized as academic degrees. Therefore, honorary titles (e.g. "Dr. h.c.") do not give a right to registration.
- 1.2. Other Austrian educational provisions
 - The designations "*Akademische/r ...*" (= "Academic ..."), which have been awarded by public universities upon completion of university courses according to art. 58 para. 2 UG, possibly by private universities upon completion of university courses, by universities of applied sciences upon completion of advanced training courses according to art. 14a para. 3 FHStG, or by university colleges of education upon completion of university courses according to art. 39 para. 1 HG, are not academic degrees; there is no legal basis for a registration.
 - The diploma degree "*Diplompädagoge*" / "*Diplompädagogin*" (abbreviation "*Dipl.-Päd.*") according to art. 7 para. 1, art. 12 para. 1, art. 16f, and art. 21 para. 1 of the Decree on Studies at Academies – AStO, BGBl. II No. 2/2000, as amended, which has been awarded by Academies up to 30th September 2007 at the latest, is not supposed an academic degree; there is no legal basis for a registration.
 - The qualification titles "*Ingenieur/in*" (abbreviation "*Ing.*"), formerly also "*Diplom-HLFL-Ingenieur/in*" (abbreviation "*Dipl.-HLFL-Ing.*"), and "*Diplom-HTL-Ingenieur/in*" (abbreviation "*Dipl.-HTL-Ing.*"), according to art. 1 and 14 of the Engineers Act 2006 – IngG 2006, BGBl. I No. 120/2006, as applicable as well as the title "*Meister/in*" (abbreviation "*Mst.*" / "*Mst.in*" / "*Mst.in*") according to art. 21 para. 5 of the Trade Code 1994 – GewO 1994, BGBl. No. 194, i as applicable are not educational titles; they shall rather be registered according to art. 2 para. 1 and art. 13 para. 1 of the

Engineers Act 1990 in combination with art. 6 para. 4 PStV. Or, respectively, art. 21 para. 5 of the Trade Code.

- 1.3. Austrian documents law
 - Art. 6 para. 1 to 3 of the Decree on Personal Status – PStV, BGBl. No. 629/1983, as amended defines the right to the registration of degrees on the part of the documents law, at which the formulation is oriented at the study law.
 - Art. 6 of the Passports Act Execution Decree – PassG-DV, BGBl. II No. 223/2006, as amended, which is legally based on art. 3 of the Passports Act 1992, BGBl. No. 839/1992, as amended, states the possibility for registration corresponding to art. 88 UG. It is explicitly stated honorary titles may not be registered. Art. 6a para. 2 of the Passports Decree – PassV, BGBl. No. 861/1995, as amended gives the possibility to register academic degrees which can because of the length of the name not or not completely be registered on page 2 or the travelling document on the pages “Official annotations”.
 - Other legal regulations, e.g. art. 365a of the Trade Code, BGBl. No. 194/1994, as amended, lay down similar provisions.
- 1.4. International law
 - Art. VI.1 and VI.3 of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (“Lisbon Recognition Convention”), BGBl. III No. 71/1999, provide for the recognition of academic degrees for the purpose of their use. As to the refinement, however, of the right to use the academic degree, reference is made to the relevant national legislation in force, so that from the Convention itself there cannot be derived a subjective right to a definite kind of registration of the degree.
 - According to art. 54 of the Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications, 2005/36/EC, nationals of Member states who fulfil the conditions for access to a regulated profession and its exercise in a host Member state have the right to use their lawful academic degree and, where appropriate, the abbreviation thereof deriving from their Member state of origin or the Member state from which they come, in the language of that state. In the current context, academic degrees are at stake. As to the refinement of the right to use the academic degree, however, also in this context reference is made to the relevant national legislation in force.
 - Academic degrees from Switzerland shall be entered, according to art. 4 of the Agreement between the Republic of Austria and the Swiss Federation on the Mutual Recognition of Equivalences in Higher Education, BGBl. No. 678/1994, in an analogous way to lit. a sublit. aa.
 - Academic degrees in Theology (not in other fields of study) which have been awarded by Pontifical higher education institutions shall be entered, according to

art. 5 para. 2 of the Concordat between the Holy See and the Republic of Austria, BGBl. II No. 2/1934, in an analogous way to lit. a sublit. aa.

2. Basis for registration

- 2.1. Document of award

The principle of high fidelity to the original, which results from art. 88 UG, requires the consultation of the document of award itself. The basis for registration shall therefore be the original or a duly legalized copy of the document by which the award of the authentic (not a secondary) academic degree has taken place.

- 2.2. Legalization

Apart from the possible legalization of the correspondence of a copy to the original (see lit. a), the document of award, in order to show evidence of its genuineness and therefore develop legal effects, has to pass the necessary international legalization procedure. If needed, details can be found in the communiqué “Legalization of Foreign Documents in Higher Education” (“*Beglaubigungsliste Hochschulwesen*”) of ENIC NARIC AUSTRIA. For the review of the genuineness on the basis of the due legalization that authority is responsible that has to make a registration. ENIC NARIC AUSTRIA therefore includes, as a rule, an appropriate note in its recommendations with regard to single cases.

- 2.3.

Translations of documents of award – insofar they have been provided by sworn and officially accredited translators – can only serve as a remedy for a better identification of the academic degree concerned in the original document. The translated wording, however, of an academic degree is not the criterion for the settlement of an abbreviation. Cases covered by para. 4 lit. b are exempted.

- 2.4. Austrian correspondence

Just as little registration of the Austrian correspondence (“transformation”) of a foreign academic degree shall take place. The Austrian academic degree shall be registered instead of the foreign (i.e. conferred) one if a validation (*Nostrifizierung*) by a public university (art. 90 UG), a University of Applied Sciences (art. 6 para. 6 FHG) or a University College of Education (art. 68 HG) has taken place, or full equivalence has been granted by the Federal Ministry for Science and Research on the basis of a bilateral agreement. In these cases the original document of award shows a respective note (art. 90 para. 3 last phrase UG).

3. Form of abbreviation

- 3.1. Abbreviations of the country of origin

The principle of high fidelity to the original requires the settlement of an abbreviation which is orientated to the system of higher education of the country of origin. This is justifiable the more, as the registration does not imply any assessment of the contents of

study. Therefore, in case that provisions on the abbreviation of certain academic degrees are laid down in laws, regulations or administrative provisions of the country of origin, or are at least of common use because of custom, those abbreviations shall be used for the registration, too.

- 3.2. Abbreviations which are settled without reference to the country of origin
If an abbreviation cannot be found according to lit. a, it shall be settled independently from the country of origin. In doing so, the overall context to other, in particular related systems of higher education, the logic of the internationally used abbreviations, and, if possible, the rules on abbreviations of the German language shall be taken into account. The question whether or not an abbreviation with the same wording exists for an Austrian academic degree, is of no relevance for that.

- 3.3. Position in front of or behind the name
3.1 and 3.2 apply also to the question whether an abbreviation has to be put in front of or behind the name. Generally speaking, the abbreviations for academic degrees according to the system of the European Higher Education Area (“Bachelor ...”, “Master ...”, “Doctor of Philosophy”) are used behind the name, whereas the abbreviations for the former academic degrees are rather used in front of the name. Art. 88 para. 2 UG is in line with that.

- 3.4. Dot of abbreviation
Principally, after those abbreviations which are put in front of the name as defined by 3.3, there appears a dot; on the other hand, if they are put behind the name, a dot will not appear. Nevertheless, if the legal provisions of the country of origin foresee another regulation, or the document of award shows another original wording, the latter shall be given priority.

- 3.5. Separation by comma
In order to avoid the false impression that those academic degrees which shall be used behind the name as defined by 3.3 be part of the family name, they shall be separated from the latter by a comma.

- 3.6. Priority of the single case
In a single case where the document of award shows an abbreviation which does not correspond to the rules laid down above under lit. 3.1 to 3.5, that abbreviation which appears in the document of award shall be registered.

- 3.7. Supplements on fields of study
If possible, supplements on the field of study in which the degree programme has been completed shall not be shown; one should better stick to the group-specific designation (e.g. “MSc”, “Dr. phil.”). Nevertheless, there exist some systems of higher education which for many fields of study provide for a specific academic degree (e.g. in Germany “*Diplom-Informatikerin*”, “*Diplom-Mikrobiologe*”, ...).

- 3.8. Supplements on institutions

The necessity to add the name of the institution which has awarded the degree is not foreseen by law, unless be it an inseparable part of the wording (e.g. “Dipl.-Ing. ETH”).

4. Particularities

- 4.1. Foreign characters

In using academic degrees which are awarded in Latin script, there are assumed also those characters that are, no doubt, not part of the German, but of the international Latin alphabet (e.g. ć, ž). This corresponds to the principle of high fidelity to the original.

- 4.2. Non-Latin scripts

Special reference has to be made to those academic degrees that are awarded in a language which uses a non-Latin script. Insofar European systems of scripts are concerned, e.g. Cyrillic or Greek, the official rules of transliteration shall apply, by which possibly even diacritic characters shall be used which are, no doubt, not part of the German, but of the international Latin alphabet (e.g. ć, ž). That applies also to non-European systems of scripts, provided that an unambiguous transliteration seem possible; otherwise the designations of the academic degrees will auxiliarily be assumed in the respective second language (above all English, French, Russian or Spanish).

B. Annexe (*in German*)