

Germany, Recognition of Examinations and Diplomas (*Anerkennungsempfehlung Deutschland*)

The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, acting in its capacity as ENIC NARIC AUSTRIA, herewith issues the following recommendations regarding the recognition of examinations and diplomas from Germany:

A. Scope of application

1. Legal situation:

- a. According to the Universities Act 2002 – UG, BGBl. I No. 120/2002, and the Universities of Applied Sciences Act – FHG, BGBl. No. 340/1993, both as amended, all recognition procedures depend on whether an institution is a recognized institution of post-secondary education (art. 51 para. 2 lit. 1 UG; art. 4 para. 2 FHG).
- b. According to art. 1 para. 1, of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Austria and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on Equivalences in Higher Education, BGBl. III No. 6/2004 (hereinafter called the „Agreement“), the special provisions of this Agreement concerning recognition apply to all public and private institutions which have been conferred the character as higher education institutions in the provinces (*Länder*) of the Federal Republic of Germany. All academic degrees (in the terminology of Germany: “higher education degrees”) of these higher education institutions form, according to art. 2 of the Agreement, a basis for recognition. For questions regarding the recognition of German higher education institutions and higher education degrees, please refer, as defined by art. 1 para. 3 of the Agreement, to the Hochschulkompass.

2. Recommendations:

- a. All study programmes offered at public and publicly – i.e. due to the legal provisions of the *Länder* – recognized German Universities, Technical Universities (*Technische Hochschulen*) and Universities of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) qualify for recognition according to the Agreement.
- b. All German diploma degrees (*Diplomgrade*), the bachelor’s degree (*Bakkalaureus-/Bachelorgrad*), the master’s degree (*Magister-/Mastergrad*), the degree of

Magister Artium, the licentiate's degree (*Lizentiatengrad*), as well as the doctoral degree (*Doktorgrad*) and the degree of a habilitated doctor (*habilitierter Doktor*) are higher education degrees as defined by the Agreement, and academic degrees as defined by the Austrian legal provisions.

- c. The Agreement applies to all persons regardless of their citizenship. However, study programmes are covered by the Agreement only if they have actually been attended at German or Austrian higher education institutions. If study programmes have only been partially attended in either of the two countries the Agreement only applies to these parts. The fact, however, that a German higher education institution has recognized examinations or a final diploma from a third country could be valued as a hint on the quality of this study programme.
- d. The Schools for Employed Persons (*Hochschulen für Berufstätige*) of AKAD are publicly recognized German Universities of Applied Sciences and are therefore covered by the Agreement.
- e. The Professional Academies (*Berufsakademien, BA*) which exist in some German *Länder* are recognized institutions of post-secondary, but not higher education. For that reason they are indeed not covered by the Agreement, but by the provisions on recognition of the UG and the FHG.
- f. The German Academies of Administration and Business (*Verwaltungs- und Wirtschaftsakademien, VWA*) are privately maintained institutions for further education and not recognized institutions of post-secondary education. The provisions on recognition do not apply to them.
- g. The German Schools for the Public Service (*Fachhochschulen für den öffentlichen Dienst*) are institutions for further education and not recognized institutions of post-secondary education. The provisions on recognition do not apply to them.

B. Recognition of examinations

1. Legal situation:

- a. According to art. 3 para. , of the Agreement, relevant courses and examinations are mutually recognized upon the student's request, if need be with reference to credit points in the framework of the Credit Transfer System (ECTS) or other credit systems. The question of whether a study programme is relevant to the subject studied is decided by the higher education institution to which the application for recognition has been addressed.
- b. According to art. 78 para. 1 second sentence UG, examinations taken at a university in the European Union shall be recognized for further study of the same subject at another Austrian university provided that the number of ECTS credit points is the

same or only slightly different. – The FHG does not foresee detailed provisions on the recognition of examinations.

2. Recommendations:

- a. Recognition should be granted without detailed review of the contents, provided that one of the prerequisites of It. 1 (items a or b) above is fulfilled. This holds, in particular, if the examinations
 - are subject-relevant;
 - have a comparable position within the curriculum, i.e. the same, more or less central significance (e.g. focal subject, supplementary subject, subject with peripheral subject-relevance) for the given study programme;
 - cover the full range of the respective subject within the study programme, i.e. no further examination procedure in this subject foreseen in the course of study (this can, if ECTS applies, be shown also by the fact that a student has in a certain subject obtained all ECTS credit points which are foreseen for this subject at the respective German higher education institution).
- b. In any case, the study programme must be relevant to the subject studied. The question of whether a study programme is a relevant one is decided by the receiving higher education institution on the basis of a summary assessment of the overall content (not on the basis of a detailed review). Differences in titles and headings of the study programmes of the two countries ought to be disregarded in this context. For the purpose of a systematic classification of a German study programme it is especially recommended to refer to the Hochschulkompass.
- c. German study programmes for further education (*Zusatz-, Aufbau- und Ergänzungsstudiengänge*) are, according to art. 3 para. 1 first sentence of the Agreement, valued as a correspondence to those Austrian university courses (*Universitätslehrgänge*) which are preceded by the completion of a higher education programme.
- d. A German pre-diploma (*Vordiplom*) or, respectively, intermediate examination (*Zwischenprüfung*) should, on principle, be valued as a correspondence to the Austrian first diploma examination (provided that it has to be passed after a study period of two years) in a subject-relevant study programme.
- e. Examinations not yet taken in the course of studies in Germany, but required according to the curriculum of the receiving Austrian institution, have to be taken at the Austrian institution.
- f. As regards the ECTS credit points, the provisions of the Universities Act 2002 should, because of their greater concreteness, be given priority in the application.

C. Admission to postgraduate studies

1. Legal situation:

- a. According to art. 3 para. 1 of the Agreement, German academic degrees and diplomas on equal-ranked state examinations (*Staatsprüfungen*; in that case without award of an academic degree) qualify their holders for admission to a postgraduate or a further study programme in Austria to the extent to which this would be possible in Germany.
- b. According to art. 64 para. 5 UG, the graduate of a foreign study programme is deemed to fulfil the general entrance requirements for admission to a master's programme in Austria, if the foreign study programme is equivalent to a relevant Austrian bachelor's programme or *Fachhochschule* bachelor's programme.

According to art. 4 para. 2 FHG, the graduate of a foreign study programme is deemed to fulfil the general entrance requirements for admission to a *Fachhochschule* master's programme in Austria, if the foreign study programme is equivalent to a relevant Austrian *Fachhochschule* bachelor's programme.

According to art. 64 para. 4 UG, the graduate of a foreign study programme is deemed to fulfil the general entrance requirements for admission to a doctoral programme in Austria, if the foreign study programme is equivalent to a relevant Austrian diploma programme, master's programme, *Fachhochschule* diploma programme or *Fachhochschule* master's programme.

2. Recommendations:

- a. Admission to a postgraduate study programme should be subject to completion of a previous study programme in Germany which demonstrably qualifies the graduate for a corresponding postgraduate study programme without further examinations or other subject-relevant achievements. A detailed review of the previous course of study completed in Germany should not be performed.
- b. In both cases, completion of a relevant study programme is essential. For admission to a postgraduate study programme, evidence of previous studies in a related subject is sufficient, as would be required of a previous study programme completed in Austria; strict correspondence, as required for the purposes of validation (*Nostrifizierung*), is not necessary. For the purpose of a systematic classification of a German study programme it is especially recommended to refer to the Hochschulkompass.
- c. If equivalence in principle, as defined in items a and b above, has been established for admission to a doctoral programme and only individual items are missing for full equivalence, the decision on equivalence, as defined in the Agreement and in art.

64 para. 4 last sentenceUG, should be subject to the examinations and other achievements required in the course of the respective doctoral programme.

- d. In the case of admission to a doctoral programme on the basis of a completed German *Fachhochschule* programme it is recommended to make the principles laid down in art. 5 para. 3 and 3a FHG a guideline for the deliberations. The requirement of the special university entrance qualification, however, is valid also in this case.
- e. Upon completion of a German study programme by a state examination, no academic degree is conferred. Admission to a postgraduate study programme on the basis of a state examination should be performed in an analogous way as on the basis of a study programme which leads to an academic degree.

D. Use of academic degrees

1. Legal situation:

- a. According to art. 5 para. 1 and 2 of the Agreement, holders of German higher education degrees are entitled to indicate their degrees in Austria in the form shown in the awarding document or, respectively, commonly used in Germany.
- b. According to art. 88 para. 1 UG2, persons who have been awarded an academic degree by a recognized German institution of post-secondary education are entitled to use this degree in the form shown in the awarding document. This includes the right to demand registration of the degree in public documents in abbreviated form.

2. Recommendations:

- a. The use of German higher education degrees – whether they have been awarded by higher education institutions as defined by the Agreement or by other institutions of post-secondary education – in Austria in the form shown in the awarding document or, respectively, commonly used in Germany is possible according to the legal provisions referred to under lt. 1 above. Registration in public documents should be done in the abbreviation determined or, respectively, commonly used.
- b. For details, please refer to the Guidelines for the Registration of Academic Degrees in Public Documents and the recommendation on the „Use of Academic Degrees“.
- c. As regards the form in which certain German higher education degrees should be used, please consult the [Hochschulkompass](#).
- d. The right to be used in Austria applies even to those German higher education degrees which do not have any correspondence in Austria (e.g. the doctoral degree "Dr. phil. habil.").

- e. Titles which have been awarded in Germany on the basis of a post-graduation (*Nachdiplomierung oder Nachgraduierung*) are covered by the Agreement and have to be valued according to items a to d above.
- f. The right to use a German higher education degree does not comprise any assessment of the substance of this degree.
- g. Upon completion of a German study programme by a state examination, no academic degree is conferred. Therefore there is likewise no right to use an academic degree in Austria.
- h. Academic degrees awarded in a third country and vested in Germany by an administrative act (e.g. conversion) with the same legal effects as the corresponding German higher education degrees are not covered by the Agreement.
- i. The Agreement does not apply to questions concerning the use of professional denominations.

E. Professional recognition

The Agreement does, according to its art. 5 paras. 4 and 5, not touch questions concerning professional recognition. To that, rather the recognition regulations for the different regulated professions as defined by directive 89/48/EEC apply, or, if need be, the provisions on the validation (*Nostrifizierung*) of foreign academic degrees and final diplomas (art. 90 UG or, respectively, art. 5 paras. 4 and 5 FHG).