



## **Higher Education in Germany**

According to the German Rectors' Conference, there are currently 397 universities in Germany with a combined student population of approximately 2.8 million. Of these, 115 are universities or similar institutions, 217 are universities of applied sciences (in German "Fachhochschulen"), 57 are colleges of art or music, 8 do not belong to one of these three categories. HEIs are either state or state-recognized institutions. In their operations, including the organization of studies and the designation and award of degrees, they are both subject to higher education legislation.

Universities including various specialized institutions, offer the whole range of academic disciplines. In the German tradition, universities focus in particular on basic research so that advanced stages of study have mainly theoretical orientation and research-oriented components.

Universities of applied sciences concentrate their study programs in engineering and other technical disciplines, business-related studies, social work, and design areas. The common mission of applied research and development implies a distinct application-oriented focus and professional character of studies.

The third major group comprises the colleges of art and colleges of music offering studies for artistic careers in fine arts, performing arts and music; in such fields as directing, production, writing in theatre, film, and other media; and in a variety of design areas, architecture, media and communication. A central characteristic is the uniting of arts teaching, artistic practice and research.

In total, there are approximately 10,500 different undergraduate programs and a further 9,500 postgraduate degree programs on offer at HEIs throughout Germany. There are essentially two university-level academic qualifications, a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree. In addition, there are some subject areas in which courses lead to state-certified exams, for example, medicine, law and

the training of teachers. Finally, there are still some remaining degree programs that lead to a "Diplom" qualification.

### **Quality Assurance System in Higher Education Area in Germany**

Due to the federal system in Germany, responsibility for education, including higher education, lies entirely with the individual federal states.

After the former legal rules were declared unconstitutional by the Federal Constitutional Court on February 17, 2016, it was necessary to develop a new legally compliant accreditation.

Since January 1, 2018, the "Studienakkreditierungsstaatsvertrag" (Interstate Study Accreditation Treaty) came into force as the new legal basis for the German accreditation system. The minister presidents of the 16 German States have signed the above-mentioned Interstate Treaty.

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) has agreed on a corresponding "Musterrechtsverordnung" (Specimen Decree) and its implementation at the state level.

The procedures continue to ensure and develop quality in the field of teaching and learning in reference to the quality management system of the HEI (system accreditation) or the quality management system of individual study programs (program accreditation). The innovation is that accreditation procedures are divided into 2 steps, one concerning the agency and the other concerning the German Accreditation Council (GAC): the accreditation agencies are conducting the procedure on the basis of a self-evaluation report of the HEI and prepare, on the basis of a formal report and the review report, the accreditation report of the experts. The concluding accreditation decision is afterwards taken by the GAC – as an administrative act (based on public law) at the request of a HEI.

The above-mentioned specimen decree contains formal and subject-specific criteria and procedure regulations. The (final) accreditation report contains the formal report and an (external) review report in accordance with a predefined by the GAC. The accreditation period is laid down as eight years. The accreditation report and the decision of the GAC have to be published by GAC.

The transferring of the responsibility for the accreditation decision from an accreditation agency to the GAC brought the procedure in Germany in line with the practice in other countries. The decision is now a state administrative act.

In accordance with the Interstate Treaty (article 5 (3)(5)), the licensing procedure of accreditation agencies is based on the agency's listing in the EQAR.

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Freiburg, September 26, 2019



## **Profile and Structure of AHPGS**

In 2001, the AHPGS as a German accreditation agency was founded by scientific and professional organizations related to the community of nursing, health and social sciences and the German Coordinating Agency for Public Health (DKGW), granted by the Donors' Association for the Promotion of Sciences and Humanities in Germany. In the same year, it was accredited by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). The AHPGS is organized in the legal form of a charitable association. From the beginning, it has been located in Freiburg, Germany. Currently, the association has 42 members, including various scientific societies in the area of health and social sciences, the Assemblies of the Faculties of Social Work and of Therapeutic Pedagogy, the Conference for Deans and Directors in Nursing Sciences and Higher Education Institutions.

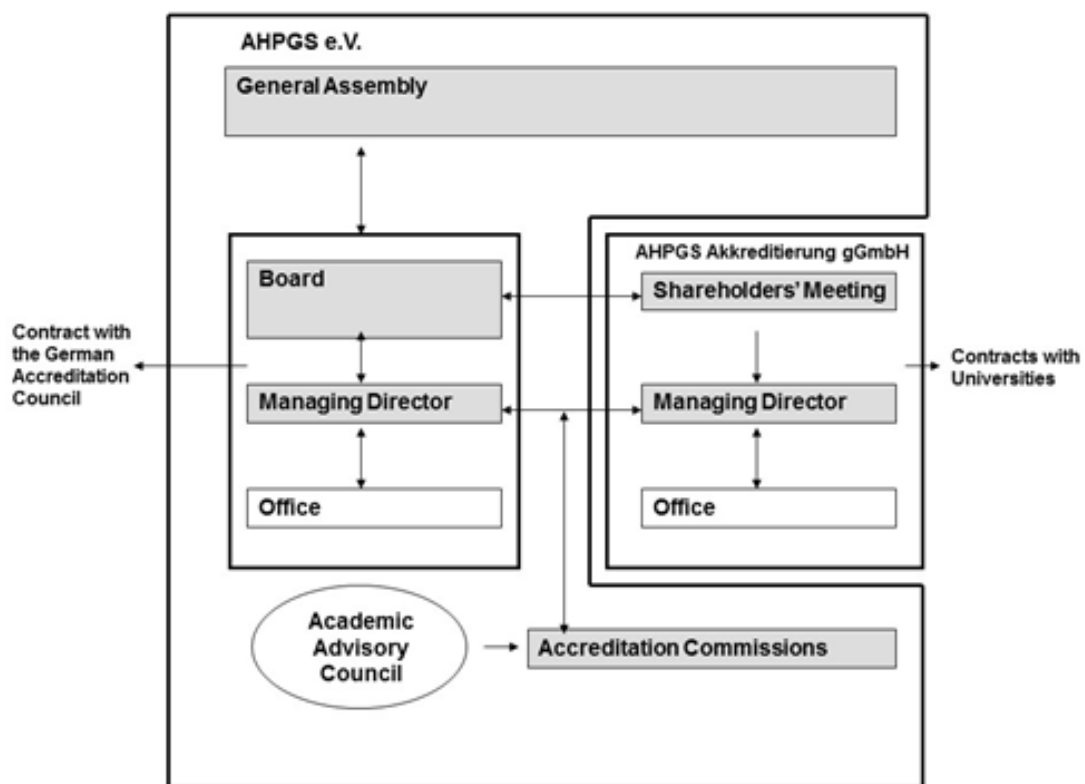
AHPGS is one of 10 accreditation agencies which are accredited by the GAC for carrying out accreditation procedures in Germany. AHPGS has a specific focus in the area of health and social sciences. It conducts its activity alongside various institutions of higher education in Germany and abroad.

For liability reasons, an "AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH" (as a non-profit, private limited charitable company under German law) was founded by the AHPGS e.V. at the beginning of 2008. AHPGS e.V. is the sole shareholder of the AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH. In the shareholders' meeting the AHPGS e.V. is represented through its executive board. A minimum of an annual meeting is mandatory by law. Shareholders' meetings take place as required, a minimum of an annual meeting is mandatory by law. On behalf of AHPGS e.V., the AHPGS Akkreditierung gGmbH organizes the accreditation procedures at and of HEIs.

The composition and tasks of the bodies of the AHPGS e.V. are laid down in the agency's by-laws. The AHPGS e.V. consists of an executive board appointed by the general assembly. The president of the AHPGS e.V. and the Vice-Presidents are in a 3-years election period. The responsibilities of the executive

board include the appointment of members of the accreditation commissions of the AHPGS e.V. The executive board also appoints the members of the independent complaints committee which examines complaints regarding the refusal of accreditation. Unless otherwise provided by the by-laws, the executive board also discusses and decides on any matters concerning the association.

### Organizational chart



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