Education system

Germany

described and compared with the Dutch system
This document contains information on the education system in Germany. We explain the Dutch equivalent of the most common qualifications from Germany for the purpose of admission to Dutch higher education.

Disclaimer
We assemble the information for these descriptions of education systems with the greatest care. However, we cannot be held responsible for the consequences of errors or incomplete information in this document.

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Education system Germany

Diplom/Magister
Staatsprüfung
(Wissenschaftliche
Hochschule)

Bachelor
(Wissenschaftliche
Hochschule)

Diplom
(Fachhochschule FH)

Bachelor
(Fachhochschule FH)

Abschlusszeugnis
(Klasse 10)

Abschlusszeugnis
(Hauptschule)

Grundschule

Duration of education
## Evaluation chart

The left-hand column in the table below lists the most common foreign qualifications with corresponding levels in the qualifications framework in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA-QF). The other columns show the Dutch equivalent along with the comparable levels in the Dutch and European qualifications frameworks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree or qualification and EHEA-QF level</th>
<th>EQF level</th>
<th>Dutch equivalent and NLQF level</th>
<th>EQF level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realschluss/ Abschlusszeugnis der Klasse 10 der Hauptschule/ Sekundarabschluss/ Mittlere Reife</td>
<td>VMBO-T diploma</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fachhochschulreife</td>
<td>HAVO diploma</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife</td>
<td>VWO diploma</td>
<td>4+</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplom-Vorprüfungszugnis (Fachhochschule)</td>
<td>1½-2 years of HBO</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zwischenprüfungszeugnis (wissenschaftliche Hochschule)</td>
<td>2 years of WO</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplom-Vorprüfungszugnis (wissenschaftliche Hochschule)</td>
<td>2 years of WO</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vordiplomzeugnis (wissenschaftliche Hochschule)</td>
<td>2 years of WO</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fachhochschuldiplom (Gesamthochschule)</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>HBO bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplom (Fachhochschule)</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>HBO bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor (Fachhochschule)</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>HBO bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>WO bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Type</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magister/Diplom/Lizentiat</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>WO master’s degree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lizentiat</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>WO master’s degree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staatsprüfung</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>HBO or WO master’s degree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>WO master’s degree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master (Fachhochschule)</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>HBO master’s degree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplom/Magister (Gesamthochschule)</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>WO master’s degree</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB**

- The information provided in the table is a general recommendation from which no rights may be derived.
- NLQF = Dutch Qualifications Framework; EQF = European Qualifications Framework
- The EQF/NLQF level is not so much a reflection of study load or content; rather, it is an indication of a person’s knowledge and skills after having completed a certain programme of study.
- Information about Dutch equivalent qualifications can be found on our website: the Dutch education system.
- The Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (SBB), evaluates statements on foreign qualifications and training at VMBO and MBO level. The evaluation may vary if SBB evaluates the diploma for admission to VET schools or the labour market in the Netherlands.
Introduction

The Federal Republic of Germany is made up of sixteen states (Länder). The responsibilities of the Federal Government and the various states are set out in the constitution.

The Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (Federal Ministry of Education and Research) only creates general guidelines for education – the states make their own legislation. For this reason, the education system differs from state to state.

Higher education in Germany is run according to a binary system, in which a distinction is made between academic education and higher professional education. The former East German states (reunification took place on 3 October 1990) have mostly adopted the education system from the west. For programmes that were taken entirely (or for the most part) prior to reunification, please contact Nuffic.

In principle the language of education is German. However, the influence of the Bologna Process has caused an increase in the number of higher education programmes offered in English, the majority of which are master’s programmes.

There are also private education institutions, of which an increasing number is recognized.

Education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 15 (16 for Berlin, Brandenburg and Bremen).

The academic year runs from October to September.
### Primary and secondary education

**Primary education**
Primary education (Primarstufe) in Germany is provided at a Grundschule (primary school, for children aged 6-10). No diploma is awarded upon completion.

**Secondary education**
Secondary education is usually divided into Sekundarstufe/Sekundarbereich I (for pupils aged 10-16) and Sekundarstufe/Sekundarbereich II (for pupils aged 16-19).

**Sekundarstufe I**
The Sekundarstufe I encompasses years 5-10 of the Gymnasium, as well as the Hauptschule and Realschule in the older states. In the new states, the Mittelschule, Sekundarschule and Regelschule are also part of Sekundarbereich I.

Upon completion of the Sekundarstufe I, pupils are awarded a Realschulabschluss, an Abschlusszeugnis der Klasse 10 der Hauptschule, a Sekundarabschluss I or Mittlere Reife.

In terms of level, the Realschulabschluss/Abschlusszeugnis der Klasse 10 der Hauptschule/Sekundarabschluss I/Mittlere Reife is comparable to a VMBO-T (theoretische leerweg) diploma.

**Sekundarstufe II**
The Sekundarstufe II encompasses the second part of the Gymnasium (the Oberstufe, covering years 11-13), the Berufliches Gymnasium/Fachgymnasium, the Fachoberschule and the various vocational programmes (Berufsschule, Berufsfachschule and Fachschule).

In most states, after a recent secondary education reform, the Zeugnis der allgemeinen Hochschulreife is conferred after 12 years. This had led to a more intensive curriculum. Detailed information is available on the website of the German ENIC/NARIC.

Diplomas that grant admission to the Sekundarstufe II are the Realschulabschluss, Abschlusszeugnis der Klasse 10 der Hauptschule and Mittlere Reife. The Sekundarstufe I certificate (awarded upon completion of the tenth year of non-Gymnasium programmes) also grants admission to the Oberstufe of the Gymnasium, provided the pupil's performance is sufficiently high (i.e. with Qualifikationsvermerk).
From the second half of the eleventh year onwards, education in some states is still divided into Grundkurse (‘basic subjects’ of 2 to 3 hours per week) and Leistungskurse (‘advanced subjects’ of 5 to 6 hours per week). Students must take 2 subjects at Leistungskurs level. Each Kurs (subject) lasts 1 semester.

Examinations (Abitur) are taken in 4 subjects: 2 at Leistungskurs level and 2 at Grundkurs level.

This structure has been in place since the mid-1970s. However, changes are currently being made in several states. Baden-Württemberg, for example, has introduced the neue Gymnasiale Oberstufe, in which the Leistungsfächer have been replaced by a Profilfach and a Neigungsfach (each 4 hours per week), and examinations are taken in five subjects.

At present, a new secondary school structure has been introduced in most states, whereby the upper secondary education of the Gymnasium (Gymnasiale Oberstufe) in accordance with the Einheitliche Prüfungsanforderungen in der Abiturprüfung - APS (Uniform Examination Standards in the Abitur Examination) is offered at an academic basic level (grundlegendem Anforderungsniveau) or advanced level (erhöhtem Anforderungsniveau). At the basic level, it starts with university preparatory education. At the advanced level, the studied subjects are further elaborated, for example by using specific paradigms.

The subjects of mathematics, German language and a foreign language are taken at the advanced basic level for at least 3 times a week. One has to attend at least 2 subjects at advanced level (at least 5 hours per week) or at least 3 subjects at advanced level (at least 4 hours per week) with one of the following subjects: German, a foreign language, mathematics or a scientific subject.

The 4 or 5 subjects of the Abitur exam should include:

- at least 2 subjects at advanced level;
- 2 of the following 3 subjects: German, a foreign language or mathematics;
- at least 1 subject from each subject cluster (see below).

At least 2 of the 3 written exams must be taken at advanced level (including one of the following subjects: German, a foreign language, mathematics or a natural science subject). The oral Abitur exam is conducted in a subject that has not been examined in written form. Depending on state legislation, a 5th exam (written or oral) can be taken only if one has attended this course for at least 2 semesters.

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1 In accordance with the Einheitliche Prüfungsanforderungen in der Abiturprüfung – APS (Uniform Examination Standards in the Abitur Examination)
2 The denomination of the various levels may vary depending on the state.
There are 3 subject clusters (Aufgabenfelder), from which pupils must choose 1 examination subject:

1. Sprache/Literatur/Kunst – languages/literature/art (for example German, a foreign language, fine art, music);
2. sozialwissenschaftlich – social sciences (for example history, geography, philosophie, social sciences/politics, economics);
3. mathematisch/naturwissenschaftlich/Technologie – mathematics/natural sciences/technology (for example mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, information technology).

Pupils are awarded the Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife, provided that at least an average grade of 4 is achieved or a minimum of 280/300 points.

In terms of level, the Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife is comparable to a VWO diploma.

Upon completion of year 13 of the Berufliches Gymnasium/Fachgymnasium, pupils are awarded the Zeugnis der Fachgebundenen Hochschulreife (not to be confused with the Fachhochschulreife). The Zeugnis der Fachgebundenen Hochschulreife has no Dutch equivalent.

The Fachoberschule (which also follows on from the Sekundarabschluss I) includes both vocational education (in year 11) and general secondary education (year 12). Upon completion of the programme, pupils are awarded the Fachhochschulreife certificate. Generally, no certificate of professional qualification is awarded at the end of this programme. Those who have already completed a vocational programme may be admitted to the twelfth year of the Fachoberschule. The Fachhochschulreife can also be obtained after year 12 of the Gymnasium (usually following a vocational programme and/or work experience).

In some states (usually with additional requirements), the Fachhochschulreife can also be obtained upon completion of certain forms of vocational education (namely at the Berufsfachschule, following on from the Hauptschule, and at the Fachschule, following on from the Hauptschule and a vocational programme, usually a Berufsschule modern apprenticeship). A special form of education is the Kollegschule (only in Nordrhein-Westfalen), which not only awards a professional qualification, but also the Fachhochschulreife certificate.
Students of the Gymnasiale Oberstufe who leave school prematurely without having obtained the Allgemeinen Hochschulreife can submit a request to obtain the Fachhochschulreife (schulischer Teil) after having completed at least 2 semesters of the Qualifikationsphase (the last 2 years).

This certificate does not necessarily grant admission to higher education (Fachhochschule) in Germany, as this usually requires a vocational qualification or an internship.

The Fachhochschulreife (schulischer Teil), together with vocational training or an internship, justifies the level of the Fachhochschulreife. In the states of Bavaria and Saxony, this option is not provided.

### Admission to higher education

The Zeugnis der Allgemeinen Hochschulreife grants admission to all forms of higher education. The Lisbon Convention applies. In most states, after the secondary education reform, the total length of programmes for the Allgemeine Hochschulreife is 12 years (4+8).

The Zeugnis der Fachgebundenen Hochschulreife (not to be confused with the Fachhochschulreife) grants access to related study programmes in higher education; the Lisbon Convention applies here.

The Fachhochschulreife only grants admission to higher professional education (Fachhochschule). This certificate is most commonly obtained via a programme at the Fachoberschule. See also the information under [Primary and secondary education](#).

Admission to the Fachhochschule does not depend on the type of school attended, but rather on the diploma obtained – namely, the Fachhochschulreife.

In some cases, some states offer the possibility of admission to the Hochschule or Fachhochschule without a Fachhochschulreife, for example after completion of vocational programmes (such as Meister or Techniker) in related specializations. However, this in no way constitutes a general right to admission; please contact Nuffic to discuss individual cases.
Higher education

Germany has over 160 universities, Kunsthochschulen (art schools) and Musikhochschulen (conservatories), as well as around 200 Fachhochschulen. At least 70 of the nationally recognized higher education institutions belong to the private sector. Within the binary German system, higher education programmes in art and music (which are counted as higher professional education (HBO) in the Netherlands) form a separate category.

The entrance requirements for this type of education are the same as those for admission to research oriented education (WO). Moreover, these programmes also award academic degrees. However, in terms of function, these programmes are more comparable to higher professional education in the Netherlands. A combination of academic and higher professional education is offered by Gesamthochschulen.

Since 1998, Germany offers bachelor's and master's programmes. A small number of programmes are offered in line with the traditional educational structure.

University education

The following institutions are part of the university system: Universitäten, Technische Universitäten/Hochschulen and other Wissenschaftliche Hochschulen of similar level, such as Pädagogische/Erziehungswissenschaftliche Hochschulen, Medizinische Hochschulen and Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschulen.

Magister/Diplom programmes

The nominal duration of these traditional programmes is around 9 semesters, which includes preparation time for examinations. Some programmes that consist of two stages have an initial academic programme lasting 3½ to 4½ years (such as some teacher-training and law programmes).

Programmes usually contain a 2-year Grundstudium and a 2-year Hauptstudium, plus the time required to prepare for examinations. The Grundstudium is completed through interim examinations, for which the Zwischenprüfungszeugnis, Diplom-Vorprüfungszeugnis or Vordiplomzeugnis certificates are awarded.

In terms of level, the Zwischenprüfungszeugnis, Diplom-Vorprüfungszeugnis and Vordiplomzeugnis certificates are comparable to 2 years of university education (WO).
The programmes award the following titles:

1. **Magister**: programmes awarding this title are usually those in arts or social sciences (rarely in the natural sciences). The programme focuses on a single major and 2 minors, or 2 majors.
2. **Diplom**: programmes in the natural or social sciences usually award this title; these are programmes with a single major.
3. **Staatsprüfung (state examination)**: the academic part of programmes in law, food chemistry and teacher-training programmes conclude with the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (first state examination).

Following that, a predominantly practical programme leads to the *Zweite Staatsprüfung* (second state examination), which grants the legal right to professional practice. The pharmacy *Staatsprüfung* is made up of 3 sections (*Abschnitten*). The third section marks the completion of a 1-year practical programme following the academic programme.

**Lizentiat/Licentiatus**

This degree is usually awarded in theological disciplines.

In terms of level, the Magister, Diplom or Lizentiat (EHEA-QF 1st + 2nd cycle/EQF level 7) is comparable to a WO master’s degree. See also the full description of learning outcomes.

In terms of level, the Staatsprüfung (EHEA-QF 1st + 2nd cycle/EQF level 7) is comparable to an HBO or WO master’s degree, depending on the type of study programme. See also the full description of learning outcomes.

**Bachelor’s-master’s programmes**

The nominal duration of bachelor’s programmes at a *wissenschaftliche Hochschule* is usually 6 semesters. Upon completion of the bachelor’s programme students are awarded the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science (or variations on these names, such as Bakkalaureus/Baccalaureus Artium and Bakkalaureus/Baccalaureus Scientiae/Scientiarum).

In terms of level, the Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science, Bakkalaureus/Baccalaureus Artium or Bakkalaureus/Baccalaureus Scientiae/Scientiarum (EHEA-QF 1st cycle/EQF level 6) obtained at a *wissenschaftliche Hochschule* is comparable to a WO bachelor’s degree.
See also the full description of learning outcomes.

The subsequent master's programmes last on average 1½ to 2 years, meaning that a bachelor's programme plus an associated master's programme will last no longer than 5 years. The titles awarded are Master of Arts and Master of Science, (or the variants Magister Artium and Magister Scientiae / Scientianum).

In terms of level, the Master of Arts / Master of Science, Magister Artium or Magister Scientiae / Scientianum (EHEA-QF 2nd cycle / EQF level 7) obtained at a wissenschaftliche Hochschule is comparable to a WO master's degree. See also the full description of learning outcomes.

**PhD**

All final university examinations (except those for bachelor's programmes) and (first) state examinations grant admission to doctorate programmes. The average duration of such programmes is 2 to 4 years. Graduates of doctorate programmes are awarded the degree of Doktor. Following the doctorate, graduates can complete the Habilitation, which qualifies them for professorship. A Doktor degree is comparable to a doctorate in the Netherlands.

**Higher professional education**

In Germany, Fachhochschulen are responsible for higher professional education.

**Diplom programmes**

These programmes last 3½ to 4 years: 6 semesters, to which an additional semester must be added in order to prepare for examinations, as well as usually 1 (or sometimes 2) work-experience semesters, or an integrated study programme of 8 semesters. As with academic university programmes, those at the Fachhochschule usually consist of a 1½ to 2-year Grundstudium awarding the Diplom-Vorprüfungzeugnis or Vordiplomzeugnis, as well as a 1½ to 2-year Hauptstudium, awarding a Diplom. This title must be distinguished from the university Diplom, and does not grant the same rights. To indicate this difference, various states (but not all) place the letters FH (Fachhochschule) after the title.

In terms of level, the Diplom-Vorprüfungzeugnis obtained at a Fachhochschule is comparable to 1½ to 2 years of higher professional education (HBO). See also the full description of learning outcomes.
Graduates with a Diplom-Sozialpädagoge/Sozialarbeiter are only granted the legal right to professional practice after passing the Staatliche Anerkennung following a year of work experience, either integrated into or following the study programme.

In most states, Fachhochschulabsolventen (Fachhochschule graduates) are also eligible for entry into doctorate programmes (provided they are especially qualified).

**Bachelor's-master's programmes**
The nominal duration of bachelor’s programmes at a Fachhochschule is usually 6 semesters, after which graduates are awarded a Bachelor of Science/Arts or a Bachelor of Engineering/Business Administration. The associated master’s programmes last between 1 and 2 years, after which graduates are awarded a Master of Science/Arts or a Master of Engineering/Architecture/Business Administration.

In terms of level, the Bachelor of Science/Arts or a Bachelor of Engineering/Business Administration (EHEA-QF 1st cycle/EQF level 6) obtained at a Fachhochschule is comparable to an HBO bachelor’s degree. See also the full description of learning outcomes.

In terms of level, the Master of Engineering/Architecture/Business Administration (EHEA-QF 2nd cycle/EQF level 7) obtained at a Fachhochschule is comparable to an HBO master’s degree. See also the full description of learning outcomes.

**Gesamthochschulen**
Gesamthochschulen offer cooperative and integrated forms of academic and higher professional education. These combined specializations include professional programmes (4 years, including a work-experience and examination semester) and academic programmes (with a nominal duration of 4½ years, including exam preparation). This type of education is only available in Hessen and Nordrhein-Westfalen.

The programmes are structured according to two models (the duration given below does not include work-experience or exam-preparation semesters):

1. A common Grundstudium of 4 semesters, followed by a
   - 1-year Hauptstudium (I), allowing students to obtain a Fachhochschuldiplom, or a
Education system Germany

- 2-year Hauptstudium (II), allowing students to obtain a university certificate (Diplom/Magister). Before qualifying for admission to the Hauptstudium II, those with a Fachhochschulreife must complete additional subjects (Brückenkursen) and sit a Zwischenprüfung (interim examination).

2. A common Grundstudium (1 year) and Hauptstudium (2 years) concluding with the Diplomprüfung I, allowing students to obtain the Fachhochschuldiplom. This is followed by a 1 to 2-year programme culminating in the Diplomprüfung II, allowing students to obtain their university certificate (Diplom/Magister).

In terms of level, the Fachhochschuldiplom (EHEA-QF 1st cycle/EQF level 6) is comparable to an HBO bachelor’s degree. See also the full description of learning outcomes.

In terms of level, the Diplom / Magister (EHEA-QF 1st + 2nd cycle/EQF level 7) obtained at a Gesamthochschule is comparable to a WO master’s degree. See also the full description of learning outcomes.

Aufbau-, Zusatz- and Ergänzungsstudien
Numerous institutions (Hochschulen and Fachhochschulen) offer 1 to 2-year programmes (mostly postgraduate) that do not culminate in the awarding of a doctorate.

NB Berufsakademien offer a combination of theoretical and practical programmes, usually lasting 3 years, to holders of a Fachhochschulreife. Berufsakademien only fall under higher education in Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, Niedersachsen and Sachsen. They award a Diplom (BA), and the programmes usually confer no rights under the equivalence agreement.
Assessment systems

The secondary and higher education systems use a numbered system from 1-6. An exception to this is the Gymnasiale Oberstufe, which uses the numbers 1-15 (in reverse order!).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical grade</th>
<th>Gymnasiale Oberstufe</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15/14/13</td>
<td>Sehr gut</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12/11/10</td>
<td>Gut</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/8/7</td>
<td>Befriedigend</td>
<td>Quite satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6/5/4</td>
<td>Ausreichend</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3/2/1</td>
<td>Mangelhaft</td>
<td>Almost satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Ungenügend</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Germany, the highest mark (1) is awarded more often than in the Netherlands (10). In the context of admission to higher education, the following formula has been used for many years to convert Dutch secondary education examination results into German results:

\[ x = 1 + 3 \times (N_{\text{max}} - N_d)/(N_{\text{max}} - N_{\text{min}}) \]

where \( x \) = the German exam result, \( N_{\text{max}} \) = the highest possible pass mark in the Netherlands, \( N_{\text{min}} \) = the lowest possible pass mark in the Netherlands, and \( N_d \) = the candidate’s result.

Initially, \( N_{\text{min}} \) was set at 6 and \( N_{\text{max}} \) at 10. However, this produced results that were far too low compared to those obtained in Germany. For this reason, based on statistical research, in 2001 the Gremium der Kultusministerkonferenz decided to set \( N_{\text{max}} \) at 8.5.

For the purpose of converting higher education examinations results, \( N_{\text{max}} \) has been set at 9 since 2011.

In principle, bachelor’s and master’s programmes use the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). To a lesser extent, this system is now also in use among traditional Diplom/Magister programmes. The old Semesterwochenstunden ('semester week hours', SWS) can be converted to ECTS by multiplying the SWS by 1½.
The ECTS Grades (A-F) may be used by institutions instead of the German number system, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECTS</th>
<th>Numerical grade</th>
<th>German equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - excellent</td>
<td>1.0 -1.5</td>
<td>Hervorragend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - very good</td>
<td>1.6-2.0</td>
<td>Sehr gut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - good</td>
<td>2.1-3.0</td>
<td>Gut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D - satisfactory</td>
<td>3.1-3.5</td>
<td>Befriedigend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E - sufficient/pass</td>
<td>3.6-4.0</td>
<td>Ausreichend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FX/F - fail</td>
<td>4.1-5.0</td>
<td>Nicht bestanden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More information on the ECTS system is available in the ECTS User’s Guide issued by the European Commission. See also our website for information about the value of foreign grades (Dutch only).

**Bologna process**

Legislation enacted in 1998 made it possible for higher education institutions to offer bachelor’s and master’s programmes on a voluntary basis based on modules and the ECTS, and accreditation by the new, independent Akkreditierungsrat. In contrast to the situation in the Netherlands, German higher education institutions have not converted en masse to the bachelor’s-master’s structure. However, the number of bachelor’s and master’s programmes is increasing each year; in 2011, 85 per cent of all programmes were structured according to the bachelor’s-master’s system. Information on the current situation can be found on the official European Higher Education Area (EHEA) website.

**Qualification frameworks**

In 2005, the Bologna Framework (overarching framework for qualifications of the European higher education area) was adopted. Development of a complete national qualifications framework, is under way. Information on the current developments can be found on the website of the Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen (DQR), dem gemeinsamen Internetportal des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung und der Kultusministerkonferenz.

**Quality assurance and accreditation**

Although Germany has no official rankings, since 2002 the Center for Higher Education Development (CHE), in cooperation with the Stern weekly magazine,
has published an annual rankings list that includes a large number of German institutions.

The principal task of the independent Akkreditierungsrat is to accredit subject-specific accreditation organizations that evaluate education programmes. The Akkreditierungsrat has seventeen members, representing the federal states, higher education institutions, students, employers, employees and also containing international representatives. Only in exceptional circumstances can the Akkreditierungsrat accredit programmes itself.

If you wish to verify whether a programme is accredited, please visit the website with the Hochschulenkompass.

International treaties

The March 1983 equivalence agreement between the Netherlands and Germany applies to both academic and higher professional education, and states that for further study or doctorate programmes, candidates are exempt from Dutch examinations if they take German examinations in equivalent specializations; exemptions must also be awarded for periods of study of equal length (see Appendix 2). Germany signed the Lisbon Convention in 1997, and ratified it in 2007.

Diploma Supplement

In collaboration with the federal states, the Hochschulrektorenkonferenz has created a German Diploma Supplement that is available to all higher education institutions. The European version of the Diploma Supplement can also be used.

More information on the Diploma Supplement is available on the Europass website of the European Commission.

Composition of file

Secondary school diplomas usually contain several pages. Graduates of higher education programmes are usually issued two documents: one certificate stating the examination results (such as a Diplomprüfungszeugnis or Magisterprüfungszeugnis) and a certificate awarding the title (such as Magister Artium or Diplom-Ingenieur). Detailed subject overviews are usually not issued.

Overview of higher education institutions

Website of the Hochschulrektorenkonferenz containing a complete and up-to-date overview of all institutions in Germany.
Useful websites

- Website of the German ENIC/NARIC, the Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen (ZAB) im Sekretariat der Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (KMK).
- Website of ANABIN, Anerkennung und Bewertung ausländischer Bildungsnachweise, established by the ZAB in collaboration with a number of other organizations. This database contains information on the education systems, degrees and qualifications of a large number of countries (including their value in Germany).
- Website of the Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (German Rectors' Conference), the association of German higher education institutions.
- The Higher Education Compass website (offered by the German Rectors' Conference), containing a complete and up-to-date overview of all institutions and study programmes in Germany.
- Website of the German Akkreditierungsrat.
- Website of the Kultusminister Konferenz (KMK) with information in English about the German education system.
- Website of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.
- Website of the Bundesagentur für Arbeit containing a complete and up-to-date overview of vocational study programmes in Germany.
- Website of the Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen (DQR), dem gemeinsamen Internetportal des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung und der Kultusministerkonferenz.