



Official publications from German organisations concerning Higher Education

**HRK (German Rectors Conference), KMK (Conference of German Cultural Ministers) and
DIHK (Chamber of Commerce and Industry)**

In the following, I will refer to three papers published by the three organisations mentioned above, concerning RPL under the aspect of access to Higher Education (HE) and recognition of prior learning in connection with the corresponding programme at the university.

In Germany we have a specific situation because we are a federal system with 16 different Länder, which are individually responsible for HE. Professional training lies in the Central State's responsibility. The three following statements give a national point of view. Otherwise, you would have to look at each state in order to see how RPL is implemented.

Paper 1:

“Hochschulzugang für beruflich qualifizierte Bewerber ohne schulische Hochschulzugangsberechtigung“

Access to HE for professionally qualified applicants without „Abitur“

Published by the KMK, 6.03.2009

1. There is a general access to HE for specified groups of applicants e.g. Meister im Handwerk Degree on Level 5, including professional schools and training.

2. Access to professionally qualified applicants for one subject which has to refer to the same area of profession.

Conditions:

- professional training of 2 years and 3 years of working experience in the area.
- specific test
- 1 year probational studies at a university
- specific laws in different states

Paper 2:

“Für mehr Durchlässigkeit zwischen beruflicher Bildung und Hochschulbildung“

For more permeability between Vocational / Professional Training and HE

Published by HRK and DIHK, 14.10.2008

There is a common goal between HE and commerce and industry in order to improve and support the permeability. Up to now, conditions and regulations are not transparent, often they differ greatly between the states. The goal is to broaden the possibilities of professionals to be accepted at university and find common ways to recognize prior experience and learning.

Access to HE:

There is a political demand to have a common strategy amongst all states in order to widen access to professionals. Furthermore, efforts to support and enlarge the group of students without traditional access ("Abitur") at university are made.

Universities should be given more freedom to be attractive to qualified professionals. This could be supported by a federal wide law which would promote the recognition of professional competences through common recognition procedures which are transparent and in favour of professional experience.

Recognition of prior learning:

General policy: RPL's relevance within HE programmes has to become more important.

- recognition of whole modules out of the professional or vocational training
- general recognition of specific parts of professional training
- recognition should mainly concern the 1st semester students, so that they can begin their studies directly in a higher semester
- HE institutions should have clear regulations on recognition and criteria which are written down in their examination regulations
- RPL should also be part of the accreditation process
- universities should consider students with different needs, in this case, if they study part time to offer courses with blended learning, on weekends etc.
- universities should offer special courses e.g. how to work scientifically etc.

There is no agreement between the DIHK and the HRK about the degree of a "BA-professional". DIHK is interested in this degree for their own programmes, which are mainly practically orientated and are different to the "normal" HE BA. They are different, but as good. HE insists on being the only institution giving academic degrees, in order to have a more transparent HE system.

Paper 3:

"Anrechnung von außerhalb des Hochschulwesens erworbenen Kenntnissen und Fähigkeiten auf ein Hochschulstudium (II)"

Recognition of prior learning and competences obtained outside of HE for HE

Published by the KMK, 18.09.2008

There is a general tendency that Germany has to accept the policy of RPL concerning formal and informal learning in analogy to the Bologna Process.

- universities are responsible of examining the individual RPL, depending on the regulations of the individual university and the state
- there can be an overall RPL of learning parts of professional / vocational programmes on the basis of cooperation between universities and professional schools
- recognition can be obtained by a specific exam in order to ascertain each individual's knowledge status
- before recognising parts of study programmes via regulations of RPL, there is an independent assessment concerning the question of access to HE, which has to be considered separately

- academic degrees are in the universities' responsibilities; they are responsible for standards and quality. up to today, universities are quite reluctant to include RPL, though there is quite some political support via Bologna (up to 50% of the study programme can be recognised as prior learning)
- Specific challenges of "franchising" which means recognition of training outside of Germany. How can it be ensured that professional training from outside of Germany complies with the quality expected in German HE. One idea could be a specific documentation in the diploma supplement.

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