

Austria – Danube University Krems

Institution	Danube University Krems (DUK)
Study programs	DUK provides study programs, which are on Master’s degrees in continuing education. https://www.donau-uni.ac.at/en/studium/index.php
Skills in German language	German language skills are necessary for admission for many study programs, but there are also study programs in English language: https://www.donau-uni.ac.at/en/studium/english-course-program/index.php
Study fees	There are study fees at Danube University, but they are depending on the study program.
Interviewed Person	University staff, academic director of a study program
Interviewer	IG - DUK

I – Preparation

The interviewee is an academic director at Danube University Krems. Among other tasks, he is responsible for the admission of students to the study program he is in charge of. He also conducts examinations called “Äquivalenzprüfung”, a process which validates professional experience for admission at Danube University. There are following admission rules for Danube University:

- If students do not have an A-levels diploma and a Bachelor’s degree, they need to show that they have at least 8 years of professional experience related to the field of the desired study. They need to show an employer’s reference as proof of their professional experience.
- If students have an A-level diploma but don’t have a Bachelor’s degree, they have to show the A-level diploma and 4 years of work-experience in the field of the study on basis of an employer’s references.
- If students have a Bachelor’s degree in a field relating to the field of the desired study program at Danube University, they need to show their diploma supplement/Bachelor certificate.

The necessary documents are submitted and checked. The prospect student is interviewed to check if their professional experience is suitable for the field of study and if their German skills are sufficient.

Within the interviewee’s study program, currently no refugees, who recently came to Austria, are studying right now, but people, who came to Austria during Yugoslav Wars in the 1990ies.

II - Awareness

Most prospect students already know quite well about their competences and skills when they first contact the interviewee. They usually have lived in Austria for several years and are very well integrated. Furthermore, the typical student at Danube University Krems is between 35 and 40 years old and has been working in his/her profession already for several years. They are looking for continuing education at Danube University Krems on basis of their professional experiences.

III - Starting up

Students have usually heard of the possibility at Danube University to have their prior professional experience validated for admission to the studies of continuing education. Some apply at Danube University because of this opportunity. The “Äquivalenzprüfung” is rather competence-oriented, checking the personal strengths of students and how they are fit to start a certain study program and Danube University.

As the “Äquivalenzprüfung” leads to admission, students hope to be admitted to a Master’s programme at Danube University.

IV – Documentation and support

For “Äquivalenzprüfung” following documents have to be submitted:

- CV,
- employers’ references and/or other documentation of professional experience,
- personal statement about the motivation to study.

If an employer’s references is missing it is hardly possible to admit a person to a study program at Danube University. No form of portfolio is demanded for the “Äquivalenzprüfung”, only the named documents above. There is no form of self-assessment, but the interviewee is interested in exploring self-assessment tools for students.

V - Assessment

During the interview it is checked if the prior professional experience is related to the desired study program and if the German skills are sufficient for following the courses of the study program. After the interview, a report is sent to the quality assurance department of Danube University Krems and in the end the rector’s office decides about admitting a student.

Prospect students/candidates are not specifically advised how to prepare for the interview as it is usually rather casual, talking about prior working experiences, discussing the CV and the prospect student’s motivation to study.

Following people are involved in “Äquivalenzprüfung”

- Administrative staff
- Academic director of the study program
- Student Service Center
- Department for Quality Assurance
- Rector’s office

VI – Impact

After the interview, the candidates are informed if they were approved to be suitable for the study or not. Furthermore, they are informed about their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the competences needed to start studying.

As there are study fees, usually the candidates are thankful for and happy with the feedback, as study fees at Danube University are quite high.

SPECIAL SECTION ONLY FOR VALIDATION PROFESSIONALS

In the case your case study concerns a validation professional, please complete also the two sections below.

VIII – Job profile and training needs

The interviewed person wasn't specifically trained to conduct "Äquivalenzprüfung". He thinks that training initiatives could help to further educate staff.

IX – policy context

Due to the "DUK-Gesetz", a law for Danube University Krems, the university is in general in a good position to admit refugees/ migrants to study programs based on their professional experiences. A problem still is, that a documentation of the professional experiences, like an employer's reference, is necessary and missing documents are a problem for the admission process. Furthermore, study fees are quite high and it needs scholarships to finance studying at Danube University.