

Germany – Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich

Institution	Ludwig-Maximilians University (LMU)
Study programs	LMU provides Bachelor- and Master programs (national and international) in education as well as structured PHD programs. http://www.fak11.lmu.de/studium/index.html
Skills in German language	German language skills are necessary for admission for many study programs, but there are also study programs in English language: http://www.en.mcls.lmu.de/study_programs/master/index.html
Study fees	There are no study fees at LMU
Interviewed Person	Person working in the City of Munich (Referat für Arbeit und Wirtschaft)

I – Preparation

The City of Munich is providing a service agency to validate qualifications of people coming from abroad since 2009. Since then about 10,000 people from 145 different countries were validated and received guidance and information. Having the status of a project at first this action is now a regular service of the city. Munich now offers guidance and information for recognition and evaluation of foreign qualifications. The goal is to help foreigners into an adequate start into the labor market and to get enough skilled employees. This city-service is integrated into a Bavarian network (MigraNet) which was ordered by the federal government. All this was done to implement the law concerning the assessment of vocational qualifications (Berufsqualifizierungsfeststellungsgesetz, BQFG).

II - Awareness

In the city of Munich there is a political consensus to try for the integration of refugees / asylum possible into society and the labor market as soon as possible. At the moment the city is working on a master plan for all refugees / asylum seekers. This is because it is important to prevent violence in the city and in the accommodations of the refugees. Although it is not a legal task the city offers guidance and information that help refugees and asylum seekers to get their qualifications recognized and evaluated. Every refugee who comes to Munich has to go to the center of integration and guidance Language and Profession (Integrationsberatungszentrum Sprache und Beruf, IBZ, <https://www.muenchen.de/rathaus/Stadtverwaltung/Sozialreferat/Wohnungsamt/integrationshilfen/IBZ.html>) to recognize his or her qualifications and to do a validation of competences if necessary.

III - Starting up

Two institutions within the City of Munich's administration are responsible to integrate refugees: the unit for work and economy (Referat für Arbeit und Wirtschaft) and the unit for social affairs (Sozialreferat). The unit for work and economy is responsible for problems concerning the labor market and for guidance to get into it. Their main target groups are unemployed people, especially people who have been unemployed for a very long time. This is why they are responsible for refugees / asylum seekers, too. The unit for social affairs is also responsible for migrants and refugees but with a focus on their integration into society. As such they are responsible for guiding refugees / asylum seekers, but from another perspective than the unit for work and economy. Obviously, there are a lot of overlapping tasks. This leads to a close cooperation of both units on the one hand. On the other hand,

this is the reason for complicated structures and unclear responsibilities within the administration.

IV – Documentation and support

Depending on their tasks the two units have a different view on the topic of validation: The unit of work and economy is looking at it as a mean to bringing refugees / asylum seekers into a job. They differentiate between validation in a formal way and validation in an informal way. Validation in a formal way is the recognition of competences that are proved by documents. Validation in a more informal way leads to the recognition of those competences which cannot be recorded in any official paper. The validation by the unit of work and economy always happens under the aspect of the German vocational training system or the German university system. Therefore, their guidance focuses on helping people to find a job rather than empowering people. In this context it is important to notice that there is a political issue, too: The chambers, trade unions etc. have no big interest to validate vocational competences in a modular way because that would offer alternative ways to complete vocational education. So they insist that guidance has to be focused on the pathways of the existing educational system.

V - Assessment

The unit of social affairs focuses on the integration of people into society and hence, has a different view on validation. Validation from their point of view is not focused on jobs but on the person. Therefore, validation has to support them in finding their way into a society based on the refugees' life course. As they were born and raised in another country with another vocational training system and another occupational system the competences they have won are often not compatible with the system in Germany. So – before joining new training courses – it is important in a first step to empower people to recognize the value of the competences they have won and to learn how to use them in the German system in a way that makes sense for themselves. And: one has to keep in mind that many of the refugees / asylum seekers are older than the people who typically join a vocational training.

The work of the unit of social affairs concerning validation is frequently based on projects which are run in cooperation with institutes that work in the field of social research (German Youth Institute) or vocational research (Federal Institute for Education and Training). To get financed those projects often have to put the topic 'validation' into a politically up to date context such as guidance and counseling, lifelong learning or competency based trainings (touching the topics EQF or EQARF). The instruments or tools developed within such projects and the cooperations are then frequently used in the work of the unit. Or they are a basis for new cooperations e.g. in the field of geriatric care, which is just a project running currently.

VI – Impact

In the end it is important to mention that the work of both units is really depends on political decisions on the Bavarian or federal level. If refugees cannot be sure that they can stay or if it is not clear that they can visit a school the work of the units becomes very complicated or maybe senseless. Some decisions in the past have supported the work of the units (such as the duty for young refugees to visit a vocational school), others don't help at all (such as decisions about secure countries of origin).