

New Developments in German Higher Education / Martin Harfmann. — In : Annales de philosophie et des sciences humaines. — N° 17 (2004), pp. 95-101.

Cover title : Annales de philosophie et des sciences humaines

1. Education, Higher — Germany. 2. Curricula — Germany.

PER L1044 / FP147875P

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN GERMAN HIGHER EDUCATION

*Kaslik, le 15 novembre 2003*

**D<sup>r</sup> Martin Harfmann**

*DAAD, University of Jordan*

### **I**NTRODUCTION

In my lecture I want to present to you an overview of the current changes within German higher education. Since more than 5 years there is a debate in Germany about how attractive this country is as a place to study and to do research in. The concept the “International Higher Education Institution” has clearly gained ground.

The reform is being carried out in a variety of fields.

- There is a new language policy.
- Something is being done to ensure better international recognition of degree courses.
- There are changes for doctoral candidates as well as for guest and visiting lecturers.
- There are offers for graduated professionals.
- Something is being done to innovate student counselling.

- And support is offered for partnerships between German and foreign higher education institutions to enable cooperations in specific fields

Let me now give you some background information which will be helpful in understanding the changes in German academia.

My topic is the “Internationalization of Germany’s higher-education institutions”.

What are the new developments in German academia?

In the beginning I like to briefly talk about the legislative framework of this ongoing reform process.

I will talk about the reasons, why this internalization was initiated.

I will make some remarks about the Bachelor’s and the Master’s degree as additional study opportunities.

I will mention the English-instructed degree courses that are increasingly offered.

Then I will tell you what is being done to ensure better international recognition of degree courses.

Then I would like to mention what changes there are for PhD-candidates and for guest and visiting lecturers.

In the beginning I like to point out that the process of internationalization in German academia is taking place in a variety of fields:

1. The legislative framework has changed.
2. There are new *offers for international students and graduates*.
3. The internationalization of university teachers and professors is being promoted.
4. There are partnership programmes.
5. The *student counselling/student advisory service* is being improved.
6. Finally the *language policy in Germany changes*, more English-instructed courses are offered.
7. The *Marketing of higher-education institutions is improving*.

Germany wants to attract international students.

The German Higher Education Act (HRG) expressly specifies this goal.

The HRG offers a framework within which federal government and the 16 regional states (Länder) work together. It harmonises the activities of the 16 Länder.

### *I. WHY IS GERMAN HIGHER EDUCATION BEING REFORMED?*

The increasing mobility of students around the world made it necessary to bring German degrees into line with international standards.

The country has generally become more international.

German business and industry demands the international exchange of staff and of aspiring academics.

Study opportunities specially devised to meet the needs of international students will now serve to facilitate entry into a German university or college.

Following the example of the Anglo-Saxon higher education systems, international students are being encouraged to take and complete their degrees (Bachelor's and Master's degrees) in Germany.

### *II. WILL THESE NEW STUDY OPPORTUNITIES REPLACE THE OLD SYSTEM?*

The traditional German degree courses will remain.

The newly-devised Bachelor's or Bakkalaureus and Master's or Magister degree courses should make use of the existing study opportunities and infrastructure already available for Diploma or Magister degree courses.

Where higher education institutions of differing types award the Bachelor's or Bakkalaureus and Master's or Magister degree in the same discipline or subject, the differing profile must be clearly identified by means of the description given to the degree.

### *III. WHAT ENGLISH-INSTRUCTED DEGREE COURSES ARE OFFERED?*

Courses instructed in languages other than German, and especially in English, are becoming increasingly important in the range of studies offered by German higher education institutions. This applies in particular to postgraduate study opportunities.

Even in the field of first degree courses, English-instructed teaching is becoming more customary.

Many higher education institutions have made it possible for international students to submit their Magister or Diploma dissertations or doctoral (PhD) theses in English.

#### *IV. WHAT IS BEING DONE TO ENSURE BETTER INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF DEGREE COURSES?*

Graduate or consecutive degree courses are being increasingly introduced which offer internationally-compatible degrees, including Bachelor's and Master's degrees.

The completion of study sections or parts of the degree course is being acknowledged by the award of so-called credit points.

The accreditation of degree courses guarantees that the content required, the achievements and the stages to be completed in a course have been clearly defined for international comparison.

#### *V. WHAT CHANGES ARE THERE FOR DOCTORAL (PHD) CANDIDATES?*

Special postgraduate courses leading to a doctorate have been established which especially aim to facilitate the path to a doctorate for graduates from abroad. Doctorate courses are e.g. offered by Graduate Colleges or the International Max Planck Research Schools. In the Graduate Colleges a research team of 10 to 15 lecturers and 30 doctoral candidates are working for a determined period of time on a research project. Also the International Max Planck Research Schools focus on scientific team work. Doctorate candidates and University professors work as a research team on interdisciplinary and innovative research fields like Computer Science, Molecular Biology).

The clarification of social security issues (scholarships, health insurance, practical internships, work permits, and foreigners' residence legislation issues) is guaranteed before the doctoral programmes are set up and announced.

#### *VI. WHAT CHANGED FOR VISITING LECTURERS?*

Within the scope of the Joint Higher Education Special Programme III (HSP III) operated by federal and regional government, longer-term guest and visiting lectureships by international academics and scientists are being promoted at German universities and at the new universities of applied sciences.

The guest and visiting lecturer programme managed by the DAAD commenced in 1997. It covers guest and visiting lectureships for first degree courses as well as for postgraduate degree courses.

*THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY AS A MOTOR FOR REFORMING GERMANY'S HIGHER EDUCATION*

Since more than 5 years there is a debate in Germany about how attractive Germany is as a place to study and to do research.

1. Some examples for support programmes for the internationalisation of higher education.

*a. postgraduate courses*

A programme to support the academic relations between Germany and countries in the Middle East (Asia, Africa, Latin America)

Out of a large number of postgraduate courses offered by German institutions of Higher Education, the DAAD supports a carefully chosen selection of courses which is of particular interest to junior executives from Middle Eastern countries.

Courses from the following fields are supported: Business Administration/Economics and Management, Developing Co-operation, Engineering, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Regional Planning, Agriculture and Forestry, Environmental Sciences, Medicine and Public Health, Veterinary Medicine, Education

These degree courses which consist of one to two years of concentrated study, provide academically trained young professionals in leading positions with the opportunity to engage in postgraduate education and training in their particular field of profession.

The *target group* for these postgraduate degree courses: Young professionals with an academic degree far above average and with at least 2 years of relevant professional experience who work in public administration, industry or commerce.

*Language of instruction:* English and German, or just German or English, depending on the particular course.

*Support:* The DAAD offers scholarships which covers the costs of living, travel costs as well as the participation in a German course.

*b. STIBET, das Stipendien- und Betreuungsprogramm des DAAD*

The aim of this DAAD-programme is to improve counselling and advising students and doctoral candidates. This programme enables universities to improve their internationalisation strategies through awarding well-aimed scholarships to foreign students.

The programme contains both: support through scholarships, Means to improve the counselling of students, academics

On the one hand Universities are supported which organise introductory seminars, excursions, seminars on German background studies.

On the other hand scholarships are awarded by the universities to foreign students who help improving counselling other foreign students themselves. 3000 students are supported yearly.

The cooperation between the DAAD and institutions who give advice to foreign students and help to integrate them into society are strengthened. New models of counselling should be developed.

In 2002 the budget of this programme amounted to 7.5 Million Euro.

*c. Support for partnerships between higher education institutions*

A German and a foreign institution, which cooperate in a very specific field. This programme aims to strengthen the structures of academic institutions in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. At present the DAAD support 87 partnerships (S.48/49). The value of a single partnership can amount up to 15.338 Euros a year.

Fact finding missions to prepare such a partnership can be financed also. Just 2 examples for existing partnerships:

1. Partnership between the Technical University Berlin and the University Stellenbosch in South-Africa. Both institutions develop together curricula in the field of Civil Engineering. The TU Berlin's Department of Civil Engineering is supported for the project by the DAAD. A first success was achieved when the University of Stellenbosch enlarged its curriculum in the Department of Civil Engineering by a new compulsory subject, namely

Architectural Computer Science. Through the mutual exchange of lecturers, scientists and students the activities in the subject Architectural Computer Science could be enhanced and it could be tested if its applicability. New course in this field could be developed, this also for graduates. For the year 2002 and 2003 the goal was to improve applying Architectural Computer Science for construction.

2. The Faculty of Economy and Social Sciences of the University Potsdam and the Sadat Academy for Management Sciences (SAMS) in Cairo/Egypt cooperate in the fields of Economy and Administration. So there is an organised exchange of students, doctoral candidates and professors between the two institutions. Students of the University Potsdam regularly carry out practical internships at the Sadat Academy and vice versa. There is also cooperation in the field of information technology. Through an internet- and intranet communication structure several branch offices of the Sadat Academy could be connected. In April 2001 a joint workshop about Environment Management could be held which contributed not only to the exchange of knowledge but also to the development of a new degree course at the Sadat-Academy. So the new degree course "Environmental Management" was established which aims to strengthen administrative structures in Egypt which are concerned with the Environment.