

# Higher Education in Austria

Vienna, May 2016

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**Österreichisches Hochschulsystem;** Bearbeiter/innen: Heinz Kasparovsky, Ingrid Wadsack-Köchl; 7. Auflage.  
Stand: 1. März 2016. – Wien: Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft, 2016 (Österreichisches Hochschulsystem) NE: Bearb.

ISBN xxx

Medieninhaber und Verleger: Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft, Verwaltungsbereich Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1014 Wien, Minoritenplatz 5.  
Hergestellt im Eigenverlag.

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# 1 Historical Review of the Post-Secondary Sector

## 1.1 Scientific Universities until 1966

In 1365, Duke Rudolf IV of Austria founded the University of Vienna (*Universität Wien*), which is the oldest university today in the German-speaking world. The University of Vienna succeeded in achieving relatively far-reaching autonomy vis-à-vis the country's rulers and the church and experienced a genuinely golden age. After a period of serious decay caused by the plague, the Turkish wars, as well as the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, this very Counter-Reformation movement led to a gradual transfer of the University of Vienna to the Jesuits, following some administrative reforms as of 1554.

In the wake of the Counter-Reformation, the **University of Graz** (*Universität Graz*) was also founded; it emerged in 1585 from an already existing Jesuits' college and was the type of university intended purely for the religious order of the Jesuits. The **University of Innsbruck** (*Universität Innsbruck*) was founded in 1669 in order to close the gap existing within the territory of the Habsburgs between Inner Austria (*Innerösterreich*), with the universities of Vienna and Graz, and Outer Austria (*Vorderösterreich*), with the university at Freiburg im Breisgau. Here, too, the organisation and the teaching were assigned to the Jesuits. The **University of Salzburg** (*Universität Salzburg*), on the other hand, founded in 1622, was not primarily a consequence of the Counter-Reformation but was rather linked to the efforts of the Benedictine order, dominating the Prince Archbishopric of Salzburg, to gain an increased influence within the church.

In the 17th and 18th century there were thus four universities on the territory of present-day Austria, universities which had no autonomy with regard to their organisation or curriculum but were under church influence and thus excluded from the development of modern science. As a growing number of students came from the aristocracy, academic life became increasingly "militarised".

The entire school system was re-designed under Maria Theresa and Joseph II. The universities were re-organised and transformed into state institutions. In the



course of the study reforms undertaken by Joseph II, the universities in Graz and Innsbruck were discontinued in 1782 and converted into lyceums or academies where priests, civil servants, country physicians, and midwives were trained. Although these reforms were largely revoked after the death of Joseph II, one thing that did remain, however, was the fact that universities had become public institutions under state control.

Further decisions of importance for the development of the Austrian university landscape were taken in the first half of the 19th century. Whereas the University of Salzburg was closed under Bavarian rule in 1810, the lyceums in Innsbruck (1826) and Graz (1827) were re-established as universities. In addition, the precursors of the today's universities of technology came into being in Vienna and Graz. In 1840 the "Styrian Corporate School of Mining" (*Steiermärkisch-Ständische Montanlehranstalt*), today **University of Mining Leoben** (*Montanuniversität Leoben*), was founded at Vordernberg upon the dynamic initiative of Archduke Johann.

The Revolution of 1848 led to a dramatic re-design of the universities which obtained a certain amount of self-administration under the new constitution. As a result, the state came to guarantee the freedom of teaching and learning, and new structures were designed for the teaching qualifications, the appointment of professors, and the administration. Medieval relics such as "nations" (*Nationen*) or "doctoral boards" (*Doktorenkollegien*) were dissolved, the philosophical studies were united and put into separate faculties, and the duration of studies was extended to four years. Access to the universities was newly organised by introducing a secondary school education ending with the school-leaving examination (*Matura* = university entrance qualification). A tremendous expansion programme for the universities in terms of technical, human, and material resources accompanied this organisational and study reform.

The specialised universities were also established and extended during the second half of the 19th century: As of 1872 the "Joanneum Graz", founded by Archduke Johann, and the "Polytechnical Institute" (*Polytechnisches Institut*) in Vienna, founded in 1815, which later came to be the **Universities of Technology in Graz and Vienna** (*Technische Universitäten Wien und Graz*), were operated as universities, and the "Hochschule für Bodenkultur", today **University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences** (*Universität für Bodenkultur*) was set up in Vien-

na. In 1896, the "Veterinary School" (*Veterinärschule*), today **University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna** (*Veterinärmedizinische Universität Wien*), which was under the control of the military administration, was granted university status. In 1898, an "Export Academy" (*Exportakademie*) was opened, as a precursor to the **Vienna University of Economics and Business** (*Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien*) of today. The two universities of technology were granted the right to confer doctoral degrees in 1901, the "University of Mining" (*Montanlehranstalt*) at Leoben followed in 1904, and the "University of Veterinary Medicine" (*Veterinärmedizinische Hochschule*) in 1908. This system of higher education, which was created in the 19th century, remained more or less unchanged – at least in its outer appearance – until the beginning of the 21st century.

After the collapse of the monarchy, the Republic continued to operate the Austrian universities and higher education institutions (*Hochschulen*) as state institutions. For Austria's First Republic, the strong involvement of the universities in the political conflicts of that time was a characteristic feature. Since the conflict among nations had caused divisions already at the end of the 19th century, a large number of university graduates, but also the universities were unable to develop a constructive relationship vis-à-vis the Republic and democracy. In the period between the two World Wars, anti-Austrian German nationalism and anti-Semitism found broad support. With the "*Anschluss*" (annexation) to the German Reich, the German university laws were introduced. Political opponents, as well as Jewish scientists and students were excluded from the universities, became victims of National-Socialist destruction campaigns and of World War II or were forced to emigrate – among them many of the best-known and best-qualified Austrian scientists.

After World War II, the Austrian university laws were re-instituted and teaching resumed shortly afterwards. However, the universities suffered major damage from the turmoil since 1938. They had lost much of their prestige, were scarred with the stigma of succumbing to political seduction and yielding to power from above, and they had only a few, politically unbiased university teachers and few qualified scientists.

Until 1955, a great number of confusing university laws from the 19th century applied to the universities. When the University Organisation Act (*Hochschul-Organisationsgesetz*) was adopted in 1955, one single law applicable

to all scientific universities and higher education institutions was enacted for the first time without, however, any major substantive innovations regarding their organisational structure, so that the university organisation of the 19th century remained in place, partly unchanged, until the re-organisation of the universities in the seventies.

In the sixties, new universities were founded. In 1962, the re-established University of Salzburg began its study programme. In 1966, the "Academy for Social and Economic Sciences" (*Hochschule für Sozial- und Wirtschaftswissenschaften Linz*), today **Johannes Kepler University Linz** (*Universität Linz*), began operating. In 1970, the "School of Educational Sciences" (*Hochschule für Bildungswissenschaften*) was founded in Klagenfurt, which was re-structured in 1993 and renamed into **University of Klagenfurt** (*Universität Klagenfurt*).

## 1.2 Post-Secondary Arts Schools until 1966

From a historical perspective, training in the arts came to be organised along school principles only at a relatively late point in time. Until the beginning of the 21st century, many elements of an individually designed, non-school-type of learning with recognised "masters" were maintained at the art colleges, where individual tutoring prevailed and where "master classes" were organised.

The oldest of today's art universities is the **Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna** (*Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien*). In 1696 Emperor Leopold I founded an "Academy for Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Perspective, and Fortification" (*Academia für Malerei, Bildhauerei, Architektur, Perspektive und Fortifikation*). In 1766 an "Imperial-Royal Engraving Academy" (*k.k. Kupferstecherakademie*) was founded; the following year an "Engravers' and Ore Cutters' School" (*Graveurakademie*). Empress Maria Theresia merged these three academies in 1772 into what became the "Imperial-Royal United Academy of Fine Arts" (*Kaiserlich-königlich vereinigte Akademie der bildenden Künste*). After several re-organisations the Academy of Fine Arts was raised to the level of a higher institution of education in 1872 when it received a new statute. The main features of this university statute became part of the law of 1955 on the organisation of academies, which was replaced by the law of 1988 on the organisation of academies.

The forerunners of today's universities of music were founded during the first half of the 19th century. The "Society for the Friends of Music in the Austrian Empire" (*Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde des österreichischen Kaiserstaates*) opened a singing school in Vienna in 1817, headed by Antonio Salieri, which was expanded soon thereafter to include classes in instrumental music. This was the precursor of today's **University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna** (*Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien*). Today's **University of Music and Dramatic Arts Graz** (*Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Graz*) goes back to a singing school of the Styrian Music Association (*Steiermärkischer Musikverein*) set up at the same time (1816). In Salzburg, too, the foundation of the Cathedral Music Association (*Dommusikverein*) in 1841 was at the origin of today's **University of Music and Dramatic Arts Mozarteum Salzburg** (*Universität Mozarteum Salzburg*). The Vienna Conservatory (*Wiener Konservatorium*) was taken over by the state in 1909 and given the name of "Imperial-Royal Academy of Music and the Performing Arts" (*Kaiserlich-königliche Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst*). The "Mozarteum", run by the "International Foundation Mozarteum" (*Internationale Stiftung Mozarteum*) since 1881, obtained its public license in 1914, was transformed into a conservatory and taken over by the state's administration in 1922.

The foundation of today's **University of Applied Arts Vienna** (*Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien*) must be seen in connection with the economically-oriented school reforms during the second half of the 19th century. In 1867 the "School of Applied Arts of the Imperial-Royal Austrian Museum for the Arts and Industry" (*Kunstgewerbeschule des Kaiserlich-königlichen österreichischen Museums für Kunst und Industrie*) was established, with the goal of training specialists for industry with artistic skills. In the course of time, areas such as metal-working or wood sculpturing became part of the training programme. The School of Applied Arts came under state administration in 1909.

Between 1938 and 1945 all of today's art universities came under German administration. In the Second Republic, they were transformed into academies: "Academy for Music and the Performing Arts in Vienna" (*Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Wien*, 1947) and "Academy for Music and Dramatic Arts 'Mozarteum' in Salzburg" (*Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst "Mozarteum" in Salzburg*, 1953). The Graz Conservatory (*Grazer Konservatorium*) was

integrated into federal administration in 1963 as "Academy for Music and Dramatic Arts in Graz" (*Akademie für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Graz*). With the law of 1970 on the organisation of the art universities, these academies ultimately became higher education institutions. In 1973 the "Art School of the City of Linz" (*Kunstschule der Stadt Linz*), founded as a private school in 1947, was taken over by the federal authorities as the "University for Artistic and Industrial Design in Linz" (*Hochschule für künstlerische und industrielle Gestaltung in Linz*), which is today's **University of Art and Industrial Design Linz** (*Universität für künstlerische und industrielle Gestaltung Linz*).

### 1.3 Public Universities as a Homogeneous Sector

In the sixties, the call for more legal certainty and legal transparency in all state actions did not stop at the gates of universities. In this connection, the developments at the scientific universities and at the artistic higher education institutions (today artistic universities) basically took a parallel course, with the latter, though, always following with some delay. This hailed the phase of gradual integration of the two types until one single category of university came into existence.

The law regulating university studies came first: The **General Act on Studies at Higher Education Institutions** (*Allgemeines Hochschul-Studiengesetz, AHStG*) of 1966 and the specific statutory regulations for university studies came first in a process of putting all matters connected to studying at universities on a new legal basis, as well as to modernise them. Similarly, the **Act on Studies at Higher Education Institutions for the Arts** (*Kunsthochschul-Studiengesetz*) created – for the first time – a legal basis for art studies, with the necessary special regulations required by the subject matter, though. The **University Studies Act** (*Universitäts-Studiengesetz*) of 1977 led to further basic changes, such as e.g. a decentralisation of the competencies. The arts studies were also integrated into its system in 1998, which eliminated the parallel application of basic statutory regulations on university studies.

A new **University Organisation Act** (*Universitäts-Organisationsgesetz, UOG*) came into force in 1975. Its most important novel features were to include all types of university teachers, the students, and the administrative staff in the

university decision-making processes of the collegial boards, as well as a new organisation of the university departments. The **University Organisation Act** (*Universitäts-Organisationsgesetz*) 1993 gave the universities increasingly more scope for decisions and configurations, which was the first step towards full autonomy.

The **Art Universities Organisation Act** (*Kunstuniversitäten-Organisationsgesetz*, KUOG) of 1998 transformed the higher education institutions for the arts into art universities. This also entailed major changes in their structural organisation. Widely along the lines of the UOG, a structure for the university departments, applicable throughout Austria, was introduced, which reduced the number of organisational units in charge of teaching, developing, and communicating the arts, as well as responsible for research from 422 to 68. This also gave impulses to a stronger link between the arts and the sciences.

The **Universities Act** (*Universitätsgesetz*, UG) 2002 ultimately created a common legal basis for the scientific and artistic universities, which eliminated the distinction between these two types, except for a few special provisions. The Universities Act 2002, which became fully effective on 1 January 2004 and marks a new era in the development of one common university sector, has given the universities complete autonomy, on account of the new control instruments such as global budgets and performance agreements, etc. The universities were transformed to become legal entities under public law (previously federal establishments) and divested from the federal administrative system. The Universities Act 2002 further develops the efforts at decentralisation of the nineties and expands them, i.a. by introducing the so-called "full legal capacity" (*Vollrechtsfähigkeit*) and substituting the budget law of the federal authorities by elements from commercial law. As a result, the legal basis was prepared for creating "entrepreneurial universities" (*unternehmerische Universitäten*), which will be in a position to access new funding sources in addition to the money received from the federal government. Moreover, the Universities Act 2002 established three autonomous **Medical Universities** (*Medizinische Universitäten*) in **Vien- na, Graz, and Innsbruck** which came into being because the former medical faculties were extracted from their former parent universities.

Since 2006, corresponding to European developments and especially to the **Bo- logna Process**, the three-cycle system with bachelor, master (and on an interim

basis *Bakkalaureat* and *Magister* before that), and doctoral degree programmes was adopted. However, universities are allowed to continue older degree programmes as phase-out models.

University students must pay a tuition fee since the academic year 2001/02. In 2008 the list of grounds for exemption of tuition fees was considerably expanded.

On the basis of first practical experiences with the Universities Act 2002, the **2009 amendment** added necessary reforms in some points, e.g. regarding the election of the rector or the (legal) status of staff engaged in research, the arts, and teaching, and furthermore clarified some ambiguities. At the same time collective contracts applicable to the university staff were concluded.

The University for Continuing Education Krems (Danube University Krems) is a university facility of a special kind, having its own legal basis (Act on the Danube University Krems), adopted in 1994. It is a corporation under public law with far-reaching self-administration and serves the goal of post-graduate training and further training. The Act on the Danube University Krems (*Bundesgesetz über die Universität für Weiterbildung Krems, DUK-Gesetz*) of 2004 largely takes over the structure of the Universities Act 2002 for the **University for Continuing Education Krems (*Universität für Weiterbildung Krems*)**.

## 1.4 University of Applied Sciences Sector

The **University of Applied Sciences Studies Act** (*Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz, FHStG*) of 1993 introduced the university of applied sciences sector in Austria. This was the result of an international development in the direction of a more job-oriented, non-university sector of higher education institutions which, however, meets the requirements of EU law regarding higher education institutions. The first university of applied sciences degree programmes went into operation in 1994, and every year new degree programmes are being added.

The new feature, as compared to universities, is that there is no basis regarding organisational law for a university of applied sciences, but that the degree programmes and meanwhile also universities of applied sciences are accredited, which any provider organisation (mainly private-law entities) can offer. The term

"University of Applied Sciences" (*Fachhochschule*) does not cause any basic change; it only refers to a specific provider as such, one which has reached a certain dimension as a provider of degree programmes, and it leads to a shift in some of the competencies.

Together with the university of applied sciences degree programmes, the University of Applied Sciences Council (*Fachhochschulrat*) was established as the authority for accrediting and evaluating degree programmes. In 2012 the Council's activities were transferred to the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (*Agentur für Qualitätssicherung und Akkreditierung Austria, AQ Austria*).

The amendment of the University of Applied Sciences Studies Act (*Fachhochschulschul-Studiengesetz, FHStG*) of 2002 ultimately also introduced the new **two-tier study system** (*Bakkalaureat (FH)* and *Magister (FH)* programmes) as a possible option for university of applied sciences degree programmes. In 2006 the degree programmes were renamed to bachelor and master degree programmes (*Bachelor- und Masterstudien*).

Since the academic year 2001/02 students taking university of applied sciences degree programmes may be required to pay a tuition fee. The decision lies with the providers.

## 1.5 Private Universities

The **University Accreditation Act** (*Universitäts-Akkreditierungsgesetz, Uni-AkkG*) of 1999, henceforth the **Private Universities Act** (*Privatuniversitätengesetz, PUG*) of 2011 together with the **Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education** (*Hochschul-Qualitätssicherungsgesetz, HS-QSG*) of the same year, establish the procedure for the recognition of private universities. Since 2012, the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (**AQ Austria**) is the body responsible for approvals and extensions, replacing the Accreditation Council (*Akkreditierungsrat*) as responsible authority. The law does not require any specific form of organisation. The range of studies offered often differs in substance and system from that of public universities and the university of applied sciences degree programmes; there may, however, also be parallel courses.



## 1.6 University Colleges of Teacher Education

The **Teacher Education Act** (*Hochschulgesetz, HG*) 2005 established public university colleges of teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschule*) in place of the hitherto existing post-secondary colleges for teacher training (*Akademien für Lehrerinnen- und Lehrerbildung*), which are in full operation as of autumn 2007. In addition, the Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Frauen, BMBF*) is entitled to accredit private university colleges of teacher education and degree studies, which is of special relevance for those supported by a church or religious community. University colleges of teacher education operate teacher training programmes (*Lehramtsstudien*) as bachelor and master degree programmes as well as further-education programmes (*weiterbildende Lehrgänge*).

## 1.7 The Remaining Post-Secondary Sector

The term "**post-secondary**" carries a different meaning in different countries. A definition of the term has existed in Austria since 1997: Recognised post-secondary educational institutions are those

- that offer studies with a minimum of 180 ECTS credits,
- that require – as admission criterion – the general university entrance qualification, or proof of the artistic aptitude in case of art studies,
- that are recognised as educational institutions, along the lines of the present definition, by the statutory provisions of the state in which they are located.

In Austria, this sector comprises the higher education institutions (► 1.1 to 1.6), as well as military academies (*Militärische Akademien*), certain psycho-therapeutic training facilities (*Psychotherapeutische Ausbildungseinrichtungen*), and conservatories (*Konservatorien*). By transferring the post-secondary colleges (*Akademien*) for teacher training, social work, midwifery, and para-medical staff to the higher education sector, the remaining post-secondary sector was severely narrowed down.

The post-secondary sector – outside the sector of higher education institutions (► 1.1 to 1.6) – cannot be examined in detail in the present context. The main

point is that all new provisions of law mentioned under ► 1.3 to 1.6 guarantee a basic **transferability** (*Durchlässigkeit*) along the lines of the Universities Act 2002 within the entire post-secondary sector – in other words it shall be possible, by decision of the host institution, to change courses, while receiving credits for previously obtained achievements.

## 2 Basic Principles and Legal Basis

### 2.1 Constitutional Basis

The **Federal Constitutional Law** (*Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz, B-VG*), the **State Basic Law on the General Rights of Citizens** (*Staatsgrundgesetz über die allgemeinen Rechte der Staatsbürger, StGG*) of 1867, and the **European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** (*Europäische Konvention zum Schutze der Menschenrechte und Grundfreiheiten, ECHR*) of 1955, and its First Protocol, are the constitutional-law provisions of relevance to the university sector. The StGG and the ECHR, together with its First Protocol, define the fundamental rights of individual persons in connection with the university sector. The freedom of science and its teaching, as well as the freedom of the arts and their teaching deserve particular mention here.

Pursuant to Article 14 para. 1 of the Federal Constitutional Law, the **federal authorities are responsible** for adopting and implementing legislation regarding the universities and universities of applied sciences. According to the Federal Ministries Act (*Bundesministeriengesetz, BMG*) of 1986 all matters regarding the public and private universities, the universities of applied sciences, the representation of student interests, study grants and scholarships, promotional measures for the construction of student hostels, as well as for university-level research activities come under the competence of the Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy (*Bundesministerin bzw. Bundesminister für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft*). All matters regarding the university colleges of teacher education come under the competence of the Federal Minister of Education and Women's Affairs (*Bundesministerin bzw. Bundesminister für Bildung und Frauen*).

Pursuant to Article 81c of the Federal Constitutional Law the public universities are places of free scientific research, tuition, and revelation of the arts. They act in the frame of the laws **autonomously** and may render statutes. The members of university collegial bodies are dispensed from instructions.

## 2.2 Simple-Majority Legislation

The **Universities Act** (*Universitätsgesetz, UG*) 2002 rendered null and void all previous legislation regarding university organisation, university studies, and university tuition and fees.

The separate legal basis for the University of Continuing Education Krems (*Donau-Universität Krems*) – the **Act on the Danube University Krems** (*Bundesgesetz über die Universität für Weiterbildung Krems, DUK-Gesetz*) of 2004 – follows the Universities Act 2002 in its substance, with the restriction that the range of studies exclusively comprises certificate university programmes for further education and doctoral studies.

The **service code** (*Dienstrecht*) applicable to university teachers – to the extent that they still have civil-servant status – is governed, in particular, by the Civil-Servants' Service Regulations Act (*Beamten-Dienstrechtsgesetz, BDG*) of 1979, the Contractual Employees' Act (*Vertragsbedienstetengesetz*), the Federal Law on the Remuneration of Scientific and Artistic Activities at Universities and Art Universities (*Bundesgesetz über die Abgeltung von wissenschaftlichen und künstlerischen Tätigkeiten an Universitäten und Universitäten der Künste, UniAbgG*) of 1974, and the Salaries Act (*Gehaltsgesetz, GehG*) of 1956. When the Universities Act 2002 entered into force, the contractual employees became employees pursuant to the **Employees Act** (*Angestelltengesetz*). New service relations are also contracted pursuant to the Employees Act.

The **University of Applied Sciences Studies Act** (*Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz, FHStG*) of 1993 is the basis for operating the universities of applied sciences and/or the university of applied sciences degree programmes, the **Private Universities Act** (*Privatuniversitätengesetz, PUG*) of 2011 is the basis for operating private universities.

The **Teacher Education Act** (*Hochschulgesetz, HG*) 2005 governs the operation of public university colleges of teacher education, the accreditation of private university colleges of teacher education and their degree programmes as well as studies at these higher education institutions.

### The **Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education**

(*Hochschul-Qualitätssicherungsgesetz, HS-QGS*) of 2011 governs all aspects of quality assurance and accreditation in each higher education sector.

The **Union of Students Act** (*Hochschülerschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaftsgesetz, HSG*) 2014 governs the organisation and tasks of the Austrian Union of Students (*Österreichische Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaft, ÖH*) and of the unions of students (*Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaften*) at the different public universities, as well as the representation of students at private universities, of university of applied sciences degree programmes, and at post-secondary colleges.

The schools of theology (*Theologische Hochschulen*) – run by the churches and not by the state – hold a special position, in that the **Concordat** of 1933 between the Holy See and the Republic of Austria (*Konkordat zwischen dem Heiligen Stuhle und der Republik Österreich*) established a close link to the public universities regarding legal provisions for studies.

## 2.3 State Administration of Higher Education

The highest state organ for the university sector is the **Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy**, for the university colleges of teacher education the **Federal Minister of Education and Women's Affairs**, respectively. The federal provinces have no direct competencies for university matters.

For the public universities, a new control system comprising three-year performance agreements, interim development agreements as needed, as well as global budgets between the universities and the federal authorities supplements the **control system**. The activities of the Federal Ministry regarding administration are essentially limited to legal supervision, negotiating the performance agreements and allocating a three-year global budget, receiving the performance reports and closing of accounts, as well as controlling and monitoring.

The Federal Minister has set up **university councils** (*Universitätsräte*) as self-administration bodies, bound by no instructions, as additional implementing bodies. Their main function is planning and supervision. A **Science Council** (*Wissenschaftsrat*) has been set up to advise the legislator, the Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy, and the universities.

The Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (*Agentur für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung Austria, **AQ Austria***) is the central state organ for the private universities. It works under the supervision of the Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy. There are no special legal provisions regarding the administration of the private universities, only regulations laid down by the AQ Austria (► 4).

The central state organ for the university of applied sciences sector is also the **AQ Austria**. The universities of applied sciences and the university of applied sciences degree programmes are administered by the providers pursuant to the legal framework provided by the AQ Austria (► 5).

Each university college of teacher education has established a **Hochschule council** (*Hochschulrat*). In addition to the Federal Minister of Education and Women's Affairs, their main function comprise central controlling and supervising activities.

## 3 Public Universities

### 3.1 Organisation

#### 3.1.1 Introduction

Universities count the following among their main **tasks**:

- to develop and impart the sciences and/or the arts;
- to provide basic training for scientific and/or artistic occupations and the qualifications for professional activities which require the application of scientific and/or artistic findings;
- to train a next generation of scientists and/or artists;
- to offer further training, especially to graduates;
- to support national and international cooperation in the field of scientific research and teaching and/or the exercise of the arts and their teaching;
- to support the use and application of university research results and/or the practical accessibility of the arts;
- to sustain the resources.

The universities are legal entities under public law having their **own legal personality**. They act free from any instructions and regulate their specific matters autonomously in their statutes. The Federal Minister has legal supervision of their activities. There are no provisions for the Federal Minister to perform any other type of supervision, for example, to review whether their activities are appropriate and economical. The university councils of the different universities are responsible for reviewing legality and efficiency. They are, in fact, the supervisory bodies in the day-to-day routine of university activities.

#### 3.1.2 The Individual Universities

The following universities exist:

- University of Vienna (*Universität Wien*)
- University of Graz (*Universität Graz*)
- University of Innsbruck (*Universität Innsbruck*)

- Medical University of Vienna (*Medizinische Universität Wien*)
- Medical University of Graz (*Medizinische Universität Graz*)
- Innsbruck Medical University (*Medizinische Universität Innsbruck*)
- University of Salzburg (*Universität Salzburg*)
- Vienna University of Technology (*Technische Universität Wien*)
- Graz University of Technology (*Technische Universität Graz*)
- University of Mining Leoben (*Montanuniversität Leoben*)
- University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (*Universität für Bodenkultur Wien*)
- University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna (*Veterinärmedizinische Universität Wien*)
- Vienna University of Economics and Business (*Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien*)
- Johannes Kepler University Linz (*Universität Linz*)
- University of Klagenfurt (*Universität Klagenfurt*)
- University of Applied Arts Vienna (*Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien*)
- University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (*Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien*)
- Mozarteum University Salzburg (*Universität Mozarteum Salzburg*) – with an external department in Innsbruck
- University of Music and Performing Arts Graz (*Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Graz*) – with an institute in Oberschützen
- University of Art and Design Linz (*Universität für künstlerische und industrielle Gestaltung Linz*)
- Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (*Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien*)
- University for Continuing Education Krems, Danube University Krems (*Universität für Weiterbildung Krems, Donau-Universität Krems*)

A university's scope of action in teaching and research activities and/or the artistic practice comprises all studies and branches of research and arts covered by the university. Changes may only be made by way of the performance agreements.



### 3.1.3 Bodies

Universities are now **headed** by a university council (*Universitätsrat*), a senate (*Senat*), a rectorate (*Rektorat*), and a rector (*Rektor/in*). Senates may set up decentralised collegial boards (*Kollegialorgane*) – with or without decision-making competences; they must set up specific collegial boards with decision-making powers. The senate must approve decisions of all collegial boards.

The **university council** (five, seven or nine members) has a strategic function and a supervisory function, as well as the task of tendering, electing or dismissing the rector and the vice-rector(s). The strategic tasks primarily relate to the approval of the development plan (*Entwicklungsplan*), the intra-university structural organisation (organisational plan), and the drafting of the performance and development agreements (*Leistungs- und Gestaltungsvereinbarungen*) with the federal authorities, as well as to arrange for external evaluations and to be involved in decisions on the range of studies and in the drawing up of curricula. The supervisory function, including the supervision of the legality and efficiency, comprises the approval of the knowledge survey and the closing of accounts.

The **senate** (eighteen to twenty-six members) is the executive body of a university; traditional co-determination is concentrated in this body. Its main tasks are the following:

- to enact and amend the statute;
- to issue the curricula for degree programmes and certificate university programmes for further education;
- to set up collegial boards with or without decision-making competences, as well as to approve their decisions;
- to prepare a short list of three for the election by the university council;
- to exercise various rights of co-determination in matters of the rectorate and the university council.

The **rectorate** (one rector and up to four vice-rectors) is the actual operational body of a university. All university facilities are under its control. All central executive tasks are vested in the rectorate, in particular the following:

- to prepare decisions for the university council and the senate;
- to appoint the intra-university executive staff;
- to allocate budget and human resources;

- to enter into intra-university target agreements;
- to draw up a development plan;
- to submit reports;
- to make evaluations.

The rectorate's members are elected by the university council on the basis of short lists of three prepared by the senate (for the rector) and by the rector (for the vice-rectors).

The **rector** is the chairperson of a rectorate; she/he represents the university vis-à-vis the Federal Minister when entering into performance and development agreements, she/he appoints the university professors on the basis of proposals by an appointment committee, and signs the employment contracts of the university staff members and is their highest superior.

The first-instance body responsible for the implementation of all **legal matters regulating university studies** (which does not include admission; ► 3.2.3) is defined in greater detail in the statute of a university. Appeals and decisions in these matters shall be submitted to the Federal Administrative Court (*Bundesverwaltungsgericht*). However, prior to being forwarded the senate is entitled to give its opinion.

All collegial bodies shall consist of at least 40% **women**.

### 3.1.4 Structure

Universities are free to design their **structural organisation** (e.g. faculties, departments, institutes, university libraries, service facilities, etc.).

### 3.1.5 Funding and Infrastructure

The state is obliged to provide the universities with funds. The university budget of the federal authorities – just like the total federal budget – is decided by the National Council upon proposal by the federal government in the form of the **Federal Budget Act** (*Bundesfinanzgesetz*).

The responsible Federal Minister enters into a **performance agreement** with every university for a term of three years (first effective since 2007). The Federal Government allocates to the universities an annual **global amount** (*Global-*

*beitrag*) based on the respective performance agreements. The statutory budget regulations of the federal authorities are not applied.

The **development plan** serves as a strategic planning instrument and is the basis for a performance agreement, presenting the university's staffing strategy for the two following performance agreement periods.

The **basic budget** (*Grundbudget*) is allocated to the different universities on the basis of negotiations of their performance agreements. The following criteria apply: requirements, demand, performance, and objectives of society. Based on the substance laid down by law, the university submits a proposal for the performance agreements.

The amount of **structural funds available for the higher education area** is distributed among the universities in line with a formula, based on indicators established by decree.

If special funding is required, e.g. for particular projects regarding the creation or advancement of a national higher education area, the Federal Minister may conclude annual **development agreements** with the individual universities.

In addition to state funding, the universities have **additional funding sources**. Since they have become fully fledged legal entities, they may acquire property, conduct research on a commission basis, etc., and they can use this income for meeting their tasks as universities. Moreover, a large part of the money available to the Fund for the Promotion of Scientific Research, which is fed from the federal budget, is allocated to the universities.

The universities are obliged to introduce a university-specific **accounting system**, including income and expenditure accounting, which replaces the government's cameralistic style of accounting and is guided by commercial accounting principles. They must present to the Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy (*Bundesministerin bzw. Bundesminister für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft*) an opening balance sheet as well as – subsequently – regular financial statements and knowledge surveys. The Federal Minister is required to report to the National Council.

Before assuming **liabilities** or taking up loans that exceed the EUR 10,000,000 limit, the university must seek the approval of the Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy.

The **University for Continuing Education Krems** is financed from federal funds and funds of the federal province of Lower Austria, as well as from course fees for the certificate university programmes for further education (*Universitätslehrgänge*).

### 3.1.6 Specific Features

Some facilities of the universities of medicine (faculties) also serve as public hospitals, in addition to engaging in teaching and research. The **university clinics** (*Universitätskliniken*) are those institutes of the Medical Universities and the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Linz (*Medizinische Fakultät der Universität Linz*) that provide medical services directly to patients, as part of their hospital operations (e.g. internal medicine, ophthalmology, accident surgery). **Clinical institutes**, however, provide these medical services only indirectly to patients (e.g. virology, hygiene, clinical pathology). A number of coordinating mechanisms with the respective hospital providers must be observed in the clinical sector.

By the same token, the facilities of the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna provide the same services of a **veterinary hospital**.

The **Art Gallery** (*Gemäldegalerie*) and the **Collection of Copperplate Engravings** (*Kupferstichkabinett*) of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (*Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien*) hold a special organisational position.

The **Austrian Institute of Historical Research** (*Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, IÖG*), formerly an independent institute, has now been established as scientific organisational unit at the University of Vienna.

According to the Concordat of 1933 between the Holy See and the Republic of Austria (*Konkordat zwischen dem Heiligen Stuhle und der Republik Österreich*), and/or the federal law on the external legal relations of the Protestant church (*Bundesgesetz über äußere Rechtsverhältnisse der Evangelischen Kirche*) of 1961, the respective churches have certain participatory competences regarding the studies of Protestant and Catholic **theology**. Moreover, on the basis of the Concordat, there are regulations for the schools of theology for students to transfer to a university for studying and/or to be awarded an academic degree by a university.

Finally, there are also guarantees that a **university sports institute** (*Universitäts-Sportinstitut*) is to be set up at every university location, which is made available to the students, the graduates, and the staff of the respective public and private universities, providers of university of applied sciences degree programmes and university colleges of teacher training for sports activities and sports competitions.

## 3.2 Studies

### 3.2.1 Degree Programmes

The university senates decide on the development of study courses and the concrete **degree programmes** (ordentliche Studien) and **further-education programmes** (certificate university programmes for further education, *Universitätslehrgänge* ► 3.2.2) within the framework of the teaching and research resources at their disposal. Universities may set up bachelor, master, and doctoral programmes, but also – if required – continue diploma programmes according to the old system. Its range of studies is subject of the performance agreements between the respective university and the federal authorities.

The law stipulates **ten groups of studies**:

- Studies in Arts and Humanities
- Studies in Engineering Sciences
- Art studies
- Teacher training studies
- Medical studies
- Studies in the Natural Sciences
- Law studies
- Studies in Social and Economic Sciences
- Theological studies
- Studies in Veterinary Medicine
- Interdisciplinary studies

Every degree programme set up by a university must be clearly attributable to one of the aforementioned groups, since this determines the academic degree (► 3.2.6).

Bachelor and master degree programmes that provide **teacher training** (*Lehramt*) for elementary schools (*Volksschulen*), special need schools (*Sonderschulen*), polytechnical schools (*Polytechnische Schulen*), secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*), "New Middle Schools" ("*Neue Mittelschulen*") or for teaching in the area of vocational training may only be offered as joint programmes together with one (or several) university colleges of teacher education.

Whenever necessary, a student may follow an **individual study** programme – with the approval of the university, though – which will be a combination of examination subjects from different diploma, bachelor, and master degree programmes.

The **University for Continuing Education Krems** offers only doctoral studies.

The **academic year** at universities begins on 1 October and ends on 30 September, consisting of the winter semester, the summer semester and the periods during which courses are not held (lecture free time). Exceptions apply for the clinical internship year (*Klinisch-Praktisches Jahr*). The senate of a university may decide on detailed regulations.

The Universities Act (*Universitätsgesetz, UG*) 2002 stresses the principle of national and international mobility of the students.

### 3.2.2 Certificate University Programmes for Further Education

Certificate university programmes for further education are the main form of continuing education within the university sector. The senate of the university in question decides on the range of continuing-education courses at the university, and it may establish **internationally customary master degrees**, whenever the certificate university programmes for further education are comparable to the respective master degree programmes with regard to admission conditions, material content and scope. In all other cases, the title "*Akademischer ...*" or "*Akademische ...*" ("Academic ...") together with an attribute characterising the contents of the certificate university programme for further education may be awarded, provided that the certificate university programme for further education in question comprises a minimum of 60 ECTS credits (► 3.2.4).

The **University for Continuing Education Krems** is explicitly in charge of further education at the university level, especially in the form of certificate university programmes for further education.

### 3.2.3 Admission to Studies

Admission to a degree programme **requires** the following:

- the general university entrance qualification (*allgemeine Universitätsreife*);
- the specific university entrance qualification (*besondere Universitätsreife*) for the chosen study course;
- knowledge of the German language;
- proof of artistic aptitude (*Nachweis der künstlerischen Eignung*) in case of arts studies;
- proof of aptitude for physical/motor skills (*Nachweis der körperlich-motorischen Eignung*) when wishing to follow a teacher training programme for the subject physical education and sports (*Bewegung und Sport*) and for the study course of sports science (*Sportwissenschaften*);
- confirmation that the selection procedure was passed in case of studies that require an admission examination.

Possession of the **general university entrance qualification** for bachelor and diploma degree studies shall be certified by the following documents:

- Austrian secondary-school leaving certificate (*Reifezeugnis/Maturazeugnis*), including a certificate of the TVE Diploma Examination (*Zeugnis über die Berufsreifeproofung*);
- university entrance qualification certificate (*Studienberechtigungszzeugnis*) for the respective degree programme;
- a foreign certificate which on the basis of an agreement under international law, of a nostrification, or a decision taken by the rectorate on a case-by-case basis is equivalent to one of the aforementioned Austrian certificates;
- IB Diploma;
- European Baccalaureate (EB) diploma (*Europäisches Abiturzeugnis*);

- a document certifying the completion of studies of at least three years (180 ECTS credits) at a recognised domestic or foreign post-secondary educational institution.

The admission requirement for art studies is the successful passing of an admission examination, as proof of the artistic aptitude; the secondary school-leaving examination is required for only a few studies. A minimum age of 17 years is required for enrolling as a degree programme student, or 15 years in exceptional cases when studying instruments.

Proof of the general university entrance qualification for **master degree programmes** is to have completed a relevant bachelor degree programme or an equivalent to it. Each university shall ensure that a person completing a bachelor degree programme is entitled to enrol in at least one relevant master degree programme without additional admission requirements; for the admission to other master degree programmes, the university may, as required, request additional qualitative requirements.

For **doctoral programmes** it is necessary to have completed a relevant master degree programme or diploma programme or an equivalent.

Whenever an applicant has obtained a **foreign admission title** (*ausländischer Zugangstitel*), its equivalence to one of the aforementioned Austrian admission titles must be reviewed. In many cases, equivalence has been determined by multilateral and/or bilateral agreements, such as, for example, for a major part of the secondary school-leaving certificates of European states on the basis of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region ("Lisbon Recognition Convention") of 1997. In all other cases, equivalence must be decided on a case by case basis; if necessary, supplementary examinations may be required as an admission condition.

**Specific university qualification** means that in addition to the general university entrance qualification, proof must be given that the study-specific admission requirements are met, including the right to immediate admission to a degree programme, as they exist in the country issuing the document that is proof of the general university entrance qualification. If, for example, the existence of a limit on the number of students (*numerus clausus*) is an admission requirement for a specific degree programme, an applicant having a secondary school-leaving



certificate from that state must prove the existence of a limit on the number of students in order to be admitted to the respective degree programme in Austria. EU citizens require no special university entrance qualification.

As far as Austrian secondary school-leaving certificates are concerned, **supplementary examinations** may have to be taken for specific subjects in the degree programme, in accordance with the University Entrance Qualification Degree (*Universitätsberechtigungsverordnung, UBVO*). This shall also apply by analogy to university entrance certificates not issued in Austria.

The senate is entitled to establish that **unacceptable study conditions** would prevail if all foreign and stateless applicants were admitted without any restriction, on account of the proportion between teachers and students. In such a case the senate may establish and announce restrictions on the admission of foreign and stateless applicants. EU and EEA citizens and certain other groups of persons, for example refugees or applicants under a mobility programme, are exempt from such regulations.

Special admission procedures apply for studies that are much in demand, especially for **human medicine and dental medicine**. For these studies admission may be linked to the passing of an **selection procedure** (*Auswahlverfahren*). Similarly, the rectorate can determine the number of students and restrict admission by means of a selection procedure for master degree and PhD programmes that are offered exclusively in a **foreign language**.

For training programmes for **teaching** at schools or at elementary educational institutions, a **selection procedure** providing proof of the aptitude for the desired profession is compulsory.

For every further semester, for which study activities are planned, the university must receive the **notification of continuation of enrolment** (*Fortsetzungsmeldung*).

For those required to pay a **tuition fee** (► 3.3.1), the payment thereof is a requirement to render the admission valid for the respective semester. All students must also pay the **students' union fee** (*ÖH-Beitrag*) for every semester (► 7).

The **rectorate** is responsible for all decisions on admission.

### 3.2.4 Curriculum

For each degree programme that a university sets up they must draw up a **curriculum** as well as **examination regulations** (*Prüfungsordnung*). The senate must create a commission with decision-making powers for this purpose. The curriculum is the central document of every degree programme. It includes, in particular, the qualification profile and governs the structure of the respective degree programme, as well as the examination subjects and the courses required prior to taking an examination, other achievements (always defining the scope of the achievement in ECTS credits), and the way in which examinations must be taken. The orientation period shall provide students of bachelor and diploma degree programmes with an overview of the most important contents of the study programme. Curricula and changes thereto shall be submitted to the rectorate for its opinion prior to decision-making, curricula of theological degree programmes shall furthermore be submitted to the competent ecclesiastical institutions, and curricula for training programs for teaching at schools or at elementary educational institutions shall also be submitted to the Quality Assurance Council for Teacher Training for their opinion.

The scope of a degree programme must be indicated in terms of the credits established under the European Course Credit Transfer System (**ECTS**).

ECTS is an important information tool. Its original purpose was cross-border mobility, i.e. providing the home institution with the most precise information possible on the range of studies offered at those foreign institutions where a specific section of the studies was taken, but also giving specific information on the extent to which the student in question met the requirements of the foreign institution.

In consequence, every institution presents

- in detail the range of its courses for all or certain degree programmes (a general overview) and
- the workload of a specific student (specific information in individual cases).

Essential components of ECTS are the **information package**, i.e. a precise break-down of the range of courses, the **credits** (1 academic year = 60 credits, with the decisive factor being the workload of an average student with hours in

attendance and all other work items in connection with a course, 1 credit being equivalent to 25 hours of study), and the **transcript of records**, which is a confirmation of the courses and examinations taken and the credits earned.

The workload must comprise:

- for bachelor degree programmes – 180 or 240 ECTS credits;
- for master degree programmes – a minimum of 60 credits;
- for diploma programmes – 240 to 360 ECTS credits;
- for doctoral studies the duration is uniformly three years without the allocation of ECTS.

### 3.2.5 Examinations and Academic Theses

The **examination regulations** for the individual curricula must be laid down by the responsible collegial board. This includes, in particular, regulations concerning the method and purpose of examinations and the way in which they are organised. As a result, the universities have adequate leeway in designing examinations.

The final examinations are the bachelor, master or diploma examination, as well as the doctoral examination (*Rigorosum*). Moreover, one to two **bachelor papers** (*Bachelorarbeiten*) must be written in the course of the degree programme. For the master degree programme and for the diploma programme a **master thesis or a diploma thesis** (*Master- bzw. Diplomarbeit*) is required, and for doctoral programmes a **doctoral thesis** (**Dissertation**) is a requirement; this must be an independent scientific or artistic piece of work. For certificate university programmes for further education ending in a master degree, a **master thesis** or a comparable achievement is required. In the treatment of the topic and the supervision of students, regard shall be given to the provisions of the **Copyright Act** (*Urheberrechtsgesetz*).

The **positive results** at examinations and regarding scientific or artistic theses are graded

- "excellent" (*sehr gut*) (1);
- "good" (*gut*) (2);
- "satisfactory" (*befriedigend*) (3) or;
- "sufficient" (*genügend*) (4);

the negative result is graded

- "insufficient" (*nicht genügend*) (5).

Intermediate assessments are not admissible. Whenever this type of grading is impossible or inappropriate, the positive grade must be "successfully completed" (*mit Erfolg teilgenommen*) and the negative grade must read "unsuccessfully completed" (*ohne Erfolg teilgenommen*). Examinations that consist of several subjects or parts may only be given a positive grade if every subject or part received a positive grade.

As a matter of principle, examinations with a negative grade can be **repeated** three times. When an examination is repeated for the third time, it must be taken before a commission. The statute of every university must determine whether and how many additional examinations are admissible.

A negative result at the last admissible repetition of an examination leads to the **exclusion** from studying at the university at which that last repetition of the examination took place. It is admissible to resume the same degree programme at another Austrian university. It is also possible at all times to change to another degree programme at the same university. Successfully passed examinations may be taken into account for the new studies in any event.

Examinations that were taken in the course of other studies or at another recognised Austrian or foreign post-secondary educational institution (*postsekundäre Bildungseinrichtung*), at a college for higher vocational education (*berufsbildende höhere Schule*), a secondary school with a particular emphasis on music (*Musikgymnasium*), a school for the training of teachers and non-teaching supervisory staff (*Höhere Anstalt für Lehrer- und Erzieherbildung*), another recognised Austrian educational institution, where admission requires the general university entrance qualification, or which were taken at the end of a former university-level course (*Lehrgang universitären Charakters*), must be **recognised** by way of official notification, to the extent that they are equivalent to the examinations required by the curriculum. The examinations taken for a subject at an Austrian university or at a university in the European Union or the European Economic Area must be recognised for the same subject in the respective programme of another Austrian university in any event if the ECTS credits (► 3.2.4) are the same or deviate from each other only slightly. Recognitions may be laid down in

general in the curriculum or be granted by way of official notification in individual cases. This is important mainly for participating in mobility programmes. Analogous arrangements as for examinations apply to scientific and artistic theses.

There are several multilateral and bilateral **agreements** on the recognition of examinations.

It is not allowed to **appeal** (*Berufung*) against an examination grade. If the organisation of the examination, at which the negative grade was obtained, had major shortcomings, the body responsible for the law regulating university studies must repeal this examination by way of official notification upon application of the student. A student's participation in the examination that was repealed shall not be counted against the admissible number of times the student may take the examination.

A copy of each academic thesis shall be delivered to the **university library**.

### 3.2.6 Academic Degrees

Upon successful completion of everything required by a particular curriculum, the relevant academic degree is awarded by way of a written **official notification** (*Bescheid*) promptly, at the latest, though, within one month after satisfaction of the requirements. The official notification must indicate, in particular, the completed study programme and the academic degree and the legal basis (i.e. the Universities Act 2002 and the relevant curriculum).

The denomination of the **academic degrees** shall be laid down in the curriculum. The most important examples are:

Bachelor's degrees:

- Bachelor of Arts BA
- Bachelor of Science BSc

Master's degrees:

- Diplom-Ingenieur/Diplom-Ingenieurin DI or Dipl.-Ing.
- Master of Arts MA
- Master of Science MSc

Diploma degrees (*to be discontinued*):

- Diplom-Ingenieur/Diplom-Ingenieurin     DI or Dipl.-Ing.
- *Doktor/Doktorin der gesamten Heilkunde* Dr. med. univ.
- *Doktor/Doktorin der Zahnheilkunde* Dr. med. dent.
- *Magister/Magistra ...*     Mag.

Doctoral degrees:

- Doktor/Doktorin ...     Dr. ...
- Doctor of Philosophy     PhD

Master's degrees of continuing education:

- Master of Arts     MA
- Master of Science     MSc

If a degree programme is completed on the basis of a **jointly offered diploma programme**, such as joint, double or multiple degree programmes (*gemeinsame Studienprogramme*), it is admissible under certain conditions that the academic degree is awarded in one joint document, together with the partner university (universities).

For the purpose of supporting international mobility of graduates, students are entitled to be issued a **Diploma Supplement** pursuant to Article IX.3 of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, in connection with the official notification of being awarded the academic degree.

The Diploma Supplement aims at promoting transparency in higher education and at facilitating academic and professional recognition, as well as at allowing an informed assessment of the qualifications obtained. It is designed to be of benefit for the persons concerned, for employers, and educational institutions.

The Diploma Supplement is not a curriculum vitae, it is not a substitute for the original qualification or a transcript. It is not an automatic guarantee for the recognition of completed studies.

The Diploma Supplement is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content, and status of the studies attended and successfully completed by the individual named on the original official notification awarding the degree to which this supplement is appended. It should be free from any value judgments, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. It should provide information on the following eight sections, which are a combination of

general statements on the specific degree programme and the results of the specific graduate:

- information identifying the holder of the qualification;
- information identifying the qualification;
- information on the level of the academic degree;
- information on the contents and the results achieved;
- information on the function of the qualification;
- additional information;
- certification of the Supplement;
- information on the Austrian higher education system.

Holders of a academic degree awarded by a recognised Austrian or foreign post-secondary educational institution may **use** these degrees in their original form in Austria. In this context, "Mag.", "Dr." or "Dipl.-Ing." ("DI") must be put in front of the name, while the other academic degrees must be indicated after the name. In the case of foreign academic degrees, the position in connection with the name derives from the regulations and/or customs prevailing in the home country. Academic degrees from an EU or an EEA country as well as from Switzerland may also be **entered** in abbreviated form in public documents.

If an Austrian academic degree is required for the exercise of a certain professional activity – i.e. if the activity falls under an area with statutory regulations and the professional recognition pursuant to EU law does not apply – holders may apply to a university with subject-matter competence for **nostrification** (*Nostrifizierung*) of their foreign academic degree. The nostrification procedure is not a degree programme but an administrative procedure which is regulated in detail in the university statutes. In a few exceptional cases (e.g. regarding many fields of study from Italy or Croatia) bilateral agreements, instead of nostrification, allow equivalence to be established by the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy.

### 3.2.7 Distance Learning

The **distance-learning programme** is primarily provided for employed persons, persons with care commitments and persons in regions remote from universities interested in studying. Handicapped persons may also benefit from this type of

studying, since limited mobility is not as important as in the case of conventional programmes requiring student presence.

On the basis of a cooperation agreement with the **FernUniversität Hagen** (Germany), a distance teaching university, it is possible for students of that university who live in Austria to receive subject-related and social guidance and counseling at the distance-learning centre of the University of Linz and its offices in Bregenz, Rottenmann, Saalfelden, Villach, and Vienna.

There are also the distance-learning programmes of the **Open University** (United Kingdom) which are also monitored by the distance-learning centres and must be pursued in the English language.

The European Association of Distance Learning Universities (**AADTU**) offers the most important institutional framework for European cooperation in distance learning. It offers Austrian students access to another 15 distance-learning facilities at 60 EuroStudyCentres in Europe.

Distance learning may also be set up with **Austrian universities**. Furthermore, distance-learning units may be offered for every study programme. The use of new media is of central significance in this connection. The University of Linz, for example, has been offering law studies with multi-media support as a distance-learning programme since the winter semester of 2001.

## 3.3 Tuition Fees

### 3.3.1 Introduction

Generally, students, who are Austrian nationals or nationals of an **EU or EEA country** or of Switzerland, pay no tuition fee. If they exceed the prescribed duration of one part of a diploma programme by more than two semesters, though (the duration of compulsory military or community service is exempt), they too shall pay tuition fees in an amount of **EUR 363.36** per semester. The tuition fee is raised by 10% if it is paid during the additional period (ending on 30 November for the winter semester and on 30 April for the summer semester).

Students from **third countries** must pay a tuition fee of **EUR 726.72** per semester.



Students, who have been admitted to follow **several programmes** at several universities, only have to pay their tuition fee once.

Students who are **on leave** for a specific semester do not have to pay a tuition fee. Leave may be granted upon application in serious cases for a maximum of two semesters per incident. In such cases, students are not allowed to participate in courses, to take examinations, or to submit and have assessed pieces of scientific work and pieces of art work.

The tuition fee must be paid **in advance** of every semester. Together with the tuition fee, the student fee for membership in the Austrian Union of Students ("students' union fee", "*ÖH-Beitrag*") is collected, as well as possible special fees (at present premium payments for the accident and third-party liability insurance covering students). Payment of the tuition fee, the student fee, and the special fee is a requirement for admission or continuation of one's studies. The universities must communicate the relevant student data to the Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy in order to ensure collection of the fees. The Federal Computing Center is in charge of collection.

The **tuition fees** remain with the respective university. The tuition fees of students who pursue a programme set up jointly by several universities or who have been admitted to several programmes at several universities, must be shared by the universities involved.

When paying their tuition fee, students are entitled to choose from among the possible **special-purpose dedications** of the tuition fees which the senate established.

When attending **certificate university programmes for further education**, participants must pay a course fee (*Lehrgangsbeitrag*). This must be fixed giving due consideration to the actual costs of the certificate university programme for further education. Degree students must pay the course fee on top of their tuition fee. Persons receiving study grants, however, will be granted a reduction from the course fee upon application, due consideration being given to their financial possibilities. The senate fixes the course fee. Non-degree seeking students, who have only been admitted to attend a certificate university programme for further education, must pay the course fee but no tuition fee. Neither a course fee, nor a tuition fee is required for attending a preparation course.

For studying at a university and attending a **university of applied sciences course of study** at the same time, the tuition fee must be paid twice, if both higher education institutions require payment of a tuition fee.

### 3.3.2 Remission and Reimbursement

The rectorate shall **grant a remission** of the tuition fee, in particular:

- to students for the semesters in the course of which they will attend courses or spend practical training periods in the framework of trans-national EU, state-run or university-level mobility programmes, if they can provide proof of this;
- to students for semesters which they will spend abroad on account of binding requirements in their curriculum;
- to foreign students whose home country or the university which they attended most recently in that country also grants students with Austrian nationality a remission of their tuition fee;
- to convention refugees;
- to students in case of disabilities, illness, pregnancy or employment.

In line with the priorities established by Austria regarding measures to support and promote the economic and social development of developing countries, as well as to support the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy is authorised to designate, by way of decree (currently: Tuition Fee Decree 2004), those countries whose nationals may be reimbursed the tuition fee.

The **decision** on the reimbursement to such persons lies with the individual university. This means that such persons must pay the tuition fee before they file an application for reimbursement. Reimbursement is handled as part of the private-sector administration on the basis of applications by students and must be completed within four weeks as of the filing of the application. However, there is no legal title to be granted reimbursement.

## 3.4 Members

### 3.4.1 Students

Their status and representation is governed by the Union of Students Act 2014 (*Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaftsgesetz 2014*) (► 7). The definition of students pursuant to the law includes students during their clinical internship year (*Klinisch-Praktisches Jahr*).

### 3.4.2 Research Fellows

These are doctoral students or doctoral graduates (post docs) in receipt of grants to work on a research project at the university. The award of a grant shall not give rise to an employment contract with the university or alter the beneficiary's existing terms of employment.

### 3.4.3 Physicians in Specialists' Training

They are temporarily employed by the university for the duration of their training. Their duties shall be determined by the medical training regulations.

### 3.4.4 Scientific and Artistic University Staff

The **university professors** are responsible for research, or the advancement and appreciation of the arts, and for teaching in their field, and shall be employed by the university on a temporary or permanent basis. They are full-time or part-time employees. Both Austrian and foreign researchers or artists whose scientific or artistic and professional credentials qualify them for the subjects related to the positions to be filled may be appointed as university professors. Following an appointment procedure (conducted by an appointment committee set up by the senate), they are appointed by the rector. On conclusion of the employment contract the university professor are granted a *venia docendi* for the subject for which he/she has been appointed. A previously acquired licence to teach degree is not be affected thereby. The *venia docendi* expires upon termination of employment. A shortened appointment procedure must be followed, if the appointment is to be made for not more than five years.

**The scientific and artistic staff in research, art, and teaching** must be appropriately qualified for the employment envisaged. They are, in their subjects, obliged to contribute to the fulfilment of the university's tasks in respect of research, or the advancement and appreciation of the arts, and teaching. They are employed by the university on a full- or part-time basis.

### 3.4.5 Non-Academic University Staff

The members of the general university staff include the administrative, technical, library, and nursing staff, as well as the physicians who are assigned exclusively to performing their duties at a public hospital. They must possess appropriate professional qualifications for their duties. They are employed by the university on a full- or part-time basis.

### 3.4.6 Non-Tenured Associate Professors

Outside lecturers are persons who were granted the teaching qualification (*venia docendi*) for a scientific or artistic subject by the university, on account of their scientific or artistic qualification. In this function they are in no employment relationship to the university. They are granted the teaching qualification by the rectorate after conducting a habilitation procedure (by a habilitation committee set up by the senate). The application for the teaching qualification must fall within the scope of the university or must constitute a meaningful supplement to it. The right to freely exercise scientific or artistic teaching activities at that university by using its facilities, as well as to supervise and assess scientific or artistic theses is linked to the granting of the teaching qualification. The prerequisite for being granted the teaching qualification is evidence of an outstanding scientific or artistic qualification, as well as of the didactic skills of the applicant. The granting of the teaching qualification neither gives rise to an employment relationship nor does it change an existing employment relationship to the university. Thus, the denomination is "non-tenured associate professor" (*Privatdozent/in*).

### 3.4.7 Professors Emeriti and Retired Professors

They are not in an active employment status to the Federal Government or the university. They are, however, entitled to retain their license to teach (*venia do-*

centi) at the university where they were employed prior to their retirement and to give lectures and hear examinations under such authorisation.

### 3.4.8 Employment Law

Not all members of the university (► 3.4.1 to 3.4.7) actually belong to the **university staff**. This was pointed out in connection with the individual groups. The staff of a university in the proper sense of the word consists of the scientific and artistic university staff, on the one hand, and the general university staff, on the other hand.

Since 1 January 2004 every university acts also as an **employer**; all new staff members are employees of their university. The **Federation of Universities** (*Dachverband der Universitäten*) signs collective contracts with the trade union. The university, as the employer, and the employees can agree on individual arrangements in the employment contracts. The law provides for the possibility, but not the certainty of a "tenure track".

The Labour Relations Act (*Arbeitsverfassungsgesetz*) applies to universities as it does to other enterprises. The interests of staff members are represented by **employees' council** (*Betriebsräte*). Currently employed tenured staff members continue to enjoy all their rights. The law changes the status of contractual employees of the federal government into that of **employees**, with the law on contractual employees in its respectively valid function forming part of the employment contract.

The employment contracts are concluded on the basis of the **Employees Act** (*Angestelltengesetz*) of 1921.

The **freedom** of the sciences and the arts, as well as academic freedom has been enshrined in the law. Nobody can be forced to perform any work contrary to his/her conscience. Every scientist has the right – irrespective of his/her status or age – to determine his/her research activities, as well as to perform sponsored or commissioned research projects. The exploitation rights regarding **inventions** belong to the university, which has to offer them to the inventors.

The rectorate must **advertise** all positions open for appointments. The advertising period must be at least three weeks.

**Employment contracts** are signed by the rector upon a proposal or after hearing the head of the organisational unit and the immediate superior of the position requiring appointment. Employment contracts for staff members working on scientific and/or artistic projects commissioned by third parties as well as for employees who are financed from earmarked funds for the promotion of research must be signed by the rector upon a proposal by the immediate superior.

Employment relations can be entered into for an **unlimited or limited term**. Unless there are statutory provisions to the contrary, limited term employment contracts shall not exceed six years, on pain of invalidity. Any further extension, which must be decided by the university management, must be for an unlimited term.

There is a **collective contract** (*Kollektivvertrag*) for university staff. This is what a typical university career path looks like: The first step to work one's way up after having finished a master or diploma degree programme is a position as university assistant for a fixed term of four to six years, during which the graduate shall complete his/her doctoral study programme. Prior to the end of the contract, employer and employee shall clarify whether the latter has a chance of continuing his/her scientific career at the respective university. He/she may then apply for a so-called "career position", a post-doc-position for a maximum period of six years as "assistant professor" (*Assistenzprofessorin bzw. Assistenzprofessor*).

For this position, the applicant must conclude a "qualification agreement" (*Qualifikationsvereinbarung*) with the university's management, which stipulates what goals the candidate must achieve in a period of up to six years – e.g. a habilitation or a certain amount of publications. At the end of the period it is checked if the goals have been achieved.

An assistant professor who fulfils the qualification agreement is employed for an unlimited period as "associate professor" (*Assoziierte Professorin bzw. Assoziierter Professor*). As a next step on the career ladder, the candidate can apply for the position of a university professor, in which case he/she must prove his-/herself – as hitherto – in an appointment procedure. As this appointment procedure remains, the new career model is not comparable to the US-American "tenure track".

In addition, there is another possibility for "senior scientists" or "senior artists", eligible for language and music teachers, for lab assistants or senior physicians, who do not pursue a university career. In any case, two negative assessments constitute a reason for termination.

The collective contract includes a **pension-fund arrangement** (*Pensionskassenvereinbarung*) for the scientific and artistic staff, in line with the **Company Pension Act** (*Betriebspensionsgesetz*).

### 3.5 Evaluation and Quality Assurance

The Universities Act 2002 requires universities to build up a quality management system in order to assure quality and performance.

The entire performance spectrum of a university is subject to evaluation. The areas to be evaluated must be determined in the performance agreement. The performance of the scientific and the artistic university staff must be evaluated at intervals lasting no longer than five years. Evaluations must be conducted on the basis of the specific international standards and in line with the statute of the university.

The results of the evaluations must be taken as a basis for the decisions of the university bodies. An assessment by the students of the teaching provided must be taken into account in the performance agreements.

## 4 Private Universities

In addition to the public universities there have been private universities in Austria since the year 2000. They require accreditation, i.e. public recognition as a higher education institution or higher education study, respectively. The legal basis is the **Private Universities Act** (*Privatuniversitätengesetz*, PUG) in conjunction with the **Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education** (*Hochschul-Qualitätssicherungsgesetz*, HS-QSG).

As per July 2014, the following institutions have been accredited as **private universities**:

- Catholic Theological Private University (Katholisch Theologische Privatuniversität Linz), Linz
- Webster University Vienna
- UMIT – Private University of Health Sciences, Medical Informatics and Technology (Private Universität für Gesundheitswissenschaften, Medizinische Informatik und Technik), Hall in Tirol
- Paracelsus Medical University (Paracelsus Medizinische Privatuniversität), Salzburg
- Anton Bruckner Private University (Anton Bruckner Privatuniversität), Linz
- New Design University (Privatuniversität der Kreativwirtschaft), St. Pölten
- Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna (Musik und Kunst Privatuniversität der Stadt Wien)
- Sigmund Freud University (Sigmund Freud Privatuniversität), Vienna
- MODUL University Vienna
- Private University Schloss Seeburg, Seekirchen am Wallersee
- Danube Private University (DPU), Krems an der Donau
- Karl Landsteiner University of Health Sciences (Karl Landsteiner Privatuniversität für Gesundheitswissenschaften), Krems an der Donau

The Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (Agentur für Qualitätssicherung und Akkreditierung Austria, **AQ Austria**) has been set up as the central body for accrediting private universities. It is responsible, in particular, for decisions on the accreditation of private universities (this includes the



accreditation of new institutions, as well as the accreditation of new degree programmes at already accredited institutions) and the supervision of already accredited private universities (this supervisory function ranges from the AQ Austria's mere right of information to the withdrawal of the accreditation).

The Board of AQ Austria puts the statutory requirements into more specific form by issuing **guidelines** on the requirements for application, standards for accreditation, etc.

The Board of AQ Austria consists of 14 **members**, eight of which shall have expertise in the international higher education sector, scientific qualification, and experience in the area of quality assurance; four shall be professionals and two student representatives. The members are appointed by the Federal Minister for Science, Research and Economy (*Bundesministerin bzw. Bundesminister für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft*). The term of office is five years. It is admissible to be re-appointed once. In the exercise of its office, the Board is not bound by any instructions.

The **Chairperson** and the Deputy Chairperson are appointed from among the AQ Austria members. Their term of office is five years. It is admissible to be re-appointed for one consecutive term of office.

The AQ Austria is subject to the **supervision** of the Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy.

The status of **students** at private universities and their representation is governed by the Union of Students Act (*Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschüler-schaftsgesetz*) 2014 (► 7).

Private universities decide autonomously on the collection of possible **tuition fees**.

## 5 Universities of Applied Sciences

### 5.1 Organisation

#### 5.1.1 Introduction

There is no legislation as such on the organisation of universities of applied sciences but only a few **organisational requirements** to provide for an orderly functioning of the studies.

University of Applied Sciences degree programmes are degree programmes at **university level** which serve to provide a scientifically founded training for specific professions. They are tailor-made to specific occupational fields.

The main **goals** are:

- to ensure practice-oriented training at university level;
- to communicate the skills needed for solving the tasks of the respective occupational field in line with the state of the art and practical requirements;
- to promote the permeability of the educational system and the flexibility of graduates regarding various occupations.

University of applied sciences degree programmes may be provided by the federal authorities and other legal entities under public and private law. A **provider** may maintain one or several institutions which are in charge of operating the degree programmes. The AQ Austria has to accredit the implementation of university of applied sciences degree programmes ("programme accreditation").

The university of applied sciences degree programmes are offered on a broader **regional** basis than the university programmes. Some of the institutions are also found outside of major conurbations.

The **AQ Austria** has been set up as the central body for the university of applied sciences sector. It is responsible for decisions on the accreditation of degree programmes as university of applied sciences degree programmes and on the withdrawal of such accreditations, as well as for the ongoing evaluation of the entire university of applied sciences sector and for advising the Federal Minister of Sci-

ence, Research and Economy (*Bundesministerin bzw. Bundesminister für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft*) on matters relating to the university of applied sciences sector and the allocation of federal funding.

The Board of AQ Austria puts the statutory requirements into more specific terms by issuing **guidelines** concerning the requirements for filing applications, evaluation standards, etc.

For further information on the Board of the AQ Austria ► 4.

### 5.1.2 The Individual Providers

At present, the following institutions act as providers of university of applied sciences degree programmes (listed in the order of the location of their head offices; frequently the programmes are also provided at other locations):

- Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschule Vorarlberg GmbH), Dornbirn
- Burgenland University of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschule Burgenland GmbH), Eisenstadt
- FH Joanneum (Fachhochschule Joanneum GmbH), Graz
- CAMPUS 02 University of Applied Sciences (CAMPUS 02 Fachhochschule der Wirtschaft GmbH), Graz
- MCI – Management Center Innsbruck Ltd. (Management Center Innsbruck GmbH), Innsbruck
- University of Applied Sciences Tyrol (fhg – Zentrum für Gesundheitsberufe Tirol GmbH), Innsbruck
- IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems (IMC Fachhochschule Krems GmbH), Krems an der Donau
- Kufstein University of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschule Kufstein Tirol Bildungs-GmbH)
- University of Applied Sciences for Health Professions Upper Austria (FH Gesundheitsberufe OÖ GmbH), Linz
- Salzburg University of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschule Salzburg GmbH)
- St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschule St. Pölten GmbH)

- Carinthia University of Applied Sciences – CUAS (Fachhochschule Kärnten Gemeinnützige Privatstiftung), Spittal an der Drau
- University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria – UASUA (FH OÖ Studienbetriebs GmbH Fachhochschul-Studiengänge Oberösterreich), Wels
- FHWien University of Applied Sciences of WKW (FHWien Fachhochschul-Studiengänge der Wirtschaftskammer Wien GmbH), Vienna
- University of Applied Sciences bfi Vienna (Fachhochschule des bfi Wien GmbH), Vienna
- FH Campus Wien (Fachhochschule Campus Wien), Vienna
- University of Applied Sciences Technikum Wien (Fachhochschule Technikum Wien), Vienna
- Lauder Business School, Vienna
- Ferdinand Porsche Distance-Learning FH (Ferdinand Porsche Fernfachhochschulstudiengänge GmbH), Wiener Neustadt
- University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt – FHWN (Fachhochschule Wiener Neustadt GmbH), Wiener Neustadt
- Federal Ministry of Defense and Sports (Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung und Sport), Wiener Neustadt

### 5.1.3 The Designation "University of Applied Sciences"

Upon application by the provider, institutions that provide university of applied sciences degree programmes may be awarded the designation "University of Applied Sciences" **by the Board of AQ Austria by way of official notification.**

In this connection, the following requirements must be met:

- a minimum of two degree programmes by the applicant institutions must have been recognised as university of applied sciences bachelor degree programmes with a subsequent university of applied sciences master degree programme or as university of applied sciences diploma programmes;
- a plan for the expansion of the institutions in question which establishes with plausibility that a minimum level of 1,000 study places will be reached within five years;

- evidence of an organisation that guarantees that teaching and the conduct of examinations are carried out autonomously, especially the existence of a University of Applied Sciences Board (*Fachhochschulkollegium*).

The **University of Applied Sciences Board** is responsible for implementing and organising the teaching and the examinations. It comprises the chairperson and the deputy chairperson, six programme directors, six representatives of the teaching and research staff as well as four representatives of the students. An institution with the designation "University of Applied Sciences" is largely autonomous in organising its teaching and its examinations, on account of the activities of the University of Applied Sciences Board, whereas in the case of other providers, the University of Applied Sciences Council is responsible for some of these tasks. As for the degree programmes as such, their contents, their qualifications under the law regulating university studies, and their assessment within Austria and/or on an international level, the designation "University of Applied Sciences" does not make any difference.

At present, 13 institutions have received the designation "University of Applied Sciences". They are specifically marked as "University of Applied Sciences" ("*Fachhochschule*") in the list in ► 5.1.2.

#### 5.1.4 Funding and Infrastructure

One characteristic feature of the universities of applied sciences sector is the system of **mixed funding** based on the standard cost system. The federal government bears a large part of the personell and running costs per study place (norm cost model). Further costs (for buildings, investments, etc.) are borne by the university of applied sciences provider (usually the governments of the federal provinces, regional and supra-regional territorial authorities or other public and private institutions assume part of the costs).

## 5.2 Studies

### 5.2.1 Objective of Education

The University of Applied Sciences Studies Act (*Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz*, FHStG) contains a general definition of the **teaching tasks** of the university of applied sciences degree programmes: to ensure practice-oriented training on the university level; to communicate the skills for solving the tasks of the respective occupational field in line with the state of the art and practical requirements; to promote the permeability of the educational system and the flexibility of graduates regarding various occupations. **Certificate university of applied sciences programmes for further education** provide the possibility for further education offerings (► 5.2.3).

Some of the main **principles** for designing the studies can also be found in the law (e.g. that the different scientific doctrines and scientific methods must be taken into account or the reference to the principle of the freedom of teaching in connection with the organisation of courses in the framework of the teaching tasks to be complied with, as well as the design of their contents and methodology); the detailed design, however, is left to the approval procedure by AQ Austria.

### 5.2.2 Degree Programmes

Studies are established as **university of applied sciences bachelor degree programmes** (180 ECTS credits) and **university of applied sciences master degree programme** (60 to 120 ECTS credits); in few cases **university of applied sciences diploma programmes** (240 to 300 ECTS credits) are still offered. There are no doctoral degree programmes in the university of applied sciences sector.

At present, there are about 370 university of applied sciences degree programmes. In addition to those organised as day courses, courses of study are also being offered to accommodate people holding a job, which take into account the specific requirements of working students – the courses are held in the evenings and on weekends. Some distance-learning modules are used. The professional practical training may be waived for those working in that specific field.

Moreover, several university of applied sciences degree programmes were set up for specific target groups; they allow graduates of colleges of higher vocational education (*berufsbildende höhere Schule*) to attain advanced qualifications.

- The **areas** in which university of applied sciences degree programmes may be offered have not been laid down by law. At present, such programmes are offered in the following areas:
- Health Sciences
- Engineering Sciences
- Media and Design
- Military and Police Sciences
- Natural Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Economic Sciences

The **academic year** begins on or around 1 October; the details, though, are left to the individual university of applied sciences providers.

### 5.2.3 Certificate University of Applied Sciences Programmes for Further Education

The providers are also entitled to offer certificate university of applied sciences programmes for further education in the subjects for which they run accredited university of applied sciences degree programmes. The internationally customary master degrees may be laid down in the respective curricula, whenever these courses of study are comparable to the respective master study courses with regard to admission conditions, material content, and scope. In all other cases, the title "Akademischer ..." or "Akademische ..." ("Academic ...") together with an attribute characterising the contents of the course of study may be awarded, provided that the course of study in question comprises a minimum of 60 ECTS credits (► 3.2.4).

### 5.2.4 Admission to Studies

Admission to a university of applied sciences bachelor degree programme and a university of applied sciences diploma programme requires the following:

- the general university entrance qualification or a professional qualification in the respective field;
- knowledge of the German language;

- successful completion of the admission procedure required for the degree programme.

The **general university entrance qualification** must be proven by either of the following documents:

- the Austrian secondary-school leaving certificate (*Reifezeugnis/Maturazeugnis*), including a certificate of the TVE Diploma Examination (*Zeugnis über die Berufsreifeprüfung*);
- a university entrance qualification certificate (*Studienberechtigungszugnis*) relevant to the respective university of applied sciences degree programme;
- a foreign certificate which on the basis of an agreement under international law, of a nostrification, or a decision taken by the rectorate on a case-by-case basis is equivalent to one of the aforementioned Austrian certificates;
- IB Diploma;
- European Baccalaureate (EB) diploma (*Europäisches Abiturzeugnis*);
- a document certifying the completion of studies of at least three years (180 ECTS credits) at a recognised Austrian or foreign post-secondary educational institution.

A special feature of the university of applied sciences sector is the admission requirement "**professional qualification in the specific field**" which is the result of stronger focus on occupational requirements. For the most part, entrants with professional qualifications must furnish evidence of additional examinations during their study.

Proficiency in the **German language** is a requirement for admission to most degree programmes, but also English degree programmes are offered increasingly. In that case, entrants must furnish proof of proficiency in the English language.

As study places are limited, an additional **admission procedure** must be followed whenever the number of applicants exceeds the number of study places.

Admission to a **university of applied sciences master degree programme** is conditional on the successful completion of a relevant university of applied sciences bachelor degree programme or of any other equivalent programme. Another requirement is proficiency in the German – or in some degree programmes



in the English – language as well as the completion of an admission procedure in the aforementioned cases.

Whenever an applicant has obtained a **foreign admission title** (*ausländischer Zugangstitel*), its equivalence to one of the aforementioned Austrian admission titles must be reviewed. In many cases, equivalence has been determined by agreements, such as, for example, for a major part of the secondary school-leaving certificates of European states on the basis of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region ("Lisbon Recognition Convention"). In all other cases, equivalence must be decided on a case by case basis; if necessary, supplementary examinations may be required as an admission condition.

### 5.2.5 Curriculum

The **curriculum** (*Studienplan*) is laid down for each degree programme by an expert panel and plays an important role in the programme accreditation by AQ Austria.

Unlike the university programmes, university of applied sciences diploma and bachelor degree programmes have a **practice-oriented** focus and therefore comprise in their curriculum an obligatory professional practical training. According to the regulations of the Board, attendance of the courses is mandatory.

The scope of a degree programme must be indicated in terms of the credits established under the European Course Credit Transfer System (**ECTS**) (► 3.2.4).

### 5.2.6 Examinations and Academic Theses

Each university of applied sciences degree programme has its own study law-based **examination regulations** as part of its statutes.

For **university of applied sciences bachelor degree programmes**, completion is based on papers written independently during the courses and an examination taken before a committee consisting of the following parts:

- oral examination on the submitted bachelor's papers as well as
- on the connections to relevant subjects in the curriculum.

University of applied sciences master degree programmes and university of applied sciences diploma programmes end with an examination taken before a committee, consisting of the following parts:

- The presentation of the diploma or master's thesis,
- an oral examination on the connections between the topic of the diploma or the master's thesis and the relevant subjects in the curriculum as well as
- an oral examination on other study related issues.

In the treatment of the topic and the supervision of students, regard shall be given to the provisions of the **Copyright Act** (*Urheberrechtsgesetz*).

Students are entitled to **repeat** failed final examinations of a course two times; the second repetition shall be held before an examination committee and can be held as an oral examination or as a written examination. The statutes can permit further resits. Students are entitled to repeat failed bachelor examinations held before a committee as well as failed comprehensive examinations held before a committee in university of applied sciences master or diploma degree programmes two times. The statutes can permit further resits.

Students who were excluded from a degree programme due to a negative assessment of the last permissible repetition of an examination shall be **excluded** from a renewed admission to the same degree programme. The recognition of positive assessments in other degree programmes is permissible.

Exams and other documented knowledge can be **recognised** on the basis of the mandatory courses, mostly by analogy with the university sector (► 3.2.5).

### 5.2.7 Academic Degrees

After completing the requirements of every curriculum, the respective academic degree is awarded. AQ Austria defines by decree the denomination of the academic degrees.

Academic degrees awarded are currently the following:

Table 1: Academic degrees

Group of studies	Academic degree followed by a reference to the respective group of disciplines	Abbreviations
Artistic studies	Bachelor of Arts in Arts and Design	BA <i>or</i> B.A.
	Master of Arts in Arts and Design	MA <i>or</i> M.A.
Studies in Engineering Sciences	Bachelor of Science in Engineering	BSc <i>or</i> B.Sc.
	Master of Science in Engineering	MSc <i>or</i> M.Sc.
	<i>Diplom-Ingenieur / Diplom-Ingenieurin für technisch-wissenschaftliche Berufe</i>	DI <i>or</i> Dipl.-Ing.
Studies in Social Sciences	Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences	BA <i>or</i> B.A.
	Master of Arts in Social Sciences	MA <i>or</i> M.A.
Studies in Economic Sciences	Bachelor of Arts in Business	BA <i>or</i> B.A.
	Master of Arts in Business	MA <i>or</i> M.A.
Studies in Military and Police Sciences	Bachelor of Arts in Military Services	BA <i>or</i> B.A.
	Master of Arts in Military Services	MA <i>or</i> M.A.
	Bachelor of Arts in Police Leadership	BA <i>or</i> B.A.
	Master of Arts in Security Management	MA <i>or</i> M.A.
Studies in Cultural Studies	Bachelor of Arts in Cultural Studies	BA <i>or</i> B.A.
	Master of Arts in Cultural Studies	MA <i>or</i> M.A.
Studies in Natural Sciences	Bachelor of Science in Natural Sciences	BSc <i>or</i> B.Sc.
	Master of Science in Natural Sciences	MSc <i>or</i> M.Sc.
Health Studies	Bachelor of Science in Health Studies	BSc <i>or</i> B.Sc.
	Master of Science in Health Studies	MSc <i>or</i> M.Sc.
Law Studies	Bachelor of Laws	LLB <i>or</i> LL.B
	Master of Laws	LLM <i>or</i> LL.M.

University of applied sciences providers may establish master degrees on the basis of completed **certificate university of applied sciences programme for further education**, in line with international customs, for example:

- Master of Arts MA *or* M.A.
- Master of Science MSc *or* M.Sc.

University of applied sciences degree programmes may be offered as **joint study programmes**, such as joint, double or multiple degree programmes (*gemeinsame Studienprogramme*), with one or several Austrian or foreign higher education institutions.

The academic degrees awarded for university of applied sciences bachelor degree programmes and university of applied sciences master degree programmes are to be used without the attribute "(FH)"; for graduates of former university of applied sciences diploma degrees it is inadmissible to use their academic degree without the attribute. Moreover, the comments on the **use** of academic degrees and their entry into documents made in connection with universities also apply here (► 3.2.6).

For the purpose of supporting international mobility of graduates, students are entitled to be issued a **Diploma Supplement** pursuant to Article IX.3 of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, in connection with the document on being awarded the academic degree (► 3.2.6).

A university of applied sciences master degree and/or diploma degree qualifies to pursue a subject-related doctoral degree programme at a university. The duration of the doctoral degree programme shall be prolonged by one or two semesters for university of applied sciences graduates compared to university graduates if the academic degree programme enabling admission to the doctoral study is longer than the respective university of applied sciences master or diploma degree programme.

If an Austrian academic degree is required for the exercise of a certain professional activity – i.e. if the activity falls under an area with statutory regulations and professional recognition pursuant to EU law does not apply – holders may apply for **nostrification** (*Nostrifizierung*) of their foreign academic degree to the University of Applied Sciences Council. The nostrification procedure is not a de-

gree programme but an administrative procedure which is regulated in detail by the provider.

## 5.3 Tuition Fees

The providers of university of applied sciences degree programmes or the universities of applied sciences are entitled, but not obligated, to collect a tuition fee of **EUR 363.36** per semester from students.

For studying at a **university** and attending a university of applied sciences course of study at the same time, the tuition fee must be paid twice, if both higher education institutions require payment of a tuition fee.

## 5.4 Members

### 5.4.1 Students

Their status and representation is governed by the Union of Students Act (*Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaftsgesetz*) 2014 (► 7).

### 5.4.2 Staff

The University of Applied Sciences Studies Act stipulates as one of the requirements for accrediting a university of applied sciences degree programme that the teaching be provided by a **teaching and research staff** with scientific, practical occupational, and pedagogic-didactic qualifications and that the requisite application-related research and development work be carried out to achieve the desired objectives and safeguard the principles.

There are **no specific statutory regulations for the staff** in the university of applied sciences sector. As a matter of principle, private-law contracts are the only basis of employment.

## 5.5 Quality Assurance

Universities of applied sciences are required to establish a **performance and quality management system**. They are furthermore subject to external quality assurance by **AQ Austria**. Accordingly, new degree programmes require accredi-

tation (programme accreditation), and changes to existing degree programmes require the AQ Austria's permission. The initial establishment of a university of applied sciences is also subject to an AQ Austria-coordinated accreditation (institutional accreditation). After a period of twelve years, the university of applied sciences providers must undergo a periodic certification procedure through audit.

## 6 University Colleges of Teacher Education

### 6.1 Organisation

#### 6.1.1 Introduction

In 2006 the Teacher Education Act (*Hochschulgesetz, HG*) 2005 entered into force. Starting in autumn of 2007, training, continuing and further education of compulsory school teachers and teachers of vocational schools was raised to the university level. The former education institutions at post-secondary level – colleges for teacher training (*Pädagogische Akademien*), colleges for the training of vocational teachers (*Berufspädagogische Akademien*), colleges for the training of religious education teachers (*Religionspädagogische Akademien*), in-service teacher training colleges (*Pädagogische Institute*), institutes for vocational teacher training (*Berufspädagogische Institute*), and institutes for religious education (*Religionspädagogische Institute*) – were converted into university colleges of teacher education and courses, often by merging several existing institutions.

University colleges of teacher education shall offer training, continuing and further education in pedagogical professions, especially in **teaching professions**. The teaching activities shall be scientifically founded and include aspects of human sciences, subject-related theory, and specialised pedagogy as well as a subject teacher training at (affiliated) partner schools (*Praxisschulen*).

Public university colleges of teacher education are federal institutions. With only one exception (see next paragraph), all university colleges of teacher education are subject to the **supervision** of the Federal Minister of Education and Women's Affairs (*Bundesministerin bzw. Bundesminister für Bildung und Frauen*).

The **University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy** (*Hochschule für Agrar- und Umweltpädagogik*) constitutes an exception, as pedagogic matters are subject to the supervision of the Federal Minister of Education and Women's Affairs; staff and financial matters are placed under the responsibility of the Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water

Management (*Bundesministerin bzw. Bundesminister für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft*).

## 6.1.2 The Individual University Colleges of Teacher Education

The law specifies the following **public** university colleges of teacher education:

- University College of Teacher Education Carinthia (Pädagogische Hochschule Kärnten)
- University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria (Pädagogische Hochschule Niederösterreich)
- University of Education Upper Austria (Pädagogische Hochschule Oberösterreich)
- University of Education Salzburg (Pädagogische Hochschule Salzburg)
- University of Teacher Education Styria (Pädagogische Hochschule Steiermark)
- Pedagogical University Tirol (Pädagogische Hochschule Tirol)
- University College of Teacher Education Vorarlberg (Pädagogische Hochschule Vorarlberg)
- University of Teacher Education Vienna (Pädagogische Hochschule Wien)
- University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy Vienna (Hochschule für Agrar- und Umweltpädagogik Wien)

In addition to the public university colleges of teacher education, the Federal Minister of Education and Women's Affairs may accredit **private** (mostly church-funded) university colleges of teacher education or private degree programmes. Currently, these are the following:

- Teacher Training College PH Burgenland (Private Pädagogische Hochschule Stiftung Burgenland)
- The Private University College of Education of the Diocese of Linz (Private Pädagogische Hochschule der Diözese Linz)
- Catholic University College for Education Graz (Private Pädagogische Hochschule der Stiftung der Diözese Graz-Seckau)



- University College of Teacher Education – Edith Stein (Private Pädagogische Hochschule der Hochschulstiftung der Diözese Innsbruck)
- The University College of Teacher Education Vienna/Krems, KPH (Private Pädagogische Hochschule der Hochschulstiftung der Erzdiözese Wien)
- Private Teacher Training Programme for Catholic Religion at Compulsory Schools, Catholic Higher Education Institution of Teacher Training Carinthia (Privater Studiengang für das Lehramt für katholische Religion an Pflichtschulen, Katholische Pädagogische Hochschuleinrichtung Kärnten)
- Private Teacher Training Programme for Islamic Religion at Compulsory Schools, Islamic Religious Community (Privater Studiengang für das Lehramt für islamische Religion an Pflichtschulen der Islamischen Glaubensgemeinschaft)
- Private Teacher Training Programme for Jewish Religion at Compulsory Schools, Lauder Chabad Campus Vienna (Privater Studiengang für das Lehramt für jüdische Religion an Pflichtschulen des Vereins Beth Chabad)

### 6.1.3 Bodies

The Teacher Education Act stipulates, similar to the regulations for universities, that decisions at university colleges of teacher education be taken solely by the higher education institution's management.

The **bodies** of the university colleges of teacher education are the *Hochschule* council (*Hochschulrat*), the rectorate, the rector, and the curriculum committees (*Studienkommission*).

It is not permitted for a person to be member of more than one of the aforementioned bodies; this does not apply to the rector concerning his/her membership in the rectorate.

The **Hochschule council** has the following duties:

- advertising the post of the rector as well as implementing the selection procedure, and drawing up a shortlist of three candidates for the appointment by the competent member of the government;
- assigning areas of responsibility to the vice-rectors as proposed by the rector;

- determining training content for the curricula;
- resolution on the organisational plan (*Organisationsplan*);
- approving the statute and the rules of procedure;
- opinion on the intended management of an institute;
- resolution on the target and performance plans (*Ziel- und Leistungsplan*) of the university college of teacher education and forwarding to the competent member of the government for approval;
- resolution on the annual resource plan (*Ressourcenplan*) of the university college of teacher education and forwarding them to the competent member of the government for approval;
- reporting to the competent member of the government in case of serious breaches of the law by governing bodies of higher education institutions (*Hochschulorgane*) or the danger of serious financial loss.

The *Hochschule* council consists of five members, who are past or present holders of responsible positions, especially in the fields of pedagogy, (vocational) education, and science, and whose exceptional knowledge and experience are such as to enable them to contribute to the attainment of the objectives and the fulfilment of the tasks of the university college of teacher education.

The *Hochschule* council at the public university colleges of teacher education (► 6.1.2) with the exception of the University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy, consists of:

- three members to be appointed by the Federal Minister for Education and Women's Affairs;
- the executive president of the Regional Education Board (*Landeschulrat*) in whose local sphere of influence the university college of teacher education is domiciled;
- one member to be appointed by the provincial government.

The members of the *Hochschule* council of the University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy Vienna are appointed as follows: three members by the Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, one member by the Federal Minister for Education and Women's Affairs, and one member by the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture (*Österreichische Landwirtschaftskammer*).

The **rectorate** performs important operational tasks, especially:

- preparing decisions for the *Hochschule* council;
- advertising budgeted posts (teaching staff, administrative staff);
- appointing teachers;
- allocating budgets internally in accordance with the resource plan;
- admitting students;
- initiating evaluations;
- enacting the rules of procedure (to be approved by the *Hochschule* council).

The rectorate consists of the rector and up to two vice-rectors. The appointment of each rector and vice-rector by the Federal Minister for Education and Women's Affairs (in the case of the University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy by the Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management) is based on the nomination of the Hochschule council.

The **rector** manages and represents the university college of teacher education and coordinates the activities of its bodies. Furthermore, the rector acts as the superior of the teaching and administrative staff working at the university college of teacher education.

The **curriculum committee** has the following tasks:

- enacting the curriculum and the examination regulations;
- preparing an opinion on preliminary rulings regarding appeals in matters relating to studies, which is submitted together with the appeal whenever it is filed with the administrative court;
- developing measures of evaluation and quality assurance regarding the degree programmes;
- establishing a working group on equal opportunities

The **monocratic** governing body for deciding study related matters is determined by the statutes.

#### 6.1.4 Structure

University colleges of teacher education are generally free to design their structural organisation. When establishing organisational units, they shall take into

account organisational and economic aspects to enable the higher education institutions to fulfil their tasks in the best possible way. They may also provide for the establishment of institutes.

### 6.1.5 Funding and Infrastructure

Public university colleges of teacher education are federal institutions and therefore financed from public funds, the **federal budget**. Each higher education institution receives human resources as well as financial resources required for covering the costs of infrastructure and the recurring costs associated with the execution and organisation of degree programmes. Within the framework of the relevant legal provisions and the directives of the Federal Minister for Education and Women's Affairs, the higher education institution may decide autonomously on how to use the resources. The federal budgetary provisions and public procurement regulations apply also to public university colleges of teacher education.

Additionally, higher education institutions are provided with buildings, generally constructed by the Federal Real Estate Company (*Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft, BIG*), which manages Austrian publicly owned real estate. The rental costs incurred do not burden the higher education institution's budget.

In addition to their range of studies, which they offer on behalf of the state, public university colleges of teacher education may offer further courses as well as scientific activities and studies within the scope of their **restricted legal capacity**. Any revenue generated from such offerings remain with the university's organisational unit with restricted legal capacity.

### 6.1.6 Specific Features

At the **University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy**, the Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management is also involved in the controlling and supervision. This influences the composition of the *Hochschule* council (► 6.1.3).

### 6.1.7 Quality Assurance Council for Teacher Training

The quality assurance council is a **nationwide** institution of the Federal Minister for Education and Women's Affairs as well as the Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy (*Bundesministerin bzw. Bundesminister für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft*) with the task of monitoring and analysing the development of teacher training as well as evaluating the academic and professional requirements for each degree programme, which university colleges of teacher education must fulfil in order to be able to provide their studies. Further tasks include giving its opinion on the curricula of new degree programmes for teacher training as part of the curriculum evaluation procedure (*Curricula-Begutachtungsverfahren*), advising the Federal Ministers and the higher education institutions, as well as publishing an annual report and submitting it to the National Council.

The quality assurance council is composed of six **members**; these are independent in the exercise of their tasks and not bound by any instructions; as experts in the area of national and/or international higher education, they have the knowledge required for the fulfilment of the tasks of the quality assurance council, in particular about the Austrian school system. The participating Federal Ministers shall each appoint equal numbers of members. The term of office is five years; a re-appointment is permissible. Half of the council members should be women, half should be men. At least two members shall have relevant international job experience.

The members elect the **chairperson** and the deputy chairperson among its members by a simple majority.

## 6.2 Studies

### 6.2.1 Objective of Education

A university college of teacher education's **task** is to establish, offer, and conduct scientifically founded and job-oriented training, continuing and further education programmes for pedagogic professions and especially teaching professions. The requirements of the teaching profession shall be reflected in the courses, covering the fields of human sciences, subject-related theory, and pedagogy in the

subject, as well as practical training at (affiliated) partner schools. Continuing education shall be organised as further-education programmes (► 6.2.2).

## 6.2.2 Range of Studies

In the field of **(teacher) training**, studies are established as bachelor and master degree programmes, partly depending on the demand.

The duration of a **bachelor degree programme** is eight semesters (four years). The "Bachelor of Education" (BEd) degree is awarded upon successful completion. The workload comprises 240 ECTS credits.

The duration of a **master degree programme** is at least two semesters (one year). The "Master of Education" (MEd) degree is awarded upon successful completion. The workload comprises a minimum of 60 ECTS credits.

Degree programmes that extend the current sphere of action of university colleges of teacher education, especially master degree programmes, may only be offered in the form of a joint study programme together with one (or several) **universities**.

University colleges of teacher education do not offer doctoral studies.

**Public** university colleges of teacher education shall establish the following degree programmes:

- bachelor and master degree programmes for primary level teacher training;
- bachelor and master degree programmes for secondary level teacher training (general education);
- bachelor degree programmes alone as well as bachelor and master degree programmes for secondary level teacher training (vocational training).

Pursuant to section 2 of the Minorities School Act for the Province of **Carinthia** (*Minderheiten-Schulgesetz für Kärnten*) of 1959, the University College of Teacher Education Carinthia shall offer a supplementary programme that provides teacher training for elementary schools and "New Middle Schools" in the Slovenian language as well as a corresponding additional offer relating to teaching/classroom practice.

**Private** university colleges of teacher education shall establish at least the following **degree programmes** to be offered on a permanent basis:

- bachelor and master degree programmes for primary-level teacher training or;
- bachelor and master degree programmes for secondary-level teacher training (general education), and;
- at least one further degree programme.

The Teacher Training College PH **Burgenland** constitutes an exception regarding the afore-mentioned stipulations to offer at least two permanent degree programmes; It shall set up at least one of the listed teacher training programmes (see previous paragraph) on a permanent basis; currently, that is a teacher training programme for elementary schools. Pursuant to sections 3 and 8 of the Minorities School Act for the Province of Burgenland (*Minderheiten Schulgesetz für das Burgenland*) of 1959, it shall offer a supplementary programme that provides teacher training for elementary schools and "New Middle Schools" in the Croatian and Hungarian language and furthermore a corresponding additional offer relating to teaching/classroom practice.

Before a bachelor and master degree programme for teacher training can be included in the target and performance plans, it shall be subject to evaluation and require a favourable opinion of the quality assurance council of teacher education regarding the curriculum.

University colleges of teacher education must offer and conduct **continuing and further education** on general pedagogic issues.

Academically certified training courses (*Lehrgänge*) are educational offerings that are not certificate *Hochschule* programmes for further education (*Hochschullehrgänge*).

**Certificate Hochschule programmes** for further education comprise a minimum of 60 and a maximum of 90 ECTS credits, upon completion of which the title "*Akademischer ...*" or "*Akademische ...*" ("Academic ...") together with an attribute characterising the contents of the programme is awarded (► 3.2.2).

Furthermore, certificate *Hochschule* programmes for further education related to the professional field may be established based on the needs and within the limits of the public-service educational mandate (*öffentlich-rechtlicher Bild-*

*ungsauftrag*). They shall comprise a minimum of 90 and a maximum of 120 ECTS credits and must undergo an evaluation regarding the fulfilment of the scientific and work-oriented requirements pursuant to the priorities established by the competent member of the government. They conclude with the academic degree "Master of Education" (MEd).

Within the framework of their own legal entity, a university college of teacher education may establish academically certified training programmes and certificate *Hochschule* programmes for further education (especially for scientific continuing and further education related to the professional field) in all fields of pedagogic occupations other than those of the bachelor and master degree programmes. For certificate Hochschule programmes for further education internationally used master degrees shall be designated, provided that it comprises a minimum of 90 and a maximum of 120 ECTS credits.

The curriculum commission decides on a **curriculum** for each degree programme following evaluation. Each curriculum requires approval by the rectorate. The Federal Minister for Education and Women's Affairs may by decree establish framework guidelines for the areas to be regulated. Curricula for degree programmes for teacher training shall be submitted to the quality assurance council of teacher education for its opinion.

The academic year begins on 1 October and ends on 30 September of the following year.

### 6.2.3 Admission to Studies

Admission to a degree programme at a university college of teacher education **requires the following:**

- the general university entrance qualification (*allgemeine Universitätsreife*);
- the positive completion of an admission procedure if required.

As a matter of principle, compliance with the **general university entrance qualification** is provided by the secondary school leaving examination (*Reifeprüfung, Matura*).



At university colleges of teacher education, as well as at universities (► 3.2.3), a university entrance qualification examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*), a TVE Diploma Examination (*Berufsreifeprüfung*), or having completed studies at a recognised **post-secondary educational institution** provides the title for admission in the sense of a general university entrance qualification.

Whenever an applicant has obtained a **foreign admission title** (*ausländischer Zugangstitel*), its equivalence to one of the aforementioned Austrian admission titles must be reviewed. In many cases, equivalence has been determined by agreements, such as, for example, for a major part of the secondary school-leaving certificates of European states on the basis of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region ("Lisbon Recognition Convention"). In all other cases, the rectorate must decide on equivalence on a case-by-case basis; if necessary, supplementary examinations may be required as an admission condition.

In principal, the **admission procedure** shall, by decree, be determined by the Federal Minister for Education and Women's Affairs and furthermore specified by the curriculum commission in accordance with the requirements laid down in the curricula.

#### 6.2.4 Curriculum

The legal basis for the curriculum may be found in the HG as well as in the Decree on Higher Education Curricula (*Hochschul-Curriculaverordnung, HCV*) of 2013.

The **Decree on Higher Education Curricula of 2013**, which is issued by the Federal Minister for Education and Women's Affairs, governs the principles for designing the curricula, including the examination regulations in detail. The decree also governs the compulsory subject areas of bachelor and master degree programmes for teacher training.

The following **subject areas** (*Studienfachbereich*) are obligatory:

- 1. fundamentals of general education,
- 2. subject-related theory and specialised pedagogy, and
- 3. practical teacher training.

Further specific subject areas shall be added in the bachelor and master degree programmes for teacher training in the area of vocational training.

Prior to the enactment or major amendment of a curriculum, they require **evaluation** by the (regarding) curriculum commission. Curricula are subject to approval by the rectorate.

At university colleges of teacher education, the **curriculum committee** shall provide curricula for each degree programme (apart from training courses comprising less than 30 ECTS credits), thus for bachelor and master degree programmes for teacher training (240 ECTS credits plus a minimum of 60 ECTS credits), for certificate *Hochschule* programmes for further education (a minimum of 60 and a maximum of 90 ECTS credits), as well as for academically certified training courses (a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 59 ECTS credits). Within the limits of their legal entity, university colleges of teacher education may establish academically certified training courses and certificate *Hochschule* programmes for further education in all pedagogic professional fields oriented towards other pedagogic professional fields than the bachelor and master degree programmes. For a certificate *Hochschule* programme for further education an internationally used master degree shall be designated, provided that it comprises a minimum of 90 and a maximum of 120 ECTS credits.

The scope of a degree programme must be indicated in terms of the credits established under the European Course Credit Transfer System (ECTS) (► 3.2.4).

### 6.2.5 Examinations, Bachelor and Master Theses

The **examination regulations** are a part of the curriculum and prepared within the framework provided for by decree by the Federal Minister for Education and Women's Affairs.

**Bachelor papers** shall be written as a part of the bachelor degree programmes, the preparation of **master theses** form part of a master degree programme. In the treatment of the topic and the supervision of students, regard shall be given to the provisions of the **Copyright Act** (*Urheberrechtsgesetz*).

Students are entitled to **repeat** failed examinations three times. The final repetition permitted shall be held before a board.

The study at a university college of teacher education is **prematurely terminated** if a student fails the last permissible repetition of an examination for a compulsory course provided for in the curriculum, or an examination or thesis which marks the completion of studies (also within the framework of another degree programme or the same degree programme at another university college of teacher education).

The provisions regarding the **recognition** of examinations may be applied by analogy with the university sector (► 3.2.5).

## 6.2.6 Academic Degrees

Upon successful completion of everything required by a particular curriculum, a "**Bachelor of Education**", short "BEd", is awarded. This academic degree shall permit admission to relevant master degree programmes at a university college of teacher education for which a "**Master of Education**", short "MEd", is awarded, as well as to relevant master degree programmes at other recognised post-secondary education institutions.

If a degree programme is completed on the basis of a **jointly offered diploma degree programme**, such as joint, double or multiple degree programmes (*gemeinsame Studienprogramme*), it is admissible, under certain conditions, that the academic degree is awarded in one joint document, together with the partner institution(s).

Regarding the **use** of bachelor and master degrees, the same applies as mentioned for universities (► 3.2.6).

For the purpose of supporting international mobility of graduates, students are issued a **Diploma Supplement** pursuant to Article IX.3 of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (*Lissabonner Anerkennungsübereinkommen*), in connection with the document certifying the award of the academic degree (► 3.2.6).

If an Austrian academic degree is required for the exercise of a certain professional activity – i.e. if the activity falls under an area with statutory regulations and the professional recognition pursuant to EU law does not apply – holders may apply to a public university college of teacher education for **nostrification** (*Nostrifizierung*) of their foreign academic degree. The nostrification procedure is not a degree programme but an administrative procedure.

## 6.3 Tuition Fees

### 6.3.1 Introduction

Generally, students, who are Austrian nationals or nationals of an **EU or EEA country** or of Switzerland, pay no tuition fee. If they exceed the prescribed duration of their degree programme by more than two semesters, though (the duration of compulsory military or community service is exempt), they too shall pay tuition fees in an amount of **EUR 363.36** per semester.

Students from **third countries** must pay a tuition fee of **EUR 726.72** per semester.

Students, who have been admitted to follow **several degree programmes**, even at several university colleges of teacher education, only have to pay their tuition fee once.

Students who are **on leave** for a specific semester do not have to pay a tuition fee. Leave may be granted upon application in serious cases for a maximum of two semesters per incident. In such cases, students are not allowed to participate in courses, to take examinations, or to submit and have assessed pieces of scientific work.

The tuition fee must be paid **in advance** of every semester. Together with the tuition fee, the student fee for membership in the Austrian Union of Students ("students' union fee", "*ÖH-Beitrag*") is collected, as well as possible special fees (at present premium payments for the accident and third-party liability insurance covering students). Payment of the tuition fee, the student fee, and the special fee is a requirement for admission or continuation of one's studies. The rectorate is in charge of collection.

**Income** from tuition fees remains with the respective university college of teacher education and is reserved for the accomplishment of the university college of teacher education's functions within the limits of their public-service educational mandate.

**Certificate Hochschule programmes** and **academically certified training programmes for further and continuing education** regulated by public law are free of charge.

## 6.3.2 Remission and Reimbursement

The rectorate shall **grant a remission** of the tuition fee, in particular:

- to students for the semesters in the course of which they will attend courses or spend practical training periods in the framework of transnational EU, state-run, or higher education-level mobility programmes, if they can provide proof of this;
- to convention refugees;
- to students in case of disabilities, sickness, pregnancy or employment.

In line with the priorities established by Austria regarding measures to support and promote the economic and social development of developing countries, as well as to support the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Federal Minister for Education and Women's Affairs is authorised to designate, by way of decree, those countries whose nationals may be reimbursed the tuition fee. Until now no such decree has been issued.

The **decision** on the reimbursement to such persons lies with the individual university college of teacher education. This means that such persons must pay the tuition fee before they file an application for reimbursement. Reimbursement is handled as part of the private-sector administration on the basis of applications by students and must be completed within four weeks as of the filing of the application. However, there is no legal title to be granted reimbursement.

## 6.4 Members

### 6.4.1 Students

Their status and representation is governed by the Union of Students Act (*Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaftsgesetz*) 2014 (► 7).

### 6.4.2 Staff

A university college of teacher education shall appoint **teaching staff** with scientific, practical occupational, and pedagogic-didactic qualifications. There are four possible categories:

- permanent teaching staff (*Stammlehrpersonal*) consisting of teaching staff employed in the civil service (*Bundeslehrpersonal*) and teaching staff having permanent federal employment contracts (*Bundesvertragslehrpersonal*)
- teaching staff temporarily assigned to service (*vorübergehend zur Dienstleistung zugewiesenes Lehrpersonal*)
- part-time teaching staff (*mitverwendetes Lehrpersonal*)
- external lecturers (*Lehrbeauftragte*)

Depending on the staff category, teachers are employed under public law or on the basis of private-law contracts.

Furthermore, a well qualified **administrative staff**, especially an Administrative Director (*Verwaltungsdirektorin bzw. Verwaltungsdirektor*) shall be appointed. The Federal Minister for Education and Women's Affairs is responsible for the appointment.

## 6.5 Evaluation and Quality Assurance

University colleges of teacher education shall develop a **quality management system** in order to assure quality and the attainment of their performance objectives and conduct internal evaluations on a regular basis. Subject of an evaluation are the university college of teacher education's tasks and activities as well as the entire spectrum of its services.

## 7 Students

### 7.1 Student Representation

The **Union of Students Act** (*Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaftsgesetz*, HSG) 2014 applies to the status of students at public and private universities, university of applied sciences degree programmes, and university colleges of teacher education as well as to their representation.

The Austrian National Union of Students (*Österreichische Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaft*) and the **unions of students** at the different universities are **public-law corporations** and manage their affairs autonomously within the scope of the statutory provisions.

Degree students (*ordentliche Studierende*) and the non-degree seeking students (**außerordentliche Studierende**) at public and private universities, university of applied sciences degree programmes and university colleges of teacher education are members of the **Austrian National Union of Students** (*Österreichische Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaft*, ÖH). It is responsible for representing the general and study-specific interests of its members, especially vis-à-vis the state authorities and the bodies of the educational institutions, to the extent that these interests do not exclusively relate to an individual educational institution. The Austrian National Union of Students has the right to submit expert opinions and proposals regarding student affairs, the university system, and the educational system as well as any related matters to the competent bodies, as well as to express an opinion on relevant bills (*Gesetzesentwürfe*) and draft decrees (*Verordnungsentwürfe*). The Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy (*Bundesministerin bzw. Bundesminister Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft*) has to provide the Austrian National Union of Students with the necessary premises and other facilities.

The **Federal Representation of Students** (*Bundesvertretung der Studierenden*) has been set up to represent the interests of students throughout Austria and to represent the Austrian National Union of Students at international level. The **chairpersons' conferences** (*Vorsitzendenkonferenzen*) have been set up for the individual branches of the educational institutions. In addition, there is

the **Election Committee** (*Wahlkommission*) **of the Austrian National Union of Students.**

Degree students and non-degree seeking students belong to the **union of students** at their respective public universities. The unions of students are responsible for representing the general and study-specific interests of their members, to the extent that these interests exclusively relate to the respective university, vis-à-vis the state authorities and the university bodies. In addition, they are responsible for participating in state authorities and institutions, in the university collegial boards, as well as their commissions and sub-commissions. Just like the Austrian National Union of Students, they have the right to submit expert opinions with regard to their specific university. The bodies of the unions of students at universities are the university representation of students, the representatives of the individual studies and the election committee.

In analogy to public universities, the bodies of the unions of students at **private universities, universities of applied sciences**, and at **university colleges of teacher education** are a union of students if on average more than 1,000 students were admitted to the respective educational institutions in the last three study years; otherwise, a representation of students at the respective higher education institution (*Hochschulvertretung*) as well as the representatives of the individual studies (*Studienvertretung*).

The student representatives hold their office **on an honorary basis**. They are entitled to be refunded for the expenses that they incur in exercising their activities. There are a few special provisions in the statutory provisions regarding studies and in the Student Support law which facilitate their work.

Individual **divisions** (*Referate*) are responsible for the administrative work and for the other fields of duties. The divisions must be set up by the Federal Representation and the university representations pursuant to their relevant statutes. In any event, divisions for educational policy, for social policy, and for business matters (business division) must be set up. The divisions are headed by division heads (*Referentinnen bzw. Referenten*). These must be members of the Austrian National Union of Students, unless the responsible body entrusts qualified staff members to head a division upon proposal of its chairperson. The chairperson may assign persons in charge (*Sachbearbeiterinnen bzw. Sachbearbeiter*) as well as staff members to support the division heads, with a view to the scope of their



tasks. In any event, persons in charge of the areas of other educational institutions must be assigned to the division for educational policy, set up by the Federal Representation of Students.

The division heads and the delegates in international organisations of students are bound by the **instructions** (*Weisungen*) of the chairperson and the decisions of the responsible bodies.

Every two years, **elections** must be held at the same time for all bodies of the Austrian National Union of Students and the unions of students at the different universities, with the exception of the election committees (*Wahlkommissionen*), on the basis of the statutory provisions governing general, equal, and secret proportional voting (*Verhältniswahlrecht*); they must be held separately for each of these bodies. The voting right must be exercised on an individual basis.

The Austrian National Union of Students and the unions of students at the different universities are subject to the **supervision** of the responsible Federal Minister. A Control Commission (*Kontrollkommission*) which consists of nine members and is appointed according to an established appointment mode is set up for a term of four years at a time. It reviews the **management of the finances** of the Austrian National Union of Students and the unions of students of the different universities and their business enterprises. Furthermore, the management of the finances of the Austrian National Union of Students and of the unions of students at the different universities, as well as of their business enterprises, is subject to audits by the **Court of Auditors** (Rechnungshof).

## 7.2 Student Ombudsman

On 1 March 2012 an office was established at the Federal Ministry for Science and Research that is **not bound by any instructions** and provides ombuds services, information, and other services for current and former students as well as persons interested in beginning a degree programme at a higher education institution. It shall provide information and services in the area of higher education on the topics and cases it is concerned with.

Each student has the right to turn to the student ombudsman for **information and advice** on matters related to degree programmes, teaching, examinations, services, and administration at higher education institutions. Such enquiries shall

each be dealt with by the student ombudsman. The student and the educational institution shall be informed about the results as well as, if applicable, any measures taken.

The student ombudsman has the right to request **information** from the respective bodies and members of the educational institutions concerning the matters brought forward by the students. The bodies and members of the educational institutions are obliged to **provide** the student ombudsman with the requested **information** in the matters it deals with.

# 8 Student Support

## 8.1 Introduction

Student support (*Studienförderung*) comprises direct and indirect support measures which are funded from public money.

**Indirect** support measures are independent of any social need; as far as their financial volume is concerned, they constitute the overwhelmingly largest part of the state's support measures. The indirect support measures comprise family allowances, sharing the insurance coverage of parents or self-insurance schemes, statutory accident insurance, as well as fiscal benefits whenever children are enrolled as students.

**Direct** support measures, which are granted pursuant to the Student Support Act (*Studienförderungsgesetz, StudFG*) 1992, depend upon the social needs and the academic success of students. The income of the student and/or the person with maintenance obligations is decisive for the definition of social need. In this connection, there are also special support measures such as study grants (paying the tuition fee), commuter traveling grants, benefits for studying abroad, etc.

In addition, public and private universities, university of applied sciences degree programmes, and schools of theology receive funds from the Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy (*Bundesministerin bzw. Bundesminister für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft*) to grant performance-based or research scholarships in order to support **students who achieve especially good results**.

## 8.2 Study Grants

### 8.2.1 Scope

Study grants (*Studienbeihilfe*) are the most important of the state's student support measures. They are meant to contribute towards overcoming social and regional barriers in facilitating access to studies for every young person who is willing to and capable of studying.

According to Austrian law, it is a matter of principle that the **parents of a student meet the financial needs of their children** (*Unterhaltspflicht*) until they become capable of maintaining themselves – which also means until they have completed their studies, provided they pursue them in a purposeful way. It is only in those cases where the parents or the students – on account of the respective income situation – are not in a position to bear the costs involved in studying that student support measures are meant to provide a form of subsidiary.

Two main **requirements for an entitlement** derive from the foregoing consideration, namely that of "meriting support" (*soziale Förderwürdigkeit*) on social grounds on the one hand and that of proving "positive academic success" (*günstiger Studienerfolg*) on the other hand.

The so-called "**self-provider scholarship**" (*Selbsterhalterstudium*) is a special type of study grant. It is meant for students who have "provided for themselves" for a minimum of four years with an annual minimum income of EUR 7,272 before receiving a study grant for the first time. In such cases, the parents' income need not be taken into consideration. Positive academic success is also required in this case.

## 8.2.2 Persons Entitled to Receive Study Grants

**Degree students** (*ordentliche Studierende*) at Austrian public or private universities (if determined by decree), university of applied sciences degree programmes, university colleges of teacher education, schools of theology (*Theologische Lehranstalten*), and conservatories (*Konservatorien*) who are

- Austrian nationals;
  - nationals of an EU or EEA country, third-country nationals or stateless persons holding the same rights as residents regarding the access to occupation, or;
  - convention refugees;
- are entitled to receive study grants.

The students must **merit support on social grounds**. The determining factors for meriting social support are income, marital status, and family size. These factors also determine the amount of the student support.

In addition, students must provide proof of their **positive academic success**. For the first or the first two semesters, students must prove that they have been admitted as degree students. However, proof of academic success must be shown during the period of application for the third semester; otherwise the study grants received up to that date must be refunded. As a rule, one speaks of positive academic success when positive evidence regarding a specified number of courses can be shown by the end of the period of application for the third semester, and the entitlement period, i.e. the statutory period of study for completing diploma, bachelor or master examinations (*Diplom-, Bachelor- oder Masterprüfungen*), doctoral examinations (*Rigorosen*) or secondary-level teaching examinations (*Lehramtsprüfungen*), or other final examinations of a study or stage of a degree programme plus one semester has not been exceeded. It is possible to extend the entitlement period for important reasons.

Students must have begun to study before reaching the age of 30 (for students providing for themselves, students with childcare obligations, disabled students, and master students that limit may be raised to a maximum of 35 years under certain circumstances) and they must not have completed an equivalent education in Austria or abroad. A master degree programme, following upon a bachelor degree programme, as well as a doctoral degree programme, following upon a (university of applied sciences) master degree programme and/or a (university of applied sciences) diploma degree programme, present an exception to the foregoing. Students must not have changed their studies more than twice. If the course of studies is changed after more than two semesters, students may lose their entitlement temporarily, unless they receive credit for the entire previous course of studies.

### 8.2.3 Amount

The **amount** of the monthly study grant is calculated by deducting the reductions from the possible maximum annual student grant.

As a matter of principle, the **maximum study grant** (*Höchchststudienbeihilfe*) amounts to EUR 475 per month. This amount also applies to studies that are followed by way of distance learning (*Fernstudium*). However, for orphans, married students, students who are required by law to maintain and educate a minimum of one child, students who need to have a domicile in the municipality of the

place of study for reasons of their studies, because their parents' domicile is unreasonably remote from the place of studies (a decree on this subject contains detailed regulations), as well as for students who provide for themselves the maximum study grant amounts to EUR 679 per month.

Study grants **are paid** twelve times per academic year. Since amounts below EUR 15 are not paid on a monthly basis, the lowest amount of study grant is EUR 15 per month.

An extra amount is granted to **handicapped** students; this is determined by the type and degree of the disability. A decree on this subject contains detailed regulations.

Students who are required by law to **maintain and educate a child** are eligible to receive an extra amount of EUR 112 per month as of 1.1.2015.

The maximum study grant due in every case is **reduced** by the following:

- the amount exceeding EUR 10,000 (as of 1.1.2015) as an annual income of the student (reasonable own contribution by the student);
- the reasonable maintenance payment by the parents, spouse and/or civil partner (*eingetragene/r Partner/in*) of a student;
- the annual amount of the family allowance (*Familienbeihilfe*) and the amount deductible for every child (*Kinderabsetzbetrag*). In case of students beyond the age of 24 (in case of students serving their military service or their alternative military service or in case of childbirth: beyond the age of 25), this amount is not deducted.

### 8.3 Additional Support Measures

The law provides for the following additional support measures:

- **commuter travel grants** (*Fahrtkostenzuschuss*) to support students receiving study grants to finance travel expenses that are necessary to complete their studies;
- **contribution to insurance costs** (*Versicherungskostenbeitrag*) to support students receiving study grants regarding a reasonably-priced self-insurance in a health insurance scheme;

- **scholarships to complete studies** (*Studienabschluss-Stipendium*) to support degree students at university during the final phase of their studies up to an age limit of 41 years;
- **tuition-fee grant** (*Studienzuschuss*) to pay the tuition fee.

## 8.4 Support to Study Abroad

### 8.4.1 Continued Payment of Study Grants

For the time of their studies abroad (for a maximum of four semesters), students continue to be entitled to receive study grants.

### 8.4.2 Grants for Studies Abroad

Students receiving study grants are entitled to receive grants for their studies abroad in order to support them in their studies at foreign universities, universities of applied sciences, and research institutions, provided that they register for the continuation of the respective studies in the third semester at the least and that the studies abroad last a minimum period of one month. The amount is laid down by decree and paid monthly.

### 8.4.3 Mobility Scholarships

Mobility scholarships (*Mobilitätsstipendien*) shall serve as financial support for studies offered entirely at a recognised university, university of applied sciences or university college of teacher education in EEA countries or in Switzerland. The Study Grant Authority (*Studienbeihilfenbehörde*) awards them in analogy to the criteria for study grants (regarding social need as well as academic success).

## 8.5 Performance-Based and Need-Based Scholarships

### 8.5.1 Performance-Based Scholarships

Performance-based scholarships (*Leistungsstipendien*) are intended to recognise **outstanding academic performance**. They must be offered by the public and private universities, university of applied sciences degree programmes, schools

of theology, and university colleges of teacher education for every academic year.

The **requirements** for being awarded a performance-based scholarship are compliance with the entitlement period for the respective stage of a degree programme, taking account of possible serious reasons, an average grade of not less than 2.0 on examinations, courses, and scientific projects used for assessment, as well as compliance with the application conditions. At university colleges of teacher education, performance-based scholarships are intended to recognise outstanding academic performance of students within the last two semesters of a degree programme, as well as to support degree students in the preparation of their scientific theses or artistic diploma and master submissions.

A performance-based scholarship must not be less than EUR 750 and must not exceed the **amount** of EUR 1,500 for two semesters.

Performance-based scholarships are **awarded** within the scope of private-law administrative matters on the basis of student applications. There is no legal title to an award.

### 8.5.2 Need-Based Scholarships

Need-based scholarships (*Förderungsstipendien*) are intended to support **scientific or artistic theses** by degree students. They must be offered every academic year at public and private universities, university of applied sciences degree programmes and schools of theology.

The award of a need-based scholarship **requires** the student to file an application for a need-based scholarship in order to finish an uncompleted thesis, together with a description of the work still to be done, a list of its costs, and a financing plan; furthermore a minimum of one expert opinion by a responsible university teacher on the list of costs and on whether the student is likely to finish the work with above-average success on the basis of the student's previous study record and his/her proposals for carrying out the work. The entitlement period must be observed and the application conditions must be satisfied.

The **amount** of a need-based scholarship must be no less than EUR 750 and no more than EUR 3,600 for an academic year.



Need-based scholarships are **awarded** within the scope of private-law administrative matters on the basis of student applications. There is no legal title to an award.

## 8.6 Study Assistance

Within the scope of private-law administrative matters, the Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy may grant students and graduates of degree programmes financial assistance (contributions to costs, in kind benefits) to meet housing costs, etc., in order to compensate them for social hardships and particularly difficult study conditions. The amount of a study assistance must be no less than EUR 180 for two semesters and no more than the maximum possible amount of a study grant for this time period.

## 8.7 Study Grant Authority

The **Study Grant Authority** (*Studienbeihilfenbehörde*) has been set up in order to handle applications for study grants, study assistance, and grants for studies abroad, to grant and/or pay other support measures pursuant to the guidelines of the Federal Minister, as well as to advise in matters of study support measures. The authority has its office in Vienna and is directly subordinate to the Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy in all matters regarding organisation.

The **scholarship offices** (*Stipendienstellen*) of the Study Grant Authority are located in Graz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Linz, Salzburg, and Vienna. Additional scholarship offices may be set up by way of decree, defining the terms of their competences, in case of adequate demand in order to simplify administrative routines. The geographical scope of the scholarship offices is laid down by way of decree. With these offices senates with a term of office of two years must be set up, which decide on appeals filed against official notifications issued by the Study Grant Authority.

Parties may lodge an **appeal** (*Vorstellung*) against decisions of the Study Grant Authority within two weeks. On the basis of such an appeal and possible additional investigations, the Study Grant Authority may, within a period of two months, amend, change or repeal a decision which it has issued in any way without seizing the competent senate. The senate of the Study Grant Authority must

decide on appeals, in which no prior decision was taken, as well as on submitted applications against a prior decision. Appeals (*Beschwerden*) against a decision of the senate of the Study Grant Authority must be addressed to the Federal Administrative Court.

## 8.8 Psychological Counseling for Students

The Federal Minister for Science, Research and Economy may set up psychological counselling offices for students at every university location in order to assist students in their choice of studies and study activities.

Currently there are psychological counselling offices in Graz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Linz, Salzburg, and Vienna.

## 9 International Cooperation

### 9.1 European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process)

The so-called **Bologna Process** was started in 1999 after the Bologna Declaration was signed.

The concept of the "European Higher Education Area" (EHEA) was launched in 2010 during the Budapest-Vienna Ministerial Anniversary Conference, completing the hitherto existing Bologna Process.

The Bologna Process was not only about reforming the education policies, it was actions taken in order to strengthen Europe as a centre for higher education and research (*Hochschul- und Forschungsstandort*), to promote internationalisation, and enhance its competitiveness, i.a. by increasing mobility of students, teachers, researchers, and scientific staff.

Austria is actively involved in implementing the European Higher Education Area. In addition to the Bologna contact point in the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Wirtschaft*, BMWFW) and the national Bologna follow-up group (comprising all stakeholders), the OeAD-GmbH introduced their own Bologna Service Point (► 9.5.1) – a cross-sectoral, independent guidance and information centre, that provides for a discussion platform enabling dialogue and exchange across higher education sectors, and acts as a practice-oriented contact point for any questions, concerns, or suggestions relating to Bologna and the European Higher Education Area.

With the "Bologna Process Implementation Report" that comprises all of the EHEA member countries, a monitoring process has been put in place for the implementation of the objectives of the Bologna Process. Reports are published at regular intervals on the occasion of the Bologna Conferences of the Ministers responsible for Higher Education.

The statutory **requirements** for obtaining the objectives of the Bologna Declaration are largely met in Austria.

- The Diploma Supplement was introduced on a mandatory basis by amending the University Study Record Decree (*Universitäts-Studienevidenzverordnung*, UniStEV) of 2002 (► 3.2.6).
- The 1999 Amendment of the University Studies Act (*Universitäts-Studiengesetz*, UniStG) (► 3.2.1) provided the basis for introducing bachelor and master degree programmes at universities, which were continued in the Universities Act (*Universitätsgesetz*, UG) 2002. The 2002 Amendment of the University of Applied Sciences Studies Act (*Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz*, FHStG) also provided for bachelor and master degree programmes in the university of applied sciences sector (► 5.2.2).
- Both, the University Studies Act and the Amendment of the University of Applied Sciences Studies Act, govern the mandatory awarding of ETCS credits to courses within the scope of the curriculum (► 3.2.4, ► 5.2.5).
- The legal basis for joint degree programmes (*gemeinsame Studienprogramme*) was created in the Universities Act as well as with a change adopted in 2004 of the University of Applied Sciences Studies Act (► 3.2.6).
- In addition to supporting students with social needs (study grants, ► 8), a wide range of scholarships is available which makes it possible for students and graduates to obtain financial support for their international mobility (► 9.2).
- The new service regulations stipulate different support measures and facilitate teaching and research stays of university teachers abroad.

Since the universities and the university of applied sciences degree programmes have become autonomous, they set up their own curricula and also solve recognition issues autonomously. The law has set a framework, which provides a good basis for appropriate decisions. The Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy has an important role to play in cross-institutional information processing and consulting – especially when it comes to providing reliable information about the systems of higher education in other countries. On account of its Europe-wide network, **ENIC NARIC AUSTRIA** (National Recognition Infor-

mation Center), located at the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy, provides the relevant information.

The multilateral basis for recognition of qualifications at university level in the European region is the **Lisbon Recognition Convention** of 1997 (to be applied in Austria since 1999). Austria is actively involved in preparing recommendations on implementation so that the existing recognition instruments can be used to improve academic mobility. Only in those cases where the high mobility flows of students make it appear useful, were the existing bilateral agreements pursued with special provisions.

Furthermore, presentations of Austria as a **centre for higher education institutions, science, and research** are made regularly in the context of round tables with foreign delegations, high-level bilateral meetings with department-heads and federal civil servants in order to create and reinforce interest among foreign university and research institutions in Austria as being such a location and in cooperating with Austrian universities and university of applied sciences degree programmes, private universities, university colleges of teacher education, and non-university institutions such as the Austrian Academy of Sciences (*Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ÖAW).

At the same time, an emphasis is laid on the **Agencies and Funds** in the field of science and research, as for example the OeAD (*Österreichische Austauschdienst*)-GmbH, the Austrian Science Fund (*Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung*, FWF), and the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (*Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft*, FFG).

## 9.2 EU Programme ERASMUS+

**ERASMUS+** is the result of the integration of the European programmes "Life-long Learning", "Youth in Action", Erasmus Mundus, and Tempus and covers three policy areas: education, training, and youth.

In the field of education and training, the ERASMUS+ programme wants to contribute to the the achievement of the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, including the headline higher education target, the objectives of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), together with the corresponding benchmarks, as well as the objective of supporting

the sustainable development of Partner Countries; at the same time, the programme pursues the **specific objectives** to:

- improve the level of key competencies and skills, with particular regard to their relevance for the labour market and their contribution to a cohesive society, in particular through increased opportunities for learning mobility and through a strengthened cooperation between the world of education and training and the world of work;
- foster quality improvements, innovation excellence, and internationalisation at the level of education and training institutions;
- promote the emergence of a European Lifelong Learning Area, in particular through enhanced policy cooperation, better use of transparency and recognition tools, and the dissemination of good practices;
- enhance the international dimension of education and training, in particular through cooperation between EU-institutions and Partner Country-institutions, through the promotion of mobility and targeted capacity building in Partner Countries;
- improve teaching and learning of languages and promote the EU's broad linguistic diversity and inter-cultural awareness;
- support excellence in teaching and research on European integration.

The programme supports only measures and activities with potential **European added value** (*europäischer Mehrwert*).

Within the education sector, the programme known under the brand name "ERASMUS+" supports staff and student mobility (study periods and traineeships), which makes it the European Union's **largest exchange programme**. Furthermore, projects are supported within the framework of strategic partnerships, knowledge alliances, joint master programmes, and especially capacity building projects, which contribute to the internationalisation of the higher education institutions.

For the higher education area this means in short:

- boosting mobility for students, teachers, and higher education staff,
- contributing to the internationalisation and modernisation of higher education institutions in Europe,
- actively shaping a joint European Higher Education Area,

- improving the transparency and comparability of European academic diplomas,
- strengthening the higher education institution's contribution to innovation in the field of education,
- a close collaboration of higher education institutions and enterprises,
- promoting language learning and a European awareness.

The programme contributes toward implementing the principle of equal opportunities for women and men, as well as equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. It contributes actively to the fight against social marginalisation, racism, and xenophobia.

### 9.3 Scholarship Programmes

On the one hand, studies abroad are promoted within the framework of the **Student Support Act** (*Studienförderungsgesetz, StFG*) 1992, which supports the study stays of socially needy students for a period of up to four semesters (► 8.4.2). On the other hand, funds are available to the universities in their budgets that may also be used as scholarships for students and graduates. The scholarships are awarded exclusively according to the quality of the projects for short-term scientific research and/or other study achievements abroad, as well as to joint study projects directly at the universities.

The Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy offers a series of **scholarships** to promote young scientists. Target group of these grants are students or young researchers who study in Austria and intend to pursue part of their studies or an entire stage of their study programme abroad (outgoing), as well as foreign students who want to pursue part of their studies or a stage of their study programme in Austria (incoming). The scholarship programmes promote the international experience and support international networking among young researchers, which ultimately benefits Austria as a centre of science and research.

For detailed information on the respective scholarships, please visit the "[Austrian Database for Scholarships and Research Grants](#)".

### 9.3.1 Outgoing Programmes

Since 2009 the **Marietta Blau Grant** offers financial support to highly qualified doctoral candidates of all areas of research, who for the sake of optimising their doctoral dissertation plan to spend six to twelve months of their study abroad. In addition to promoting young scientists at Austrian universities, this programme seeks to internationalise doctoral studies.

#### **Doctoral research grants for the European University Institute**

(Doktoratsstipendien für das Europäische Hochschulinstitut, EUI) are awarded for a four-year doctoral programme of the European University Institute in the fields of history, cultural history, economics, political and social sciences, and law. The young researchers spend the entire duration of their doctoral degree programme at this renowned institution. Stays abroad for the purpose of visiting conferences, researching or working in archives, however, are possible. In addition to the annual membership fees, the Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Economy also covers the first three years of the programme's tuition fees; the fourth year is sponsored by the European University Institute.

**Doctoral Research Fellowships** funded by the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy are awarded in cooperation with the Center Austria at the University of New Orleans, the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies at the University of Alberta, and the Centres for Austrian Studies at the Universities of Minnesota and Jerusalem. These are doctoral fellowships, fitting the topics of focus of the respective centres, which mainly cover the field of Austria and Central Europe. Students shall be given the possibility, within the scope of a doctoral degree programme offered in Austria, to further their research project, establish relevant contacts on the spot, visit libraries and archives, as well as receive an insight in the activities of the aforementioned centres, while actively contributing to the organisation and administration. The fellowships are awarded for ten months, in Alberta for twelve months.

As a new scholarship programme, **Andrássy Scholarships** (with a focus on Central Europe) were presented for the study year 2013/14, financing the completion of a one- or two-year master degree programme in the German language at the Andrásy University Budapest for a maximum of 22 months as a supplement to a bachelor or master degree programme completed in Austria.



### 9.3.2 Incoming Programmes

Incoming Scholarship programmes bring top students and young researchers to Austria.

**Ernst Mach Grants** are open to all applicants of all disciplines and are offered as three sub-programmes:

- Ernst Mach Grants for doctoral students, postgraduates, and post-docs from all over the world for their study and research activities at Austrian universities;
- Ernst Mach Grants for applicants from Non-European countries studying a bachelor, diploma or master degree programme at an Austrian university of applied sciences;
- Ernst Mach Follow-up Grants (EZA) shall give targeted support to post-docs from Non-European Developing Countries. These grants support post-docs, who want to cooperate with the former host university in Austria in the necessary preparatory work in their home country.

**Franz Werfel Fellowships** are awarded to foreign university teachers of German literature, who focus on Austrian literature in their research and teaching activities at their home universities. These grants thus contribute to the development of a network of young and committed teachers of German literature in the field of Austrian literature.

Since 2008, **Richard Plaschka Fellowships** are awarded to young foreign university lecturers of history (but also from neighbouring disciplines such as cultural history, archaeology or musicology), who are primarily occupied with Austria-related topics and who, on the long run, want to give special attention to this topic in their teaching activities at their home universities. The programme's objective is the establishment of a worldwide network of young and committed historians with a reference to Austria.

## 9.4 EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion

As a part of the Europe-wide initiative, EURAXESS – Researchers in Motion (**EURAXESS - Researchers in Motion**) provides (mobile) researchers access

to a wide range of information; from research funding and financing possibilities to job vacancies and practical support concerning legal and administrative issues.

EURAXESS brings together four major initiatives:

- EURAXESS Jobs is a free, Europe-wide job database with regularly updated job vacancies as well as fellowships and funding opportunities for researchers.
- EURAXESS Services assists researchers and their families in organising their stay in a foreign country.
- EURAXESS Rights (European Charta for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers) sets out the rights and duties of researchers and their employers or sponsors.
- EURAXESS Links is a network for European researchers working outside Europe: including North America, Brazil, Japan, China, India, ASEAN – Association of South-East Asian Nations (Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia).

**EURAXESS Austria** is a part of this Europe-wide initiative and offers a wide range of information in order to promote mobility and the career development of researchers from the PhD-Level. It also offers regional information to mobile researchers in Austria. With a significant participation of the universities, the network of EURAXESS Services Centers is steadily growing.

## 9.5 Institutions

### 9.5.1 Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research

On the basis of the OeAD Act (OeAD-Gesetz), the Austrian Exchange Service was converted into a new legal structure on 1 January 2009, the full denomination being "OeAD (*Österreichische Austauschdienst*)-Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung – Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research (OeAD-GmbH)". Until the end of 2008, its predecessor was the association "Austrian Exchange Service – Agency for International Educational and Scientific Cooperation" (*Österreichischer Austauschdienst (ÖAD) – Agentur für Internationale Bildungs- und Wissenschaftskooperation*), which was founded in

1961 by what was then the Rectors' Conference with the goal of supporting foreign students during their stay in Austria. Today, the OeAD-GmbH – which is Austria's largest non-profit agency serving the international exchange of students and scientists – serves the following tasks:

- managing and administering the scholarship programmes of the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy and the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (*Bundesministerium für Europa, Integration und Äußeres*, BMEIA), as well as looking after the scholarship students and visiting researchers during their stay in Austria, as well as their follow-up assistance after their return to their home-countries;
- functioning as EURAXESS Service Centre;
- functioning as national agency for the EU programme "Erasmus+";
- functioning as the National CEEPUS Office;
- managing and administering the Agreement on Scientific-Technical Co-operation (*Abkommen über wissenschaftlich-technische Zusammenarbeit*, WTZ);
- operating pre-study courses in the university towns of Graz, Leoben, and Vienna;
- marketing activities for Austria as a centre for higher education;
- information activities for foreign students and visiting researchers;
- promoting (academic) mobility;
- networking and cooperating with other international exchange organisations;
- helping to find accommodation for foreign students and visiting researchers.

### 9.5.2 International Offices

At each higher education institution, foreign-relations offices (having different names and organisational structures) have been set up. They mainly serve as contact points for information on foreign studies and offer information services regarding possible financial grants as well as their requirements and application deadlines.

## 10 IST Austria

The "Institute of Science and Technology Austria" is a self-governing postgraduate research institution and legal entity under public law, located in Klosterneuburg. It will provide **top-level research** in the field of basic research as well as a high-quality **post-graduate education** in the form of PhD and post-doc programmes. Research, training, and the appointment of staff are internationally oriented. English is the working language as well as the language of instruction.

IST Austria has two specific legal bases, namely an Agreement between the Republic of Austria and the Federal State of Lower Austria on the Establishment and the Operation of the Institute of Science and Technology Austria, as well as the Federal Law on the Institute of Science and Technology Austria, both of 2006. It started operating in June 2009.

IST Austria considers itself as a **research institution of international standing** in the fields of natural sciences and technology. In order to reach this goal, IST Austria offers outstanding researchers the possibility to pursue their own ideas and research projects without being restricted by specific obligations or commercial interests. The institute's fields of research are chosen on the basis of the availability of internationally renowned scientists, who are provided with a world-class environment. IST Austria will not enter into fields in which it can't offer infrastructure at an international top level.

Funding through the federal government and the Federal Province of Lower Austria is secured by law on a long-term basis. Furthermore, third-party funding is possible.

While research at the IST Austria is dedicated to the principle of curiosity-driven research, any commercial and industrial **application of research findings** shall be carefully examined and, where possible, commercially exploited by patent protection, licensing or the creation of spin-offs. A detailed technology transfer policy with rules for intellectual property rights is currently in preparation. Adjacent sites for a spin-off park is already available for medium- and long-term developments.

The **administration** of IST Austria is made up of a Board of trustees (*Kuratorium*), a President, a Managing Director (*Verwaltungsdirektorin bzw. Verwaltungsdirektor*), as well as a Scientific board (*Wissenschaftlicher Rat*).

## Appendix: Legislation

The cited regulations are listed in alphabetic order – decrees in the order of their superordinate acts – and are quoted as amended. Further regulations can be found at the [Legal Information System](#) of the Republic of Austria.

### Constitutional Law

- Agreement on the European Economic Area – EEA-Agreement (*Abkommen über den Europäischen Wirtschaftsraum*), Federal Law Gazette No. 909/1993.
- Federal Ministries Act (*Bundesministeriengesetz – BMG*) 1986, Federal Law Gazette No. 76.
- Federal Constitutional Law (*Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz – B-VG*), Federal Law Gazette No. 1/1930.
- Federal Constitutional Act on the Conclusion of the Treaty concerning the accession of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Malta, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Slovenia and the Slovak Republic to the European Union (*Bundesverfassungsgesetz über den Abschluss des Vertrages über den Beitritt der Tschechischen Republik, der Republik Estland, der Republik Zypern, der Republik Lettland, der Republik Litauen, der Republik Ungarn, der Republik Malta, der Republik Polen, der Republik Slowenien und der Slowakischen Republik zur Europäischen Union*), Federal Law Gazette I No. 53/2003.
- Data Protection Act (*Datenschutzgesetz – DSG*) 2000, Federal Law Gazette I No. 165/1999.
- EU Accession Treaty (*EU-Beitrittsvertrag*), Federal Law Gazette No. 45/1995.
- Federal Constitutional Law on the EEA Agreement (*EWR-Bundesverfassungsgesetz – EWR-BVG*), Federal Law Gazette No. 115/1993.

- Basic Law on the General Rights of Nationals (*Staatsgrundgesetz über die allgemeinen Rechte der Staatsbürger*), Imperial Law Gazette No. 142/1867.

## Legislation on Higher Education

- General Administrative Procedure Act (*Allgemeines Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz – AVG*) 1991, Federal Law Gazette No. 51/1991.
- Salaried Employees Act (*Angestelltengesetz*), Federal Law Gazette No. 292/1921.
- Civil Service Code (*Beamten-Dienstrechtsgesetz – BDG* 1979) 1979, Federal Law Gazette No. 333.
- Legal Relations with the Protestant Church Act (*Bundesgesetz über äußere Rechtsverhältnisse der Evangelischen Kirche*), Federal Law Gazette No. 182/1961.
- Compensation for Scientific and Artistic Activities at Universities and Universities of the Arts Act (*Bundesgesetz über die Abgeltung von wissenschaftlichen und künstlerischen Tätigkeiten an Universitäten und Universitäten der Künste – UniAbgG*), Federal Law Gazette No. 463/1974 [to be discontinued]
- Act on the Danube University Krems (*Bundesgesetz über die Universität für Weiterbildung Krems – DUK-Gesetz*) 2004, Federal Law Gazette I No. 22/2004.
- Hospitals and Health Resorts Act (*Bundesgesetz über Krankenanstalten und Kuranstalten – KAKuG*), Federal Law Gazette No. 1/1957. – There is furthermore an implementing legislation of the federal provinces.
- Federal Budget Act (*Bundeshaushaltsgesetz – BHG*) 2013, Federal Law Gazette I No. 139/2009.
- Federal Procurement Act (*Bundesvergabegesetz – BVergG*) 2006, Federal Law Gazette I No. 17/2006.
- University of Applied Sciences Studies Act (*Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz – FHStG*), Federal Law Gazette No. 340/1993.
- Family Allowances Act (*Familienlastenausgleichsgesetz*) 1967, Federal Law Gazette No. 376.
- Salaries Act (*Gehaltsgesetz – GehG*) 1956, Federal Law Gazette No. 54.

- Union of Students Act (*Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaftsgesetz – HSG*) 2014, Federal Law Gazette I No. 45/2014.
- Teacher Education Act (*Hochschulgesetz – HG*) 2005, Federal Law Gazette I No. 30/2006.
- Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (*Hochschul-Qualitätssicherungsgesetz – HS-QSG*), Federal Law Gazette I No. 74/2011.
- Concordat between the Holy See and the Republic of Austria, to which the Additional Protocol has been attached (*Konkordat zwischen dem Heiligen Stuhle und der Republik Österreich samt Zusatzprotokoll*), Federal Law Gazette II No. 2/1934.
- OeAD Act (*OeAD-Gesetz*), Federal Law Gazette I No. 99/2008.
- Private Universities Act (*Privatuniversitätengesetz – PUG*), Federal Law Gazette I No. 74/2011.
- School Organisation Act (*Schulorganisationsgesetz*), Federal Law Gazette No. 242/1962.
  - University Entrance Qualification Decree (*Universitätsberechtigungsverordnung – UBVO*) 1998, Federal Law Gazette II No. 44.
- Student Support Act (*Studienförderungsgesetz – StudFG*) 1992, Federal Law Gazette No. 305.
- Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region – "Lisbon Recognition Convention" (*Übereinkommen über die Anerkennung von Qualifikationen im Hochschulbereich in der europäischen Region – "Lissabonner Anerkennungsübereinkommen"*), Federal Law Gazette III No. 71/1999, to which the declarations of the Republic of Austria have been attached, Federal Law Gazette III No. 155/1999.
- Universities Act (*Universitätsgesetz – UG*) 2002, Federal Law Gazette I No. 120/2002.
  - Regulation on Eligible Groups of Persons (*Personengruppenverordnung – PersGV*) 2014, Federal Law Gazette II No. 340/2013.
  - Tuition Fee Decree (*Studienbeitragsverordnung – StubeiV*) 2004, Federal Law Gazette II No. 55/2004.

- University Studies Evidence Decree (*Universitäts-Studienevidenzverordnung – UniStEVO*) 2004, Federal Law Gazette II No. 288/2004.
- Contractual Employees Act (*Vertragsbedienstetengesetz*) 1948, Federal Law Gazette No. 86.

## Legislation on Research

- The Austrian Academy of Sciences Act (*Bundesgesetz betreffend die Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien*), Federal Law Gazette No. 569/1921.
- Act on the Institute of Science and Technology – Austria (*Bundesgesetz über das Institute of Science and Technology – Austria*), Federal Law Gazette I No. 69/2006.
- Austrian Research and Test Centre Arsenal GmbH Act (*Bundesgesetz über das Österreichische Forschungs- und Prüfzentrum Arsenal Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung*), Federal Law Gazette I No. 15/1997.
- Research and Technology Promotion Act (*Forschungs- und Technologieförderungsgesetz – FTFG*), Federal Law Gazette No. 434/1982.
- Research Organisation Act (*Forschungsorganisationsgesetz – FOG*), Federal Law Gazette No. 341/1981.
- Agreement pursuant to Article 15a of the Federal Constitutional Act (B-VG) by and between the Federal Government and the Province of Lower Austria on the Establishment and Operation of the "Institute of Science and Technology – Austria" (*Vereinbarung gemäß Art. 15a B-VG zwischen dem Bund und dem Land Niederösterreich über die Errichtung und den Betrieb des "Institute of Science and Technology – Austria"*), Federal Law Gazette I No. 107/2006.

## Legislation on Librarianship

- General Code of Civil Law (*Allgemeines bürgerliches Gesetzbuch – ABGB*), Collection of Juridical Texts (JGS) No 946/1811



- Austrian Libraries' Association and Service GmbH Act (*Bundesgesetz über die Österreichische Bibliothekenverbund und Service Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung*), Federal Law Gazette I No. 15/2002.
- Media Act (*Mediengesetz – MedienG*), Federal Law Gazette No. 314/1981.
  - Legal Deposit Decree (*Pflichtablieferungsverordnung – PflAV*), Federal Law Gazette II No. 271/2009.
- Copyright Act (*Urheberrechtsgesetz*), Federal Law Gazette No. 111/1936.