

Higher Education
The Austrian Higher Education System

Vienna, February 2010



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Preface BMWF

The Austrian higher education system has been undergoing a number of reforms in the last decade and Austria has been an active player in implementing Bologna objectives from the very beginning.

Austria is therefore a strong link in the chain of European higher education systems. This is partly due to the timely provision of a legal framework for the implementation of the various Bologna objectives at our higher education institutions. The Universities Act 2002 foresees, among others, the following measures:

- Bachelor/master study architecture for all new study programmes and voluntary conversion for existing ones*
- Introduction of a quality assurance system*
- Diploma supplement and ECTS*

The Universities of Applied Sciences Act provides the legal framework for the Austrian universities of applied sciences to offer state-of-the-art professionally oriented higher education bachelor's and master's programmes. Over time we have made amendments and provisions to facilitate the full and smooth implementation of the Bologna Process and will continue to do so.

In a system where the different partners enjoy a large portion of autonomy it is important that responsibility and accountability are properly handled. I see this as one of the major challenges of the future and I am optimistic that the major stakeholders, namely government, higher education institutions and students will choose dialogue and common action as the suitable approach to jointly improve our higher education system.

I am fully convinced that Austria will continue to play an important role in European and international higher education and that the attractiveness of Austria as a location for study and research will further increase in the future. This brochure aims at providing a glimpse into the diversified Austrian higher education system and I hope it will catch your interest.

Beatrix Karl
Federal Minister for Science and Research



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Preface BMUKK

The start of the 2007/08 school year marked the opening of the university colleges of teacher education. The legislative process which led to the establishment of the University colleges of teacher education took into consideration the provisions of the Bologna Process, though it had not been underway long at the time.

Students who complete a course of study at a university college of teacher education are awarded a bachelor's degree; more specifically, a Bachelor of Education degree (BEEd). Because the BEEd is also a concrete professional qualification – i.e. a teaching degree – it is awarded for a specific type of school and with the authorisation to teach certain subjects.

University colleges of teacher education also offer certificate university college programmes for further education culminating in a master's degree as part of their remit in continuing education, allowing them to implement the Bologna Declaration in continuing education at the second level.

Courses of study at university colleges of teacher education are set up according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

Thanks to close ties with numerous educational institutions in other countries, the international mobility of lecturers and students is already well established. I welcome the Europeanisation of our university colleges of teacher Education as another important step toward creating a forward-looking educational offering for teachers.

Claudia Schmied
Federal Minister for Education, Arts and Culture

OeAD-GmbH

With this brochure the OeAD-GmbH hopes to provide an overview of the tertiary educational sector in Austria, from the actual wording of certain laws to individual institutions and their structures.

IN AUSTRIA THE TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL sector includes public universities, private universities, universities of applied sciences and the university colleges of teacher education. To explain current conditions and structures in tertiary education there is a comprehensive chapter on the history of this sector.

THE LONG TRADITION of individual institutions of higher education serves as an important foundation for their ongoing evolution.

FOR THE LAST 50 YEARS THE OeAD-GmbH has been deeply involved in the administration, organisation and planning of international mobility schemes (not only in the tertiary educational sector) and is pleased to make a contribution toward a greater understanding of this sector with the publication of this brochure.

Hubert Dürrstein
CEO

Universities Austria [UNIKO]

The Austrian higher education system has changed and has been growing immensely over the last twenty years. This is why Universities Austria (Österreichische Universitätenkonferenz) believes that it is valuable to have a brochure which pictures the current state of the national higher education landscape and refers to the stakeholders involved.

THE AUSTRIAN UNIVERSITIES have been the only higher education institutions in Austria for many centuries and thus can look back upon a long tradition and history starting in the fourteenth century. The university as an institution has changed enormously but the mission has always been teaching and research. Meanwhile, other higher education institutions have emerged and should fulfil different missions each in order to supply an offer complementary to the one of universities.

ON BEHALF OF UNIVERSITIES AUSTRIA I hope this brochure will be successful and provide interested parties with useful information on the Austrian higher education system.

Hans Sünkel
President of Universities Austria

Mozarteum University
Salzburg
University of Vienna



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Austrian Private Universities [ÖPUK]

The private universities have added a range of educational and vocational institutions to the Austrian university system, placing new accents on the competition between universities.

WITH THE UNIVERSITY ACCREDITATION LAW a legal accreditation and evaluation procedure has been laid down for the Austrian private universities for the first time. Ongoing certification and evaluation of all programmes ensures not only the quality of study at the private universities but will also have an effect on quality management at the state universities. Austrian Private Universities (ÖPUK) welcomes all ways to present educational opportunities in the Austrian university system in a comprehensive and transparent manner. This brochure gives the private universities an opportunity to underline the new, complementary study programmes on offer. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the success of this project.

Marianne Betz
Chaiwoman of ÖPUK

Konservatorium Wien University
Anton Bruckner University



Universities of Applied Sciences, Austria [FHK]

The Austrian universities of applied sciences offer study programmes with an international orientation and international reputation.

THIS IS A REFLECTION OF THE DEMANDS which are being made on study programmes in today's world. Having an academic degree alone is no longer sufficient for securing your future job prospects. In fact it is much more important to have finished a study programme which conveys the qualifications which are actually needed on an internationalized and globalized labour market. The mission of the universities of applied sciences is to offer career-oriented higher education and to consider the needs of the labour market already at the design or planning stage of the curricula. For this reason internationalization is a crucial element expressed through the curricula of the study programmes.

THE UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES have been confirmed in every regard with this approach. For their activities in the areas of internationalization, staff and student exchange they have been awarded the Diploma Supplement Label and the ECTS Label by the European Commission multiple times.

IN THE NAME OF THE AUSTRIAN UNIVERSITIES of applied sciences I am very pleased by the fact that this brochure successfully strengthens the international profile of the Austrian institutions of higher education to further internationally promote studying in Austria.

Werner Jungwirth
President of the FHK

FH Wiener Neustadt
FH Joanneum Graz



University Colleges of Teacher Education

The university colleges of teacher education admitted their first classes at the start of the 2007/08 school year, satisfying the requirement in the Bologna Declaration for institutions of teacher training which grant an academic bachelor's degree as the culmination of a teacher training course, and in which it is also possible to earn a master's degree.

IN ACCORDANCE with college-level standards the previous curricula were completely revised on the basis of ECTS and new curricula were created in order to reflect the requirements of an academic degree programme.

BUT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT departure – apart from the new university college status – from earlier modes of teacher training was bringing together programmes of study which used to be separated into foundational and advanced courses and thereby creating the bachelor's-master's continuum which tracks more closely to a goal-oriented, lifelong learning model.

PROVEN ELEMENTS OF the earlier institutions were also retained, especially the complementary pairing of academic/pedagogical with educational training and classroom-based studies at the same time. In this way the social sciences themselves (such as educational science, pedagogical psychology and sociology) are tested and practised by the students in their classroom-based training from the start, according to the appropriate methodology and theories of instruction as well as of media practices, etc. This provides optimal preparation for the students in their future teaching challenges.

IN TERMS OF RESEARCH the university colleges of teacher education focus on subjects and projects that are most relevant to the actual practice of teaching and working in the classroom, ensuring a close connection between the theory and practice of teaching.

WITH THEIR GOAL AND performance plans, which model current course offerings as well as envisaged innovations, the university colleges of teacher education are charting an assured and independent course toward a forward-looking model of teacher training.

Helmut Barak
bm:ukk

PH Carinthia – Victor Frankl
PH Tyrol – Edith Stein



Austrian Students' Union [ÖH]

The Austrian Students' Union (ÖH) is the legal representative body of all students in Austria, whether from universities of applied sciences, university colleges of teacher education or regular universities.

BECAUSE MEMBERSHIP is obligatory, all students at these educational institutions are automatically members of the ÖH.

THE AUSTRIAN STUDENTS' UNION strives to voice the interests of Austrian students in all issues pertaining the tertiary sector. In public discussions on educational and wider societal issues it seeks to articulate and promote the students' perspectives.

THE ÖH HAS BEEN ENGAGED with the Bologna Process for a number of years, with a clear rejection of tendencies toward commercialisation and over-regimentation of coursework within higher education, along with a critical position toward those particular action lines in the Bologna Process which foster competition between colleges and universities instead of cooperation. An overhaul of the implementation of Bologna is urgently needed in Austria, since in many cases goals have not been achieved or there have even been new shortfalls, as in the case of student mobility. After 10 years of the Bologna Process there is still work to do – and this is where the ÖH will be most actively engaged in the interest of all students.

Sigrid Maurer
Chairwoman of the ÖH



1. Public universities

The responsibilities of the universities include the development of and instruction in the arts and sciences; career training in the arts and sciences; and fostering the academic development as well as post-graduate studies of junior academics.

IN LEGAL TERMS universities are independent legal entities. They are not bound by any higher authority and govern their affairs independently.

Austrian Public universities

(listed according to their own designation)

University of Vienna

University of Graz

University of Innsbruck

Medical University of Vienna

Medical University of Graz

Medical University Innsbruck

University of Salzburg

Vienna University of Technology

Graz University of Technology

University of Leoben – Montanuniversität

BOKU – University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna

University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna

WU (Vienna University of Economics and Business)

Johannes Kepler University (JKU) Linz

University of Klagenfurt – Alpen-Adria-University Klagenfurt

University of Applied Arts Vienna

University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna

University Mozarteum Salzburg (with a branch in Innsbruck)

University of Music and Performing Arts Graz KUG
(with a branch in Oberschützen)

University of Art and Design Linz

Academy of Fine Arts Vienna



Academy of Fine Arts
Vienna
Mozarteum University
Salzburg
University of Applied Arts
Vienna

1.1 University structure

University governance comprises the University Council, Senate, Rectorate and the Rector.

THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL has five, seven or nine members. Its responsibilities include approving the development plan and the organisation plan as well as creating draft performance agreements with the Federal Government. In this respect the University Council also fulfils an oversight role, including legal and economic oversight, and is responsible for creating the performance report, knowledge survey and balance sheet.

WITH 18 OR 26 MEMBERS the Senate is the traditional seat of co-determination. Its responsibilities include enacting curricula for regular programmes and degree programmes; appointing collegial boards as well as approving their decisions; submitting a shortlist of three candidate names for the election of a Rector to the University Council as well as a variety of consultation rights on the agendas of the Office of the Rectorate and the University Council.

THE RECTORATE comprises the Rector and up to four Vice-Rectors. As the operational body of the university it oversees all university departments and is responsible for all centralised administration activities, in particular creating proposals for the University Council and Senate; appointing internal managers for the university; budget and personnel allocation; setting internal university objectives; reporting and evaluations.

THE RECTOR IS THE CHAIRPERSON of the Rectorate. He or she is the official representative of the university in the negotiations with the Federal Minister for Science and Research on performance agreements, appoints university professors, signs off on the contracts of university staff and is their highest-level supervisor. There must be at least 40% female representation on all collegial boards.

1.2 Financing

The Federal Minister concludes a three-year performance agreement with each university. University budgets are agreed in this document by means of a fixed formula: 20% of the total amount for all universities is allocated on the basis of performance indicators and indicators of social objectives.

THE REMAINING 80% of the total budget is allocated on the basis of negotiated performance agreements. The criteria weighted among the universities are as follows: requirement and demand as well as performance and social objectives again.

APART FROM GOVERNMENT FINANCING universities may also take advantage of other sources of funding. For example, they may perform contract research or apply for funds from the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).

THE UNIVERSITIES ARE OBLIGATED to present an opening balance sheet to the Federal Minister for Science and Research as well as regular balance sheets, performance reports and knowledge surveys subsequently. The minister is required to report to the Austrian National Council.

ONE EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE is the University of Continuing Education in Krems, which is financed by funding from the Federal Government and the province of Lower Austria as well as by course fees for programmes of university study.

1.3 University law

The Senate of each university determines degree programmes as well as certificate university programmes for further education. A Collegial Board appointed by the Senate of each individual university sets out both curricula and examination regulations.

THE VOLUME OF DEGREE programmes offered is governed by the performance agreement between university and Federal Government. Each degree programme established by a university must belong unequivocally to one of ten legally prescribed study groups as this determines the academic degree that may be earned.

The ten legally prescribed study groups are:

- Humanities and cultural studies
- Engineering studies
- Artistic studies
- Teaching studies
- Medical studies
- Natural science studies
- Legal studies (jurisprudence)
- Social and economic studies
- Theological studies
- Veterinary medicine

BEYOND THAT it is possible for students, upon approval of the university, to design an individual degree programme made up of examination subjects which belong to different study groups.

Certificate university programmes for further education and university-level courses

CONTINUING EDUCATION in the university domain primarily takes the form of certificate university programmes for further education. The Senate of each university may establish internationally recognised master's degrees if the programmes in question are equivalent to comparable master's degree programmes. Otherwise, a description which uses the word ›academic‹ along with an appropriate characterisation of the programme contents may be awarded provided that this programme comprises at least 60 ECTS credits.

STUDENTS MAY ALSO EARN master's degrees or ›academic‹ diplomas at non-university educational institutions as long as the programme completed is a ›university-level course‹. This designation is awarded to an educational institution by the Federal Minister for Science and Research for a limited time period.

Admission requirements

Admission to a degree programme requires:

- General university qualification
- Any special qualification for the chosen degree programme
- German-language proficiency
- For arts courses, demonstration of artistic aptitude
- For teaching studies in movement and sport or the study of sports sciences, demonstration of athletic aptitude;

- For degree programmes with limited access, successful completion of the mandated selection procedure
- General university qualification for bachelor's degrees and diploma courses is based in principle on the secondary school leaving examination known as the Matura.
- For some degree programmes additional examinations in subjects relevant to the study programme must also be completed.

THOSE WITHOUT A SECONDARY SCHOOL leaving certificate but who have special professional or experiential qualifications may complete a university entrance qualification exam for a particular field of study. For those who have completed apprenticeships as skilled workers the vocational matriculation diploma examination provides access to any degree programme.

HAVING COMPLETED A DEGREE programme at a recognised institution of post-secondary education counts as a general university qualification, provided that the programme comprises at least 180 ECTS credits or is at least three years in length.

THE PREREQUISITE FOR admission to an artistic degree programme is passing an admission examination as demonstration of artistic aptitude. University entrance exams are only required for some degree programmes. For admission as a degree programme student the prerequisite for admission is a minimum age of 17; in exceptional cases for musical instrument studies students may be admitted at 15.

THE GENERAL UNIVERSITY qualification for a master's degree programme is the completion of a relevant bachelor's programme or equivalent. Every university must make one master's degree programme accessible for graduates of bachelor's degree programmes without any additional prerequisites; admission to different master's degree programmes may, however, involve additional qualitative requirements.

THE GENERAL UNIVERSITY qualification for a Ph.D. degree programme is the completion of a relevant master's or diploma degree programme or equivalent.

IF AN APPLICANT has passed a secondary school leaving examination abroad, it must be determined whether this examination is equivalent to an Austrian one. The 1997 Lisbon Recognition Convention governs the recognition of foreign qualifications in the European region. Otherwise, equivalency must be

determined on an individual basis. Supplementary examinations may also be required as a condition of admission where necessary because of substantial differences in secondary school leaving examinations.

SPECIAL ADMISSION PROCEDURES apply for degree programmes which are in especially high demand, such as medicine and dentistry. This means access to these degree programmes is limited to those applicants who pass the special admission procedures. The number of places can also be restricted and a selection procedure mandated for master's and Ph.D. degree programmes which are held entirely in a foreign language.

Curriculum

FOR EACH DEGREE PROGRAMME at a university a curriculum must be created and publicised. As the central document for any study programme the curriculum contains the qualification profile in the subject and sets out the structure of the degree programme, the examination subjects, the classes, lectures and other work necessary to complete the programme as well as other requirements and the way in which examinations must be taken. The curriculum also provides the number of ECTS credits for various elements of the course, allowing for a standardised assessment of the work of a particular student in internationally comparable terms.

For individual degree programmes, this works out to:

- 180 ECTS credits (in special cases, 240) for bachelor's degrees;
- At least 120 ECTS credits for master's degrees;
- 240 – 360 ECTS credits for diploma programmes;
- for Ph.D. programmes 3 continuous years without the award of ECTS credits, as of autumn 2009.

Examinations and theses

THE EXAMINATION REGULATIONS for each curriculum are set by the Collegial Board responsible. This Board determines the method and manner in which examinations are to be held, as well as to what purpose. The universities enjoy considerable discretion in this regard.

FINAL EXAMINATIONS INCLUDE bachelor's, master's and diploma examinations and doctoral examinations (›Rigorosen‹). For bachelor's degrees two academic essays must also be completed as part of the coursework. For master's and diploma courses a master's or diploma thesis is required, while a dissertation

must be presented as an independent scientific or artistic endeavour for Ph.D. programmes. Certificate university programmes for further education which conclude with a master's degree require a master's thesis or comparable work.

A POSITIVE RESULT ON EXAMINATIONS as well as scientific or artistic endeavours may be graded as follows: very good ⁽¹⁾, good ⁽²⁾, satisfactory ⁽³⁾ or sufficient ⁽⁴⁾. A negative result would be graded as ›insufficient‹ ⁽⁵⁾. Where this form of evaluation is either unfeasible or inappropriate ›participated successfully‹ may be used to indicate a positive result and ›participated unsuccessfully‹ to indicate the opposite. Examinations consisting of multiple subjects or elements may only be evaluated positively if each subject or element has a positive result.

THERE ARE MULTIPLE CONVENTIONS on the recognition of examinations, both multilateral and bilateral. In principle, students who have failed examinations may resit them three times, with the third time requiring evaluation by committee. Individual university bylaws must define whether and how many additional examinations are permitted.

FAILING THE LAST PERMITTED attempt at an examination results in expulsion from the degree programme at the university where the examination was failed for the final time. Starting over the same degree programme at a different Austrian university is permitted. It is also possible to change the degree programme at the same university at any time. Examinations which the student has passed may be taken into consideration for the new degree programme.

Academic degrees

UPON FULFILLING ALL THE REQUIREMENTS in a given curriculum the student is granted the appropriate academic degree by a notice of award. This notice must include the degree programme completed, the academic degree and the legal basis of the degree programme (the 2002 Universities Act and curriculum in question).

Nomenclature of academic degrees – the most important examples

Bachelor's degrees:

- Bachelor of Arts BA
- Bachelor of Science BSc

Master's or diploma degrees:

- Diplom-Ingenieur/Diplom-Ingenieurin DI or Dipl.-Ing.
- Doctor of general medicine Dr. med. univ.
- Doctor of dentistry Dr. med. dent.
- Master of Arts MA
- Master of Science MSc

Doctoral degrees:

- Doctor Dr.
- Doctor of Philosophy PhD

Master's degrees in continuing education:

- Master of Arts MA
- Master of Science MSc

TO FACILITATE THE international mobility of graduates a diploma supplement may be issued together with the notice of award, in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. This supplement describes the type, level, context, content and status of a completed degree programme.

ANYONE WHO HAS EARNED an academic degree from a recognised institution of post-secondary education either at home or abroad may also use this degree in its original form in Austria. In the case of ›Mag.‹, ›Dr.‹ and ›Dipl.-Ing.‹ (DI) these are to be put before the person's name, while all other academic degrees are to be put after the name. In the case of foreign academic degrees the place of the degree in a personal title should follow convention in the country where the degree was awarded. Academic degrees from the EU (including signatories to an accession agreement) or from the European Economic Area, Switzerland or the Holy See may also be entered in abbreviated form in official documents.

IF AN AUSTRIAN ACADEMIC degree is required for practising a certain occupation, application may be made to have a foreign academic degree recognised for equivalency at a university with the requisite subject matter authority. In some special cases, such as degree programmes in Italy or Croatia, bilateral agreements negate the need for such equivalency recognition, allowing the Federal Ministry for Science and Research to simply grant equivalency instead.

Distance learning

DISTANCE LEARNING IS TARGETED primarily at people who are either in the workforce, have caretaking duties at home or are interested in a degree programme but live in areas without a nearby university. The disabled can also benefit from this form of study as limited mobility is not a consideration as it would be for a conventional type of on-campus programme.

THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION of Distance Teaching Universities (AADTU) provides the most important institutional structure for European cooperative ventures in distance teaching, offering Austrian students access to 15 distance learning institutions with 60 Euro Study Centres throughout Europe. Some of the best-known institutions include the distance university of Hagen, in Germany, as well as the British Open University.

AUSTRIAN UNIVERSITIES MAY set up their own distance learning programmes, along with distance learning units in any degree programme. New media play an important role in this development. For example, the University of Linz has been offering a multi-media distance learning option for legal studies since winter 2001.

1.4 Tuition fees

Students who are citizens of Austrian or of an EU/EEA country or Switzerland do not have to pay tuition fees at public universities – except in certain cases.

IN APPLICABLE CASES the regulations stipulate the payment of € 363.36 per semester plus a membership fee to the Austrian Students' Union (ÖH), plus an insurance fee. Upon admission to a university any applicable fees must be paid by the established deadline (regular deadline or special deadline) in order for enrolment to be confirmed. Students taking degree seeking courses at more than one university pay the compulsory fees only once. University students enrolled simultaneously at a university and a university of applied sciences may be subject to double payment of fees (pending on institutional regulations).

FEE-PAYING STUDENTS are entitled to indicate how they wish those fees to be spent from within options established by the Senate of the respective university.

FEE WAIVERS MUST BE GIVEN to students studying or acquiring work experience under transnational, European Union, or university mobility programmes. Fees are also to be waived for students completing mandatory curriculum requirements on study abroad programmes, in cases where the home institution has concluded partnership agreements providing for the reciprocal waiver of fees, and for students from least developed countries (as determined by decree

of the Federal Minister). Additional reasons may be defined by the institutions themselves.

A WAIVER IS ALSO TO BE GRANTED for officially recognized refugees and for students suffering from illness, for disabled students, for students with childcare duties and for students during pregnancy.

GENERAL TUITION FEES ARE, if applicable, levied together with the Austrian Students' Union (ÖH) membership fee and student insurance premium; if general fees are not applicable the ÖH and insurance fees still have to be paid in order for enrolment to be confirmed.

Additional general information on tuition fees is available at

<http://www.bmwf.gv.at/studienbeitraege>; for local regulations which might vary from institution to institution see the homepages of the respective institutions as listed at

<http://www.reko.ac.at/mitglieder/universitaeten/>

1.5 Members of the university

STUDENTS: Provisions for the status and representation of students are set out in the law known as HSG 1998 (Hochschülerinnen- und Hochschülerschaftsgesetz 1998).

RESEARCH FELLOWS: Also known as post docs, these are students or graduates of a doctoral programme who are working at the university under the auspices of a funded research project. This kind of research fellowship neither gives rise to a new employment relationship with the university nor does it alter an existing one.

DOCTORS IN SPECIALIST TRAINING: Their relationship to the university is temporary, limited to the period of the training itself. Their responsibilities are derived from the legal provisions governing medical training.

ACADEMIC UNIVERSITY STAFF: University professors are responsible for research and development in their chosen field as well as for teaching. They may have temporary or permanent employment with the university. They are appointed by the Rector after they have been vetted by an Appointment Commission installed by the Senate. A shortened vetting procedure is used when an appointment is not meant to last longer than five years.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STAFF: This includes administrative, technical, library and nursing staff as well as doctors whose responsibilities are solely those of a public hospital.

PRIVATE LECTURERS: These are people who have received a teaching licence (venia docendi) from the university on the basis of their academic qualifications for a given subject. As such, they are not employees of the university. Teaching licences are granted by the Rectorate following the completion of a post-doctoral lecturing qualification procedure overseen by a Senate-appointed Habilitation Committee. This teaching licence includes the right to supervise and evaluate academic work. The issuance of a teaching licence neither gives rise to a new employment relationship with the university nor does it alter an existing one (hence the term ›private lecturer‹).

PROFESSORS EMERITI AND RETIRED UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS: They are not actively employed either by the Federal Government or by the university. However, they have the right to continue teaching, holding classes, seminars and examinations at the university where they were last actively employed.

Employment law

SINCE 1 JANUARY 2004 each university has also become an employer; all newly employed personnel are salaried employees of their particular university. The National University Federation negotiates collective contracts with the union. Both employees and the university as employer have options for tailoring individual contracts to their own needs. There is legal provision for tenure track appointments. Employee interests are represented by works councils.

CIVIL SERVANTS RETAIN ALL THEIR RIGHTS. Federal contractual employees have become salaried employees as a result of the law. New employees do not have the status of civil servants – their contracts are based on the Salaried Employees Act.

ACADEMIC freedom in terms of both research and teaching is protected by law. No one may be forced to do any work which is against his or her conscience. Every academic has the right to determine their own research as well as to complete sponsored or contract research, regardless of their age or status. The university retains patent utilisation rights arising from inventions; however, the university must offer them to the inventor. All open positions must be publicly advertised by the Rectorate.

EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS must be signed by the Rector at the request of or upon consultation with the head of the organisational unit and the immediate supervisor for the position in question. This also applies in the case of employees assigned to academic projects on behalf of third parties as well as employees whose salaries will be financed by earmarked funds from research grants.

Employment contracts may be permanent or temporary

THE COLLECTIVE CONTRACT contains a pension fund agreement for academic university staff in the sense described by the Occupational Pensions Act.

Teaching and research careers

IN THE FUTURE A TYPICAL ACADEMIC career at the university will follow the trajectory described below: After completing a master's or diploma degree programme a graduate could expect to hold a temporary position as a university assistant for four to six years. During this period the student should also complete his or her doctoral programme. Before the contract for this position expires there should be a career-oriented conversation between employer and employee regarding the latter's chances of pursuing a further academic career at the university. If the outlook is positive, he or she may apply for a ›career track‹ position in the form of a post-doc job with the title of ›Assistant professor‹, which may last for up to six years.

FOR THIS POSITION The candidate must sign a ›qualification agreement‹ with the university administration, which defines what he or she must accomplish over the course of (up to) six years – such as a post-doctoral lecturing qualification or a certain number of publications. At the end of this period it will be ascertained as to whether the goals were achieved.

IF THE CANDIDATE FULFILS the requirements of the qualification agreement, he or she becomes an ›Associate professor‹ with a permanent employment contract. The next step on the academic career path is to apply for the position of a ›University professor‹. As was the case in the past, the candidate must go through an appointment vetting process, which is another reason why this new career model is not comparable to the American ›tenure track‹ system.

APART FROM THOSE OPTIONS there are separate tracks for ›senior scientists‹ or ›senior artists‹ that would apply to language and music teachers or laboratory managers, for example, as well as to someone such as a senior physician who is not pursuing an academic career but may play the role of department head in a hospital. At any stage of the university career path two negative evaluations constitute grounds for dismissal.

1.6 Evaluation and quality assurance

The 2002 Universities Act requires universities to set up a quality management system to ensure the level of quality and performance.

THE AREAS TO BE evaluated are set out in the performance agreement. The performance of academic university staff must be evaluated at least every five years. Student evaluations of teaching quality must also be taken into consideration by the performance agreements.

1.7 Universities Austria [uniko]

Universities Austria, founded in 1911, is the national umbrella association of the 21 Austrian state universities and is located in Vienna.

ITS PURPOSE IS TO ASSIST the universities in the fulfilment of their tasks and responsibilities and thus to foster scholarship and research. Universities Austria supports the national and internal coordination of the 21 universities, represents them in national and international committees and is the public voice of the universities. Furthermore, it provides administrative and organisational support for the National University Federation (Dachverband der Universitäten), which is responsible for collective bargaining. The 21 universities fund their umbrella organisation through membership fees, which are graded according to the size of the institution.

MISSION: Universities Austria is the official representative organisation and the voice of the public universities. The efficacy of its efforts depends on the unity of its members. The basis for Universities Austria's authority and work is the identification of each individual Rectorate with the association's resolutions and decisions. As such, it is responsible for conveying the demands of universities to society, the private sector and the government and ensuring the future of university education and research in Austria.

STRUCTURE: The meeting of members is the Plenary as defined by the Associations Act (Vereinsgesetz) 2002. It is the supreme governing body of the association and all Rectors of the 21 state universities are participating. The Rector (i.e. the University President or Vice-Chancellor) acts as the university's delegate in the plenary. Should s/he be unable to attend, the Rector may nominate another member of the Rectorate as delegate. Each university has one vote. The Plenary meets between four and five times a year and is chaired by the President. The Board, which consists of seven members, gets together more frequently.

THE POLICY COMMITTEES (fora) and working groups focus on specific issues such as research, teaching or international affairs and have been established to ease the communication and coordination between the member institutions. In each forum one associate of every Rectorate is represented, who is also responsible for this field within her/his university. Working groups provide a platform for specific issues such as art, medicine, doctoral studies and others. The policy committees and working groups are of particular significance for the daily work of Universities Austria. Through the establishment of a permanent secretariat the work of the Plenary, policy committees and working groups is enabled and eased. The Secretary General is in charge of the secretariat, the plenary and the Board. Five policy advisors are taking care of specific policy committees, such as research, international affairs, teaching, legal issues, budget and press & public relations. They are assisted by two secretaries.

2.0 Austrian Private Universities [ÖPUK]

The private universities of Austria wholeheartedly welcome the publication of a brochure which offers an overview of higher education in Austria. Compared to public universities, the private universities are relative newcomers on the educational scene. However, since their foundation, they have consistently made the international aspect of their syllabi a top priority.

THE AUSTRIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES offer students innovative, state-of-the-art university education of a high quality and provide personal and individual attention at all times. Continuous internal and external evaluation of teaching & research assures quality control, and special attention is also paid to the support and development of the arts.

THE AUSTRIAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES develop their degree programmes to meet both current and future educational needs. Regular external re-accreditation reviews supplement the internal quality management and assure graduates of the best chances in the labour market. This brochure provides an overview of the Austrian educational system's diverse offerings, giving our international partners the opportunity to get to know the Austrian system better, and thereby fostering the growth of international ties.

Private University Seeburg
Castel



2.1. Institutions

Private universities in Austria

(listed according to their own designation)

- Catholic Theological Private University Linz
- Webster University Vienna
- UMIT – University for Health Sciences,
Medical Informatics and Technology, Hall in Tyrol
- PEF – Privat Universität für Management, Vienna
- Paracelsus Medical University Salzburg
- Anton Bruckner University, Linz
- New Design University, St. Pölten
- Konservatorium Wien University, Vienna
- Sigmund Freud Private University Vienna
- MODUL University Vienna
- Private University Seeburg Castle,
Seekirchen am Wallersee
- Danube Private University, Krems

2.2. Accreditation and quality assurance

The Accreditation Council is the central body for accrediting private universities. Apart from new accreditations its responsibilities also include the oversight of private universities which have already been accredited.

THE COUNCIL IS MADE up of eight members who have knowledge of the international university landscape. While the Council is appointed by the federal government, four of its members are nominated by Universities Austria (formerly the Austrian Rectors' Conference). Women must have a proportionate share of nominations. The term of Council members is five years in principle.

THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT are appointed by the Federal Minister from among the members of the Council. While their terms are for three years only, a one-time renewal at the end of the first term is permitted. The Accreditation Council is subject to the authority of the Federal Minister for Science and Research.

PROVISIONS FOR THE STATUS and representation of students at private universities are set out in the law known as HSG 1998.

PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES take their own decisions on imposing any study or tuition fees.

3.0 Universities of applied sciences

According to the Universities of Applied Sciences Studies Act (FHStG), degree programmes offered by universities of applied sciences must fulfil the following teaching requirements:

PROVIDE A PRACTICE-ORIENTED programme at the higher education level; develop students' ability to tackle the challenges inherent to their job field at the current state of the art of knowledge and practice in that field; promote the accessibility of the educational system as well as the professional flexibility of graduates. The universities of applied sciences are more widely dispersed across regions than universities, and in some cases are outside of the main population centres in Austria.

DEGREE PROGRAMMES at universities of applied sciences may take the form of bachelor's (180 ECTS credits) and master's (60 – 120 ECTS credits), as well as — less commonly — diploma (240–300 ECTS credits) degree programmes. Doctoral degrees cannot be awarded at universities of applied sciences.

PROVIDERS ARE AUTHORISED to offer certificate university of applied sciences degree programmes for further education. They may award internationally recognised master's degrees if the programme in question is comparable to other international master's degree programmes in terms of admission requirements, content and comprehensiveness. Otherwise, a description which uses the word ›academic‹ along with an appropriate characterisation of the programme contents may be applied to a programme which comprises at least 60 ECTS credits.

WHILE MOST UNIVERSITY of applied sciences degree programmes are held during the day, there are also programmes for working people, which take place on evenings and weekends, often using elements of distance learning. Where students are employed in jobs relevant to their studies, the requirement for professional practical training within the degree programmes may be waived.

Providers of university of applied sciences degree programmes

AT PRESENT THE FOLLOWING institutions serve as providers of university of applied sciences degree programmes (listed in the order of primary location, though there may be additional branches, and according to their own designation):

- Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences, Dornbirn
- University of Applied Sciences Burgenland, Eisenstadt
- FH JOANNEUM University of Applied Sciences, Graz
- CAMPUS02-University of Applied Sciences Business Studies, Graz
- MCI Management Center Innsbruck, Innsbruck
- University of Applied Sciences Tyrol fh gesundheit, Innsbruck
- IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems
- University of Applied Sciences Kufstein
- Salzburg University of Applied Sciences
- St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences
- Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, Spittal an der Drau
- Upper Austria University of Applied Sciences, Wels
- FHW University of Applied Sciences for Communication and Business Management, Vienna
- University of Applied Sciences bfi Vienna
- University of Applied Sciences Technikum Wien, Vienna
- Lauder Business School, Vienna
- FH Campus Vienna – University of Applied Sciences, Vienna
- Ferdinand Porsche Distance FH Programmes, Vienna
- University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt
- Theresian Military Academy, Wiener Neustadt

AT PRESENT THESE providers offer about 170 university of applied sciences degree programmes, ranging from health sciences, cultural sciences and art and design to military and police leadership, natural sciences, social sciences, engineering sciences and economics.

3.1 University of applied sciences structure

The University of Applied Sciences (UAS) Board is the main body within the institution responsible for teaching and examinations.

UNDER ITS RESPONSIBILITY THE UAS academic staff is able to develop and organise its teaching and its examination pattern relatively independently. It is made up of representatives of the teaching staff and students.

3.2 Financing

Financing for the UAS sector is divided up among several sources. The federal government pays the costs of each student place provided that a set of defined criteria is fulfilled.

BUILDINGS, INVESTMENTS and some running expenses are paid by the providers (in most cases state governments, regional and trans-regional municipalities and other public and private institutions assume a part of the cost as well).

3.3 Universities of applied sciences law

Providers of UAS degree programmes can be federal and other legal entities in terms of public and private law. The Universities of Applied Sciences Council accredits the degree programmes.

FOR UAS DEGREE PROGRAMMES the accreditation period can last up to five years. After that they have to undergo an internal and external evaluation procedure and must apply to the Council for an extension of their approval, which may require content-related and methodological changes in the programme of study.

Admission requirements

Admission to a UAS degree programme requires:

- General university qualification – generally demonstrated by the Matura examination taken at a secondary school. Or
- a university entrance qualification exam, a vocational matriculation diploma examination or a completed degree programme at an institution of post-secondary education with at least 3 years' duration. Or
- a relevant professional qualification. In this case examinations in general educational subjects must also be taken during the degree programme.
- German-language proficiency
- Completion of the admission procedure required for the degree programme.

THE GENERAL UNIVERSITY qualification for a UAS master's degree programme is the completion of a relevant bachelor's degree programme or equivalent.

REPLACING THE GENERAL university qualification with a relevant professional qualification is an option limited to the UAS sector and results from a greater emphasis on professional requirements.

IF AN APPLICANT has passed a secondary school leaving examination abroad, it must be determined whether this examination is equivalent to an Austrian one. Supplementary examinations may also be required as a condition of admission where necessary.

IN GENERAL, IF THE NUMBER of applicants exceeds the number of student places, an admission examination or some other type of admission procedure must be administered.

IF THE ACADEMIC AND DIDACTIC concept of a UAS degree programme is based on work experience, access to this UAS degree programme may be restricted to an appropriate target group.

Curriculum

CREATING CURRICULA FOR UAS degree programmes is the sole responsibility of the providers. The curricula are subject to an accreditation procedure by the Universities of Applied Sciences Council.

IN CONTRAST TO universities, UAS degree programmes have a much more practical focus. For that reason they also include a mandatory professional practical training (placement or internship) as part of their curriculum.

Examinations and theses

THERE ARE NO CENTRALISED regulations for examinations in UAS degree programmes. Rather, each UAS has its own examination regulation. In the case of UAS bachelor's degree programmes the prerequisites for graduation consist of independent academic essays completed in courses or seminars as well as an examination before a committee. UAS master's and diploma degree programmes require a master's or diploma examination for graduation, consisting of a master's or diploma thesis and an examination before a committee. As is the case for universities, it is possible for outside examinations and academic theses to be recognized.

Academic degrees

ON FULFILMENT OF ALL requirements set out in the curriculum the appropriate academic degree is awarded. The wording of each academic degree is set by the Universities of Applied Sciences Council by decree.

Bachelor's degrees

Bachelor of Arts in Arts and Design BA or B.A.
Bachelor of Arts in Business BA or B.A.
Bachelor of Arts in Cultural Studies BA or B.A.
Bachelor of Arts in Military Services BA or B.A.
Bachelor of Arts in Police Leadership BA or B.A.
Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences BA or B.A.
Bachelor of Science in Engineering BSc or B.Sc.
Bachelor of Science in Health Studies BSc or B.Sc.
Bachelor of Science in Natural Sciences BSc or B.Sc.
Bachelor of Laws LLB or LL.B.

Master's degrees

Diplom-Ingenieur/Diplom-Ingenieurin DI or Dipl.-Ing.
Master of Arts in Arts and Design MA or M.A.
Master of Arts in Cultural Studies MA or M.A.
Master of Arts in Business MA or M.A.
Master of Arts in Military Services MA or M.A.
Master of Arts in Police Leadership MA or M.A.
Master of Arts in Social Sciences MA or M.A.
Master of Science in Health Studies MSc or M.Sc.
Master of Science in Natural Sciences MSc or M.Sc.

Diploma degrees

Diplom-Ingenieur/Diplom-Ingenieurin (FH)
DI or Dipl.-Ing. (FH)
Magister – Austrian master's (FH) Mag. (FH)
 (Using a UAS diploma degree without the suffix ›FH‹ is not permitted.)

MASTER'S DEGREES CAN be defined by providers on the basis of completed certificate university of applied sciences programmes for further education, for example:

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

TO FACILITATE THE INTERNATIONAL mobility of graduates a diploma supplement may be issued together with the notice of award in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. This supplement describes the type, level, context, content and status of a completed degree programme.

HAVING A UAS MASTER'S or diploma degree permits the graduate to embark upon a related doctoral programme at a university, which would then last one to two semesters longer for a UAS graduate than for a university graduate if the equivalent university degree programme leading to the doctoral programme requires a longer minimum study period than the UAS master's or diploma degree programme.

3.4 Tuition fees

Providers of UAS courses are authorised but not obligated to collect a tuition fee from students in the amount of € 363.36 per semester.

IF A STUDENT IS TAKING courses at a university and at a university of applied sciences simultaneously, he or she must pay the tuition fees for both (assuming both have fees).

3.5 Members of the UAS

STUDENTS: Provisions for the status and representation of students are set out in the law known as HSG 1998

STAFF: THE UAS sector does not have its own form of employment law. Rather, employment is generally set up on the basis of civil law contracts. Teaching staff are known as FH Lecturers (up to the third year of employment) or FH Professors (starting from the fourth year).

3.6 Accreditation and quality assurance

The Universities of Applied Sciences Council is set up as the central administrative body for universities of applied sciences. It is subject to the authority of the Federal Minister for Science and Research.

THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY of the Council is to award or withdraw accreditation to programmes as university of applied sciences (UAS) degree programmes. No degree programme can be launched without being accredited by the Council for a maximum duration of five years. Before a degree programme can be re-accredited it has to undergo an external evaluation process. It also awards academic degrees and grants equivalency to foreign academic degrees, evaluates the entire UAS sector on an ongoing basis and advises the Federal Minister for Science and Research on issues concerning UAS education and federal funding.

THE COUNCIL HAS 16 MEMBERS, of which at least four must be women, and all of whom are appointed by the Federal Minister for Science and Research. They serve a three-year term. The members are not subject to any higher authority in the exercise of their duties. The President and Vice-President are appointed by the Federal Minister from among the members of the Council.

3.7 Austrian Association of Universities of Applied Sciences [FHK]

The Austrian Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (FHK) was established in 1996 as a representation of interests for the sector of universities of applied sciences. In the meantime there exist 20 universities of applied sciences, offering about 315 degree programmes in different occupational areas.

The FHK – an umbrella institution:

THE FHK OFFERS ITS MEMBERS A SHARED PLATFORM to work on serious issues such as improving their legal and financial standing as well as a forum to deal with continually recurring questions in the domain of higher education and education policy in a timely and coordinated manner. The FHK has established itself as the voice of all the universities of applied sciences, allowing it to communicate a consistent message to policymakers and the public on issues of concern to its members.

Mission – the tasks of the FHK:

- To strengthen the identity of the UAS sector
- To represent the interests of its members
- To offer a platform for exchange

Structure:

MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES of Applied Sciences in Austria (FHK), and thus of the Members Assembly, are the course-providing bodies represented by both their executive directors and the heads of degree programmes.

THEY MAKE THEIR DECISIONS in the Members Assembly twice a year, which is chaired by the President.

THE MANAGING BOARD CONSISTS of two representatives of each course-providing body. One representative belongs to the management of the course-providing body, while the other is part of the community of the heads of degree programmes.

THE MANAGING BOARD DETERMINES the basic requirements as well as the strategic aims of the Association. Furthermore, the Managing Board assists and advises the Presiding Council in all matters in the fulfilment of the Association's purpose. The Managing Board is also chaired by the President.

THE PRESIDING COUNCIL consists of seven Members of the Managing Board, chaired by the President. The Presiding Council is the steering committee of the Association and is responsible for all matters which are not assigned to other committees by the Articles of Association.

THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT is headed by the Secretary General, located in Vienna, and manages the daily business of the Association, supporting the President and the other bodies of the Association. Furthermore there are four Committees supporting the Managing Board in the following subject areas:

- Personnel and Organisational Development
- International Matters
- Research and Development
- Quality Management

THE AUSTRIAN ASSOCIATION of Universities of Applied Sciences is funded by membership fees, which are charged, referring to the institutional membership, in consideration of the size of the member institution.

Visison – the future of the FHK:

- To convey an attractive image of Universities of Applied Sciences
- To act as a stimulus and opinion builder for the UAS sector
- To be sought after as politico-educational experts for the tertiary educational sector

4.0 University colleges of teacher education

In the autumn of 2007 the academy-level institutions providing training and continuing education for primary school teachers and other teachers were raised to university college level. The earlier academy-level training institutions became university colleges of teacher education, often by combining multiple existing institutions.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION are tasked with creating, offering and providing quality educational products in pedagogical career fields, particularly for the teaching profession. The various dimensions of a teaching career are addressed through coursework in the social sciences and the relevant subject matter discipline as well as training in didactical and classroom-based methods (training schools). University colleges of teacher education offer degree programmes as well as continuing education.

FOUNDATIONAL DEGREES are offered through degree programmes comprising 180 ECTS credits, which generally take six semesters to complete. These are bachelor's programmes, which conclude with a Bachelor of Education (BEEd) degree.

PUBLIC UNIVERSITY COLLEGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION offer degree programmes for teaching in primary and lower secondary schools. In addition, degree programmes are offered on an as-needed basis for teaching in special-needs schools, for teaching students finishing their pre-vocational year, and for teaching in vocational training schools.

PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION must also offer degree programmes for teaching in primary schools and lower secondary schools. The sole exception to this rule is the University College of Teacher Education Burgenland, which is only required to offer one of the two degree programmes. At present this is the training course for teaching in primary schools. Private university colleges of teacher education must also offer at least one other teaching subject, such as teaching in special-needs schools or vocational training schools.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION in the Federal Provinces of Carinthia and Burgenland are also required to provide supplementary language studies in Slovenian, Croatian or Hungarian along with the appropriate additional courses in teaching methodology to students planning to teach in primary and lower secondary schools.

University colleges of teacher education

(listed according to their own designation)

The law has provision for the following public University colleges of teacher education:

University College of Teacher Education Carinthia – Victor Frankl UC

University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria

University College of Teacher Education Upper Austria

University College of Teacher Education Salzburg

University College of Teacher Education Styria

University College of Teacher Education Tyrol

University College of Teacher Education Vorarlberg

University College of Teacher Education Vienna

University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy Vienna

APART FROM PUBLIC UNIVERSITY COLLEGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION the Federal Minister for Education, Arts and Culture may accredit private university colleges of teacher education (mostly under the auspices of a religious organisation) or private courses of study. At present these include:

University College of Teacher Education Burgenland

Private University College of Teacher Education of the Diocese of Linz

Catholic University College for Education of the Diocese of Graz-Seckau

University College of Teacher Education of the Diocese of Innsbruck

University College of Teacher Education Vienna / Krems

Religionspädagogische Akademie der Diözese Gurk Klagenfurt

(Religious Pedagogical Academy of the Diocese of Gurk Klagenfurt)

Islamische Religionspädagogische Akademie Wien

(Islamic Religious Pedagogical Academy)

Jüdische Religionspädagogische Akademie der jüdischen Erziehungs- und Bildungsstätte Beth Chabad Wien

(Jewish Religious Pedagogical Academy of Chabad Austria)

4.1 Structure of University colleges of teacher education

The administrative bodies for university colleges of teacher education are the University College Council, the Rectorate, the Rector and the Curriculum Committee.

THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE COUNCIL has five members. Its responsibilities include advertising the position of the Rector and providing content for curricula; furthermore, it has planning responsibilities.

THE RECTORATE CONSISTS OF THE RECTOR and one or two Vice-Rectors, and is the actual administrative and representative body of the university college of teacher education.

THE RECTOR HEADS the university college of teacher education, represents it to third parties and coordinates the activities of its administrative bodies. In addition, the Rector is the supervisor for all teaching and administrative staff at the university college of teacher education.

THE RECTOR AND VICE-RECTOR(S) are nominated from a shortlist of three names given by the University College Council to the Federal Minister for Education, Arts and Culture. Special regulations apply to the College of Teacher Education in Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, which is under the joint responsibility of the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment & Water Management, and the Federal Minister for Education, Arts and Culture.

THE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE is responsible for passing the curriculum and examination regulations. It must also decide on bylaws and has the secondary and final word on all academic affairs. It has nine members who are teachers and three members who are student representatives.

4.2 Financing and infrastructure

The Federal Government is required to fund public university colleges of teacher education. Every year each college presents a target and performance plan along with a resource plan to the appropriate Federal Minister for approval, which is the basis for that year's financing.

Apart from government funding, university colleges of teacher education may take advantage of additional sources of financing so long as the activities associated with them do not adversely affect the colleges' teaching and research.

4.3 University colleges of teacher education law

Public university colleges of teacher education are federal institutions.

All university colleges of teacher education are subject to the authority of the Federal Minister for Education, Arts and Culture.

One exception to this rule is the College of Teacher Education in Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, which is subject to the authority of the Federal Minister for Education, Arts and Culture in pedagogical matters but to the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment & Water Management in respect to staffing and budgeting.

Admission requirements

Admission to a university college of teacher education degree programme requires:

- General university qualification – generally demonstrated by the Matura examination taken at a secondary school. Or
- a certificate of general educational development or
- a vocational matriculation examination or
- an academic degree from an institution of post-secondary education and
- German-language proficiency;
- Fulfilment of the admission requirements set for the particular degree programme (whether vocational courses or vocational training and work experience)
- Successful completion of the mandated selection procedure.

IF AN APPLICANT HAS earned a preliminary degree abroad, it must be determined whether this degree is equivalent to one of the Austrian preliminary courses listed above. Otherwise, equivalency must be determined on an individual basis by the office of the Rectorate. Supplementary examinations may also be required as a condition of admission where necessary.

Curriculum

THE PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGNING curricula, including examination regulations, are set out in the university college ordinance on curricula by the Federal Minister for Education, Arts and Culture.

Mandatory subject areas include:

- Social sciences
- Relevant academic subjects
- Subject matter teaching methodology
- Classroom-based teaching: Classroom-based training takes place in the training schools (primary and lower secondary schools) attached to the university colleges of teacher education as well as in other schools used by the colleges as training schools.
- Supplementary courses (these may include teaching-related elective subjects such as media technology).
- For teachers of vocational or agricultural instruction there may be other specific subjects (such as vocational training).

For a bachelor's degree a bachelor's thesis is required.

THE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE sets the curriculum for each degree programme, which is then approved by the Rectorate. Examinations are recognised as they are at a university.

Examinations and theses

EACH DEGREE PROGRAMME has its own examination regulations, which are created by the Curriculum Committee according to the usual legal and administrative standards.

THE PRIMARY REQUIREMENT for graduation is an independent written thesis (bachelor's thesis).

THE EXAMINATION REGULATIONS for university college degree programmes as well as other courses outline the oral/written/practical examinations which must be passed and/or a final thesis (as required by university college courses finishing with a master's degree).

AS IS THE CASE FOR universities, it is possible for outside examinations and academic theses to be recognised.

Academic degrees

UPON FULFILLING all the requirements in a given curriculum a candidate is awarded a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree. This academic degree allows candidates to pursue a thematically relevant master's degree, either at a university or a university of applied sciences institution.

Agrarian and
Environmental Pedagogy Vienna
Catholic UCoTE Graz
University College of Teacher
Education



University College of Teacher
Education Tyrol – Edith Stein



TO FACILITATE THE international mobility of graduates, a diploma supplement may be issued together with the notice of award in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. This supplement describes the type, level, context, content and status of a completed degree programme.

IF AN AUSTRIAN ACADEMIC degree is required for practising a certain occupation, application may be made to have a foreign academic degree recognised for equivalency by a university college of teacher education with the requisite subject matter authority.

UPON COMPLETING A university college master's course an internationally recognised master's degree is awarded.

4.4 Tuition fees

Students at university colleges of teacher education must pay a tuition fee in the same cases that are applicable to universities (see chapter 1.4).

4.5 Members of University colleges of teacher education

STUDENTS: Provisions for the status and representation of students are set out in the law known as HSG 1998.

STAFF: university colleges of teacher education employ academic, professional training and educational training instructors.

There are four categories:

- I. Federal contractual teaching staff
- II. Teaching staff on temporary assignment
- III. Shared teaching staff
- IV. Adjunct faculty

DEPENDING ON THEIR CATEGORY, staff may be hired on the basis of a public (government) or private contract.

4.6 Evaluation and quality assurance

University colleges of teacher education must set up their own quality management system as well as undertake regular internal evaluations to ensure consistent quality and performance.

THESE EVALUATIONS should be focused on the responsibilities and activities of the university college as well as the full spectrum of performance-based indicators.

4.7 University colleges of teacher education and the BMUKK

With the passing of the 2005 Universities Act (given that nothing had changed in this regard at the department level since the most recent government was formed), the university colleges of teacher education – unlike other educational institutions in the tertiary sector, which come under the authority of the BMWF – became part of the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BMUKK).

THERE IS A HISTORICAL REASON for this shift; namely, that the precursors of the university colleges of teacher education were subject to the School Organisation Act because they were not considered universities. But there were practical reasons as well – in particular the close link between the training and continuing education of (prospective) teachers and schools as the places where teachers carry out their profession.

THE BMUKK is responsible for funding the universities, acting as the final authority in reviewing the implementation of the 2005 Universities Act and any other legislative initiatives aimed at further development.

THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy vienna is overseen by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management with regard to budgeting and staffing, and by the BMUKK with regard to pedagogical matters.

5.0 The I.S.T.-Austria

The Institute of Science and Technology – Austria in Klosterneuburg opened in June 2009.

ITS PURPOSE IS to promote cutting-edge research in basic research as well as top quality post-graduate education in the form of Ph.D. and post-doc programmes.

RESEARCH, TRAINING AND staffing at the I.S.T. all have an international orientation, with English as the language of work and instruction.

THE RESEARCH AREAS of the Institute will be primarily determined by the availability of leading international scientists and researchers. They will have first-rate infrastructure. In areas where it is not possible to equip the facilities up to the highest international standard I.S.T.-Austria will not engage in any research.

WHILE RESEARCH AT I.S.T.-Austria will be driven entirely by the resident scientists' aim to make advancements in their respective fields, any outstanding commercial or industrial application of research findings ought to be carefully tested and, where possible, commercially exploited by means of patents, licences or starting a company. A detailed technology transfer policy, with rules on intellectual property, is currently under discussion. However, there are already parcels of land available surrounding the I.S.T. to serve the mid- to long-term development of commercial spin-offs.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF I.S.T.-Austria comprises a Board of Trustees, a President, an Administrative Director and a Scientific Board.

INFOPOINT

www.

ist.ac.at

6.0 Austrian Students' Union [ÖH]

Both degree and non-degree programme students at universities, universities of applied sciences, private universities and university colleges of teacher education belong to the Austrian Students' Union (ÖH).

AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL the ÖH represents general and study-related interests of its members to government authorities as well as educational institutional bodies. The ÖH has the right to deliver opinions and suggestions regarding student matters, university life and education, as well as comment on relevant draft laws and decrees.

THE ÖH IS THE OFFICIAL BODY set up to represent student interests at the federal level throughout all of Austria. Its members are elected from the Student Councils known as University Representations.

AT THE INDIVIDUAL UNIVERSITY LEVEL the ÖH represents the general and study-related interests of its members. Where those interests concern only a particular university, the ÖH is the counterpart of government agencies and university bodies. It also cooperates with government agencies and institutions, collegial boards and their committees and sub-committees. Similar to its rights at the federal level it is also authorised to provide an outside opinion on matters related to each university. At the university level the bodies of the ÖH include the University Representation, the Student's Councils and the Electoral Commission.

FOR UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES the bodies of the ÖH are the university of applied sciences representation, the degree programmes' representations, and the class-year representations.

STUDENTS AT PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES are still members of the ÖH though they do not have any legally required form of institutional representation.

AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION the bodies of the ÖH are a University College of Teacher Education Council and a Council, or representation, for each degree programme.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES are not paid for their work but they may claim compensation for the time and effort they expend on their official duties. To support their work different rules apply to student representatives regarding some aspects of their studies and their study grants.

ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER areas of responsibility are carried out by offices, such as the Office for Educational Policy, the Office for Social Policy and the Office for Economics, which are set up at every university.

ELECTIONS FOR ALL ÖH BODIES at the federal and university level take place every two years for all of Austria simultaneously but separately for each of these bodies on the basis of proportional representation. The electoral commission represents an exception in this respect.

THE ÖH IS SUBJECT TO THE authority of the Federal Minister for Science and Research. The ÖH is also subject to the oversight of the Austrian Court of Auditors both with regard to its financial controlling as well as its commercial undertakings.

7.0 Financial aid

Financial aid includes both direct and indirect subsidies which are derived for the most part from state funding.

INDIRECT SUBSIDIES ARE not based on financial need. This includes family benefits, insurance coverage under a parents' plan or self-insurance, compulsory accident insurance and tax deductions for children who are full-time students.

DIRECT SUBSIDIES, WHICH are provided under the Student Support Act (Studienförderungsgesetz), are based on social need as well as academic performance of the student. Social need is determined by the income of the student and/or their parents or legal guardians. There are also special forms of financial aid, such as: study allowance for tuition fees, transportation cost allowance and grants for studying abroad.

FINALLY, THE UNIVERSITIES receive funding from the Federal Minister for Science and Research to award performance-related grants and incentive grants.

7.1 Study grants

Study grants are the most important element of state financial aid. By helping to remove socio-economic and regional barriers they are meant to enable any young person of interest and ability to pursue a higher education.

AUSTRIAN LAW HOLDS PARENTS OF students accountable for the financial maintenance of their children until such time they are able to support themselves, which in this context means the end of a degree programme pursued in a focused and timely manner. Only in those situations where the income of parents or students does not cover the costs associated with pursuing a higher education are study grants intended to provide a secondary source of support.

BASED ON THIS CONSIDERATION there are two main requirements for receiving a study grant: firstly, ›social need for support‹, and secondly, ›favourable academic performance‹.

THE ›GRANT for ›self-supporters‹ is a special study grant intended for students who have been supporting themselves with an annual income of at least € 8,148.00 for the four years prior to first receiving a study grant. In this case parental income is not taken into consideration. However, favourable chances of academic success are also a condition of the award.

Eligibility

Study grants may be awarded to:

Degree programme students at universities, universities of applied sciences and university colleges of teacher education, who are:

- Austrian citizens, citizens of an EU or EEA country, or of Switzerland; citizens of a third country are generally treated equally as far as it may be concluded from the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).
- Refugees under the Geneva Convention.

THE STUDENT MUST demonstrate social eligibility for support through such measures as income, marital status and family size, which also help determine the amount of the award.

THE STUDENT MUST ALSO demonstrate a favourable academic performance. For the first one or two semesters the candidate must provide evidence of their admission as a degree programme student. During the application period for the third semester proof of academic performance must be presented or else the study grants already received must be paid back. Favourable academic performance is generally established if evidence of a set measure of coursework is presented promptly and the eligibility period (length of time set by law to complete one stage of an academic degree, plus one semester, except in the case of unforeseen difficulties) is not exceeded.

CANDIDATES MUST HAVE STARTED their studies before reaching 30 years of age (for previously employed students, raising of children or disability and students continuing a master's degree programme, this may be extended to a maximum of 35 years under certain conditions) and cannot have completed an equivalent degree programme either in Austria or abroad. Exceptions to this rule include a master's degree programme which immediately follows a bachelor's degree programme, a doctoral degree programme which immediately follows a master's or diploma degree programme. The degree programme may not have been changed more than twice. A change of the degree programme after completing more than two semesters can lead to a temporary loss of eligibility unless the entire pre-enrolment period is credited.

Study grant amount

THE AMOUNT OF THE STUDY GRANT is calculated on the basis of the maximum annual study grant minus any deductions. The maximum study grant is € 5,700.00 per year. There is a maximum study grant of € 8,148.00 per year for orphans, married students, students legally required to provide for the care and upbringing of at least one child, for students who have a residence in the municipal area of their place of study because their parents' residence is too far from their place of study and for students who support themselves.

FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES there is a supplement based on the type and severity of their disability. More information is available in the appropriate decree. Students legally required to provide for the care and upbringing of a child receive a supplement of € 67.00 per month. The maximum study grant is reduced by any amount exceeding € 8,000.00 of a student's annual income (reasonable amount student can pay); the reasonable maintenance payments by parents or the spouse of a student; the yearly amount of the family allowance and child tax credit. For students over 26 (or those who carry out military or alternative service or have just had a child: over 27) this amount is not deducted.

7.2 Additional subsidies

The following additional subsidies are provided for by law:

TRANSPORTATION COST ALLOWANCE (to help study grant recipients pay for transportation costs needed to pursue their degree programme);

INSURANCE COST ALLOWANCE (to help study grant recipients receive a low cost self-insurance for health insurance);

STUDY COMPLETION GRANT (to support regular students at universities in the final phase of their studies, up to the age of 41);

STUDY ALLOWANCE (to cover the tuition fee).

7.3 Grants for study abroad

While studying abroad students are eligible to receive study grants for up to four semesters.

APART FROM THAT, recipients of study grants are also eligible for an additional grant specifically for studying abroad. Requirements include having passed a diploma exam or a doctoral exam (›Rigorosum‹) or, if such major exams are not required, two semesters of credit counting toward the completion of one's studies, and a minimum period of three months of study abroad. The amount of the grant is set by decree and is paid out on a monthly basis.

7.4 Mobility grants

In the winter term 2008/2009 the mobility grant was introduced as a new form of financial student support.

THE MOBILITY GRANT has the function to support students who study the complete course of their bachelor's or master's programme at a state-approved university, university of applied sciences or a university college of teacher education outside Austria but within the EEA or Switzerland.

Preconditions for the mobility grant are:

1. the university entrance qualification was achieved in Austria.
2. the applicant had her/his residence and centre of vital interests in Austria for at least five years before applying for the mobility grant and
3. the applicant has not applied for another financial support according to the Student Support Act.

7.5 Performance-related grants

All students may apply for such a grant.

PREREQUISITES FOR this grant are: an excellent record of academic progress, having not exceeded the eligibility period of the respective section of the study programme, a grade point average of no more than 2.0 for the examinations, course work and research papers under evaluation, and fulfilling all other conditions of the competition application. The detailed eligibility criteria are designed by the public universities, the private universities and the universities of applied sciences. A performance-related grant may not be less than the amount of the course fee (see chapters 1.4 and 3.4) for two semesters, nor be more than € 1,500.00 per academic year.

7.6 Incentive grants

Degree programme students can apply for such a grant to complete a scientific or artistic work in progress.

THE PREREQUISITE FOR this grant is an appropriate application by the student along with a description of the project, cost breakdown and financing plan; at least one assessment by a supervising university instructor on the cost breakdown as well as the probability that the student will be able to complete the project with an above-average chance of success, as based on their past academic record and project plan; adhering to the eligibility period; fulfilling all other conditions of the competition application. The detailed eligibility criteria are designed by the public universities, the private universities and the universities of applied sciences. An incentive grant may not be less than € 700.00 yet not more than € 3,600.00 in an academic year.

7.7 Student financial aid

As part of its private sector activities the Federal Ministry of Science and Research may award student financial aid in the form of rent subsidies.

STUDY COST ALLOWANCES or benefits in kind to students and graduates of degree programmes who may be experiencing difficulties due to economic or academic circumstances. Student financial aid may not be less than € 180.00 for two semesters, nor exceed the maximum study grant for the same period.

7.8 Study Grant Authority

The Study Grant Authority in Vienna is responsible for study grants, additional subsidies and grants for studying abroad as well as awarding or directing other forms of financial aid according to the guidelines set by the Federal Minister.

THERE ARE APPLICATION offices of the Study Grant Authority in Graz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Linz, Salzburg and Vienna.

STUDENTS MAY FILE an objection within two weeks following a decision by the Study Grant Authority. Based on that objection and the results of any other enquiries, the Study Grant Authority has two months to modify, supplement or reverse its decision in any way. The Senate of the Study Grant Authority takes decisions on objections for which no preliminary decision has yet been taken as well as applications submitted against preliminary decision. Appeals against decisions taken by the Senate must be made directly to the Federal Minister for Science and Research.

8.0 History

Austria's institutions of higher education have a long and storied history. Understanding those traditions puts their present position into context.

IN 1365 DUKE RUDOLF IV of Austria founded the University of Vienna, making it the oldest university in German-speaking Europe today. Having won considerable autonomy from both church and state, the University of Vienna flourished for an extended period. The University then witnessed a series of major events, from the Plague to the Turkish siege of the city, followed by the Reformation and then the Counter-Reformation. It was this latter movement which resulted in the gradual handover of the University of Vienna to the Jesuits, starting in 1554.

THE SPIRIT OF THE COUNTER-REFORMATION also marked the establishment of two other universities. In 1585 a Jesuit college became the University of Graz but it continued to be operated by that religious order. In 1669 the University of Innsbruck was founded to fill the gap in the Habsburg territory between the area south of the Semmering Pass, which had the Universities of Vienna and Graz, and the area to the west along the Rhine River, which had the University of Freiburg in Breisgau. Here, too, it was the Jesuits who left their mark, both in terms of teaching and organisation.

BY CONTRAST, the founding of the University of Salzburg in 1622 had much less to do with the Counter-Reformation. Rather, it was an attempt by the Benedictine Order, which dominated the principality of Salzburg, to gain greater influence within the Church.

THUS, OVER THE COURSE of the 17th and 18th centuries, four universities were established in the territory of present-day Austria, which were administrated by the Church, without organisational or academic autonomy. For that reason they were largely insulated from the development of modern science and research. Their student populations were also drawn largely from the nobility, which had a militarising influence on academic life.

THE SOVEREIGNS MARIA THERESA and Joseph II inaugurated a new era for the entire educational system. The universities were reorganised and made over into state institutions. As part of this Josephine educational reform the Universities of Graz and Innsbruck were formally closed in 1782 and turned into government-run lyceums for training priests, civil servants, country doctors and midwives.



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University of Graz
University of Salzburg
Graz University of
Technology
University of Leoben

IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY several other important decisions shaped the development of the Austrian university landscape. The University of Salzburg was disbanded under Bavarian rule in 1810. However, the lyceums in Innsbruck and Graz were reconstituted as universities in 1826 and 1827, respectively, and remained under state control. At the same time the precursors to today's universities of technology of Vienna and Graz emerged. In 1840 the Styrian Mining Academy (today's University of Leoben) was founded in Vordernberg at the urging of Archduke Johann.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1848 led to a decisive new restructuring of the universities, which gained a significant measure of independence thanks to a new constitution. Academic freedom was now guaranteed by the state and teaching licences; professorial nominations and administration were reconfigured accordingly. The primary route to a university education became the Matura examination, which was the capstone to the grammar school system of college-preparatory schooling. Along with this organisational and academic reform came a massive expansion of the university system in terms of subject matter, staffing and infrastructure.

IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY special colleges also grew and proliferated. Starting in 1872, the Joanneum Graz and the Vienna Polytechnic Institute were set up as colleges (they later became the Universities of Technology in Graz and Vienna) along with the College of Agriculture in Vienna (now the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna). In 1896 the Veterinary School within the military administration was granted college status (today it is the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna). In 1898 an Export Academy was established, which later became the Vienna University of Economics and Business. The right to grant doctorates was awarded in 1901 to both Technical Colleges, in 1904 to the Mining Academy in Leoben and in 1908 to the Veterinary College.

DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN the two World Wars both anti-Austrian and anti-Semitic feeling became widespread as German nationalism took hold at the universities. Once Austria was annexed by the Third Reich, political dissidents as well as Jewish academics and students were barred from universities and colleges and either fell victim to the Nazi genocide or the Second World War or were forced to emigrate. Among them were many of the most famous and talented Austrian scientists and researchers.

AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR education quickly became a priority again. However, the universities were damaged in many ways by the turbulence which went back to 1938. They lost a tremendous amount of prestige. Charged with having been seduced by power, they were left with few instructors who were untainted politically and even fewer qualified scientists and researchers.

AT THE SAME TIME the universities were still governed by a great number of arcane educational laws left over from the 19th century. It was not until 1955 that the passing of the Higher Education Organisation Act put into place a single law for all academic colleges and universities for the first time, albeit without mandating any significant changes to their organisational structures. This allowed the 19th century model of organisation for colleges and universities to be retained almost unchanged until the 1970s.

NEW UNIVERSITIES WERE established in the 1960s. In 1962 the newly founded University of Salzburg opened. In 1966 the Linz College of Economic and Social Sciences (now the University of Linz) was inaugurated. In 1970 the University of Educational Sciences was founded in Klagenfurt, which was restructured and renamed the University of Klagenfurt in 1993.

8.1 Development of schools of arts up to 1966

The oldest of the arts universities still in existence today is the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. In 1696 Emperor Leopold I founded an academy for painting, sculpture, architecture, perspective and fortification.

NEXT, THE ›IMPERIAL AND ROYAL Copperplate Academy‹ was founded in 1766, followed by an ›Engraving Academy‹ in 1767. These three academies were merged by Empress Maria Theresa into the ›United Imperial and Royal Academy of Fine Art‹ in 1772. Following multiple reorganisations, a new statute elevated the Academy of Fine Arts to the rank of a college in 1872. In its basic outlines this collegial statute was subsumed by the Academy Organisation Act of 1955, which was not replaced until 1988.

THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19th century saw the establishment of the precursors to today's music colleges. In 1817 the ›Society of Friends of Music in the Austrian Empire‹ opened a singing school in Vienna under the direction of Antonio Salieri, which was quickly expanded to include instruction in musical instruments. This was the forerunner of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna as we know it today.

SIMILARLY, THE UNIVERSITY of Music and Performing Arts Graz traces its origins to a singing school, started in the same period (1816) by the Styrian Music Association. In Salzburg the formation of a Cathedral Music Association in 1841 planted the seed which eventually became the University Mozarteum Salzburg. In 1909 the Vienna Conservatory was taken over by the government and renamed the Imperial and Royal Academy for Music and the Performing Arts. The Mozarteum, run by the International Mozarteum Foundation since 1881, was awarded public status in 1914, turned into a conservatory and came under government administration in 1922.

THE FOUNDING OF WHAT WE KNOW today as the University of Applied Arts in Vienna should be seen in the context of commercially-oriented school reforms in the second half of the 19th century. In 1867 the School of Applied Arts of the Imperial and Royal Austrian Museum for Art and Industry was established with the goal of producing skilled artisans for the nation's industry. Over the years subjects such as metalwork and woodwork were added to the training programme. In 1909 the School of Applied Arts came under state control.

AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR these university precursors were initially turned into academies: the Academy for Music and the Performing Arts in Vienna (1947) and the ›Mozarteum‹ Academy for Music and the Performing Arts in Salzburg (1953). In 1963 the Graz Conservatory became the federally administered ›Academy for Music and the Performing Arts in Graz‹. The 1970 Schools of Fine Arts Organisation Act finally granted these academies the status of colleges.

IN 1973 THE federal government took over the private art school of the city of Linz which had been founded in 1947 as the College of Art and Industrial Design Linz (known today as the University of Art and Industrial Design Linz).

8.2 Development of the universities to the present day

The passing of the General Higher Education Studies Act (AHStG) and other special education legislation in 1966 marked an attempt both to modernise the entire higher education sector and put it on a new legal footing.

IN A SIMILAR WAY, albeit with the requisite modifications due to the nature of the subject, the Schools of Arts Studies Act (KHStG) created a legal basis for arts studies for the first time. More recently, thoroughgoing changes such as a decentralisation of responsibility came about through the University Studies Act (UniStG) passed in 1997, which also integrated arts studies into the system, obviating the need for a parallel system of legal principles related to these studies. In a 1999 amendment to the University Studies Act the three-stage degree system (baccalaureate or bachelor's – master's – doctoral degree) was introduced as an option for the universities.

IN 1975 A NEW UNIVERSITY Organisation Act (UOG) came into effect. Among the most significant effects of the law was the inclusion of university instructors of all categories, students and administrative staff into the university decision-making processes overseen by the collegial bodies, along with a reorganisation of the institutes. The University Organisation Act of 1993 (UOG 1993) granted the universities increasing latitude in decision-making and organisational matters as a first step toward full autonomy.

THE 1998 UNIVERSITIES of the Arts Organisation Act (KUOG) formally turned colleges of the arts into universities of the arts, introducing far-reaching changes to their organisational structure. Similar to the 1993 UOG, a division into institutes was inaugurated across the board, reducing the number of organisational units concerned with teaching and development of the arts as well as research from 422 to just 68.

THE 2002 UNIVERSITIES ACT finally put in place a common legal basis for both the universities of the sciences and of the arts. In addition, it granted the universities a complete measure of autonomy with new instruments of control such as global budgets and performance agreements. Giving the universities the status of legal entities under public law, the government officially removed them from federal administration. This created the legal basis for an ›entrepreneurial university‹ which is able to develop its own sources of revenue apart from government financing. The 2002 Universities Act also carved out the three independent medical universities of Vienna, Graz and Innsbruck from their host universities.

IN LINE WITH European developments in higher education, particularly the Bologna Process, the university study system has been divided into bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programmes. Degree programmes as previously organised will only continue until the students enrolled in them have graduated.

BASED ON INITIAL experiences with the 2002 Universities Act, a 2009 amendment provided clarity on some issues which arose and also refined certain points of the law with regard to electing a Rector, for example, or appointing staff to research, teaching or arts positions. The collective bargaining agreement for university staff was finalised at the same time.

8.3 Development of private universities

The 1999 Universities Accreditation Act (UniAkkG) created a procedure for recognising private universities. The Accreditation Council is the agency responsible for both approvals and extensions.

THE LAW DOES NOT mandate any particular form of organisation for private universities. While course offerings often differ from public universities and universities of applied sciences both systematically and in terms of content, duplicate offerings are not permitted.

8.4 Development of the university of applied sciences sector

The 1993 Universities of Applied Sciences Studies Act (FHStG) marked the inception of universities of applied sciences in Austria.

THIS WAS A CONSEQUENCE of the international trend toward developing a more profession-oriented, non-university arena of higher education which would still meet the standards of EU law for institutions of higher education. The first university of applied sciences degree programmes were inaugurated in 1994, and new ones have followed every year since.

ONE POINT OF DISTINCTION vis-à-vis universities is that there is no formal organisational basis for universities of applied sciences. Instead, it is the degree programmes themselves which are accredited, and can thus be offered by any provider organisation (which are for the most part private entities). The Universities of Applied Sciences Council was set up to accredit degree programmes.

IN A 2002 AMENDMENT to the Universities of Applied Sciences Studies Act (FHStG) the two-stage degree system (FH baccalaureate or bachelor's – FH master's) was introduced as an option for universities of applied sciences degree programmes. The division into bachelor's and master's degree programmes was introduced in 2006.

8.5 Development of university colleges of teacher education

The Teacher Education Act of 2005 replaced the previous academies for teacher training with state-run university colleges of teacher education, which began full-scale operations in the autumn of 2007.

THE FEDERAL MINISTER for Education, Arts and Culture can also accredit private university colleges of teacher education, which is of particular relevance to those institutions run by churches and other religious communities. University colleges of teacher education conduct courses for compulsory school teachers as bachelor's programmes along with continuing education courses.

9. Student Ombudsman

For general questions and individual problems related to studying or doing research at Austrian universities, universities of applied sciences or university colleges of teacher education as well as for several aspects of student life in Austria (entry and residence requirements, housing, etc.) a central student ombudsman office (Studierendenanwaltschaft) is available for Austrian and international students.

STUDENTS CAN CONSULT the webpage (www.diesan.at) or address individual enquiries or complaints to this office. Cases are dealt with free of charge and in full confidentiality.

→ Studierendeanwaltschaft

Minoritenplatz 5

1014 Wien

Toll free telephone (Mon – Fr 9am – 4pm) 0800-311 650

san@bmwf.gv.at

www.diesan.at

10. The OeAD-GmbH can help

For Undergraduates, graduate students and researchers the first point of contact regarding questions of international mobility is the Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research (OeAD-GmbH).

SINCE 1 JANUARY 2009 the OeAD has been operated as a limited liability company (GmbH), with a mandate to fulfil a number of important functions:

CARRY OUT THE FEDERAL Minister for Science and Research's grants programmes and external projects; assist and supervise grant recipients and guest researchers during their stay in Austria as well as provide follow-up services after their return;

- Act as the national agency for the Erasmus mobility and lifelong learning programme of the EU; Direct Tempus and various other EU programmes for EU partner countries:
- Direct and administer ›Aktionen‹ programmes such as ›Austria – Slovakia‹, ›Austria – Czech Republic‹ and ›Austria Hungary‹;
- Function as the national CEEPUS office;
- Direct and administer agreements of scientific and technological cooperation (WTZ);
- Operate university preparation programmes in the university cities of Graz, Leoben and Vienna;
- Market Austria as an attractive destination for higher education;
- Provide information to international students and guest researchers;
- Promote (academic) mobility;
- Form networking and cooperation agreements with other international exchange organisations;
- Provide housing information to international students and guest researchers.

In addition to the OeAD there are international offices at individual colleges and universities (albeit with different names and organisational structures) which are responsible for brokering the services of the Ministry of Science and Research as well as of the OeAD.



The OeAD on Campus Vienna
The new OeAD House

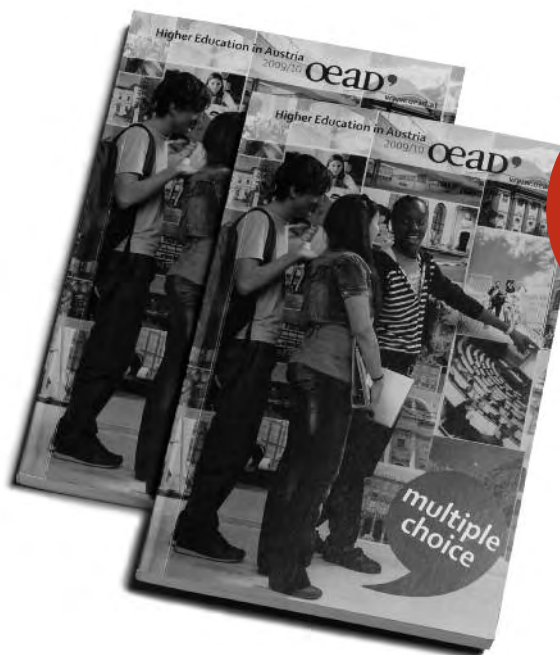


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**Austrian Association of Universities of Applied Sciences
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**Rectors' Conference of University Colleges of Teacher Education
(RÖPH)**

www.paedagogischehochschulen.at/rektorenkonferenz



**Conference of Austrian Private Universities (ÖPUK)
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