

# **The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2019/2020**

**A description of the responsibilities, structures and  
developments in education policy for the exchange of information in Europe**

– EXCERPT –

## 14. ONGOING REFORMS AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

This chapter provides a thematic and chronological overview of national reforms and policy developments since 2017.

The introduction of the chapter describes the overall education strategy and the key objectives across the whole education system. It also looks at how the education reform process is organised and who the main actors in the decision-making process are.

The section on ongoing reforms and policy developments groups reforms in the following broad thematic areas that largely correspond to education levels:

- Early childhood education and care
- School education
- VET and adult learning
- Higher education
- Transversal skills and employability.

Inside each thematic area, reforms are organised chronologically. The most recent reforms are described first.

Finally, the section on the European perspective provides links to European strategies in which education and training have a prominent role.

### **Overall national education strategy and key objectives**

There is a consensus that, in light of demographic changes in Germany, and with a view to the emerging need for skilled workers, but also because of the challenges posed by digitisation and the ongoing migration of refugees, great efforts must be made to develop the German education system in the years ahead.

The coalition agreement between the governing parties for the 19th legislative period announced a number of plans.

The following initiatives, among others, were envisaged for the school sector:

- Initiation of an investment offensive for schools on the basis of an amendment to Art. 104c of the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz* – R1), which, in addition to the current school renovation programme, includes support for the Länder in their investments in municipal education infrastructure, in particular in all-day schooling and care services, digitalisation and vocational schools.
- Enabling all-day education and care for all pupils of primary school age. To this end, a legal entitlement to all-day care for all children of primary school age is to be created. Together with the Länder, the services are to be expanded in such a way that the legal entitlement can be fulfilled in 2025.
- Improving the equipment of all schools within the framework of the Digital-Pact School 2019–2024 of the Federal Government and the Länder. While the federal government will ensure better equipment with digital technology, the Länder will train teachers so that they can make good didactic use of digital media and impart digital skills. The common goal is for pupils to be able to use a digital learning environment in all subjects and learning areas in order to acquire the necessary skills in the digital world.

An amendment to Article 104c of the Basic Law entered into force in April 2019. The amendment enables the Federation to grant financial aid to the Länder for

investments by the Länder and local authorities that are significant for the nation as a whole in order to increase the efficiency of the municipal education infrastructure. The new Article 104c is the constitutional basis for the DigitalPact School 2019-2024 (*DigitalPakt Schule 2019–2024*), with which the Federation and the Länder, among other things, pursue the goal of creating digital education infrastructures suitable for the future.

In the field of vocational education and training, the coalition agreement provides, inter alia, for the following measures:

- Strengthen and modernise vocational education and training with a Vocational Training Pact, including improving equipment for vocational schools in the context of digitalisation
- Development of a National Continuing Education Strategy for the Federal Government, the Länder and associations
- Initiation of an innovation competition in vocational education and training
- Expansion of the special programme to promote digitisation in inter-company vocational training centres and their centres of competence
- Strengthening the further training of trainers
- Strengthening innovative qualification pathways (e.g. higher vocational training, dual studies)
- Further strengthen vocational guidance at all general secondary schools in cooperation with the Länder, especially at the *Gymnasium*
- Extension of the National Decade for Literacy and Basic Education
- Expansion of the individual promotion instruments for career advancement and the continuing education programmes offered by the higher education institutions

For the higher education sector, the following projects, among others, were announced:

- Continuation of federal funding within the framework of the successor to the Higher Education Pact (*Hochschulpakt*) to strengthen higher education institutions and studies
- Continuation of the funds from the Quality Pact for Teaching (*Qualitätspakt Lehre*) in accordance with the recommendations of the German Science Council (*Wissenschaftsrat*)
- Continuation and extension of the Quality Offensive for Teacher Training at federal and Länder level
- Expansion of the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz – BAföG – R84*) and improvement of services

### **Overview of the education reform process and drivers**

In the Federal Republic of Germany responsibility for the education system is determined by the federal structure of the state. Unless the Basic Law awards legislative powers to the Federation, the Länder have the right to legislate. Within the education system, this applies to the school sector, the higher education sector, adult education and continuing education. Administration of the education system in these areas is almost exclusively a matter for the Länder.

The scope of the Federal Government's responsibilities in the field of education is defined in the Basic Law, according to which the Federation bears responsibility

particularly for the regulations governing the following domains of education, science and research:

- In-company vocational training and vocational further education
- Admission to higher education institutions and higher education degrees (here the Länder may enact laws at variance with the legislation of the Federation)
- Financial assistance for pupils and students
- Promotion of scientific and academic research and technological development
- Child and youth welfare (in particular early childhood education and care in day-care centres and child-minding services)
- Legal protection of participants of correspondence courses
- Regulations on entry to the legal profession
- Regulations on entry to medical and paramedical professions
- Employment promotion measures as well as occupational and labour market research

More detailed information on the distribution of legislative competences in the education sector is available in chapter 2.7.

In addition to the division of responsibilities described above, the Basic Law also provides for particular forms of cooperation between the Federation and the Länder within the scope of the so-called joint tasks (*Gemeinschaftsaufgaben*). Joint tasks in the field of science and education are regulated in Article 91b of the Basic Law. Pursuant to Article 91b, the Federation and the Länder may mutually agree to cooperate in cases of supra-regional importance in the promotion of science, research and teaching as well as for the assessment of the performance of educational systems in international comparison and in drafting relevant reports and recommendations.

Federalism has proved successful as a state structure which encourages diversity and competition. The Federal Government and the Länder will introduce the appropriate measures and initiatives within their respective areas of responsibility. At the same time, there has been an increase in the common responsibilities of the Länder and the need to agree objectives and coordinated measures on the part of the Federal Government and the Länder in fields of national relevance.

### **Ongoing reforms and policy developments**

The following account includes measures resolved by all Länder in the Standing Conference and measures by the Federal Government. Within their own areas of responsibility, the Länder take various and far-reaching measures which cannot be separately described. The reform measures of the Länder, mostly with substantial support or in cooperation with the Federation, affect the following areas in particular:

- Expanding full-day offers with the aim of extended educational and support options
- Raising the educational level of disadvantaged people
- Measures to improve linguistic competence
- Measures to improve dovetailing of the pre-school sector and primary school
- Measures to improve school education, reading competence and the understanding of mathematical and scientific correlations

- Vocational orientation measures and measures to improve transition from school to work
- Measures to strengthen the link between vocational and higher education
- Laws to improve the identification and recognition of professional qualifications acquired abroad by the Federation and the Länder
- Measures to increase the higher education graduation rate and that of comparable qualifications
- Measures for digitalisation in the school and higher education sector

The basic principle of sustainability should be anchored more firmly in the German educational system in future. To this end, the National Platform on Education for Sustainable Development resolved the National Plan of Action on Education for Sustainable Development (*Nationaler Aktionsplan Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung – BNE*) in June 2017. The members of the National Platform are, on behalf of the federal government, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – BMBF*), the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMFSFJ*), the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (*Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, Bau und Reaktorsicherheit – BMUB*) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (*Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit – BMZ*), and on behalf of the Länder, representatives of the Standing Conference, the Conference of the Ministries of Youth and Family Affairs (*Jugend- und Familienministerkonferenz – JFMK*) and the Conference of the Environmental Ministers (*Umweltministerkonferenz – UMK*), and on behalf of the local authorities, a representative of the local authority organisations. Decision-makers from the fields of business, science and civil society are also members of the National Platform.

#### **14.1. National Reforms in Early Childhood Education and Care**

##### **2019**

##### **Federal programme "ProChildminding"**

With the federal programme ProChildminding: Where Education for the Smallest Starts (*ProKindertagespflege: Wo Bildung für die Kleinsten beginnt*), the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMFSFJ*) supports the further development of childminding services from 2019 to 2021. Under the slogan "Qualified Acting and Caring", the programme focuses on three areas:

- More qualification of child day care staff.
- Better working conditions by, among other things, developing practical replacement arrangements for sick leave and holidays.
- Good cooperation, by financing a coordination office at the respective youth welfare offices which is dedicated to networking and advising child day care workers.

A total of 48 projects in 14 Länder will receive funding of up to Euro 450,000 each. The funding total for the programme amounts to Euro 22.5 million.

More detailed information is available in chapter 11.2.

<https://prokindertagespflege.fruehe-chancen.de/>

### **Gute-KiTa-Gesetz**

On 1 January 2019, the Act on the Further Development of Quality and Participation in Child Day Care (*Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Qualität und zur Teilhabe in der Kindertagesbetreuung – R64*) came into force. With the so-called Good Daycare Facilities Act (*Gute-KiTa-Gesetz*), the Federation supports the Länder in improving the quality of childcare. By 2022, the Federation intends to invest Euro 5.5 billion in the further development of the quality of child day care.

Measures are possible in ten fields of action, for example to create a needs-based offer, a good skilled worker-child key, to qualify skilled workers or to strengthen the management of child day-care facilities. In addition to measures to further develop quality, participation can also be improved by reducing parents' fees. The Federation and the Länder conclude individual agreements which specify the action and financing concepts they intend to use to improve quality and improve participation in child day care.

More detailed information is available in chapters 3.2. and 11.2.

<https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/133310/80763d0f167ce2687eb79118b8b1e721/gute-kita-bgbl-data.pdf>

### **Federal programme Skilled Labour Initiative for Staff in Early Childhood Education and Care**

With the Skilled Labour Initiative for Staff in Early Childhood Education and Care : Attracting Young Talent, Retaining Professionals (*Fachkräfteoffensive für Erzieherinnen und Erzieher: Nachwuchs gewinnen, Profis binden*), the BMFSFJ is supporting the Länder, local authorities and child day care providers from the 2019/20 training year onwards in making training for pedagogical staff more attractive, attracting qualified pedagogical staff and retaining trained pedagogical staff in their careers and strengthening their skills.

The aim of the programme is to attract additional skilled workers in early education by expanding paid, practice-integrated training and to promote professional, practice-integrated training in day-care centres through practical guidance. This should particularly appeal to groups of people who are as yet under-represented among the employees, e.g. men, people with higher education entrance qualifications or people changing jobs. In addition, the assumption of special professional responsibility is to be rewarded in order to open up development prospects for experienced pedagogical staff.

## **2017**

### **Expansion of day-care for children**

The common goal of the federal, state and local governments is to create a nationwide, needs-based and high-quality range of day care places for children. In particular, the expansion of day care places for children under three years of age has been driven forward in recent years. Since 1 August 2013 all children from the age of one

have had a legal right to early-childhood education in a day-care centre or childminding service. On 1 March 2018, nearly 790,000 children under the age of three were being cared for in a day care facility for children or in publicly funded childminding services. This corresponds to a care rate of 33.6 percent.

Since 2008, the Federation through several investment programmes has contributed a total of Euro 5.95 billion to the expansion. Since 2015, it has made a permanent annual contribution of Euro 845 million (Euro 945 million between 2017 and 2018) to the operating costs. In the fourth investment programme, the Federation is providing an additional Euro 1.126 million between 2017 and 2021 to create 100,000 additional places in day care facilities and childminding services.

### **Further development of early education and ensuring its funding**

The federal, state and local governments have initiated a multi-year process to further develop the quality of child day care. As a result, the Conference of the Ministers of Youth and Family Affairs (*Jugend- und Familienministerkonferenz – JFMK*) in May 2017 reached a majority agreement on key points for a quality development law. It is envisaged that the Länder will select targets for action according to their own development needs and that the Federation will become more involved in financing quality development in child day care on a permanent basis. The key issues paper was based on the interim report "Further Developing Early Education and Securing Finances" (*Frühe Bildung weiterentwickeln und Finanzierung sicherstellen*), which had previously been prepared by the Federation, the Länder and the central municipal associations. For the first time, joint quality objectives were identified, cost estimates were made and new ways of financing the system for greater federal participation were examined. More detailed information on quality development in early childhood education and care can be found in chapter 11.2.

[https://www.jfmk.de/pub2017/TOP\\_7.1\\_Fruehe\\_Bildung\\_Eckpunkte-QE-Gesetz.pdf](https://www.jfmk.de/pub2017/TOP_7.1_Fruehe_Bildung_Eckpunkte-QE-Gesetz.pdf)

<https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/jump/114052/fruehe-bildung-weiterentwickeln-und-finanziell-sichern-zwischenbericht-2016-von-bund-und-laendern-data.pdf>

### **Federal programme Kita-Entry**

The BMFSFJ supports low-threshold offers that prepare the way and offer accompanying support for access to child day care with the federal programme Kita-Entry (*Kita-Einstieg* – getting started in the day care facility for children). The participating locations receive support for a coordination and network office, for specialist staff to implement the offer as well as additional project funds from 2017 until 2020.

## **14.2. National Reforms in School Education**

### **2019**

#### **Teacher training**

In May 2019, the Standards for Teacher Training in the Educational Sciences (*Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften*) were revised and updated with a view to the requirements of digitisation. Teachers should be able to use digital media professionally and didactically in a meaningful way in their respective subject lessons and reflect on the content in accordance with their educational mandate.

The content requirements for subject-related studies and subject-related didactics in teacher training which apply to all Länder (*Ländergemeinsame inhaltliche*

*Anforderungen für die Fachwissenschaften und Fachdidaktiken in der Lehrerbildung*) were also updated in 2014 with regard to inclusive teaching and in 2019 with regard to digitisation. The framework agreements on the individual types of teaching careers were also revised with a view to the strategy of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK*) for Education in the Digital World (*Bildung in der digitalen Welt*).

### **DigitalPact for Schools 2019–2024**

In March 2019, after the Bundestag, the Bundesrat also approved an amendment to Article 104c of the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz – R1*). With the constitutional amendment, the Federation can grant the Länder financial assistance to increase the efficiency of the municipal education infrastructure. The amendment to Article 104c of the Basic Law was a prerequisite for the DigitalPact for Schools 2019–2024 (*DigitalPakt Schule 2019–2024*), by which the Federation and the Länder aim to ensure that schools are better equipped with digital technology. The Federation promotes the infrastructure, while the Länder ensure the development of the content.

More detailed information on the DigitalPact for Schools 2019–2024 is available in chapter 3.2.

The educational and content foundations for the implementation of the DigitalPact for Schools were laid by the Länder with the KMK strategy for Education in the Digital World (*Bildung in der digitalen Welt*), which has been in use for two years.

More detailed information on the strategy for Education in the Digital World is available in chapter 6.3.

[https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2017/Strategie\\_neu\\_2017\\_datum\\_1.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2017/Strategie_neu_2017_datum_1.pdf)

## **2018**

### **Democracy education and human rights education**

In 2018, the Länder agreed on an even stronger anchoring of democracy and human rights education in teaching and everyday school life. With the fundamental revision of its recommendations "Democracy as an objective, subject and practice of historical-political education and upbringing in schools" (*„Demokratie als Ziel, Gegenstand und Praxis historisch-politischer Bildung und Erziehung in der Schule“*) and "Human rights education in schools" (*„Menschenrechtsbildung in der Schule“*), the Standing Conference is responding to changing social conditions and current political challenges.

More detailed information is available in chapter 6.3.

### **Joint initiative of the Federation and the Länder for supporting high-achieving and potentially particularly capable pupils**

In January 2018, a joint initiative was launched by the Federal Government and the Länder to promote high-performing and potentially particularly high-performing pupils ("Performance catches on"). Against the background of an education policy aimed at equal opportunities and educational justice, the initiative aims to ensure the best possible learning and educational success for all the pupils concerned, irrespective of their origin, gender or social status. In the first five-year phase, the schools will be supported in the development of practical strategies and concepts for school and



teaching development by an interdisciplinary research network financed by the federal government. The Federal Government is also responsible for the supraregional coordination of the initiative and for the scientific support of the transfer in the second phase. The Länder are responsible for the selection of schools following Land-wide calls for tenders, the supervision of schools and the Land-wide implementation of promising measures. The Länder are also developing strategies and concepts in the fields of diagnosis and counselling, as well as for the promotion of extra-curricular potential.

The initiative focuses in particular on children and young people from educationally disadvantaged families, especially those with a migrant background, and on gender balance, especially girls in the so-called MINT (mathematics, information, natural sciences, technology) subjects. The duration of the initiative is ten years. The Federal Government and the Länder are providing a total of 125 million euros for the initiative in equal parts.

The joint support initiative *Leistung macht Schule* builds upon the Support Strategy for High-Achieving Pupils (*Förderstrategie für leistungsstarke Schülerinnen und Schüler*) of the Standing Conference which has already made a significant contribution to better support for high-achieving pupils.

<https://www.leistung-macht-schule.de>

<https://www.bmbf.de/files/Beschluss%20zur%20gemeinsamen%20Bund-L%c3%a4nder-Initiative.pdf>

<https://www.lemas-forschung.de/>

### **Teaching Jewish history, religion and culture at school**

In April 2018, the KMK and the Central Council of Jews in Germany (*Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland*) presented an annotated collection of material on the teaching of Judaism in schools at a joint symposium to support teachers. The aim of a joint declaration by the Central Council of Jews in Germany and the KMK in December 2016 is to address the diversity of Judaism in schools and to give pupils a lively and differentiated picture of Jewish life in the past and present. The diverse aspects of the history and present of Judaism are to be discussed in as many grades and subjects as possible. Subjects and projects of historical-political education bear a special responsibility. Analyses of current political developments and past events and processes are inextricably linked.

[https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2016/2016-12-08\\_KMK-Zentralrat\\_Gemeinsame-Erklaerung.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2016/2016-12-08_KMK-Zentralrat_Gemeinsame-Erklaerung.pdf)

[www.kmk-zentralratderjuden.de](http://www.kmk-zentralratderjuden.de)

## **2017**

### **Recommendation on vocational orientation in schools**

In December 2017, the Standing Conference adopted the „Recommendation for vocational orientation in schools" (*Empfehlung zur Beruflichen Orientierung an Schulen*). According to the recommendation, the educational mission of schools is essentially to prepare pupils adequately for life in society and to enable them to participate actively and responsibly in cultural, social, political, professional and economic life. This includes preparing the pupils for the world of work and employment. An early,

practice-oriented, individual vocational orientation is of central importance for a successful transition into education, study and occupation for all pupils. The Länder understand vocational orientation to mean a process that begins at school and continues until it leads to training, studies and employment. More detailed information on vocational orientation at schools can be found in Chapter 12.5.

#### **Vocational schools 4.0**

In December 2017, the Standing Conference adopted the declaration "Vocational schools 4.0 – further development of innovative strength and integration management of vocational schools in Germany in the coming decade" (*'Berufliche Schulen 4.0 – Weiterentwicklung von Innovationskraft und Integrationsleistung der beruflichen Schulen in Deutschland in der kommenden Dekade'*). Over the next ten years, the ministers see digitalisation, the integration of immigrants and the general trend towards academisation as major challenges for vocational education and training in Germany.

Against the background of a dynamic professional and working world, it is considered necessary to adapt the teaching content of vocational education and training again and again. Additional innovation potential arises from digitalisation and the resulting pedagogical possibilities. Synergy effects are to be achieved in the future through transnational working structures in these elementary fields of design. The digital infrastructure of vocational schools can be expanded within the framework of the DigitalPact School, for which the Federation will provide the Länder with financial assistance amounting to Euro 5 billion over the next five years.

By working well together, vocational schools and training companies ensure the long-term success of vocational education and training as a whole. In an increasingly international professional world, skilled workers need job-specific foreign language skills that will increasingly be taught in vocational schools in the future. International cooperation between vocational schools is intended to support and promote corresponding skills.

Dealing with heterogeneous groups of pupils is a growing challenge for the vocational education system. Future recommendations for language- and culture-sensitive pedagogy and individual support for pupils will establish a common framework of action for these topics.

The Länder will also further develop the quality of vocational schools by working more closely together. In particular, they will exchange information on existing quality management systems. Other important tasks for the quality development of vocational schools are to develop common concepts for attracting new teachers and further training for active teachers.

### **14.3. National Reforms in Vocational Education and Training and Adult Learning**

#### **2019**

##### **Qualification Opportunities Act**

Since 1 January 2019, the Act to Strengthen the Opportunities for Qualification and for More Protection in Unemployment Insurance (Qualification Opportunities Act) has been in force.

The Qualification Opportunities Act has significantly expanded access to continuing education and training assistance: In principle, employees are also granted access to continuing training assistance regardless of their qualifications, age and company size if they need continuing training as a result of digital structural change or are otherwise affected by structural change. The expansion of funding is also directed at those who are seeking further training in a bottleneck occupation. In addition, the support services have been improved: In addition to the payment of continuing training costs, the possibilities for subsidies for remuneration for those participating in continuing training have been expanded. Both are generally tied to co-financing by the employer and the amount depends on the size of the company.

Furthermore, the continuing training and qualification counselling of the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit – BA*) is being strengthened.

## **2017**

### **Strategy „Education in the Digital World“**

In December 2017, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK*) added the chapter on continuing education to its strategy on "Education in the Digital World" (*‘Bildung in der digitalen Welt’*). With its resolution, the Standing Conference is making an important contribution to ensuring that adults can continuously deepen and develop existing skills in the digital world even after they have completed school, vocational training or higher education. Digital learning environments enable learning to be tailored to personal knowledge needs and objectives. However, digital development does not only influence the learning process. It will also change their infrastructure or the qualification of teachers.

[https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2017/Strategie\\_neu\\_2017\\_datum\\_1.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2017/Strategie_neu_2017_datum_1.pdf)

### **Measures for refugees**

The BMBF package of measures in the field of vocational education and training as well as adult education includes, amongst other things, the Getting Started in German (*Einstieg Deutsch*) programme so that refugees can quickly learn the basics of understanding and speaking German, the use of successful instruments from the education chains (*Bildungsketten*) initiative (adaptation of potential analyses, expansion of the Programme for Vocational Orientation) as well as a strengthening and expansion of the Coordination Office for Vocational Education and Training and Migration (*KAUSA – Koordinierungsstelle Ausbildung und Migration*) including a doubling of the number of KAUSA service points.

The occupation-related promotion of the German language introduced in 2017 and enshrined in the Residence Act (§ 45a) can benefit in particular recipients of benefits under the Social Security Code II (*Zweites Buch Sozialgesetzbuch – Grundsicherung für Arbeitsuchende – R165*), but also job seekers, persons seeking training and persons in the process of vocational recognition.

Young refugees gain deeper insights into recognised skilled crafts requiring formal training with the programme Vocational Guidance for Refugees (*Berufsorientierung für Flüchtlinge – BOF*). The aim is the subsequent transition to an apprenticeship or entry qualification. BOF is part of the joint qualification initiative Paths to Education

and Training for Refugees (*Wege in Ausbildung für Flüchtlinge*) of the BMBF, the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit – BA*) and the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (*Zentralverband der deutschen Handwerks – ZDH*). Up to 10,000 young refugees are to be given the chance to learn a skilled craft.

The Federal Recognition Act helps fugitives with already existing formal foreign vocational qualifications to integrate into the labour market. The procedure for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications is accompanied by extensive nationwide and target-group-specific information and counselling services for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications.

The aim of the Integration through Qualification (*Integration durch Qualifizierung*) support programme is to provide nationwide support for the implementation of the Federal Recognition Act through qualifications for migrants as well as counselling, information and training services.

#### **14.4. National Reforms in Higher Education**

##### **2019**

##### **Measures for Refugees**

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – BMBF*) has launched a comprehensive and globally unique package of measures for the integration of refugees into institutions of higher education, which is being implemented by the German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst – DAAD*). Refugees who are willing to study are prepared for studying at one of Germany's almost 200 higher education institutions and study colleges after their higher education entrance qualification has been checked. They are also supported in everyday campus life by voluntary student initiatives. The package of measures was extended beyond 2019. Tolerated persons and holders of certain humanitarian residence permits can apply for benefits under the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz – BAföG – R84*) after 15 months of legal residence. Refugees with a high protection status, such as refugees within the meaning of the Geneva Refugee Convention or persons entitled to subsidiary protection, can apply for BAföG without a waiting period. In the meantime, over ten thousand refugees have taken up regular studies.

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/integrating-asylum-seekers-and-refugees-higher-education-europe-national-policies-and\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/integrating-asylum-seekers-and-refugees-higher-education-europe-national-policies-and_en)

The Länder have created corresponding regulations under Land law.

##### **Future Treaty Strengthening Studies and Teaching**

In June 2019, the heads of government of the federal and Länder governments adopted the Future Treaty Strengthening Studies and Teaching (*Zukunftsvertrag Studium und Lehre stärken*). As the successor to the Higher Education Pact 2020 (*Hochschulpakt 2020*), the aim of the Future Treaty is to jointly improve the quality of study and teaching at higher education institutions on a comprehensive and sustainable basis. At the same time, study capacities in Germany will be maintained in line with demand. Almost three million students will benefit from better study conditions and higher teaching quality at all institutions of higher education.

The permanent funding from 2021 is to be used in particular to expand permanent higher education staff involved in studies and teaching. The Federation and the Länder see this as an essential factor for improving the quality of studies and teaching. Further measures to improve permeability, to address a more heterogeneous student body or to use digital media are also planned.

The Federation is providing Euro 1.88 billion annually for the Future Treaty Strengthening Studies and Teaching from 2021 to 2023 and Euro 2.05 billion annually on a permanent basis from 2024 onwards. In addition to the basic funding of higher education institutions, the Länder will also provide funding to the same amount, so that through the Future Treaty will provide around Euro 3.8 billion annually will be provided until 2023 and a total of Euro 4.1 billion annually from 2024 onwards for the promotion of studies and teaching. The distribution of federal funds among the Länder is transparent and is based on an annually recalculated key.

### **Federation-Länder Agreement Innovation in Higher Education Teaching**

In May 2019, the Joint Science Conference (*Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz – GWK*) adopted the new Federation-Länder agreement Innovation in Higher Education Teaching (*Innovation in der Hochschullehre*). Important objectives of the agreement are to promote the further development of higher education teaching and to strengthen it in the higher education system as a whole. The agreement provides for the permanent establishment of an organisational unit – which is not legally independent – under the umbrella of an existing institution. It is to provide incentives for teachers at higher education institutions and higher education institution management through appropriate funding formats, to continue to make greater efforts to improve the quality of studies and teaching and to support the exchange and networking of relevant actors. This will address the German higher education landscape in its entirety and continuously strengthen the innovative capacity of higher education teaching.

The Federation and the Länder provide up to Euro 150 million annually to promote innovation in teaching at higher education institutions. Funding will be provided by the Federation between 2021 and 2023 and jointly from 2024 onwards, with the Federation providing Euro 110 million and the Länder Euro 40 million annually.

With this agreement, the Federation and the Länder are continuing their efforts, in particular through the Quality Pact for Teaching (*Qualitätspakt Lehre*) to promote and disseminate innovative teaching at higher education institutions. In addition to the science-led promotion of projects, in particular for the strategic-structural strengthening of higher education institutions in study and teaching and for current, topic-related challenges in study and teaching, the organisation of cross-Länder exchange and networking as well as the transfer of knowledge should also be supported.

A legally dependent organisational unit is to be set up at an existing institution in order to realise the objectives and implement the task portfolio. A suitable sponsoring institution is to be selected by the GWK in a declaration of interest procedure.

### **Recommendations for Digitisation in Higher Education Teaching**

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (*Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK*) has drawn up „Recommendations for digitisation in higher education teaching“

(„Empfehlungen zur Digitalisierung in der Hochschullehre“) in a broad-based dialogue process and adopted them in March 2019.

The recommendations are addressed to the Länder, the Federation and to the management of higher education institutions, the faculties, the departments and the teachers themselves and are intended to contribute, among other things, to the consideration of digitisation in the strategic overall development of higher education institutions, to networking across higher education institutions for quality assurance in study programmes with regard to digital competences and to the digital exchange of student data. The recommendations include the following objectives:

- Higher education institution management ensures that the digitisation of teaching is anchored in the overall strategic development of the higher education institution at all levels.
- The higher education institution creates the organisational, personnel and financial prerequisites for carrying out and supporting teaching in the digital world.
- The higher education institutions consistently use the opportunities offered by digitisation to support and further develop teaching across higher education institutions.
- The higher education institution ensures the information, exchange and networking of teachers for the further development of digital teaching.
- Teachers exchange ideas on the use of digital media in their disciplines and develop suitable concepts for the curricular integration of digital elements into teaching and new digital learning and teaching formats.
- Higher education didactics develops research-based and practice-oriented offers for the digital design of teaching and concepts for its implementation.
- The accreditation of study programmes ensures that digital competence is adequately anchored in the curricula of study programmes.
- By defining standards and establishing corresponding interfaces, the higher education institutions enable the digital transfer of student data between institutions in compliance with data protection regulations.

### **Strategy „Education in the Digital World“**

The recommendations on digitisation in higher education teaching are part of the process of implementing the KMK strategy "Education in the digital world" (*Bildung in der digitalen Welt*), which also applies to the higher education sector. The institutions of higher education are both users of digital possibilities and at the same time a motor behind digital developments. Teaching hereby plays a special role in the context of digital education. Thanks to digital media, learning and teaching become less dependent on a time and place; individual learning conditions can be taken into account more widely and allow lifelong learning to a greater extent than before. At the same time, new questions arise for research in education science. Because digitisation affects all areas of the institution of higher education, it also has an influence over university administrative processes in study, teaching and examinations as well as content-based and technical interfaces between research and teaching.

The digitisation of institutions of higher education is not concerned with turning classroom universities into online universities, but with exploiting the specific added value of digitisation for the work of the institutions of higher education. It plays an

important role in the strategic alignment of the institutions of higher education as well as the regional and national centres of science in Germany.

More detailed information on the strategy of the Standing Conference „Education in the Digital World“ are available in chapter 14.2.

[https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2017/Strategie\\_neu\\_2017\\_datum\\_1.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2017/Strategie_neu_2017_datum_1.pdf)

## **2018**

### **Allocation of Study Places in the Central Allocation Procedure**

In December 2018, the Standing Conference agreed on the draft of a state treaty to be concluded between the Länder ("State Treaty on Admission to Institutions of Higher Education") and thus presented concrete proposals for new regulations on the allocation of study places in the central allocation procedure. The ratification of the State Treaty by the Länder is a prerequisite for the new regulations to come into force. Currently, preparations are being made to implement the new regulations in Land law.

The reason for the revision of the admissions procedure is a ruling by the Federal Constitutional Court in December 2017, which declared the federal and Land laws on the procedure for the allocation of study places at state-run institutions of higher education, insofar as they relate to admissions to the study of human medicine, to be partially incompatible with the Basic Law and instructed the legislature to create new regulations by 31 December 2019 to eliminate the constitutional objections.

### **Federal-Länder Programme for the Recruitment and Development of Professorial Staff at Fachhochschulen**

In November 2018, the GWK agreed on a programme to promote the recruitment and development of professorial personnel at *Fachhochschulen*. The programme supports *Fachhochschulen* in personnel development and the recruitment of professors. The Federation and the Länder together provide a total of over Euro 430 million for this purpose, of which 71 percent is provided by the Federation and 29 percent by the Länder. Initially, the Federation will finance the programme 100 per cent, but by the end of the programme period the share of funding provided by the Länder will have risen to 50 per cent.

The programme provides for various funding instruments such as professorships with a special focus, cooperative doctorates, tandem programmes or the establishment of cooperation platforms. In addition to the funding measures already set out in the programme, *Fachhochschulen* can themselves develop suitable instruments and apply for funding. If desired, *Fachhochschulen* can apply for additional support to analyse their situation and develop their own institution- and site-specific concept for recruiting personnel.

### **Accreditation of Studies**

In February 2016, the Federal Constitutional Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*) expressly confirmed the approach of a binding external quality assurance of teaching through the accreditation of study programmes, but saw shortcomings in the legal implementation. As a result, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany

(Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK) put the accreditation system on a new legal basis by means of a state treaty.

In December 2017, the KMK adopted the Model Law Ordinance on the State Treaty on Accreditation for Studies (*Musterrechtsverordnung zum Studienakkreditierungsstaatsvertrag*). The ordinance is based on the State Treaty signed by all Länder on the organisation of a joint accreditation system for quality assurance in study and teaching at German higher education institutions (State Treaty on Accreditation in Higher Education – *Studienakkreditierungsstaatsvertrag* – R128).

The aim of the Model Law Ordinance is to regulate the common requirements of the Länder for the structural and qualitative standards for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes. The Länder thus fulfil their obligation to guarantee the equivalence of corresponding study and examination achievements as well as degrees and the possibility of changing higher education institutions. They have created corresponding regulations under Land law.

The existing system will be modified at key points. Decisions on accreditation from the agencies will now be transferred to the Accreditation Council (*Akkreditierungsrat*). In addition, the accreditation of agencies has been simplified. This is done on the basis of registration with the European Register of Recognised Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAR) and is laid down as a substitute for the accreditation of agencies. In order to preserve the freedom of science, it has been anchored that the votes of the scientific members of the Accreditation Council count twice when dealing with questions of technical content. Thus, the representatives of the scientific community have a majority of votes for technical and content-related questions. Freedom of science is a central component of the German higher education system. The State Treaty on Accreditation in Higher Education and the state ordinances issued on its basis take this into account. Further information on the accreditation of study programmes can be found in chapter 11.3.

[https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2018/SO\\_170601\\_StaatsvertragAkkreditierung.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2018/SO_170601_StaatsvertragAkkreditierung.pdf)

[https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2018/BS\\_171207\\_Musterrechtsverordnung.pdf](https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/PresseUndAktuelles/2018/BS_171207_Musterrechtsverordnung.pdf)

## **14.5. National Reforms Related to Transversal Skills and Employability**

### **2016**

#### **Decade for Literacy and Basic Education**

In 2016 the Federation and the Länder proclaimed the Decade for Literacy and Basic Education (*Dekade für Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung*) in Germany which continues the National Strategy for Literacy and Basic Education of Adults (*Nationale Strategie für Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung Erwachsener*) and is designed to tackle adult reading and writing skills which are not sufficient for full participation in society. As a broad social alliance, the strategy includes, among others, the local authorities (*Kommunen*), trade unions, churches, the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit* – BA) and *Volkshochschule* associations. Industry associations and chambers of industry and commerce are also invited to participate.

[https://www.bmbf.de/files/NEU\\_strategiepapier\\_nationale\\_alphabetisierung.pdf](https://www.bmbf.de/files/NEU_strategiepapier_nationale_alphabetisierung.pdf)



More detailed information is available in chapter 8.5.

#### **14.6. European Perspective**

One of the five core goals of the “Europe 2020” strategy of the European Union for intelligent, sustainable and integrative growth is to improve the level of education. An EU-wide core goal has been set out with the dual objective of lowering the share of premature school-leavers and increasing the share of graduates with a tertiary or comparable qualification. Reports on the implementation are made annually through the National Reform Programme. Moreover, the ‘Strategic framework for co-operation in education and training until 2020’ (ET 2020) focuses attention on the major challenges facing European education systems, and highlights the areas that need to be improved.

For information on reforms in the EU Member States that are explicitly linked to the Europe 2020 Strategy see the 2016 National reform programmes.