

Diploma Supplement

The system of Austrian higher education

(Item 8 of the Diploma Supplement – English)

As of 7th November 2011

Post-secondary Education in Austria

- The Austrian post-secondary **university level sector** (*Hochschulsektor*) consists of
 - Public universities (*Universitäten*), maintained by the state;
 - private universities (*Privatuniversitäten*), operated by private organisations with state accreditation;
 - maintainers of university of applied sciences degree programmes (*Fachhochschul-Studiengänge*) incorporated upon the basis of private or public law and subsidised by the state, with state accreditation (some of which are entitled to use the designation *Fachhochschule*);
 - university colleges of education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*) maintained by the state or operated by private organisations with state accreditation;
 - the Institute of Science and Technology Austria;
 - universities of philosophy and theology (*Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschulen*), operated by the Roman Catholic Church.
- The **non-university post-secondary sector** (*außeruniversitärer postsekundärer Sektor*) consists of
 - academies for midwifery (*Hebammenakademien*);
 - clinical technical academies (*Medizinisch-Technische Akademien*);
 - military academies (*Militärische Akademien*);
 - the school of international studies (*Diplomatische Akademie*);
 - certain training institutions for psychotherapists (*Psychotherapeutische Ausbildungseinrichtungen*);
 - conservatories (*Konservatorien*).

The following text addresses exclusively the university level sector.

Overall Structure of University Level Higher Education

There are currently two different systems of degree programmes in Austria: an older system without reference to the Bologna process and a newer one with reference to it.

- Under the auspices of the **older system** of diploma degree programmes (*Diplomstudien*), the first degree awarded is the diploma degree (*Diplomgrad*). An Austrian higher secondary school leaving certificate or its equivalent is the general qualification necessary for enrolling in a diploma degree programme; conclusion of a diploma degree programme entitles degree holders to enrol in doctoral degree programmes. A diploma degree (*Diplomgrad*) is awarded by Austrian universities after a course of study consisting of 240 to 360 ECTS credits. Full degree titles are gender specific designations: *Magister* for men; *Magistra* for women. Degree titles also include a general description of the field of study in which they were obtained, e.g. *Magister philosophiae*. In the fields of engineering, the degree titles are *Diplom-Ingenieur/in*. Degrees awarded in medicine and dentistry are exceptions to the above. The first degrees awarded after the completion of these degree programmes consisting of 360 ECTS credits are *Doctor medicinae universae* and *Doctor medicinae dentalis*, respectively.

Graduates of university of applied sciences programmes that consist of 240 to 300 ECTS credits are awarded, analogous to university studies, a university of applied science diploma degree (*Fachhochschul-Diplomgrad*) contingent upon discipline: either a *Diplom-Ingenieur/in* (FH) for fields of engineering or *Magister/Magistra* (FH) in other fields of study.

- The **new system** is based on the distinction between undergraduate and graduate studies. Upon completion of an undergraduate programme (*Bachelorstudium* at universities; *Fachhochschul-Bachelorstudiengang*; *Studiengang* at university colleges of education; 180 ECTS credits), a bachelor's degree (designation: „Bachelor of/in ...“) is awarded. Upon completion of a graduate programme (*Masterstudium* at universities comprising 120 ECTS credits or, respectively, *Fachhochschul-Masterstudiengang* comprising 60 to 120 ECTS credits), a master's degree (designation: „Master of/in ...“) is awarded. In the fields of engineering, the designation of the master's degree can also be „Diplom-Ingenieur/in“.

Recipients of these diploma degrees from the old system or a master's degrees from the new system (includ-

ing the ones awarded in both cases by the universities of applied sciences) are entitled to enrol in doctoral degree programmes (*Doktoratsstudium*) at universities. A doctoral degree with the designation either “*Doktor/in*” or “Doctor of Philosophy” (PhD) is awarded upon completion of a doctoral programme with a minimum duration of three years.

In addition to the degree programmes (*ordentliche Studien*) described above, there are non-degree programmes (*außerordentliche Studien*) consisting of certificate university programmes for further education (*Universitätslehrgänge*) and individual courses in scientific subjects, both at universities, certificate university of applied sciences programmes for further education (*Lehrgänge zur Weiterbildung*) at universities of applied sciences, and certificate university college programmes for further education (*Hochschullehrgänge*) at university colleges of education.

Diploma Degree Programme (*Diplomstudium*)

Admission to a diploma degree programme is granted upon the basis of the Austrian higher secondary school leaving certificate (*Reifezeugnis*), its foreign equivalent, or the successful completion of a special university entrance qualification examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*). Students of compulsory lower schools who have completed additional schooling in the form of apprenticeships as skilled workers also may take a vocationally based examination acknowledged as equivalent to the higher secondary school leaving certificate (*Berufsreifeprüfung*). Admission to diploma degree programmes in the arts is based on aptitude ascertained by admission examinations. Admission to university of applied sciences diploma degree programmes may also take place upon the basis of previous vocational or technical experience and qualifications of applicants. In some fields of study (in particular human medicine and dentistry, and university of applied sciences diploma degree programmes) admission is based on a selective admission process.

A degree programme may be divided into stages (*Studienabschnitte*). The length of each stage of the degree programme as well as the areas of study (*Fächer*) and content required are articulated in curricula that distinguish between required subjects (*Pflichtfächer*) and electives (*Wahlfächer*). Each stage concludes with a diploma examination (*Diplomprüfung*). University of applied sciences diploma degree programmes and some diploma degree programmes at universities include an internship or practical training. The approval of a diploma thesis (*Diplomarbeit*) is a prerequisite for admission to the concluding diploma examination.

Bachelor Degree Programme (*Bachelorstudium*)

Admission to a bachelor degree programme is granted upon the basis on the Austrian higher secondary school leaving certificate (*Reifezeugnis*), its foreign equivalent, or the successful completion of a special university entrance qualification examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*). Students of compulsory lower schools who have completed additional schooling in the form of apprenticeships as skilled workers may take a vocationally based examination acknowledged as equivalent to the higher secondary school leaving certificate (*Berufsreifeprüfung*). Admission to bachelor degree programmes in the arts is based on aptitude ascertained by admission examinations. Admission to university of applied sciences bachelor degree programmes may also take place upon the basis of previous vocational or technical experience and qualifications of applicants. In some fields of study (in particular university of applied sciences bachelor degree programmes and study programmes at university colleges of education) admission is based on a selective admission process.

Areas/Modules of study (*Fächer/Module*) are laid down in curricula. As a rule, two substantial bachelor's papers or projects (*Bachelorarbeiten*) must be completed in the process of completing degree programme requirements. University of applied sciences bachelor degree programmes and some bachelor degree programmes at universities include an internship or practical training. The programme can conclude with a bachelor's examination (*Bachelorprüfung*).

Master Degree Programme (*Masterstudium*)

Admission to a master degree programme is granted on the basis of the successful completion of an Austrian bachelor degree programme (*Bachelorstudium*), or a comparable post-secondary degree acknowledged being its equivalent.

Areas/Modules of study (*Fächer/Module*) are laid down in curricula. A main emphasis is the composition of a master's thesis (*Masterarbeit*). This degree programme concludes with a master's examination (*Masterprüfung*). The approval of the master's thesis (*Masterarbeit*) is a prerequisite for admission to this examination.

At university colleges of education no master degree programmes are offered.

Doctoral Degree Programme (*Doktoratsstudium*)

Admission to a doctoral degree programme at a university is granted on the basis of the successful completion of an Austrian diploma or master degree programme, or a comparable post-secondary degree acknowl-

edged being their equivalents.

Contents and requirements of study are laid down in curricula. The focus lies with the drafting of a dissertation as the result of self-guided research performance. This degree programme concludes with the approval of the dissertation and with a comprehensive doctoral examination (*Rigorosum*) or a *defensio*.

At universities of applied sciences and at university colleges of education no doctoral degree programmes are offered.

Evaluation of performance and grading system (Austrian grading scale)

According to the modalities for examinations outlined in the curricula, achievement may be evaluated upon the basis of oral and written exams or project related work. In principle oral examinations are open to the public.

Austrian Grading scheme	Definition
1	EXCELLENT: Outstanding performance
2	GOOD: Generally good, but with some errors
3	SATISFACTORY: Generally sound work with a number of substantial errors
4	SUFFICIENT: Performance meets the minimum criteria
successfully completed	Positive performance, where a strict differentiation is not adequate
5	UNSATISFACTORY: < 50% Substantial improvement necessary; requirement of further work
not completed	Negative performance, where a strict differentiation is not adequate

Grades for comprehensive examinations

covering materials from various subjects:

positive:

mit Auszeichnung bestanden
mit Erfolg bestanden
bestanden

negative:

nicht bestanden

Source:

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Unit III/7

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