Institutions, Level and Models of Training

Early childhood education and care

As a rule, pedagogic staff in early childhood education and care (Erzieherinnen and Erzieher) are trained at Fachschulen for youth and community work which are internationally assigned to the tertiary level. Over recent years, the number of courses of study leading to a first degree and further courses of study for pedagogic staff has increased. Particularly at the levels of administration, management and counselling in the elementary sector, further courses of study are available to qualified pedagogic staff in cooperation between Fachschulen and Fachhochschulen.

Some of the staff (especially those in senior positions) have a degree from a Fachhochschule as Sozialpädagogen (youth and community workers). This training either comprises a three-year course of study at a higher education institution and one year of practical training or a four-year course of study with two Praxissemester (integrated semesters of work experience). Other academically-trained teaching staff include for instance childhood educators (Kindheitspädagogen). A variety of Bachelor study courses have now been established in this discipline.

In some Länder, auxiliary staff, especially nursery assistants (Kinderpflegerinnen), are employed in the elementary sector alongside pedagogic staff (pädagogische Fachkräfte) and graduate youth and community workers. In most Länder, these staff attend a two-year training course at Berufsfachschulen, full-time vocational schools.

In December 2011, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK) developed a competence-based qualification profile for all fields of work of pedagogic staff in early childhood education and care in training in a Fachschule. The qualification profile defines the requirement level for the profession and describes the professional competences a qualified person must have. This should make it easier to credit qualifications gained at Fachschulen and Fachakademien to a degree course at an institution of higher education and thus ensure the mobility and appeal of the profession.

Teachers

Teacher training is basically divided into two stages, a course of higher education including periods of practical training and practical training in a school setting. Teacher training courses are offered at universities, Technische Hochschulen / Technische Universitäten, Pädagogische Hochschulen (colleges of education) and colleges of art and music. Practical teacher training in the form of a Vorbereitungsdienst (preparatory service) takes place in teacher training institutes (Studienseminare) or comparable institutions and training schools.
The share of practical training in schools in higher education courses has been substantially increased in recent years. For study courses at universities, in all Länder institutions (e.g. centres for teacher training) have been established in order to coordinate teacher training between the faculties and guarantee an adequate relationship to teaching practice.

The conclusion of a degree course at an institution of higher education, enabling access to preparatory service, is the Erste Staatsprüfung (First State Examination) or a Master of Education. In the majority of the Länder in the meantime the consecutive structure of study with Bachelor's and Master’s degrees (BA/MA) has also been introduced in teacher training. Study courses which provide for Bachelor and Master’s structures in teacher training are accepted in all Länder and their degrees are recognised if they meet the following requirements:

- integrative study at universities or equivalent higher education institutions of at least two subject areas and of the educational sciences at the Bachelor level as well as at the Master level (the Länder are at liberty to specify exceptions in the subject areas art and music as well as in the vocational subject areas) in adherence to the common content requirements
- practical study in schools as early as during the Bachelor's course of study
- no extension of existing standard periods (without practical sections)
- differentiation of the curricula and diplomas by teaching position.

Master’s courses of study conveying the educational prerequisites for a teaching position have a specific teaching-related profile that is established in the course of the accreditation procedure in accordance with the specifications of the Accreditation Council (Akkreditierungsrat) and is to be displayed in the Diploma Supplement. The degree designations for Bachelor’s and Master’s study courses conveying the educational requirements for teaching positions are:

- Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.)
- Master of Education (M.Ed.)

The accreditation procedure particularly involves monitoring the compliance with subject-specific requirements in teacher training valid for all Länder as well as with Länder-specific specifications concerning the content and structure. The subject-specific requirements valid for all Länder embrace the Standards for Teacher Training in the Educational Sciences (Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften) and 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).

The decision as to whether teacher training study programmes are concluded with the Staatsexamen or follow the graduated structure of higher education studies lies with the Länder. In Länder which have a consecutive study structure for teacher training, the Master’s degree replaces the First State Examination as a rule. The (Second) State Examination must, however, be taken after the preparatory service.

Regardless of how the study is organised, the study courses have been modularised and provided with a credit point system.

**Admission Requirements**

**Early childhood education and care**

For pedagogic staff in early childhood education and care, as a rule, the admission requirement for training is a Mittlerer Schulabschluss and either a relevant vocational training qualification which took
at least two years to acquire or two years of experience in a relevant occupation, thus the complete training period for pedagogic staff (pädagogische Fachkräfte) is four to five years.

Since 2004 higher education institutions in Germany have also been training child day-care professionals. There are now around 70 Bachelor degree courses for pedagogic staff in (early) childhood education and care. The admission requirement is usually the higher education entrance qualification. One in three courses is offered part-time, while three are designed as integrated offers. Close cooperation between Fachschulen and higher education institutions allows a double degree to be obtained: the vocational qualification and the Bachelor degree.

Teachers

The basic entry requirement for teacher training courses is the Hochschulreife (higher education entrance qualification), which is acquired after attending school for 12 or 13 years and passing the Abitur examination. The higher education entrance qualification can also be attained in other ways in specific cases, e.g. by adults who successfully complete a course of evening classes, or, in certain cases, following the successful completion of a non-university course of training in the tertiary sector.

A pass in the Erste Staatsprüfung (First State Examination) or a similar higher education examination or, depending on the type of teaching career, a Master’s degree examination, is the requirement for admission to the Vorbereitungsdienst (preparatory service). It even constitutes entitlement to admission.

The Erste Staatsprüfung (First State Examination) forms the leaving qualification of a higher education course of study and, like the Master of Education, on principle provides entitlement to doctoral studies. Details are regulated by the universities in their doctoral regulations (Promotionsordnungen).

Curriculum, Level of Specialisation, Learning Outcomes

The various careers for which teachers are trained correspond to the levels and types of school in the Länder. In view of the resulting large number of different designations for teaching careers, the following six types of teaching careers can be distinguished for reasons of clarity:

Type 1 Teaching careers at the Grundschule or primary level
Type 2 General teaching careers at primary level and all or individual lower secondary level school types
Type 3 Teaching careers at all or individual lower secondary level school types
Type 4 Teaching careers for the general education subjects at upper secondary level or for the Gymnasium
Type 5 Teaching careers in vocational subjects at upper secondary level or at vocational schools
Type 6 Teaching careers in special education

In March 2015, the Standing Conference and the German Rector’s Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz - HRK) resolved a joint recommendation Teacher Training for a School of Diversity (Lehrerbildung für eine Schule der Vielfalt) on the topic of inclusion. The teacher training courses should be further developed so that the future teachers are better prepared for the challenges of a diversified body of pupils.

In all Länder training is divided into studies at a university or equivalent institution of higher education including periods of practical training and practical training in a school setting (Vorbereitungsdienst). The preparatory service concludes with the Second State Examination; a pass in this examination
confers the teaching qualification. The two stages of training must be closely related in terms of education and instruction provided, and must take account of the specific requirements of each type of teaching career.

The Standards for Teacher Training: Educational Sciences adopted by the Standing Conference in 2004 define the requirements to be met by teaching staff and refer to the education and training objectives formulated in the Education Acts of the Länder. The requirements are generated by the competences aimed for, which are subdivided into four areas:

- Teaching
- Education
- Assessment
- Innovation

In June 2014 the Standards for Teacher Training: Educational Sciences were amended and updated with regard to inclusive teaching requirements.

The Standing Conference resolved the content requirements for subject-related studies and subject-related didactics in teacher training which apply to all Länder in 2008 (last revised in 2017). The specialist profiles contained therein cover the description of the competences to be achieved during the course of studies as well as the individual substantive priorities needed for this. They relate to the subjects of general education and vocational teaching professions.

In accordance with these requirements on content binding for all Länder, the following competences should be acquired during the various phases of teacher training and in different education institutions:

- Basic competences with respect to the specialist sciences, their methods for acquiring and consolidating knowledge and way of working as well as the teaching methodology requirements will be largely built up during the course of studies.
- The teaching of competences that are defined more by teaching practices, on the other hand, is above all the job of the preparatory service; numerous bases for this will, however, be laid or initiated in the course of studies.
- After all, further development in a professional role as a teacher is the job of further and continuing education.

First stage of teacher training: Studies at a higher education institution

The characteristic elements of the courses for the six types of teaching career are described below in generalised form. The details are laid down by the Länder in Studienordnungen (study regulations), Ausbildungsordnungen (training regulations) and Prüfungsordnungen (examination regulations) or corresponding legal provisions. These include in particular provisions on the following:

- subjects/subject areas and combinations that may be chosen for the respective teaching career
- the scope and content of the course of study in the individual subjects/subject areas, including subjects relating to educational sciences and subject-related didactics
- the type of certificates required for admission to examinations, the type and scope of individual parts of the examinations and assessment procedures

Teaching career type 1: Teaching careers at the Grundschule or primary level

Training for this type of teaching career consists of a course of study lasting at least seven semesters, which devotes particular attention to educational science and practical teaching components. The
degree requirements total at least 210 credits as specified in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The course of study covers the following:

- Educational sciences, primary school pedagogy and primary school didactics. The basic pedagogical and didactic qualifications in the subject areas dealing with heterogeneity and inclusion as well as the fundamentals of assessment practice play a particularly important role in this regard.
- Subject-related and subject-didactic course contents from the subjects German and mathematics, as well as an additional subject or area of learning for the primary school or primary level. One of these subjects or areas of learning is studied as a major subject. The further subject or area of learning may be replaced by a special pedagogical focus.
- Practical experience at schools, that should begin in the first study semesters wherever possible.
- A paper demonstrating the ability for independent scientific work.

The course of study concludes with a corresponding higher education qualification or the Erste Staatsprüfung (First State Examination).

**Teaching career type 2: General teaching careers at primary level and all or individual lower secondary level school types**

Training for this type of teaching career consists of a course of study lasting at least seven semesters. The degree requirements total at least 210 credits as specified in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The course of study covers the following:

- Educational sciences and practical training in schools. To this end particular importance attaches to educational and didactic basic qualifications in the areas dealing with heterogeneity and inclusion, and fundamental support diagnostics.
- Studies and didactics relating to at least two subjects; the ratio of these subjects to the educational sciences should be approximately 2:1.
- A paper demonstrating the ability for independent scientific work.

Depending on the special requirements for the individual teaching careers the relevant Land law may require one learning area or two subjects instead of one of the above two subjects.

The course of study concludes with a corresponding higher education qualification or the Erste Staatsprüfung (First State Examination).

**Teaching career type 3: Teaching careers at all or individual lower secondary level school types**

Training for this type of teaching career consists of a course of study lasting at least seven semesters. The degree requirements total at least 210 credits as specified in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The course of study covers the following:

- Educational sciences and practical training in schools. To this end particular importance attaches to educational and didactic basic qualifications in the areas dealing with heterogeneity
and inclusion, and fundamental support diagnostics.
- Studies and didactics relating to at least two subjects; the ratio of these subjects to the educational sciences should be approximately 2:1.
- A paper demonstrating the ability for independent scientific work.

Depending on the special requirements for the individual teaching careers the relevant Land law may require one learning area or two subjects instead of one of the above two subjects.

The course of study concludes with a corresponding higher education qualification or the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination).

**Teaching career type 4: Teaching careers for the general education subjects at upper secondary level or for the Gymnasium**

The *Regelstudienzeit* (standard period of study) for a study course for this type of teaching comprises a minimum of six semesters in a Bachelor’s study course and a minimum of two semesters in a Master’s study course. It comprises 10 semesters in total including periods of practical training in schools and is rated with 300 credits under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The standard period of study for teacher training courses ending with the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination) comprises a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 10 semesters and amounts to a volume of at least 270 ECTS credits.

The course of study covers the following:

- Educational sciences and practical training in schools. To this end particular importance attaches to educational and didactic basic qualifications in the areas dealing with heterogeneity and inclusion, and fundamental support diagnostics.
- In-depth studies and didactics relating to two subjects comprising at least 180 ECTS credits divided more or less equally between both subjects.
- A paper demonstrating the ability for independent scientific work.

The course of study concludes with a corresponding higher education qualification or the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination).

**Teaching career type 5: Teaching careers in vocational subjects at upper secondary level or at vocational schools**

The *Regelstudienzeit* (standard period of study) for a study course for this type of teaching comprises a minimum of six semesters in a Bachelor’s study course and a minimum of two semesters in a Master’s study course. It comprises 10 semesters in total including periods of practical training in schools and corresponds to 300 credits under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The standard period of study for teacher training courses ending with the *Erste Staatsprüfung* (First State Examination) comprises 9 semesters and amounts to a volume of at least 270 ECTS credits.

A practical activity relating to the vocational subject area is also required lasting 12 months in principle.

The course of study covers the following:

- Educational sciences focusing on vocational or business education, subject-related didactics for the vocational subject area and the second teaching subject, and practical training in schools amounting to 90 ECTS credits. To this end particular importance attaches to educational and didactic basic qualifications in the areas dealing with heterogeneity and inclusion, and
fundamental support diagnostics.

- Subject-related studies within the vocational subject area (first subject) and subject-related studies for the teaching subject (second subject) totalling 180 ECTS credits.
- Bachelor’s thesis and Master’s thesis totalling 30 ECTS credits.

Instead of the second teaching subject a second vocational subject area or a subject area relating to special education may be chosen. The second subject can be an affine subject or an affine field in exceptional cases.

The course of study concludes with a corresponding Master of Education degree or the Erste Staatsprüfung (First State Examination).

The following subject areas can be chosen for study: business and administration, metals technology, electrical engineering, construction engineering, wood engineering, textile technology and design, laboratory technology/process technology, media technology, colour technology, interior design and surface technology, health and personal hygiene, dietetics and domestic science, agriculture, youth and community work, nursing, automotive engineering, information technology. The Länder may admit other vocational subject areas.

**Teaching career type 6: Teaching careers in special education**

Courses for the teaching career in special education at universities and equivalent higher education institutions are to be structured such that they meet the requirements of the special needs education of pupils at all school types and foster the ability to act professionally in both specialist and educational terms.

Qualification as a special education teacher can be obtained either by passing the (Second) State Examination after obtaining a related higher education qualification, or by passing the First State Examination, and also through an additional course of study after qualifying for a different type of teaching career. In some Länder the two forms of training exist side by side or as alternatives.

The course of study covers the following:

- Educational sciences and practical training in schools, including in the subject areas relating to special education. To this end particular importance attaches to educational and didactic basic qualifications in the areas dealing with heterogeneity and inclusion, and fundamental support diagnostics.
- Subject-related studies and didactics in at least one teaching area or area of learning.
- Study of special education; this should amount to around 120 ECTS credits.
- A paper demonstrating the ability for independent scientific work.

The ratio of subject-related studies to that of the educational sciences should be approximately 2:1.

The Regelstudienzeit (standard period of study) for a study course comprises a minimum of eight semesters and is rated with 240 credits under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The course of study concludes with a corresponding higher education qualification or the Erste Staatsprüfung (First State Examination).

Study of special education incorporates discipline-specific and cross-discipline components taking into account aspects of joint education of pupils with and without Sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf (special educational needs). The discipline-specific components include the following special educational focuses:
education for the blind
education for the deaf
education for the mentally handicapped
education for the physically disabled
education for children with learning difficulties
education for those with speech defects
emotional and social development

The Länder can also approve other subject areas.

**Second stage of teacher training: Preparatory service**

For all teaching careers, studies at a university or equivalent institution of higher education are followed by the *Vorbereitungsdienst* (preparatory service) as the second stage of teacher training. It can last between 12 and 24 months. Preparatory service aims to provide practical training in schools building on subject-related science, subject-related didactics and educational science competences. It develops the competences laid down in the Standards for Teacher Training in the Educational Sciences (*Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften*) for teachers.

Training in the preparatory service takes place in different training formats at schools, teacher training colleges or similar establishments. It covers theoretical instruction, testing in lessons and theory-based reflection.

The following formats shape training in the preparatory service:

- introductory seminars
- sitting in on lessons
- accompanied teaching
- independent teaching
- training in seminar events.

The Länder may also credit relevant work placements abroad during the preparatory service, or after completing the first stage of teacher training to the duration of preparatory service. However, at least half of the preparatory service must be completed in Germany.

All applicants who have completed a teacher training course in accordance with the specifications of the Standing Conference should be allowed equal access to the preparatory service for the type of teacher training that corresponds to their qualification. This applies irrespective of the Land in which the degree was acquired.

Depending on regulations under Land law up to 60 ECTS credits from the preparatory service can be credited to a Master’s degree.

**Teacher Educators**

In the preparatory service teachers receive pedagogical and subject-related didactics training at teacher-training colleges. The Länder are responsible for the organisation of these colleges. The head of a teacher-training college is, as a rule, appointed by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and reports directly to it.

Training at the teacher-training colleges is in the hands of teachers (lecturers/heads of department) with special scientific and practical expertise, who are given time off from their own lessons to teach
at the colleges, or are seconded to a teacher-training college full-time for a limited period.

Teachers at schools who are particularly highly skilled both professionally and methodologically are responsible for training trainee teachers in schools; the trainee teachers are assigned to these teaching staff for training.

The teachers involved in the preparatory service undergo continual in-service training.

Qualifications, Evaluation and Certificates

Regardless of whether the study course is organised in the tiered system or concludes with the Erste Staatsprüfung (First State Examination), the courses of study are modularised and provided with a credit point system in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System. Examinations under the responsibility of universities are usually carried out during the courses of study. Credits which are acquired at Fachhochschulen as part of an accredited Bachelor’s or Master’s study course can be credited as part of the credit requirements in all teacher training courses. The details are regulated by Studienordnungen and Prüfungsordnungen (study and examination regulations). The successful completion of a teacher training course conveying the educational prerequisites for teaching positions entitles the holder of the degree to be accepted into the Vorbereitungsdienst (state preparatory service).

It is the task of the state examination boards, which are subordinate to the ministries responsible for the school system, to hold the First State Examination. Examinations that lead to a Bachelor's or Master's degree are carried out at the responsibility of the institutions of higher education. In Bachelor’s and Master’s study courses, which confer the qualification for admission to the preparatory service, the state responsibility for content requirements in teacher training is ensured through the involvement of a representative of the highest Land education authority for the school system in the accreditation procedure; any accreditation of individual curricula requires the approval of this representative.

The preparatory service concludes with the (Second) State Examination. This is a prerequisite for, but not a guarantee of permanent employment in the state school sector. It has to be taken before a state examination board or a state examination commission and usually consists of four parts:

- in the majority of Länder a major written paper relating to educational theory, pedagogic psychology or the didactics of one of the subjects studied;
- a practical teaching examination involving demonstration lessons in the chosen subjects;
- an examination on basic questions of educational theory, educational and civil service legislation and school administration and occasionally on sociological aspects of school education;
- an examination on didactic and methodological issues in the subjects studied.

The forms taken by the State Examination must be capable of recording the level of competence development pursuant to the Standards for Teacher Training in the Educational Sciences (Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften). To ensure the quality of training in the preparatory service, external and internal evaluation measures are to be implemented.

Following the (Second) State Examination there is no legal entitlement to employment in teaching. An appointment to a permanent post is made within an application procedure according to the criteria of aptitude, qualifications and record of achievement and on the basis of current vacancies. In some Länder, the vacancies are advertised with a relevant requirement profile by the schools themselves. Teachers who are not taken on can apply for temporary posts [4] such as providing cover for teachers
on maternity/paternity leave or sick leave.

**Alternative Training Pathways**

Teacher training usually takes place in a university teacher-training degree course followed by the *Vorbereitungsdienst* (preparatory service), and ending with a state examination. However, if there is an irrefutable need for specific teaching careers or disciplines in the Länder, and this cannot be met by teachers with formal teacher training, lateral entrants may be employed in order to meet short-term demands. In 2016 8.4 per cent of all newly recruited teachers in the public school sector had no formal teacher training. The measures to employ lateral entrants are largely oriented by the latest versions of the standards adopted by the Standing Conference and the agreements on teacher training common to all Länder. In December 2013 the Standing Conference agreed inter alia the following minimum requirements for the qualification of lateral entrants:

- university Master’s degree or equivalent higher education qualification from which at least two teaching-related subjects can be derived;
- completion of the Vorbereitungsdienst (preparatory service) or a comparable training which also ensures basic educational competences through a (second) state examination or an equivalent state-certified qualification.

By agreeing joint guidelines and requirements for lateral entrants, the Standing Conference has also facilitated the mobility of lateral entrants who later move to a different Land.

**Source URL:**

**Links**
[3] https://www.hrk.de/home/