

HRK

Linking Education and Employability – examples from Germany

Tuning High Level International Policy
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UNIVERSITIES and *Businesses* – Worlds Apart?

Not necessarily:

**Four examples from Germany on
bridging the gap between the two
and ensuring employability**



- 1. *Dialogue:***

University Business Working Group

- 2. *Quality Assurance:***

Involving Social Partners in Accreditation

- 3. *Study:***

“Dual Study Programmes”

- 4. *Governance:***

University Governing Boards

1. University Business Working Group

- Founded and run jointly by the German Rectors' Conference and the two national Employers' Associations
- Around 30 members from the business side, often HR managers from medium to large firms, and around 15 members from the university side (rectors and presidents)
- Meets twice a year to discuss topics of common interest, prepares joint declarations and initiatives

University Business Working Group

Topics of recent years:

- The Bologna Process, e.g. the issue of good, student-centred teaching and the use of learning outcomes
- Labour market relevance of study programmes, employability of graduates
- Internationalisation of study programmes, how to attract international students (and keep graduates in the German labour market)
- Permeability between academic and vocational education, e.g. qualifications frameworks, recognition of prior learning
- Funding of higher education in Germany, in times of rising enrolment figures
- Autonomy and governance of higher education institutions

University Business Working Group

Pros:

- Continuing, informal platform for open and controversial exchanges between the two sides
- Total liberty in setting the agenda, accountable to no-one

Cons:

- No direct impact, beyond the circle of participants
- Too infrequent meetings for sustained and intensive dialogue

2. Involving Social Partners in Accreditation

Quality Assurance in German Higher Education

National Accreditation Council
accredits

Ten Accreditation Agencies
accredit

Study programmes and institutional QA systems

***... in all these bodies and procedures social partners
(businesses and trade unions) have to be involved***

Involving Social Partners in Accreditation

Pro:

- Allows to ensure that curricula are relevant to the labour market and that future graduates will acquire competences that make them employable or allow them to become entrepreneurs themselves

Con: ?

3. Dual Study Programmes (cooperative work-study degree programmes)

- Most rapidly growing type of study programme in Germany: at present close to 1000 programmes , offered mainly at Universities of Applied Sciences and at Schools of Business, Engineering and Social Work
- Combine academic study with elements of vocational training or professional practice
- Unlike part-time study, the job-related or vocational elements are an integral part of the programme
- Two types: either first time-study combined with first time-vocational training, or study programme for people in employment (to upgrade their qualifications)
- Cooperative work-study degree programmes are usually the same length as full-time degree programmes.

Study Concept

- Student Selection by the firm/company
 - training/employment contract needed before beginning of studies
- Student receives salary and social security during entire duration of study programme
- Two ways of combining theory and practice phases
 - Block model (e.g. 12 weeks practice, 12 weeks theory)
 - Weekly model (e.g. 3 days practice/week, 2 days theory/week)
- Leads to two awards: Bachelor/Master PLUS a vocational award (Chambers of Crafts/Commerce)

Pros:

- Strong application-orientation among students
- High motivation of students
- Close ties with the firm (employer)
- Opportunity for both sides to get to know each other well
- Students enjoy financial and social security

Cons:

- Can be extremely work-intensive for students
- High coordination effort required between HEI and enterprise
- Little research aspects in the study programme
- Sometimes problems with the recognition of the final award as HE award
- Little curricular freedom for students

4. Governing Boards in HEI

- In DE gradually introduced since the 1990s, wide range of models
- Established as the third element of HE governance, next to the President's/Rector's Board and the Senate
- Transfer of competences from state to governing board
- At least half of members should be external (academic competence)
- Appointment, remit, etc. to be agreed between HEI and Ministry
- 3 main functions:
 - Strategic advice to HEI (but no operational remit)
 - Control of presidential board (formerly exercised by State)
 - Bridge between HEI and society

Governing Boards in HEI

Pros

- Support HEI as drivers of societal and economic change and innovation
- Professionalisation of HE governance
- Provide expertise from external stakeholders, including businesses, e.g. on the relevance of study programmes to society and the labour market

Cons

- Risk of “remote control” of HEI by external stakeholders, in particular from industry
- Threat to the principles of academic freedom and autonomy

... Worlds Apart?

Certainly not.

In particular the development of QA procedures and of new governance structures in recent years has led to more intensive contacts but these remain uneven:

It is often easier to involve medium and large companies than small ones,

and cooperation is easier to establish in engineering and business/economics than in the humanities and social sciences.

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**Thank you very much
for your attention!**

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