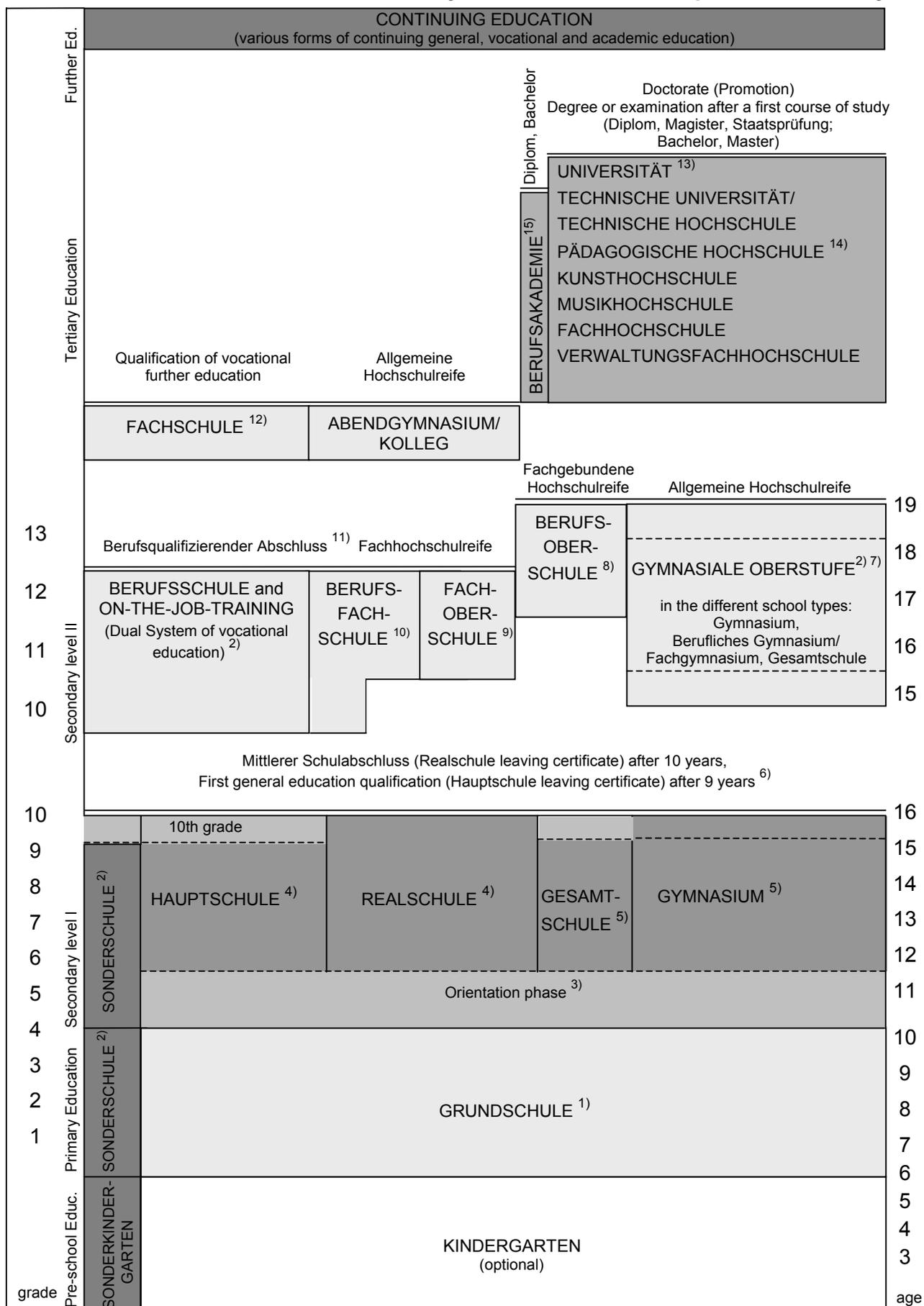


Basic Structure of the Educational System in the Federal Republic of Germany



Annotations

Diagram of the basic structure of the education system. The distribution of the school population in grade 8 as per 2007 taken as a national average is as follows: *Hauptschule* 20.6 per cent, *Realschule* 26.5 per cent, *Gymnasium* 33.4 per cent, *integrierte Gesamtschule* 8.5 per cent, types of school with several courses of education 6.4 per cent, special schools 3.8 per cent.

The ability of pupils to transfer between school types and the recognition of school-leaving qualifications is basically guaranteed if the preconditions agreed between the Länder are fulfilled. The duration of full-time compulsory education (compulsory general education) is nine years (10 years in four of the Länder) and the subsequent period of part-time compulsory education (compulsory vocational education) is three years.

- 1 In some Länder special types of transition from pre-school to primary education (*Vorklassen*, *Schulkindergärten*) exist. In Berlin and Brandenburg the primary school comprises six grades.
- 2 The disabled attend special forms of general-education and vocational school types (partially integrated with non-handicapped pupils) depending on the type of disability in question. Designation of schools varies according to the law of each Land.
- 3 Irrespective of school type, grades 5 and 6 constitute a phase of particular promotion, supervision and orientation with regard to the pupil's future educational path and its particular direction (*Orientierungsstufe* or *Förderstufe*).
- 4 The *Hauptschule* and *Realschule* courses of education are also offered at schools with several courses of education, for which the names differ from one Land to another. The *Mittelschule* (Sachsen), *Regelschule* (Thüringen), *Erweiterte Realschule* (Saarland), *Sekundarschule* (Bremen, Sachsen-Anhalt), *Integrierte Haupt- und Realschule* (Hamburg), *Verbundene oder Zusammengefasste Haupt- und Realschule* (Berlin, Hessen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Niedersachsen) *Regionale Schule* (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Rheinland-Pfalz), *Oberschule* (Brandenburg), *Duale Oberschule* (Rheinland-Pfalz), *Regionalschule* (Schleswig-Holstein) and *Gemeinschaftsschule* (Schleswig-Holstein), as well as comprehensive schools (*Gesamtschulen*) fall under this category.
- 5 The *Gymnasium* course of education is also offered at comprehensive schools (**Gesamtschule**). In the cooperative comprehensive schools, the three courses of education (*Hauptschule*, *Realschule* and *Gymnasium*) are brought under one educational and organisational umbrella; these form an educational and organisational whole at the integrated *Gesamtschule*. The provision of comprehensive schools (*Gesamtschulen*) varies in accordance with the respective educational laws of the Länder.
- 6 The general education qualifications that may be obtained after grades 9 and 10 carry particular designations in some Länder. These certificates can also be obtained in evening classes and at vocational schools.
- 7 Admission to the *Gymnasiale Oberstufe* requires a formal entrance qualification which can be obtained after grade 9 or 10. At present, in the majority of Länder the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* can be obtained after the successful completion of 13 consecutive school years (nine years at the *Gymnasium*). Yet in almost all Länder the gradual conversion to eight years at the *Gymnasium* is currently under way, where the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* can be obtained after a 12-year course of education.
- 8 The **Berufoberschule** has so far only existed in a few Länder and offers school-leavers with the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* who have completed vocational training or five years' working experience the opportunity to obtain the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife*. Pupils can obtain the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* by proving their proficiency in a second foreign language.
- 9 The **Fachoberschule** is a school type lasting for two years (grades 11 and 12) which admits pupils who have completed the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* and qualifies them to study at a *Fachhochschule*. Pupils who have successfully completed the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* and have been through initial vocational training can also enter the *Fachoberschule* directly in grade 12. The Länder may also establish a

grade 13. After successful completion of grade 13, pupils can obtain the *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* and under certain conditions the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*.

- 10 **Berufsfachschulen** are full-time vocational schools differing in terms of entrance requirements, duration and leaving certificates. Basic vocational training can be obtained during one- or two-year courses at *Berufsfachschulen* and a vocational qualification is available at the end of two- or three-year courses. Under certain conditions the *Fachhochschulreife* can be acquired on completion of a course lasting a minimum of two years.
- 11 Extension courses are offered to enable pupils to acquire qualifications equivalent to the *Hauptschule* and *Realschule* leaving certificates.
- 12 **Fachschulen** cater for vocational continuing education (1-3 year duration) and as a rule require the completion of relevant vocational training in a recognised occupation and subsequent employment. In addition, the *Fachhochschulreife* can be acquired under certain conditions.
- 13 Including institutions of higher education offering courses in particular disciplines at university level (e.g. theology, philosophy, medicine, administrative sciences, sport).
- 14 **Pädagogische Hochschulen** (only in Baden-Württemberg) offer training courses for teachers at various types of schools. In specific cases, study courses leading to professions in the area of education and pedagogy outside the school sector are offered as well.
- 15 The **Berufsakademie** is a tertiary sector institution in some Länder offering academic training at a *Studienakademie* (study institution) combined with practical in-company professional training in keeping with the principle of the dual system.

As at January 2009

GLOSSARY

Abendgymnasium

Establishment of the so-called Zweiter Bildungsweg at which adults can attend evening classes to obtain the general higher education entrance qualification.

Allgemeine Hochschulreife

General higher education entrance qualification. Entitles holder to admission to all subjects at all higher education institutions and is usually obtained at upper →Gymnasium level (→Gymnasiale Oberstufe) by passing the Abitur examination. The certificate of Allgemeine Hochschulreife incorporates examination marks as well as continuous assessment of pupil's performance in the last two years of upper →Gymnasium level (*Qualifikationsphase*).

Bachelor

The Bachelor's degree as a first higher education degree provides basic qualification for a profession. It can be obtained after a standard period of study (*Regelstudienzeit*) of at least three and at most four years at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education, at colleges of art and music, and at →Fachhochschulen. Together with the →Master's degree, the Bachelor's degree is part of a graduation system of consecutive degrees (two-cycle degree system) which is to replace the traditional system of higher education qualifications (→Diplom and →Magister). The Bachelor's degree provides the same rights as Diplom qualifications obtained at a Fachhochschule. The Bachelor's degree may also be obtained as a tertiary education qualification providing qualification for a profession at Berufsakademien.

Berufliches Gymnasium

Type of school at upper secondary level offering a three-year course of education which includes both the general education subjects taught at upper →Gymnasium level (→Gymnasiale Oberstufe) and

career-oriented subjects, such as business and technology, but which also leads to the general higher education entrance qualification.

Berufsschule

Vocational school at upper secondary level generally providing part-time instruction in general and vocational subjects to trainees receiving vocational education and training within the dual system.

Diplom

The Diplom degree as a higher education qualification provides qualification for a profession. It may be obtained either at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education (particularly in social or economic sciences and in natural and engineering sciences), at colleges of art and music, and at →Fachhochschulen (in all subjects, with the specification Fachhochschule or FH added to the degree title).

Fachgebundene Hochschulreife

Qualification entitling holder to study particular subjects at a higher education institution. May be obtained through certain courses of vocational education at upper secondary level.

Fachhochschule

University of applied sciences. Type of higher education institution established in the 1970s, which has the particular function of providing application-oriented teaching and research, particularly in engineering, business, administration, social services and design.

Fachhochschulreife

Qualification entitling holder to study at a →Fachhochschule. May usually be obtained after 12 years of schooling at a Fachoberschule or - under certain conditions - at other vocational schools.

Grundschule

Compulsory school for all children of the age of six onwards. It comprises four grades, except in Berlin and Brandenburg where it covers six grades.

Gymnasiale Oberstufe

The upper level of the →Gymnasium, which can however be established at other types of school such as the Gesamtschule. It comprises grades 11-13 (or 10-12, 11-12, depending on the Land). Course of general education concluded by the Abitur examination, which leads to the general higher education entrance qualification (→Allgemeine Hochschulreife).

Gymnasium

Type of school covering both lower and upper secondary level (grades 5-13 or 5-12) and providing an in-depth general education aimed at the general higher education entrance qualification. At present, in almost all Länder, there is a change from the nine-year to the eight-year Gymnasium in which the →Allgemeine Hochschulreife is acquired after grade 12.

Hauptschule

Type of school at lower secondary level providing a basic general education. Compulsory school, unless pupil is attending a different type of secondary school, usually comprising grades 5-9.

Kindergarten

Pre-school establishment for children aged between three and six as part of child and youth welfare services – may be either publicly or privately maintained (not part of the school system).

Kolleg

Establishment of the so-called Zweiter Bildungsweg where adults attend full-time classes to obtain the general higher education entrance qualification.

Kunsthochschule / Musikhochschule

The colleges of art / colleges of music teach the entire gamut of artistic subjects or only certain branches of study, in some cases also the pertaining theoretical disciplines.

Magister

The Magister degree as a higher education qualification providing qualification for a profession may be obtained at universities and equivalent institutions of higher education (particularly in arts subjects).

Master

The Master's degree as a further higher education degree provides an advanced qualification for a profession and can be obtained after a standard period of study of one to two years at a university or equivalent institution of higher education, at colleges of art and music, as well as at →Fachhochschulen. Master's study courses are differentiated by the profile types "more practice-oriented" and "more research-oriented." They require a first degree qualifying for entry into a profession. Consecutive Master's study courses build on a preceding Bachelor's study course in terms of content and are part of a graduation system of consecutive degrees (two-cycle degree system) that is to replace the traditional system of higher education qualifications (→Diplom, →Magister). Non-consecutive Master's study courses and Master's courses providing further education correspond to the requirements of consecutive Master's study courses and lead to the same level of qualifications and the same rights as consecutive Master's study courses.

Mittlerer Schulabschluss

General education school leaving certificate obtained on completion of grade 10 at →Realschulen or, under certain circumstances, at other lower secondary level school types. It can also be obtained at a later stage during vocational training at upper secondary level. In some Länder called Realschulabschluss.

Promotion

Award of a doctoral degree on the basis of a doctoral thesis and either an oral examination or a defence of the student's thesis. As a rule, the doctorate is embarked on after completing a first course of study culminating in the →Magister, →Diplom or →Staatsprüfung, as well as after obtaining a Master's qualification, and the promotion serves as proof of ability to undertake in-depth academic work.

Realschule

Type of school at lower secondary level, usually comprising grades 5-10. Provides pupils with a more extensive general education and the opportunity to go on to courses of education at upper secondary level that lead to vocational or higher education entrance qualifications.

Sonderkindergarten

Pre-school establishment for children with disabilities – also known as a *Förderkindergarten*.

Sonderschule

Special school – school establishment for pupils whose development cannot be adequately assisted at mainstream schools on account of disability. Also known as *Förderschule*, *Schule für Behinderte* or *Förderzentrum*.

Staatsprüfung

State examination concluding a course of study in certain subjects (e.g. medical subjects, teaching, law). Also refers to examination taken by law students and teaching students at the end of their preparatory service (known as the Second State Examination). The examinations are administered by examination committees staffed not only by professors from the institutions of higher education but also by representatives of the state examination offices of the Länder.

Technische Hochschule / Technische Universität

Type of higher education institution equivalent in status to university. Focus traditionally lies in natural science and engineering.

Verwaltungsfachhochschule

→Fachhochschule maintained by the Federation or a Land which trains civil servants in a particular sector of public administration for careers in the so-called higher level of the civil service.