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For further information on the HRK,
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HRK German Rectors' Conference

The Voice of the Universities

German Rectors' Conference (HRK)

Tasks and structure

The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) is the association of public and government-recognised universities in Germany. The member institutions are represented in the HRK by their executive boards and rectorates.

The HRK currently has 269 member institutions, in which around 90 per cent of all students in Germany are enrolled.

Due to this large membership, representing all types of higher education institution, the HRK functions as the voice of the universities in dialogue with politicians and the public and as the central forum for opinion-forming in the higher education sector.

The HRK deals with all issues relating to the role and tasks of universities in academia and society, especially teaching and studying, research, innovation and transfer, academic continuing education, internationalisation, and university self-administration and governance.

The HRK has three main tasks:

1. Opinion-shaping and political representation

Through the HRK, the university leadership can stay abreast of new developments in the higher education system, discuss issues in research and higher education policy and develop joint positions.

On this basis, the President and Executive Board of the HRK represent the interests of the member institutions in dialogue with politics and administration at Federal and State Government level and in the public sphere.

As well as responding to issues and positions that are already the subject of political and public debate, the HRK actively sets the agenda for discussion.

2. Development of principles and standards in the higher education system

In core areas of the German education system, the HRK engages in intensive dialogue with partners in academia, the Federal and State Governments, employers' associations, trade unions and many others to formulate jointly accepted and long-term norms and standards.

The issues involved include, among others, the fundamental relationship between academic and professional education in the German Qualifications Framework (GQF) and the specific requirements placed on the higher education institutions' examination regulations by the German language test for admission to university for international applicants (Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang (DSH)).

3. Services to universities and the public

The HRK assists its member institutions and the public with a range of services. For example, it supports universities in the digitalisation of teaching (Hochschulforum Digitalisierung – Higher Education Forum on Digitalisation) and in the optimisation of their recognition and credit transfer practices (project MODUS). The HRK Higher Education Compass provides comprehensive and up-to-date information online about the higher education system, in particular the range of degree programmes on offer, while the associated clearing system helps potential students find suitable study places. The HRK also offers a nationwide online information portal for academic continuing education (project hoch & weit). It supports governance and processes of internationalisation of its member institutions (HRK ADVANCE) and promotes the international visibility and positioning of German universities and the German higher education system (service project „International University Rankings“).

The work of the HRK is based on decisions made by its bodies (the General Assembly, the Senate and the Executive Board). Decisions are developed in the Standing Committees, working groups and project groups and prepared and implemented by the offices in Berlin, Bonn and Brussels.

The HRK represents the higher education sector in the Alliance of Science Organisations in Germany, and is a member of the European University Association (EUA). The financial and legal body of the HRK is the Stiftung zur Förderung der Hochschulrektorenkonferenz.

The Higher Education Compass is the central information portal of German universities where the HRK provides information on the degree programmes and doctoral education programmes of all public and government-recognised universities in Germany. All information has been authorised by the universities and is updated by them on a regular basis:
www.hochschulkompass.de/en

The HRK provides information on the international cooperation agreements maintained by Germany's universities:
www.internationale-hochschulkooperationen.de/en

Key research priorities of German universities (Research Map) are presented by the HRK at:
www.researchmap.de



Photo: Christian Klenk/Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt



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