

## Diploma Supplement

This Diploma Supplement model was developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. The purpose of the supplement is to provide sufficient independent data to improve the international 'transparency' and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.). It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended. It should be free from any value judgements, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should give the reason why.

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### 1. INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE HOLDER OF THE QUALIFICATION

The holder of the qualification is shown on the Master-Zeugnis.

### 2. INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE QUALIFICATION

2.1 Name of qualification and (if applicable) title conferred (in original language)

Master of Arts (M.A.)

2.2 Main field(s) of study for the qualification

Communication Design

2.3 Name and status of awarding institution (in original language)

Technische Hochschule Mannheim – University of Applied Sciences

2.4 Name and status of institution administering studies (in original language)

see 2.3

2.5 Language(s) of instruction/examination

German. Some lectures might be held in English.

### 3. INFORMATION ON THE LEVEL AND DURATION OF THE QUALIFICATION

#### 3.1 Level of the qualification

Second Cycle (Master's Degree), EQF-7

#### 3.2 Official duration of programme in credits and/or years

1,5 years – 90 ECTS points

#### 3.3 Access requirement(s)

Bachelor's degree (at least 3,5 years of study; 210 ECTS) or equivalent Higher Education degree in appropriate field of study

Graduates from other universities and/or federal states who hold only a completed bachelor's degree in design or a related discipline with 180 ECTS credits may make up the missing 30 ECTS credits through designated courses from the bachelor's programme. These requirements must also be fulfilled by graduates of a bachelor's degree in a more distantly related field. The admissions committee of the master's programme will decide on a case-by-case basis whether applicants are accepted with conditions.

### 4. INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME COMPLETED AND THE RESULTS OBTAINED

#### 4.1 Mode of study

Full Time, attendance study

#### 4.2 Programme learning outcomes

Graduates of the Master's programme Communication Design at Technische Hochschule Mannheim are equipped to use design as a strategic, transformative, and systemic tool for addressing complex challenges of the future. This forward-thinking programme moves beyond traditional design education by integrating competencies across design practice, futures studies, technology, critical media theory, and entrepreneurship.

Upon completion of the programme, graduates will be able to:

- Research and develop future scenarios, analysing societal, ecological, and technological developments and translating them into reflective design strategies.
- Act strategically and with contextual awareness, managing design processes responsibly and with impact in entrepreneurial, social, and political domains.
- Collaborate across disciplines and borders, engaging in research projects and partnerships with companies, NGOs, and innovation labs.
- Apply critical media literacy and AI-assisted design methods, creating visual content with credibility, cultural sensitivity, and ethical integrity in complex media environments.
- Independently initiate and lead innovation processes, whether as founders, consultants, or creative directors navigating transformation in organisations and communities.
- Work both experimentally and academically, developing new approaches that actively shape the future of design practice.

As such, graduates are not only prepared to respond to current transformation processes, but are also empowered to define and design what the future could—and should—look like.

#### 4.3 Programme details, individual credits gained and grades/marks obtained

The Master's programme in Communication Design at Technische Hochschule Mannheim focuses on three interconnected areas: future-oriented transformative design, entrepreneurship and strategic networking, and a cutting-edge research component. It aims to educate design professionals who understand design not only as a creative discipline but also as a strategic tool for social transformation, innovation, and research.

### 1. Transformative Design Focus

The design-oriented track includes three elective specialisations:

- **Transformation Design**  
Design is explored as a strategic tool for sustainable change within organisations, communities, and systems. Students learn how to initiate, guide, and implement transformation processes using design methods within enterprises, institutions, and social contexts.
- **Critical Design**  
This module introduces students to theoretical and practical approaches of speculative and critical design. As part of an international and transdisciplinary collaboration with California State University, students work on the Minority Report 2070 project, developing and publishing design visions for alternative futures.
- **Experimental Interactives**  
Project-based experimentation in interactive media, both digital and analog. Students develop speculative concepts and advanced interface solutions at the human-machine interaction level from sketch and model to functioning prototype.

### 2. Entrepreneurship & Design Management

This focus provides students with entrepreneurial, legal, and economic skills, as well as innovation and leadership strategies tailored to design professionals:

- **Design Management**  
Covers project management, facilitation, and implementation of transformation processes in organisations. Students acquire the strategic and operational tools to turn creative ideas into viable business models, while managing change in both institutional and personal career contexts.
- **Entrepreneurship & Law**  
Offers a practical foundation in legal, economic, and strategic aspects of self-employment and company formation, enabling students to develop independent and entrepreneurial design careers.
- **Innovation Lab**  
An applied, mentorship-based format in which students prototype and test their own projects or startup ideas. With support from institutions such as the MIX Institute for Human Centered Innovation, CUBEX 41, and local startup incubators in Mannheim, students explore business model validation in real-world settings.

### 3. Research and Theoretical Context

The research-oriented component strengthens academic and contextual competencies in design practice:

- **Political Context & Aesthetics**  
Critical examination of the political and aesthetic dimensions of design. Key topics include visual ethics, the authenticity of digitally generated imagery, and the perception and manipulation of algorithmically produced content (e.g. fake news, deepfakes, AI visuals).
- **Image Science & Promptographics**  
Application-focused exploration of new developments in image theory. Students are introduced to prompt engineering as a creative and conceptual design method within AI-supported visual practices.
- **Research & Master Thesis**  
Teaches qualitative and quantitative research methods in preparation for the independent development and writing of the master's thesis.

The individual credits gained and grades obtained are shown on the *Master-Zeugnis*. The English translation can be found on the transcript of records

#### 4.4 Grading system and, if available, grade distribution table

Grades		Graduates (01/22-12/24)	
		abs. No.	%**
1,0 - 1,2*	very good	31	67 %
1,3 - 1,5		9	20 %
1,6 - 1,8	good	4	9 %
1,9 - 2,2		1	2 %
2,3 - 2,5		0	0 %
2,6 - 2,8	satisfactory	1	2 %
2,9 - 3,2		0	0 %
3,3 - 3,5		0	0 %
3,6 - 3,8	sufficient	0	0 %
3,9 - 4,0		0	0 %
Ø** 1,3		46	100 %

\*With distinction

\*\*Calculated only if at least 20 students finished the programme within the given timeframe.

#### 4.5 Overall classification of the qualification (in original language)

The overall classification of the qualification is shown on the *Master-Zeugnis*. The English translation can be found on the transcript of records.

## **5. INFORMATION ON THE FUNCTION OF THE QUALIFICATION**

### **5.1 Access to further study**

The degree qualifies the holder to apply for a doctorate program (see 8.5)

### **5.2 Access to a regulated profession (if applicable)**

## **6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **6.1 Additional information**

### **6.2 Further information sources**

<https://www.th-mannheim.de>

## **7. CERTIFICATION**

This Diploma Supplement refers to the following original documents:

Document on the award of the academic degree (Urkunde über die Verleihung des Akademischen Grades)

Transcript of Records (Zeugnis)

## **8. NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM**

The information on the national higher education system on the following pages provides a context for the qualification and the type of higher education institution that awarded it.

## 8. INFORMATION ON THE GERMAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM<sup>1</sup>

### 8.1 Types of Institutions and Institutional Status

Higher education (HE) studies in Germany are offered at three types of Higher Education Institutions (HEI).<sup>2</sup>

- *Universitäten* (Universities) including various specialised institutions, offer the whole range of academic disciplines. In the German tradition, universities focus in particular on basic research so that advanced stages of study have mainly theoretical orientation and research-oriented components.

- *Fachhochschulen (FH)/Hochschulen für Angewandte Wissenschaften (HAW)* (Universities of Applied Sciences, UAS) concentrate their study programmes in engineering and other technical disciplines, business-related studies, social work, and design areas. The common mission of applied research and development implies an application-oriented focus of studies, which includes integrated and supervised work assignments in industry, enterprises or other relevant institutions.

- *Kunst- und Musikhochschulen* (Universities of Art/Music) offer studies for artistic careers in fine arts, performing arts and music; in such fields as directing, production, writing in theatre, film, and other media; and in a variety of design areas, architecture, media and communication.

Higher Education Institutions are either state or state-recognised institutions. In their operations, including the organisation of studies and the designation and award of degrees, they are both subject to higher education legislation.

### 8.2 Types of Programmes and Degrees Awarded

Studies in all three types of institutions have traditionally been offered in integrated "long" (one-tier) programmes leading to *Diplom- or Magister Artium* degrees or completed by a *Staatsprüfung* (State Examination).

Within the framework of the Bologna-Process one-tier study programmes are successively being replaced by a two-tier study system. Since 1998, two-tier degrees (Bachelor's and Master's) have been introduced in almost all study programmes. This change is designed to enlarge variety and flexibility for students in planning and pursuing educational objectives; it also enhances international compatibility of studies.

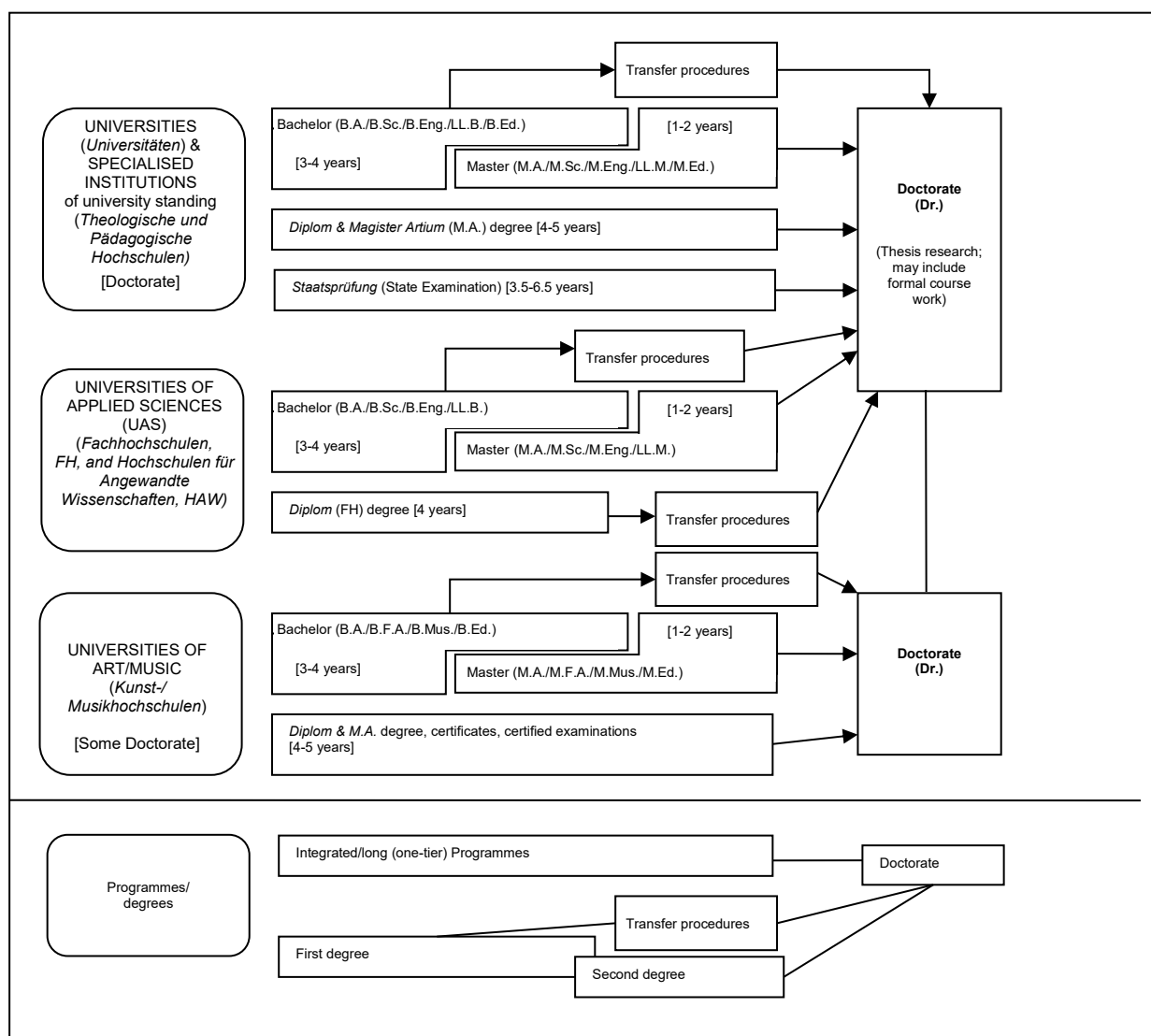
The German Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (HQR)<sup>3</sup> describes the qualification levels as well as the resulting qualifications and competences of the graduates. The three levels of the HQR correspond to the levels 6, 7 and 8 of the German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning<sup>4</sup> and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning<sup>5</sup>.

For details cf. Sec. 8.4.1, 8.4.2, and 8.4.3 respectively. Table 1 provides a synoptic summary.

### 8.3 Approval/Accreditation of Programmes and Degrees

To ensure quality and comparability of qualifications, the organisation of studies and general degree requirements have to conform to principles and regulations established by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK).<sup>6</sup> In 1999, a system of accreditation for Bachelor's and Master's programmes has become operational. All new programmes have to be accredited under this scheme; after a successful accreditation they receive the seal of the Accreditation Council.<sup>7</sup>

Table 1: Institutions, Programmes and Degrees in German Higher Education



#### 8.4 Organisation and Structure of Studies

The following programmes apply to all three types of institutions. Bachelor's and Master's study programmes may be studied consecutively, at various higher education institutions, at different types of higher education institutions and with phases of professional work between the first and the second qualification. The organisation of the study programmes makes use of modular components and of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) with 30 credits corresponding to one semester.

##### 8.4.1 Bachelor

Bachelor's degree programmes lay the academic foundations, provide methodological competences and include skills related to the professional field. The Bachelor's degree is awarded after 3 to 4 years. The Bachelor's degree programme includes a thesis requirement. Study programmes leading to the Bachelor's degree must be accredited according to the Interstate study accreditation treaty.<sup>8</sup>

First degree programmes (Bachelor) lead to Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.), Bachelor of Engineering (B.Eng.), Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.), Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.), Bachelor of Music (B.Mus.) or Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.).

The Bachelor's degree corresponds to level 6 of the German Qualifications Framework/ European Qualifications Framework.

##### 8.4.2 Master

Master is the second degree after another 1 to 2 years. Master's programmes may be differentiated by the profile types "practice-oriented" and "research-oriented". Higher Education Institutions define the profile.

The Master's degree programme includes a thesis requirement. Study programmes leading to the Master's degree must be accredited according to the Interstate study accreditation treaty.<sup>9</sup>

Second degree programmes (Master) lead to Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Science (M.Sc.), Master of Engineering (M.Eng.), Master of Laws (LL.M.), Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.), Master of Music (M.Mus.) or Master of Education (M.Ed.). Master's programmes which are designed for continuing education may carry other designations (e.g. MBA).

The Master's degree corresponds to level 7 of the German Qualifications Framework/ European Qualifications Framework.

##### 8.4.3 Integrated "Long" Programmes (One-Tier): Diplom degrees, Magister Artium, Staatsprüfung

An integrated study programme is either mono-disciplinary (*Diplom* degrees, most programmes completed by a *Staatsprüfung*) or comprises a combination of either two major or one major and two minor fields (*Magister Artium*). The first stage (1.5 to 2 years) focuses on broad orientations and foundations of the field(s) of study. An Intermediate Examination (*Diplom-Vorprüfung* for *Diplom* degrees; *Zwischenprüfung* or credit requirements for the *Magister Artium*) is prerequisite to enter the second stage of advanced studies and specialisations. Degree requirements include submission of a thesis (up to 6 months duration) and comprehensive final written and oral examinations. Similar regulations apply to studies leading to a *Staatsprüfung*. The level of qualification is equivalent to the Master's level.

- Integrated studies at *Universitäten (U)* last 4 to 5 years (*Diplom* degree, *Magister Artium*) or 3.5 to 6.5 years (*Staatsprüfung*). The *Diplom* degree is awarded in engineering disciplines, the natural sciences as well as economics and business. In the humanities, the corresponding degree is usually the *Magister Artium* (M.A.). In the social sciences, the practice varies as a matter of institutional traditions. Studies preparing for the legal, medical and pharmaceutical professions are completed by a *Staatsprüfung*. This applies also to studies preparing for teaching professions of some *Länder*.

The three qualifications (*Diplom*, *Magister Artium* and *Staatsprüfung*) are academically equivalent and correspond to level 7 of the German Qualifications Framework/European Qualifications Framework.

They qualify to apply for admission to doctoral studies. Further prerequisites for admission may be defined by the Higher Education Institution, cf. Sec. 8.5.

- Integrated studies at *Fachhochschulen (FH)/Hochschulen für Angewandte Wissenschaften (HAW)* (Universities of Applied Sciences, UAS) last 4 years and lead to a *Diplom (FH)* degree which corresponds to level 6 of the German Qualifications Framework/European Qualifications Framework.

Qualified graduates of FH/HAW/UAS may apply for admission to doctoral studies at doctorate-granting institutions, cf. Sec. 8.5.

- Studies at *Kunst- and Musikhochschulen* (Universities of Art/Music etc.) are more diverse in their organisation, depending on the field and individual objectives. In addition to *Diplom/Magister* degrees, the integrated study programme awards include certificates and certified examinations for specialised areas and professional purposes.

#### 8.5 Doctorate

Universities as well as specialised institutions of university standing, some of the FH/HAW/UAS and some Universities of Art/Music are doctorate-granting institutions. Formal prerequisite for admission to doctoral work is a qualified Master's degree (UAS and U), a *Magister* degree, a *Diplom*, a *Staatsprüfung*, or a foreign equivalent. Comparable degrees from universities of art and music can in exceptional cases (study programmes such as music theory, musicology, pedagogy of arts and music, media studies) also formally qualify for doctoral work. Particularly qualified holders of a Bachelor's degree or a *Diplom (FH)* degree may also be admitted to doctoral studies without acquisition of a further degree by means of a procedure to determine their aptitude. The universities respectively the doctorate-granting institutions regulate entry to a doctorate as well as the structure of the procedure to determine aptitude. Admission further requires the acceptance of the Dissertation research project by a professor as a supervisor.

The doctoral degree corresponds to level 8 of the German Qualifications Framework/ European Qualifications Framework.

#### 8.6 Grading Scheme

The grading scheme in Germany usually comprises five levels (with numerical equivalents; intermediate grades may be given): "Sehr Gut" (1) = Very Good; "Gut" (2) = Good; "Befriedigend" (3) = Satisfactory; "Ausreichend" (4) = Sufficient; "Nicht ausreichend" (5) = Non-Sufficient/Fail. The minimum passing grade is "Ausreichend" (4). Verbal designations of grades may vary in some cases and for doctoral degrees. In addition, grade distribution tables as described in the ECTS Users' Guide are used to indicate the relative distribution of grades within a reference group.

#### 8.7 Access to Higher Education

The General Higher Education Entrance Qualification (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*, *Abitur*) after 12 to 13 years of schooling allows for admission to all higher educational studies. Specialised variants (*Fachgebundene Hochschulreife*) allow for admission at *Fachhochschulen (FH)/Hochschulen für Angewandte Wissenschaften (HAW)* (UAS), universities and equivalent higher education institutions, but only in particular disciplines. Access to study programmes at *Fachhochschulen (FH)/Hochschulen für Angewandte Wissenschaften (HAW)* (UAS) is also possible with a *Fachhochschulreife*, which can usually be acquired after 12 years of schooling. Admission to study programmes at Universities of Art/Music and comparable study programmes at other higher education institutions as well as admission to a study programme in sports may be based on other or additional evidence demonstrating individual aptitude. Applicants with a qualification in vocational education and training but without a school-based higher education entrance qualification are entitled to a general higher education entrance qualification and thus to access to all study programmes, provided they have obtained advanced further training certificates in particular state-regulated vocational fields (e.g. *Meister/Meisterin im Handwerk*, *Industriemeister/in*, *Fachwirt/in (IHK)*, *Betriebswirt/in (IHK)* und *(HWK)*, staatlich geprüfte/r *Techniker/in*, staatlich geprüfte/r *Betriebswirt/in*, staatlich geprüfte/r *Gestalter/in*, staatlich geprüfte/r *Erzieher/in*). Vocationally qualified applicants can obtain a *Fachgebundene Hochschulreife* after completing a state-regulated vocational education of at least two years' duration plus professional practice of normally at least three years' duration, after having successfully passed an aptitude test at a higher education institution or other state institution; the aptitude test may be replaced by successfully completed trial studies of at least one year's duration.<sup>10</sup> Higher Education Institutions may in certain cases apply additional admission procedures.

#### 8.8 National Sources of Information

- Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK) [Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany]; Graurheindorfer Str. 157, D-53117 Bonn;

Phone: +49[0]228/501-0; [www.kmk.org](http://www.kmk.org); E-Mail: [hochschulen@kmk.org](mailto:hochschulen@kmk.org)

- Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB) as German NARIC; [www.kmk.org](http://www.kmk.org); E-Mail: [zab@kmk.org](mailto:zab@kmk.org)

- German information office of the *Länder* in the EURYDICE Network, providing the national dossier on the education system; [www.kmk.org](http://www.kmk.org); E-Mail: [Eurydice@kmk.org](mailto:Eurydice@kmk.org)

- Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK) [German Rectors' Conference]; Leipziger Platz 11, D-10117 Berlin, Phone: +49 30 206292-11; [www.hrk.de](http://www.hrk.de); E-Mail: [post@hrk.de](mailto:post@hrk.de)

- "Higher Education Compass" of the German Rectors' Conference features comprehensive information on institutions, programmes of study, etc. ([www.higher-education-compass.de](http://www.higher-education-compass.de))

<sup>1</sup> The information covers only aspects directly relevant to purposes of the Diploma Supplement.

<sup>2</sup> *Berufsakademien* are not considered as Higher Education Institutions, they only exist in some of the *Länder*. They offer educational programmes in close cooperation with private companies. Students receive a formal degree and carry out an apprenticeship at the company. Some *Berufsakademien* offer Bachelor courses which are recognised as an academic degree if they are accredited by the Accreditation Council.

<sup>3</sup> German Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Degrees. (Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany of 16 February 2017).

<sup>4</sup> German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (DQR). Joint resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the German Conference of Economics Ministers and the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany of 15 November 2012). More information at [www.dqr.de](http://www.dqr.de)

<sup>5</sup> Recommendation of the European Parliament and the European Council on the establishment of a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning of 23 April 2008 (2008/C 111/01 – European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning – EQF).

<sup>6</sup> Specimen decree pursuant to Article 4, paragraphs 1 – 4 of the interstate study accreditation treaty (Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany of 7 December 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Interstate Treaty on the organization of a joint accreditation system to ensure the quality of teaching and learning at German higher education institutions (Interstate study accreditation treaty) (Decision of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany of 8 December 2016), Enacted on 1 January 2018.

<sup>8</sup> See note No. 7.

<sup>9</sup> See note No. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Access to higher education for applicants with a vocational qualification, but without a school-based higher education entrance qualification (Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany of 6 March 2009).