



INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

HAW Hamburg Recognition Handbook

A GUIDE TO THE RECOGNITION OF *PRÜFUNGSLEISTUNGEN*
(EXAMINATIONS AND GRADED ASSESSMENTS) AND CREDITS
COMPLETED AT INSTITUTIONS OUTSIDE GERMANY

This is a reference guide for all issues relating to the recognition of examinations, graded assessments and credits completed at institutions outside Germany towards degrees at HAW Hamburg, such as courses taken during a semester abroad. It is intended for use both by students and by academic and administrative staff at HAW Hamburg charged with making decisions on recognition.

The recognition of attainments acquired internationally follows the principles set out in the ‘Statutes regarding the recognition of attainments and award of credits (Anerkennungs- und Anrechnungssatzung)’ of HAW Hamburg, issued 22 August 2019, and in the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2021–2027, to which HAW Hamburg is a signatory.

The aim of this guide is to provide information and best practice suggestions to the end of supporting good practice across HAW Hamburg in matters of recognition of attainments acquired abroad. While students will be interested primarily in the enhancement to their learning of the attainments achieved, administrative staff will benefit particularly from this guide’s clear and comprehensible outlines of the requisite processes. It is vital for HAW Hamburg staff to communicate decisions around recognition or its refusal clearly and provide robust reasons for them.

Before going abroad to study for a period of time, HAW Hamburg students need to receive clear information on the processes to follow regarding recognition, which will enable them to become aware of potential issues at an early stage and resolve them before they arise.

The fundamental principles we need to follow are that it is imperative to promote international mobility among students and that attainments completed and skills acquired by students in the course of such mobility should receive fair assessment, with flexible handling of divergences in attainments with the general aim of enabling recognition in line with the Lisbon Convention. Although the principal scope of the Lisbon Convention¹ pertains to student mobility within Europe, it may serve as a model for handling student attainments achieved in non-European countries in a similarly fair and transparent manner and as a yardstick for the standards to apply in these contexts.

This is an English translation of the original German text of this guide. It is provided for informational purposes only and has no force independent of the original German text. The original German version as issued on the above date shall be authoritative and definitive in all cases of dispute. In the interests of non-discriminatory use of language, this English translation uses alternating feminine and masculine pronouns in the singular and uses the plural ‘they’ form where possible and sensible.

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1. Legal bases for recognition of attainments completed abroad

This section outlines the legal foundations for processes of recognition pursuant to the Lisbon Convention and the Hamburg Higher Education Act and the Statutes regarding the recognition of attainments and award of credits at HAW Hamburg (Anerkennungs- und Anrechnungssatzung).

1.1 LISBON CONVENTION

The Lisbon Recognition Convention², whose full title is 'Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region', sets out binding regulations regarding the recognition of 'qualification[s] giving access to higher education', of 'period[s] of study' at higher education institutions, and of completed qualifications issued by higher education institutions. The central principles of the Lisbon Convention are³:

Onus of proof

The onus is on the institution to prove that the attainment in question, achieved abroad, is ineligible for recognition due to a 'substantial difference' (see below).

'Substantial differences'

Recognition³ may only be withheld if the body, office or individual charged with taking decisions on recognition identifies, and can demonstrate, 'substantial differences [...] between the periods of study completed in another Party [to the Convention] and the part of the higher education programme which they would replace in the Party in which recognition is sought' (Article V.1, Lisbon Convention). The valid basis for assessment of attainments achieved abroad is the knowledge and/or skills the student has acquired. As a fundamental principle, the decision-maker should consider whether the knowledge and/or skills thus acquired are sufficient for the student to continue and complete her studies in Hamburg successfully.

Withholding of recognition: duty to disclose reasons and student's right of appeal

'If recognition is withheld, the reasons for the refusal to grant recognition shall be stated' (Article III.5, Lisbon Convention). The student seeking recognition has a right to appeal the decision, and an established appeal process must be in place for this purpose.

Prohibition on discrimination

Assessment of qualifications shall take place without regard to any specific characteristic of the student seeking recognition.

Duty of transparency

The procedures and criteria used for the assessment and recognition of attainments, credits and qualifications must be transparent, uniform and consistent.

Availability of appropriate information

A full and proper assessment for recognition purposes calls for the availability of 'appropriate information' (cf. Article III.3, Lisbon Convention) on the qualification, period of study, credit(s) or attainment completed in the student's host country. The student seeking recognition is responsible for providing this information. The institution that issued the qualification or confirmed the attainment is required to provide the student seeking recognition or the recognising institution with the necessary information upon request and within a reasonable timeframe.

Reasonable timeframe for decisions on recognition

Decisions on recognition shall be taken within an appropriate, pre-determined timeframe, which shall be communicated to those seeking recognition.

² There is a link to the text of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in section 6 of this guide.

³ Cf.: the website of the German Rectors' Conference (<https://www.hrk-modus.de/informieren/einstiegsthemen/anererkennung/>)

1.2 HAMBURG HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

The Lisbon Convention was incorporated into German federal law in 2007, replacing earlier European regulations on the recognition or crediting to a degree course of attainments completed externally. Initially, the Lisbon Convention had relevance only to matters of recognition between the states contracting it. However, the incorporation, as of 15 July 2010, of its stipulations into Section 40 of the Hamburg Higher Education Act (Hamburgisches Hochschulgesetz, HmbHG) made these regulations equally applicable to attainments achieved within Germany and in third countries. This is also in line with the resolutions of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz, KMK) that are currently in force.

This means that an institution may only refuse to recognise attainments and credits completed externally if it is able to demonstrate that 'substantial differences' exist between the attainment submitted for recognition and the attainment the student would need to complete were recognition withheld. Skills attained extramurally (outside the setting of a higher education institution), unlike knowledge and skills acquired within such a setting, cannot necessarily be assumed a priori to be of qualitative equivalency, which means there can be no presumption of equivalency in relation to these attainments. They are recognisable to a total maximum of half of the credits (*Studienleistungen*) the student is required to complete in order to attain the degree. This provision is intended to ensure that a substantive proportion of the education underlying the degree a student attains has actually taken place within the setting of a higher education institution.

SECTION 40 SUBSECTION 1, HMBHG – UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION, FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY, WITHOUT LEGAL FORCE

(1) Where a student moves to another higher education institution, the credits, examinations and assessments (*Studien- und Prüfungsleistungen*) and periods of study and practical experience they have completed shall be recognised insofar as there are no substantial differences between the knowledge and skills conferred by the attainments completed and those [the knowledge and skills] whose achievement is the purpose of the degree course at the receiving institution.

SECTION 40 SUBSECTION 2, HMBHG – UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION, FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY, WITHOUT LEGAL FORCE

(2) Knowledge and skills attained through other means than a degree course, that are equivalent to those attained through a degree course and are required for the successful completion of [the degree course on which a student has embarked or will embark], shall be credited to [that] degree course to a maximum total of half of the credits and examinations [*Studien- und Prüfungsleistungen*] the student must complete [in order to successfully complete that degree course].

1.3 RECOGNITION OF *STUDIEN-* AND *PRÜFUNGSLEISTUNGEN* AND PERIODS OF STUDY AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE ATTAINED/COMPLETED AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

2) Decisions on the recognition of *Studien-* and *Prüfungsleistungen* and periods of study and practical experience attained/completed outside the Federal Republic of Germany shall have regard to the recommendations issued by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the German Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) and the German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*), particularly any equivalency agreements entered into by these bodies, and to any agreements in place in the context of partnerships between HAW Hamburg and other higher education institutions.

2. Key requirements in the recognition process

This section outlines the basis for recognition of attainments or credits.

2.1 RECOGNITION IS UPON APPLICATION ONLY

Outline of the fundamental conditions which must be in place for a valid process of recognition (Key requirements in the recognition process)

Students of HAW Hamburg seeking recognition for attainments or credits completed abroad must apply for recognition; it takes place automatically in certain degree courses. If a student has completed courses that (if recognised) would enable him to proceed to an examination or formal assessment for a specific module, he must apply for the recognition of these courses before commencing the examination or assessment concerned.

Checking for 'substantial differences'

As a general principle, recognition should proceed having regard to the successful achievement of the learning objectives set out in the Module Handbooks and Course and Examination Regulations issued by HAW Hamburg and its faculties and departments. When checking for 'substantial differences' as defined above, recognising authorities can use the following criteria⁴:

– Achievement of learning objectives

Assessment of an attainment for recognition should have regard to the learning objectives underlying the attainment and successfully met by its completion. This does not mean undertaking a micro-comparison of the attainment with the corresponding course at HAW Hamburg; instead, the view should be to whether the attainment places the student in a position to successfully meet the requirements of the remaining modules of the degree course, enabling a comparison 'in the round'. The key question decision-makers need to ask themselves is whether recognition of the attainment would place the overall objective of the degree course (as a whole) in serious jeopardy.

– Quality of the host institution and/or of the degree programme in which the attainment took place

Considerations here may relate, for example, to differences between a higher education institution and an institution of cooperative education (*Berufsakademie*), or to the accreditation of a degree course. Decision-makers should consider whether the institution abroad at which the student achieved the attainment is comparable to HAW Hamburg and whether it, or the degree course in question, is accredited in a corresponding manner⁵.

– Level of knowledge and/or skills attained versus level of knowledge and/or skills imparted by the corresponding course/module at HAW Hamburg

The term 'level' here is intended to be read in a formal sense, and the corresponding key question is whether the attainment took place within a Bachelor's or Master's degree programme.

– Foci and orientation of the degree programmes concerned

For recognition to be legitimate, the content, foci and emphases of the attainments for which the student seeks recognition should correspond, by and large, to those characterising the course or module at HAW Hamburg which she would need to take were recognition withheld. This fundamental principle notwithstanding, a difference in emphasis between HAW Hamburg and the host institution, or between the degree courses concerned, may be indicative of differences in the skills attained without justifying withholding of recognition per se.

– Workload

As a general principle, differences in workload alone do not preclude recognition. However, significantly divergent workloads may be indicative of differences in the successfully fulfilled learning objectives met by the

⁴ Cf.: https://www.hrk-nexus.de/fileadmin/redaktion/hrk-nexus/07-Downloads/07-03-Material/07-03-01_Leitfaden/nexus_Leitfaden_Anerkennung_Lang.pdf, pp. 32-35
⁵ The anabin database contains information on the accreditation status of educational institutions outside Germany.

attainment achieved and by the reference attainment at HAW Hamburg, and this interplay of factors may point to a 'substantial difference' that is incompatible with recognition. Recognition of attainments is a matter for the relevant Examinations Committee⁶.

Conversion of grades

Insofar as comparable grading systems are in place, grades attained in recognised credits or examinations shall be adopted as they are. Where the grading system used for the attainment is not comparable with that used at HAW Hamburg, the correct procedure is to convert the grade or award a 'pass' (*bestanden*)⁷. Conversion shall proceed using the Modified Bavarian Formula (Appendix). Please note: The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (hereafter KMK) has issued a recommendation that only those grades which are achievable in practice (Nmin, Nmax) should serve as the basis for conversion. One example is the French grading system; there is a theoretical maximum grade of 20, but in practice students never score higher than 18. In use of the Modified Bavarian Formula in this instance, the Nmax value would be set at 18 to ensure the conversion produced a fair and realistic result.

Timeframe

It is important to take decisions on recognition within as short a timeframe as possible, so students can plan the further course of their studies. Section 75 of the Code of Administrative Court Procedure (*Verwaltungsgerichtsordnung*) (VwGO) stipulates, as a fundamental principle, a period of **three months** as a permissible timeframe for responding to 'an application to carry out an administrative act'; after this period has elapsed, the student seeking recognition has the right to lodge proceedings for failure to act. It is vital to avoid the matter escalating to this point, due not least to the expense involved. [If the student has been requested to provide further documents in support of her application for recognition, the three-month timeframe is paused until the documents have been submitted.]

Recording of recognised attainments in the student's Certificate of Examinations

The relevant Faculty Service Office shall record recognised attainments in the student's Certificate of Examinations and in their Transcript of Records, adding a reference to the institution at which the attainment was completed.

⁶ Section 4 of this guide contains a detailed list of all relevant points of contact
⁷ Students have a right to conversion of their grades in all cases except in those where the corresponding module at HAW Hamburg is ungraded and only a pass is awarded for successful completion.

3. The recognition process

This section outlines an exemplary procedure for the recognition of an attainment completed outside Germany. It lists chronologically all stages of the process to which students and recognising individuals/offices/authorities must have regard.

3.1 BEFORE THE STUDENT GOES ABROAD

Before making concrete plans for a stay abroad, students should avail themselves of the opportunity to acquire relevant information about existing partnerships between HAW Hamburg and higher education institutions outside Germany. In the first instance, their most important points of contact in this regard are the Student Exchange Coordinator of their faculty and (for matters of recognition) the relevant departmental academic staff (see section 4). The International Office can help with more general issues.

Advice given to students on spending time studying abroad should focus on the following points:

When to go

The question of the point in someone's degree course at which a period of study makes most sense in recognition terms (in which semester, during the student's Bachelor's or Master's degree) will call for an individual answer, as it varies in accordance with course and curricular structures and with the requirements of host institutions. Among other factors, the student will need to consider what range of classes and courses is on offer at his prospective host institution at which point in the academic year. Advisors can help students identify the most flexible areas of their degree course's curriculum, whose completion abroad will present the least complexity.

Eligibility of courses/modules for recognition

Providing advice on these matters to students will entail, in particular, paying attention to the eligibility of courses/modules at HAW Hamburg's various partner institutions for recognition by HAW Hamburg. Students can seek personal advice on these matters or use overview tables showing which courses at which institutions have been recognised/credited in the past. Where a current description of the module or modules concerned is unavailable, the Student Exchange Coordinator shall support the student in requesting an up-to-date version to facilitate assessment of eligibility for recognition.

Learning Agreement

A Learning Agreement is a document listing the courses/modules/classes that a student intends to take during her period of study abroad. It describes how these courses will be recognised at HAW Hamburg. It is a mandatory requirement for stays at Erasmus partner institutions, but may also find use for European institutions outside the Erasmus network, for institutions in non-EU countries, and for overseas student mobility. The conclusion of a Learning Agreement is tantamount to the unreserved and unconditional recognition of the attainments it lists upon their successful completion by the student. This means that the courses chosen and their agreed recognition, once included in the Learning Agreement, can no longer be denied approval, provided all involved (the student, those responsible for recognition, the partner institution) have agreed to the student's choices. Any courses included in the Learning Agreement which the student has chosen out of interest in the subject, but which are not eligible for crediting to the student's degree course, should carry a note within the Learning Agreement advising of this.

3.2 DURING THE STUDENT'S STAY ABROAD

Changing to other courses/modules/classes

If a student, once he has arrived at the host institution, needs or wishes to change the courses chosen in advance of his stay abroad, for instance because a chosen course has been unexpectedly cancelled or his interests have changed, he is required to discuss the proposed change with the individual, office or body at HAW Hamburg that is responsible for recognition in his case and gain its approval. The change or changes must be recorded in the Learning Agreement in the section entitled 'Changes to Learning Agreement' or in an addendum; this is the only way of ensuring that the unreserved recognition conferred by a Learning Agreement in the usual case remains effective. A student's failure to report and seek approval for the change or changes means that retrospective recognition of these altered courses cannot be guaranteed. Should this happen, the individual, office or body at HAW Hamburg with authority of recognition shall review the matter once the student has returned to Hamburg.

3.3 AFTER THE STUDENT'S RETURN TO HAMBURG

Students themselves are responsible for initiating the recognition process after their return from their time abroad. They are required to submit certificates and confirmation of examinations, assessments, credits, modules and attainments completed abroad to the Examination Committee. The exact procedure may vary between faculties and departments; some may, for example, credit courses digitally, while others may require the student to attend a face-to-face meeting (see list of contacts in section 4 of this guide).

Transcript of Records

After completion of their stay abroad, students are required to submit the certificate of confirmation of that stay and of their completed attainments, issued by the host institution, to the appropriate office, individual or body at HAW Hamburg. This confirmation will usually be in the form of a Transcript of Records, the Learning Agreement and the Department specific template that usually complement the Learning Agreement. The recognising individual or body will check whether the student completed the courses and assessments set out in her Learning Agreement.

Authenticity check

The recognising individual, office or body shall check the authenticity of the documents submitted by the student.

3.4 IF RECOGNITION IS WITHHELD

HAW Hamburg may only withhold recognition if it is able to prove that the learning objectives met by the student in completing the courses/modules/credits/attainments at the host institution show 'substantial differences' from those the student would no longer have to complete at HAW Hamburg if his application for recognition were successful.

The office, individual or body which has denied recognition is required to set out their reasons for doing so in writing. They may wish to ascertain and refer to the views of the member/s of academic staff responsible for delivering the corresponding module at HAW Hamburg or for coordinating the degree course or of a recognition officer. The reasons must be set out in such a way that a non-specialist in the subject and a non-member of an academic institution would be able to comprehend them and acknowledge them as plausible. We recommend setting out the reasons for withholding recognition in reference to the following criteria:

- a description of the knowledge and skills acquired via completion of the attainment, in the context of the learning objective they fulfil and the level they are set at, and with reference to the composition and character of the student's degree course at HAW Hamburg and the qualification to which the degree course leads
- a comparison of the knowledge and skills acquired via completion of the attainment and those the student would acquire if they completed the corresponding attainment at HAW Hamburg instead, in the context of the learning objective each attainment fulfils and the level they are set at
- a clear statement of the 'substantial difference(s)' between the two

Differences relating exclusively to the number of ECTS credits associated with the attainment, the type of institution (university, university of applied sciences, institution of cooperative education, etc.), or the institution's location (country or federal state) are not sufficient grounds for withholding recognition, although these factors may serve as indicators of a potential substantial difference which requires more specific substantiation.

Further, it is not permissible to withhold recognition because the student has completed work at another institution or within another module which has been recognised as counting towards the student's degree; we do not regard knowledge or skills as consisting in specific contingents that can be 'filled up' or 'used up'.

For the same reason, the period of time that has elapsed since a student attained particular knowledge or skills is, as a general principle, irrelevant to decisions around recognition. Time will only be a factor in the legitimate withholding of recognition on grounds of substantial differences in cases where the knowledge and skills acquired in the attainment for which the student seeks recognition have become demonstrably obsolete or obsolescent, by comparison with the current state of knowledge in the appropriate field, to a degree that renders them wholly inadequate for meeting current subject-specific standards and needs.

3.5 APPEALS AGAINST THE WITHHOLDING OF RECOGNITION

The office, individual or body charged with recognition must ensure that students receive, in written form, both the reasons for withholding recognition and full information on their right to appeal the decision. This information must set out the appeal procedure and the timeframe within which the student must submit the appeal, which will usually be within one month of the decision's issuance.

Failure to provide information about the right to appeal automatically extends the timeframe within which an appeal is permissible to one year, pursuant to Section 58 subsection 2 of the Code of Administrative Court Procedure (*Verwaltungsgerichtsordnung, VwGO*).

Students with queries on issues surrounding their recognition procedure should address them, as a general rule, to the office, individual or body charged with recognition in their case, or (if this is different) the point of contact within the relevant faculty or department (see section 4 of this guide). The International Office and the faculties' Student Exchange Coordinators have a supportive and advisory role in relation to the recognition process.

Should the office, individual or body charged with recognition fail to make an appeal pathway available to the student and provide no rationale for the withholding of recognition that corresponds to the legitimate grounds for recognition set out above, the student thus affected should commence legal action.

4. Points of contact for matters of recognition

The table below lists the relevant points of contact for matters around recognition in HAW Hamburg's faculties and departments.

ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Student Exchange Coordinator	Huong Ly Luu HuongLy.Luu@haw-hamburg.de & TI-International@haw-hamburg.de	→ www.haw-hamburg.de/hochschule/technik-und-informatik/international/auslandsaufenthalt-im-studium/
Department of Aeronautical and Automotive Engineering	Prof. Dr.-Ing. Sven Füsler sven.fueser@haw-hamburg.de	→ www.haw-hamburg.de/hochschule/beschaeftigte/detail/person/person/show/sven-fueser/172/ Room A 11.24 Tel. 040 248 75 7895
Department of Computer Science	Prof. Dr. Zhen Ru Dai zhenru.dai@haw-hamburg.de	by arrangement, Berliner Tor 7, room 786 b Tel. 040 428 75 8153
Department of Information and Electrical Engineering	Prof. Dr. Jens Ginzel jens.ginzel@haw-hamburg.de	by arrangement, Berliner Tor 7, room 03.83 Tel. 040 428 75 8013
Department of Mechanical Engineering and Production Management	Prof. Dr. Thorsten Struckmann thorsten.struckmann@haw-hamburg.de	Office hours: see website; Berliner Tor 9, room F 321 Tel. 040 428 75 8737
Degree programme Mechatronics	Prof. Dr. Dirk Engel dirk.engel@haw-hamburg.de	Weds 1.00 – 2.00 pm Berliner Tor 9, room A 11.16 Tel. 040 428 75 7902

LIFE SCIENCES

Student Exchange Coordinator	ls-international@haw-hamburg.de Tel. 040 428 75-6398	→ www.haw-hamburg.de/hochschule/life-sciences/international/studieren-im-ausland-leistungsanerkennung/
Faculty Service Office	pruefungsangelegenheiten_lifesciences@haw-hamburg.de	→ www.haw-hamburg.de/hochschule/life-sciences/studium-und-lehre/fakultaetsservicebuero/pruefungen-leistungen-und-praxis/
Department of Nutrition and Home Economics	Prof. Dr. Christoph Wegmann christoph.wegmann@haw-hamburg.de Tel. 040 428 75-6116	
Department of Biotechnology	Prof. Dr. Rainer Sawatzki rainer.sawatzki@haw-hamburg.de Tel. 040 428 75-6163	
Department of Industrial Engineering and Management	Prof. Dr. Volker Skwarek volker.skwarek@haw-hamburg.de Tel. 040 428 75-6435	
Department of Health Sciences	Gunnar Paetzelt, <i>Diplom Gesundheitswirt</i> gunnar.paetzelt@haw-hamburg.de	

DESIGN, MEDIA AND INFORMATION

Student Exchange Coordinator	Jenny Kahler dmi-international@haw-hamburg.de Tel. 040 428 75-4664	→ www.haw-hamburg.de/hochschule/design-medien-und-information/international/studieren-im-ausland/
Department of Communication Design	Prof. Sven Vogel sven.vogel2@haw-hamburg.de	
Department of Illustration	Prof. Alexandra Kardinar alexandra.kardinar@haw-hamburg.de	
Department of Fashion, Costume and Textile Product Design	Prof. Reinhard von der Thannen reinhard.vonderthannen@haw-hamburg.de	
Department of Clothing Technology and Management	Prof. Stefanie Bahlmann stefanie.bahlmann@haw-hamburg.de	
Department of Media Technology	Contact the relevant professor or: Jenny Kahler Student Exchange Coordinator dmi-international@haw-hamburg.de Tel. 040 428 75-4664 Prof. Wolfgang Willaschek Professor of Dramaturgy Vice-Dean for International Affairs wolfgang.willaschek@haw-hamburg.de Tel. 040 428 75-7665 Prof. Dr. Jan Mietzner Prüfungsausschussvorsitzender Jan.Mietzner@haw-hamburg.de Tel. 040 428 75 7642	
Department of Information	Prof. Dr. Steffen Burkhardt steffen.burkhardt@haw-hamburg.de Tel. 040 428 75-3651	

BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Student Exchange Coordinator

Lea Andres
ws-international@haw-hamburg.de
Tel. 040 428 75-6975

→ www.haw-hamburg.de/hochschule/wirtschaft-und-soziales/international/

Department of Nursing and Management

Prof. Dr. Miriam Richter
miriamtariba.richter@haw-hamburg.de
Tel. 040 428 75-7092

Department of Public Management

Prof. Dr. Jan Martin Hoffmann
janmartin.hoffmann@haw-hamburg.de
Tel. 040 428 75-7701

Department of Social Work

Prof. Dr. Daniela Ulber
daniela.ulber@haw-hamburg.de
Tel. 040 428 75-7114

Department of Business

Prof. Dr. Natalia Ribberink
natalia.ribberink@haw-hamburg.de
Tel. 040 428 75-6952

**For matters of recognition and crediting to
degree courses, please currently contact:**

Jan-Hendrik Schünemann
jan-hendrik.schuenemann@haw-hamburg.de
Tel. 040 428 75-6902

5. Best practice examples of valid recognition procedures

This section outlines examples of best practice.

5.1 BEST PRACTICE AT HAW HAMBURG

Example case: Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, Department of Business

Procedure prior to the student going abroad:

- Student applies for stay abroad via Mobility Online gateway; Student Exchange Coordinator manages application
- Student can download departmental 'recognition table' from EMIL. For ERASMUS+ mobilities, the table is completed in addition to the ERASMUS+ Learning Agreement.
- Use of the 'recognition table' is **not** mandatory; it is an aid to comparison of modules at HAW Hamburg and the prospective host institution and can assist students in obtaining irrevocable consent to recognition from their department before their stay (this is a matter for the student to arrange).
- Students can receive advice on their choice of courses and their 'recognition table' in person (in the relevant staff member's office hours) or by email prior to or during their stay abroad.
- The relevant Faculty Service Office can allow students and those responsible for recognition to access a database of courses and modules that have received recognition in the past after being completed at partner institutions. This makes the process of establishing eligibility for recognition simpler.
- Courses for which recognition is approved can also replace modules that would ordinarily be taken in later semesters at HAW Hamburg, subject to agreement with those responsible for recognition.
- Recognition shall proceed in accordance with the stipulations of the Lisbon Convention. Where a student has taken courses or modules at a host institution which, in comparison with the courses or modules they are intended to replace at HAW Hamburg, prove too insubstantial in workload or attained learning objective, or relate to too low

an educational level, recognition may be exceptionally granted if withholding recognition would cause the student unreasonable hardship.

- If a 'recognition table' has been completed prior to the student's period of study abroad, it is the usual case that recognition will be possible for all courses it contains.

Procedure after the student's return to Hamburg

- The relevant Faculty Service Office recognises and credits the student's attainments to their degree.
- The onus is on the student to submit the documents required for the process (Transcript of Records issued by the host institution, 'recognition table').
- Recognition will generally not be disputed where the student has submitted a 'recognition table', supplemented by the student's ERASMUS+ Learning Agreement as appropriate.
- Students can choose whether or not to seek recognition for all courses or modules they have completed, and can complete a form to indicate the modules or courses for which they are seeking recognition.
- The Department of Business provides information on recognition and the 'recognition table' on its website.
- If a student has not submitted a 'recognition table' or an ERASMUS+ Learning Agreement, the Examinations Committee shall check each module/course/attainment submitted for eligibility for recognition pursuant to the criteria set out in the Lisbon Convention. Students must apply for recognition via this procedure and demonstrate completion of the relevant attainments by submitting confirmation issued by the host institution or their Transcript of Records from the host institution.

5.2 BEST PRACTICES AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS

This subsection details some examples of processes, forms and databases around matters of recognition of attainments completed abroad, as used at other higher education institutions.

EXAMPLE 1:

List of creditable attainments ('Anrechnungsliste'), Kempten University of Applied Sciences

The International Office at Kempten University of Applied Sciences enters all modules/subjects whose content has been checked for eligibility for recognition into what are called 'Anrechnungslisten' (lists of creditable attainments; our translation, not Kempten's). You can find these lists in the Mobility Online gateway under the relevant host institution.

- Select the appropriate partner institution
- Click on the "i" symbol to the right (to show details of partner institution)
- A window will open showing details
- Under 'Documents' there are a number of downloadable documents including the 'Anrechnungsliste' (currently for Bachelor's degree courses only)
- Please note that if this section does not contain an 'Anrechnungsliste', this means that none is available as yet; in these cases, students will need to apply for recognition for their chosen courses in advance of their stay or complete a Learning Agreement.

Advance application for crediting of attainments (for non-Erasmus participants)

- Only subjects/modules should be entered here that are not included in an 'Anrechnungsliste'
- Those included in an 'Anrechnungsliste' do not require an application for recognition

Learning Agreement (for Erasmus participants)

- Students need to enter all subjects/courses/modules they intend to take during their period of study abroad
- This includes those in an 'Anrechnungsliste'; the student, however, does not need to add a course/module description for these

All courses/modules not in an 'Anrechnungsliste' should be supplemented with a course or module description in German or English; students may need to translate these themselves

Source: → www.service4mobility.com/europe/PortalServlet?identifier=KEMPTEN01&kz_bew_pers=S&kz_bew_art=OUT&sprache=de

EXAMPLE 2:

Recognition form, Faculty of Law, European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)

The use of a standard course recognition form (which is comparable to the 'recognition table' used by the Department of Business at HAW Hamburg and discussed above) can simplify and streamline processes.

Link (in German):

→ www.rewi.europa-uni.de/de/studium/formulare_antraege/mag_ba_ma_gpl/Anerkennung-Studienleistungen-DPJS.pdf

EXAMPLE 3:

centralised recognition procedure with a step-by-step guide and a gateway for downloading required documents, Leibniz University Hannover

Leibniz University Hannover organises its recognition procedures centrally, which makes it considerably easier for students to identify the correct points of contact, the steps they need to take, and the forms required. The procedure is the same across the university.

Link:

→ www.uni-hannover.de/en/studium/im-studium/international/outgoing/transfer-of-credits-earned-abroad/

EXAMPLE 4:

Grade conversion table for conversion using the Modified Bavarian Formula, Leibniz University Hannover

The use of a grade conversion table considerably simplifies and expedites the process of recognition where credits have been attained under non-comparable grading systems. It is important in this context to ensure that conversion proceeds on a fair and just basis by referring to past experience of realistic grading at international partner institutions. This means setting Nmax values which students actually achieve in practice⁸.

Link:

→ www.uni-hannover.de/fileadmin/luh/content/zentral/anererkennung/notenumrechnung.pdf

6. LINKS AND RESOURCES

If you wish to learn more about the matters discussed in this guide, you can access full texts of relevant official documents, information on current developments, aids to recognition and crediting processes, and other useful information by visiting the websites listed below.

Text of the Lisbon Recognition Convention:

In German:

→ https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/pdf/ZAB/Konventionen_und_Uebereinkommen_von_Europarat_UNESCO/Lissabonkonvention.pdf⁹

In English:

→ <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168007f2c7>

EGRACONS:

→ <http://egracons.eu>

EGRACONS is a platform providing support with the conversion of grades issued by institutions outside Germany, with an emphasis on the European region. It gives explanations of matters such as drawing up grade overviews and incorporating them into the EGRACONS tool, alongside information on topics of general relevance to grade conversion.

MODUS:

→ <https://www.hrk-modus.de>

The MODUS project, initiated by the German Rectors' Conference, runs seminars on matters around recognition and provides a broad, continually updated and expanding range of information on the topic, including best practice cases. The project aims to help promote the sharing of experience and expertise by creating networks among staff of higher education institutions in Germany whose roles and remits include recognition.

Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz, KMK):

→ <https://www.kmk.org/zab/zentralstelle-fuer-auslaendisches-bildungswesen/allgemeines-zur-erkennung-erkennung-im-hochschulbereich.html>

The KMK's website contains a wealth of information on the laws and regulations governing recognition of examinations and credits attained outside Germany and on the interpretation of those laws and regulations. It also provides access to its publications and resolutions on the topic, adding new ones periodically.

European Commission:

→ https://ec.europa.eu/info/education/skills-and-qualifications/recognition-your-qualifications_en

Alongside general information on recognition matters, the European Commission website contains pointers on recognition practices in a range of European countries and on recognition arrangements in the ERASMUS+ context.

7. SOURCES

- Statutes regarding the recognition of attainments and award of credits (*Anerkennungs- und Anrechnungssatzung*) of HAW Hamburg, issued 22 August 2019
- German Rectors' Conference ['nexus' project]: Project on recognition of credits and examinations attained outside Germany
- Hochschulrektorenkonferenz [MODUS project]:
→ <https://www.hrk-modus.de>
- Hamburg Higher Education Act (text in German):
→ <https://www.landesrecht-hamburg.de/bsha/document/jlr-HSchulGHArahmen>
(last accessed 4 September 2021)

APPENDIX:

8.1 THE MODIFIED BAVARIAN FORMULA

Use of the Modified Bavarian Formula pursuant to the relevant Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz)

(unofficial translation, for informational purposes only)

Agreement on Determining the Overall Grade for Foreign University Entrance Qualifications

(Resolution of the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, 15.03.1991 in the version issued on 18.11.2004)

1. Fundamental principle

- (1) When determining the overall final grade [of higher education entrance qualifications attained outside Germany], the responsible authority shall consider all proofs of educational attainment to be submitted by the student pursuant to the proposals for assessment issued by the Central Office for Foreign Education (*Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen, ZAB*)¹.
- (2) Where the student submits a proof of educational attainment which would admit the holder to higher education in the issuing state, but which the ZAB's proposals do not consider to provide for direct access to higher education in the federal states of the Federal Republic of Germany, the assessment of the attainment shall additionally consider the required proofs of the individual credits attained.

2. Elements of grading and assessment to be taken into account in the process of determining the overall final grade

- (1) If the proof of educational attainment completed outside Germany carries an overall grade, this shall serve as the basis for the assessment or conversion of its value.
- (2) Where the proof of educational attainment deemed to be required pursuant to the proposals for assessment issued by the ZAB contains only individual grades [without an overall/total grade], the overall grade shall be calculated as the arithmetic mean of these individual grades, taking account of any weighting.

Grades issued for subjects relating to military education or training shall not be included in the assessment. If the proof of educational attainment contains grades issued for practical or vocational subjects, their arithmetic mean (average) shall be calculated and included in the assessment.

¹ Refer to the www.anabin.de database, 'Hochschulzugang'.

3. Use of the lowest possible passing grade

Proofs of educational attainment attained outside Germany for whose validity only indirect evidence is available shall be regarded as carrying the lowest possible passing grade and included in the calculation of the overall grade on this basis.

4. Multiple overall grades

- (1) Where multiple overall grades are valid for inclusion in the determination of the overall grade, their arithmetic mean shall be calculated, weighting each equally, to give one overall grade, which shall subsequently be converted to the German grading system.
- (2) Where these multiple overall grades are based on different grading systems, they shall, in the first instance, be converted in accordance with the provisions of subsection 3 below.
- (3) The conversion process shall use the 'Modified Bavarian Formula' (see Appendix).
- (4) The grade thus determined shall be to one decimal place, unrounded.

5. Calculating the overall grade

Where the student's desired access to higher education requires them to have passed a *Feststellungsprüfung* or an examination for those entitled to access to higher education pursuant to the Federal Expellees Act (*Bundesvertriebenengesetz*), the overall grade shall be the arithmetic mean of the grade [(or grades)] of the proofs of educational attainment completed outside Germany [as submitted by the student] and the examination/*Feststellungsprüfung* as set out above.

6. Date of attainment of higher education entrance qualification

- (1) Where the student's desired access to higher education requires them to have passed a *Feststellungsprüfung* or an examination for those entitled to access to higher education pursuant to the Federal Expellees Act (*Bundesvertriebenengesetz*), the date on which they were confirmed to have passed this examination shall be deemed the date of their attainment of their higher education entrance qualification.
- (2) In all other cases, the date of attainment of a student's higher education entrance qualification shall be deemed to be the date of the proof of educational attainment to be submitted pursuant to section 1 above.

7. Repeal of resolutions of the Kultusministerkonferenz

The Resolutions of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) of 12 August 1977 (*Vereinbarung über die Berechnung der Gesamt- bzw. Durchschnittsnoten ausländischer Hochschulzugangsberechtigungen deutscher Staatsbürger zur Aufnahme eines Studiums an einer deutschen Hochschule*), of 19 May 1978 (*Vereinbarung über die Berechnung der Gesamt- bzw. Durchschnittsnoten ausländischer Hochschulzugangsberechtigungen ausländischer Studienbewerber*), and of 9 September 1985 (*Vereinbarung über die Berechnung der Gesamt- bzw. Durchschnittsnote der Hochschulzugangsberechtigung deutscher Aussiedler*) are hereby repealed.

The Modified Bavarian Formula

$$x = 1 + 3 \frac{N_{\max} - N_d}{N_{\max} - N_{\min}}$$

mit

- x = gesuchte Note
- N_{\max} = oberer Eckwert gem. BV der ZAB
- N_{\min} = unterer Eckwert gem. BV der ZAB
- N_d = ausländische Durchschnittsnote

x = grade to be calculated

N_{\max} = upper reference value pursuant to the proposals for assessment issued by the ZAB

N_{\min} = lower reference value pursuant to the proposals for assessment issued by the ZAB

N_d = average (mean) grade [of the educational attainment completed outside Germany]

Source: KMK

→ https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/pdf/ZAB/Hochschulzugang_Beschluesse_der_KMK/GesNot04.pdf

8.2 STATUTES REGARDING THE RECOGNITION OF ATTAINMENTS AND AWARD OF CREDITS (*ANERKENNUNGS- UND ANRECHNUNGSSATZUNG*) OF HAW HAMBURG, ISSUED 22 AUGUST 2019

Statutes regarding the recognition of attainments and award of credits (*Anerkennungs- und Anrechnungssatzung*) at Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg (HAW Hamburg; Hamburg University of Applied Sciences)

This is an English translation of the original German text of these Statutes. It is provided for informational purposes only and has no force independent of the original German text. The original German version as issued on the above date shall be authoritative and definitive in all cases of dispute. In the interest of non-discriminatory use of language, this English translation uses alternating feminine and masculine pronouns, or plural forms where possible.

On 22 August 2019, acting pursuant to Section 108 subsection 1 sentence 3 of the Hamburg Higher Education Act (HmbHG) issued on 18 July 2001 (HmbGVBl. p. 171), last amended 29 May 2018 (HmbGVBl. p. 200), the Executive Board of HAW Hamburg confirmed the following [German] text of the *Satzung zur Anerkennung und Anrechnung von Leistungen – Anerkennungs- und Anrechnungssatzung - an der Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg* (Hamburg University of Applied Sciences), adopted by the University Senate of HAW Hamburg on 23 May 2019 in accordance with Section 40 subsection 5 alongside Section 85 subsection 1 no. 7 HmbHG:

1. Recognition of *Studien-* and *Prüfungsleistungen* and periods of study and practical experience attained/completed at a higher education institution

- (1) HAW Hamburg shall recognise *Studien-* and *Prüfungsleistungen* and periods of study and practical experience attained/completed at a higher education institution where there are no substantial differences between the knowledge and skills acquired through the attainment submitted for recognition and those acquired through the attainment the student would need to complete for their current degree course if recognition were withheld.
- (2) Decisions on the recognition of *Studien-* and *Prüfungsleistungen* and periods of study and practical experience attained/completed outside the Federal Republic of Germany shall have regard to the recommendations issued by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the German Länder (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) and the German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*), particularly any equivalency agreements entered into by these bodies, and to any agreements in place in the context of partnerships between HAW Hamburg and other higher education institutions
- (3) The relevant Examinations Committee shall be responsible for taking decisions on recognition. Recognition shall take place either upon application by the student or ex officio. The Appendix to these Statutes lists, for each degree course run by HAW Hamburg, whether recognition is upon application or ex officio.

Where, and to the extent that, amendments to these Statutes prove necessary, the University Senate shall enact these amendments once each semester; it shall have done so, at the latest, by the commencement of the degree course application period for the semester in question. Students of HAW Hamburg changing to another degree course within HAW Hamburg and students changing from a degree course elsewhere to one at HAW Hamburg shall receive equal treatment with regard to recognition of attainments.

- (4) It is the responsibility of students seeking recognition for their attainments to submit all the documentation required for the process.
- (5) Once a student has registered for the first time with legally binding effect for the completion of a *Studien-* or *Prüfungsleistung* or a period of study or practical experience, an attainment completed in a different degree course or at a different institution shall not be recognised for the same *Studien-* or *Prüfungsleistung* or period of study or practical experience. If recognition is withheld, the authority responsible for recognition matters shall write to the student notifying her of this, giving the reasons for withholding recognition, informing her of her right to appeal the decision, and setting out the appeal process.
- (6) Insofar as the grading systems used for the recognised attainment are comparable to those used in the relevant degree course at HAW Hamburg, grades attained in recognised *Prüfungsleistungen* shall be adopted as they are and counted towards the student's overall final grade. Where grading systems are not comparable, the student shall be awarded a 'pass', that is, 'successfully completed' (*bestanden*), and the overall final grade shall be calculated without taking the grade awarded for the recognised attainment into account. The student's Certificate of Examinations shall record recognised attainments (*Prüfungs-* and *Studienleistungen*) as such.
- (7) HAW Hamburg, its faculties and departments may issue detailed provisions on procedures for the recognition of *Studien-* and *Prüfungsleistungen* and periods of study or practical experience attained/completed at a higher education institution in general or course- or subject-specific Course and Examination Regulations or guidelines.

2. Award of credits for attainments completed outside a higher education institution

- (1) Knowledge and skills attained through other means than a degree course, that are equivalent to those attained through a degree course and are required for the successful completion of a degree course, shall be credited to [that] degree course to a maximum total of half of the Studien- and Prüfungsleistungen the student must complete [in order to successfully complete that degree course]. Section 1 subsections 2 to 7 shall apply accordingly.
- (2) HAW Hamburg, its faculties and departments may issue detailed provisions on procedures for crediting attainments completed outside a higher education institution in general or course- or subject-specific Course and Examination Regulations.

3. Effective date; supersession of previously effective provisions

- (1) These Statutes shall come into effect on the date of their publication in the HAW Hamburg official gazette (Hochschulanzeiger).
- (2) Where general or course- or subject-specific Course and Examination Regulations of HAW Hamburg that came into effect prior to the effective date of these Statutes contain provisions relating to the recognition of, or award of credits for, Studien- and Prüfungsleistungen or periods of study or of practical experience that diverge from the provisions of these Statutes, the provisions of these Statutes shall supersede those provisions. This means that such provisions of general or course- or subject-specific Course and Examination Regulations of HAW Hamburg that came into effect prior to the effective date of these Statutes shall not apply.

Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg
Hamburg, 22 August 2019

FACULTY OF DESIGN, MEDIA AND INFORMATION (DMI)

DEGREE COURSE	RECOGNITION OF ATTAINMENTS UPON APPLICATION	RECOGNITION OF ATTAIN- MENTS ON EX OFFICIO BASIS
Clothing Technology and Management- (B.Eng.)	X	
Illustration (B.A.)	X	
Communication Design (B.A.)	X	
Fashion, Costume and Textile Product Design (B.A.)	X	
Illustration (M.A.)	X	
Communication Design (M.A.)	X	
Fashion, Costume and Textile Product Design (M.A.)	X	
Multichannel Trade Management in Textile Business (M.A.)	X	
Library and Information Management (B.A.)	X	
Media and Information (B.A.)	X	
Digital Communication (M.A.)	X	
Information, Media and Library Management (M.A.)	X	
Visual Journalism (M.A.)	X	
Media Systems (B.Sc.)	X	
Media Technology (B.Sc.)	X	
Digital Reality (M.Sc.)	X	
Sound – Vision – Games (M.A.)	X	

FACULTY OF LIFE SCIENCES (LS)

DEGREE COURSE	RECOGNITION OF ATTAINMENTS UPON APPLICATION	RECOGNITION OF ATTAIN- MENTS ON EX OFFICIO BASIS
Biotechnology (B.Sc.)		X
Pharmaceutical Biotechnology (M.Sc.)		X
Health Sciences (B.Sc.)		X
Health Sciences (M.Sc.)		X
Public Health (MPH)		X

Hazard Control (B.Eng.)		X
Biomedical Engineering (B.Sc.)		X
Rescue Engineering (B.Eng.)		X
Biomedical Engineering: Signal Processing, Imaging and Control-Systems (M.Sc.)		X
Medical Technology and Healthcare Business (EMMAH) (M.Sc.)		X
Nutrition and Home Economics (B.Sc.)	X	
Food Science (M.Sc.)	X	
Environmental Engineering (B.Sc.)		X
Renewable Energy Systems - Environmental and Process Engineering (M.Eng.)		X
Renewable Energy Systems - Environmental and Process Engineering (M.Sc.)		X
Process Engineering (B.Sc.)		X
Process Engineering (M.Sc.)		X
Industrial Engineering (B.Sc.)	X	
Industrial Engineering (M.Sc.)	X	

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE (TI)

DEGREE COURSE	RECOGNITION OF ATTAINMENTS UPON APPLICATION	RECOGNITION OF ATTAINMENTS ON EX OFFICIO BASIS
Automotive Engineering (B.Eng.)		X
Aeronautical Engineering (B.Eng.)		X
Mechatronics (B.Sc.)		X
Automotive Engineering (M.Sc.)		X
Aeronautical Engineering (M.Sc.)		X
Applied Computer Science (B.Sc.)		X
European Computer Science (B.Sc.)		X
Computer Science for Technical Systems (B.Sc.)		X
Business Information Systems (B.Sc.)		X
Computer Science (M.Sc.)		X
Electrical Engineering – Automation Technology (B.Sc.)	X	
Electrical Engineering and Information Technology (B.Sc.)		X

Information Engineering (B.Sc.)		X
Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Management (B.Sc.)		X
Automation Technology (M.Sc.)		
Information and Communication Technology (M.Sc.)		X
Microelectronic Systems (M. Sc.)	X	
Mechanical Engineering – Energy and Plant Systems (B.Sc.)		X
Mechanical Engineering – Development and Design (B.Sc.)		X
Mechanical Engineering and Production (B.Sc.)		X
Mechanical Engineering and Production (cooperative degree programme) (B.Sc.)		X
Mechanical Engineering - Manufacturing Technology (B.Sc.)	X	
Production Technology and Management (B.Sc.)		X
Computational Methods in Mechanical Engineering (M.Sc.)		X
Design Technology and Product Development in Mechanical Engineering (M.Sc.)		X
Sustainable Energy Systems (M.Sc.)		X
Production Technology and Management (M.Sc.)		X

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (W&S)

DEGREE COURSE	RECOGNITION OF ATTAINMENTS UPON APPLICATION	RECOGNITION OF ATTAINMENTS ON EX OFFICIO BASIS
Nursing (cooperative degree programme) (B.Sc.)	X	
Interdisciplinary Healthcare and Management (B.Sc.)	X	
Nursing (consecutive) (M.Sc.)	X	
Nursing (continuing education degree programme) (M.Sc.)	X	
Social and Health Management (MBA)	X	
Public Management (cooperative degree programme) (B.A.)	X	
Public Management (M.A.)		
Education and Learning in Childhood (B.A.)	X	
Social Work (B.A.)	X	
Applied Family Sciences (M.A.)	X	
Social Work (M.A.)	X	
Foreign Trade/International Management (B.Sc.)	X	
International Business and Foreign Trade (B.Sc.)	X	
Logistics/Business Studies (B.Sc.)	X	
Marketing/Business Studies (B.Sc.)	X	
International Business (M.Sc.)	X	
International Logistics and Management (M.Sc.)	X	
Marketing and Sales (M.Sc.)	X	
Multichannel Trade Management in Textile Business (M.A.)	X	