

# Berufsakademien: Neither here nor there?

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The title of an article in the *Deutsche Universitätszeitung* in 1996 ("Weder Fisch noch Fleisch")<sup>[1]</sup> would lead one to believe that Berufsakademien (BAs) are hybrid institutions, belonging neither to the business nor to the higher educational sector.

In a way this is true, and their dual structure does entail strengths as well as weaknesses.

These "university-level academies of professional education" (to quote from a sponsored section of the *International Herald Tribune*) were formally established in 1974 in the German state of Baden-Württemberg as a complement to the existing institutions of higher education: universities, teacher-training institutions (Pädagogische Hochschulen) and polytechnics (Fachhochschulen).

Their aim was to "integrate training facilities of the employment sector and activities of state higher educational institutions in a joint effort at cooperative education of the highest standards"<sup>[2]</sup>.

The BAs remained a Baden-Württemberg peculiarity for nearly two decades, and therefore their graduates often ran into problems of recognition in the other federal states.

Meanwhile BAs, modeled after the Baden-Württemberg institutions, exist in Berlin and Saxony as well, and will be established in Thüringen as of the coming academic year.

In September 1995, the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of the German states (Kultusministerkonferenz, or KMK for short) finally agreed that the "final qualifications awarded by Berufsakademien ... are final

qualifications at the tertiary level." Therefore, they are considered to be equivalent to Fachhochschule degrees if a number of prerequisites are met:

- The entrance requirements are to be identical to those of the other higher educational institutions. Therefore, the general Abitur is the entrance ticket for the BAs and it is interesting to note that Fachhochschulreife (the admissions requirement for the Fachhochschulen) is not sufficient for BAs.

- A minimum of 40 percent of the total teaching duties have to be fulfilled by full-time professors of the BA.

- Individual BAs must offer at least two different degree programs with a number of special subjects.

- A final thesis has to be completed within a period of three months. It is to be evaluated by an examiner from one of the state Studienakademien (for instance, the academic components of the BAs) who must be a professor.

- Quality assessment and teaching standards are to be controlled by the Studienakademie.

Germany has always taken pride in what has been called its "dual system" — the combination of academic and practical training in secondary and higher education.

In higher education, the Fachhochschulen introduced a cooperative model by making internships a mandatory part of their curriculum.

The BAs went one step further: periods of course work alternate about every 10-14 weeks with on-the-job training throughout the curriculum.

Students at BAs have about 30-34 contact hours per week during their academic semesters, for a total of 2,100 (business administration and social work) to 2,400 (engineering) contact hours — a figure which is roughly equivalent

to the course load at Fachhochschulen.

Some BAs have had even higher course loads (up to 3,000 in engineering). But it seems that, for economic reasons, they will eventually have to settle for loads which are 5 to 15 percent lower than at Fachhochschulen.

A Berufsakademie, then, is a joint venture of the state higher educational system and private business.

Several of Baden-Württemberg's globally-oriented companies originally joined forces with the state administration, represented by the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts to create this new type of institution in 1972.

Dissatisfaction with the existing higher educational institutions certainly played a role in launching this initiative. As elsewhere in the world, industry had long complained about the lack of practical training at traditional universities.

In Germany, the establishment of Fachhochschulen after the 1960s (Baden-Württemberg has more than 20 of them) resulted from that discontent.

Meanwhile there are now eight BAs in Baden-Württemberg (including two with branch campuses) enrolling about 13,000 students who are educated and trained in cooperation with nearly 4,000 companies.

What does the Berufsakademie have that a Fachhochschule doesn't?

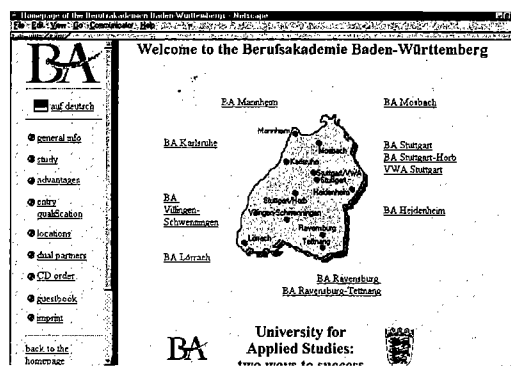
Above all, the difference is characterized by a very direct influence of the companies involved.

On the state level, subject commissions (Fachkommissionen) were created that set the curriculum for the different subject areas in business administration, engineering and social work.

One-half the members of these commissions are representatives of

Some of the BAs have never actually attained the enrollment figures for which they were

While the Fachhochschulen aspire to be “Universities of Applied Science,” some of the BAs would like to be called “Universities for Applied Studies.”



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[3] It may be somewhat confusing for the outsider that, in Baden-Württemberg, the term *Berufsakademie* is used both for the whole network of state BAs (the *Berufsakademie Baden-Württemberg*) as well as for individual institutions — the *Berufsakademie Mosbach*. It bears repeating: All BAs have an academic part, the *Studienakademie* and a training company for each student. The building(s), however, will invariably be called *Berufsakademie* (not *Studienakademie*).

➤ See the back page for a directory of Berufsakademien.

# A Directory of Berufsakademien

Also see the BA home page on the World Wide Web:  
<http://www.ba-bw.de>.

## **Berufsakademie Heidenheim Wilhelmstraße**

10 89518 Heidenheim  
 Telephone: 011-49-7321-38-19-41 Fax: 011-49-7321-38-19-47  
 World Wide Web: <http://www.ba-heidenheim.de/>  
 Electronic Mail: [ott@ba-heidenheim.de](mailto:ott@ba-heidenheim.de)

## **Berufsakademie Karlsruhe Erzbergerstraße**

121 76133 Karlsruhe  
 Telephone: 011-49-721-9-73-55 Fax: 011-49-721-9-73-56-00  
 World Wide Web: <http://www.ba-karlsruhe.de/>  
 Electronic Mail: [ihle@ba-karlsruhe.de](mailto:ihle@ba-karlsruhe.de)

## **Berufsakademie Lörrach Hangstraße**

48 79539 Lörrach  
 Telephone: 011-49-7621-2071-0 Fax: 011-49-7621-2071-119  
 World Wide Web: <http://www.ba-loerrach.de/>  
 Electronic Mail: [info@ba-loerrach.de](mailto:info@ba-loerrach.de)

## **Berufsakademie Mannheim Coblitzweg**

7 68163 Mannheim  
 Telephone: 011-49-621-41-05-0 Fax: 011-49-621-41-05-101  
 World Wide Web: <http://www.ba-mannheim.de/>  
 Electronic mail: [info@ba-mannheim.de](mailto:info@ba-mannheim.de)

## **Berufsakademie Mosbach Lohrtalweg**

10 74821 Mosbach  
 Telephone: 011-49-6261-8-71-00  
 Fax: 011-49-6261-8-75-04  
 World Wide Web: <http://www.ba-mosbach.de/>  
 Electronic Mail: [info@ba-mosbach.de](mailto:info@ba-mosbach.de)

## **Berufsakademie Ravensburg Außenstelle Tettnang**

**Hofkammerstraße**  
 40 88069 Tettnang  
 Telephone: 011-49-7542-5-28-11  
 Fax: 011-49-7542-5-35-89

## **Berufsakademie Ravensburg Marienplatz**

2 88212 Ravensburg  
 Telephone: 011-49-751-8-06-27-00  
 Fax: 011-49-751-1-76-95  
 World Wide Web: <http://www.ba-ravensburg.de/>  
 Electronic Mail: [info@ba-ravensburg.de](mailto:info@ba-ravensburg.de)

## **Berufsakademie Stuttgart Außenstelle Horb Florianstraße**

5 72160 Horb a. N.  
 Telephone: 011-49-7451-5-21-0  
 Fax: 011-49-7451-5-21-111  
 World Wide Web: <http://www.ast-horb.ba-stuttgart.de/>  
 Electronic Mail: [info@ast-horb.ba-stuttgart.de](mailto:info@ast-horb.ba-stuttgart.de)

## **Berufsakademie Stuttgart Jägerstraße**

56 70174 Stuttgart  
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 World Wide Web: <http://www.ba-stuttgart.de/>  
 Electronic Mail: [info@ba-stuttgart.de](mailto:info@ba-stuttgart.de)

## **Berufsakademie Villingen-Schwenningen Erzbergerstraße**

17 78054 Villingen-Schwenningen  
 Telephone: 011-49-7720-3-90-60  
 Fax: 011-49-7720-39-06-21  
 World Wide Web: <http://www.ba-vs.de/>  
 Electronic Mail: [info@ba-vs.de](mailto:info@ba-vs.de)

## **Studienakademie der Württ. Verwaltungs- und Wirtschafts-Akademie (VWA Stuttgart) Neckarstraße**

88 70190 Stuttgart  
 Telephone: 011-49-711-2-10-41-45  
 Fax: 011-49-711-2-10-41-60  
 World Wide Web: <http://www.vwa.ba-stuttgart.de/>  
 Electronic Mail: [info@vwa.ba-stuttgart.de](mailto:info@vwa.ba-stuttgart.de)

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