



Supplement federal/state programme funding for studies with 3% to 5% component for social infrastructure

Joint statement by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) and the German National Association for Student Affairs (DSW)

drawn up by the working group of university chancellors and managing directors of the student services organisations

In their considerations for the further development of tertiary education in Germany, universities and higher education policy-makers are increasingly emphasising quality aspects of studies. These specifically include higher graduation rates, an increasing proportion of those who complete their studies within the standard course duration plus two semesters, greater openness of universities towards applicants with "non-traditional" educational backgrounds, further openness towards students in special circumstances or with disabilities, greater accessibility to vocational education and training and, finally, continuing to attract international students. Due to the incorporation of the aforementioned goals in the systematic evaluation of universities' success and their increasing use as the basis for the allocation of funding to universities, for example, in the Future Contract for Strengthening Studying and Teaching in Higher Education and/or the allocation of funds to universities based on performance, this form of steering the higher education system is becoming considerably more important.

However, it is not only the quality of the study programmes offered by the university and the ability and motivation of the students that are key to high-quality studies, the secure social and economic footing of students during their studies is also crucial. Against this background, the cooperation between universities and student services organisations, i.e. the institutions which are responsible for the economic and social support of students and for shaping the university environment in accordance with the student services and higher education laws of the federal states, deserves special attention. The social infrastructure surrounding studies is crucial for student success, which is why universities are not to be regarded in isolation from student services organisations. As a distinguishing characteristic of the Higher Education Area, student services organisations offer a broad and networked range of services including catering to housing, student finance, advice and support, childcare, international affairs and culture for students and the employees of the universities, and thus make a significant contribution to the attractiveness and quality of universities. In order to make studying a success, there needs to be a sufficient supply of reasonably priced accommodation and university catering facilities, as well as psychological and social counselling services.

While university capacities have been expanded since 2007 within the framework of the joint Higher Education Pacts of the federal government and states and they will continue to be supported on a regular basis from 2023 onwards within the framework of the Future Contract for Strengthening Studying and Teaching in Higher Education, the situation is regrettably different

when it comes to the student accommodation and catering facilities of student services organisations as well as counselling services. The 49 percent increase in student numbers since 2007 contrasts with the increase in accommodation of only 8 percent and the increase in seats at tables in catering facilities of only 14 percent. This growth in social infrastructure, which is significantly lower than the growth in study capacities, has so far not been financed from federal and state programme funding but rather exclusively from respective state subsidies.

In order to provide a social infrastructure at universities that can accommodate the increase in student numbers, we firmly believe that, according to calculations by the German National Association for Student Affairs, around €3.5 billion will be required over the next five years for investments in the expansion and maintenance of existing facilities, of which €1.9 billion will be required for student housing and €1.6 billion for university catering.

In order to provide the social infrastructure with sustainable funding, we propose that the programme funding for studies from the federal government and states be supplemented by a component for the social infrastructure of three to five percent per year.

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