

**20 November 2013**

**HRK Recommends Standards for Academic Franchising**

The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) has approved guidelines for the franchising of university courses. One speaks of franchising in the university environment when university programmes of study are delivered by partner organisations, but the academic qualification is conferred by the university. This practice has drawn increased criticism recently, with suspicions of insufficient quality assurance.

The HRK General Meeting stressed in its resolution that by franchising courses, universities can strengthen their profile and reach new groups of students. However, because they confer the academic qualifications, they bear great responsibility for the courses and the students attending them.

"The responsibility for maintaining academic standards remains at all times with the university. Franchised courses must fulfil the same quality standards as the other teaching offered by the university," said HRK President Professor Horst Hippler today in Berlin.

This responsibility starts, he continued, with the choice of franchise partners and encompasses numerous contractual arrangements concerning organisation of study, examinations and the choice and qualifications of teaching staff. Furthermore, the students must be able to turn to appropriate help if they have problems or complaints. It is also important that the university conferring the academic qualification reveals the partnerships and is open about the scope of the teaching and its success and regularly provides accessible reports on quality assurance.

The Standing Conference of Education Ministers and the Accreditation Council are also called upon to unify the framework conditions and accreditation standards that have not yet been legally clarified.

**Text of the recommendation**