

14 May 2019**Sharp increase in doctoral degrees awarded to graduates of universities of applied sciences****Findings of HRK survey of universities**

The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) published the findings of its survey of all German universities at its General Assembly in Rostock today. It enquired about doctoral degrees awarded to graduates of universities of applied sciences and those completed through cooperative doctoral training for the academic years 2015 to 2017 respectively.

It was revealed that the number of doctoral degrees successfully completed by graduates of universities of applied sciences has risen steadily since the 1990s. Universities reported 1,575 completed doctoral degrees for the years 2015 to 2017, which equals an increase of more than 26 per cent compared to the years 2012 to 2014. The actual number could be even higher, considering that only 78 per cent of all universities contacted replied. Most doctoral degrees awarded to graduates of universities of applied sciences were completed in the engineering sciences.

92 per cent of universities claimed that they have now set out provisions in the relevant university regulations to ensure that graduates of universities of applied sciences can access doctoral training.

There was also a marked increase in doctoral degrees completed through cooperative doctoral training: there were 551 between 2015 and 2017, and this increased by around 47 per cent compared to the previous survey period. These processes involve professors of universities of applied sciences acting as supervisors, reviewers and/or examiners.

89 per cent of university heads who took part believed it was possible to involve professors from universities of applied sciences in the doctoral examination procedure in this way. Only around 57 per cent of the surveyed faculties and departments answered this in the affirmative.

"The overall trend is very positive. However, the HRK survey reveals that there is clearly a strong discrepancy between the desire expressed by university heads and the reality in the faculties and departments. It clearly requires more in-depth analyses of causes and a lot of persuasive effort," said HRK President Professor Dr Alt.

The survey is part of the monitoring included in the HRK recommendation of 2015 on managing cooperative doctoral degree programmes. This is the second time that the HRK has taken a close look at the number of cooperative doctoral degree programmes. However, the

HRK has been examining trends in doctoral degrees awarded to graduates of universities of applied sciences since 1997.

The survey covered 150 universities authorised to confer doctoral degrees, including 40 Colleges of Art and Music. Questionnaires were sent to university leadership teams and faculties/departments. The response rate among public universities and institutions of equivalent status was 84 per cent.

The publication “Promotionen von Absolventinnen und Absolventen von Fachhochschulen und Hochschulen für Angewandte Wissenschaften und Promotionen in kooperativen Promotionsverfahren” (Doctoral degrees awarded to graduates of universities of applied sciences and doctoral degrees through cooperative doctoral training processes) can be viewed on the HRK website or ordered from the HRK Head Office (bestellung@hrk.de) in print.