

## Press release

**14 December 2020**

### **Teacher education well on the way to “embracing diversity”**

Students and trainee teachers as well as qualified educators need to be better prepared for the diversity of the students they teach. It was with this aim in mind that the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) adopted the joint recommendation “Educating teachers to embrace diversity” in 2015. At a joint virtual meeting of the two Executive Boards, they have made an interim assessment of progress and are now to publish a joint report.

The recommendation describes how students and trainee teachers can be prepared for “embracing diversity” during their theoretical and school-based education and how experienced teachers can engage in relevant professional development. Teachers should create schools in which diversity is recognised and valued as a normal state of affairs and as a strength. This means developing the competences to recognise students' different starting points and particular aptitudes as well as disadvantages or limitations and to respond with the appropriate pedagogical measures.

The envisaged time-frame for the implementation of the recommendation is ten years. After five years, the Executive Boards of the KMK and HRK are satisfied with the progress made so far.

“We can see that the universities have already made very good progress in implementing the recommendations,” said HRK President Professor Dr Peter-André Alt. “Inclusion isn't just covered in educational science classes, as a matter of course it has become part of programmes in academic disciplines and didactics. Students can familiarise themselves with all aspects of the topic during their studies at university and reflect on it during the practical phases.”

KMK President Dr Stefanie Hubig, the education minister for the state of Rhineland-Palatinate, was pleased: “Diverse learning groups are the norm in our schools. They form the starting point for the school-based teacher education phase and also in ongoing professional development. So I'm all the more delighted that the development of transferable general and special-needs teaching competences is now viewed as an integral part of school-based teacher education in all federal states and that trainee teachers learn to value inclusion and develop a professional attitude towards it.”

The Executive Boards also positively assessed the cooperation between universities and state teacher education institutions. They noted that the productive combination of practical and theoretical expertise is an important component with which to sustainably embed inclusion in teacher education. Both Executive Boards are very optimistic that after another five years, progress in universities and teacher education institutions will more than surpass the recommendations.

Joint recommendation of the HRK and KMK: “Educating teachers to embrace diversity” (available in German and English)