

5 February 2015**Universities: Handling university admissions responsibly**

"Universities have been criticised in the current debate about the dialogue-oriented service procedure (DoSV) and places on degree programmes which have not been taken. However they are acting responsibly regarding university admissions." This was the statement provided today by the Vice President for Teaching and Learning of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Prof. Dr. Holger Burckhart, regarding reports on unallocated places on degree programmes with admission restrictions.

Holger Burckhart:

"For years now we have been working in association with the universities towards an admission procedure which makes it easier to quickly fill as many available places on degree programmes as possible. The dialogue-oriented service procedure (DoSV) looks like a promising way to achieve this. However, on the way towards this goal, there have been and still are some significant obstacles. In the transition period, the universities regard themselves as being responsible for university admissions remaining compliant at all times but with a justifiable amount of effort.

In the meantime, the process is making good progress and the university participation rate is increasing accordingly. The first run through the process for the winter semester 2012/2013 took place with 17 universities; in the last winter semester, 62 of currently 170 universities entitled to participate entered into the dialogue-oriented service procedure with at least one degree programme. I am optimistic that this process will now gather momentum. This is because the development of IT solutions to connect the universities is now well advanced. Until that happened, we had to struggle with significant technical difficulties due to the wide range of systems used in universities.

We would like to find a solution in the interests of the applicants. Like the universities, they also need the admission procedure to be legally incontestable. For this purpose, the process needs to run smoothly without any technical problems. So it would not make sense to make it mandatory for the universities to participate.

The agreement concluded by Federal States also acts at a stumbling block for participation. In this agreement, it states that the universities are responsible for bearing the costs of the process. It is imperative that this is corrected in the review of the agreement which is currently due. With the university admissions, the universities are performing a government duty which the Federal States have to finance.

Incidentally, even if the dialogue-oriented service procedure is introduced across the board, it will never be possible to reach full allocation of all degree programmes with admission restrictions. There will always be certain locations and certain subjects which have unused places on their degree programmes. Other things come into play, such as the attractiveness of a region, a city, a university, a study programme. The interests of applicants also change. In this respect, recent reports on unused places on degree programmes are an unnecessary dramatisation of the current situation.

During the development phase of the dialogue-oriented service procedure, the German Rectors' Conference is supporting maximum possible utilisation of capacities with their university clearing system. Places on degree programmes which have not been taken will be published there by the universities from 1 March and 1 September onwards each year respectively. The university clearing system will post information about places on courses with local admission restrictions and also on programmes with free access."