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HRK Guidelines for Franchising in Medical Degree Programmes

At its 18th General Meeting in Kaiserslautern, the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) has approved guidelines for franchising models in medicine and medical schools. 'Academic franchising' is the term used to describe models in medical studies where foreign universities cooperate with hospitals in Germany.

The HRK is now appealing primarily to the federal state governments to ensure compliance with quality standards. Academic franchising also gives the federal states corresponding supervisory rights, which they would not have with a branch of a foreign university. For example, they could define organisational and qualitative standards.

The success of academic franchising in Germany is due to the continued high demand for medical school places: the number of applications regularly exceeds the available places by four to one. Even the Higher Education Pact has not resulted in the creation of more places to study medicine.

"In this situation, private and cooperative models can usefully complement conventional medical studies," said HRK President Prof. Dr. Horst Hippler in Bonn today. However, all models must be subject to uniform quality standards, he added.

Since the implementation of the EU directive on the recognition of professional qualifications, medical qualifications from other EU states have been automatically recognised in Germany. However, European regulations also require medical training to be obtained through academic study at a university. "The new franchising models do not allow us to adequately discern the academic content of a degree," said Hippler. "In many cases, the teaching staff lack the necessary academic qualifications."

Text of the resolution