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**Author**

BRÄNDLE, Tobias (LENGFELD, Holger)

**Title**

Drifting apart or converging? : grades among non-traditional and traditional students over the course of their studies: a case study from Germany / Tobias Brändle ; Holger Lengfeld

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**Abstract**

Since 2009, German universities were opened by law to freshmen who do not possess the traditional graduation certificate required for entry into University, but who are rather vocationally qualified. In this article, we track the grades of these so-called non-traditional students and compare them to those of traditional students using a longitudinal design. Based on assumptions about differences in competencies, family background and the cultural closeness of academia, we derive hypotheses on differences concerning the progression of students' grades. These hypotheses have been tested using examination data from an undergraduate degree program at one German university. Analyzing a sample of 723 students, we show that over the course of their studies, non-traditional students perform worse than their fellow students who have general university entrance qualifications. Moreover, there is no trend toward convergence between the students' performances. Additionally, repeated measures ANOVAs reveal the influence of socio-demographic characteristics and study practice on progression of students' grades. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Lengfeld, Holger, E-Mail:

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holger.lengfeld@uni-leipzig.de