Areas of responsibility

The PhD regulations of the MLU state that if graduates who wish to pursue a doctoral degree have obtained their qualifications abroad, then these qualifications must be subjected to an equivalence assessment as part of the application process for acceptance as a doctoral candidate. According to the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK), it is universities which are responsible for recognising the qualifications of applicants for places on undergraduate or postgraduate courses, as well as for recognising academic achievements and examination results. As far as doctorates are concerned, the International Office is responsible for verifying and certifying equivalence in all circumstances with the exception of recruitment.

As a matter of principle, the International Office assesses only whether the applicant meets the relevant formal requirements for postgraduate studies at the MLU. Only the Faculties can decide whether the qualifications obtained abroad are also of material equivalence, e.g. by studying the applicant’s Master’s dissertation. The International Office shall make its assessment once a suitably qualified academic has signed a letter of confirmation agreeing to supervise the prospective doctoral candidate. In the absence of this signed letter, such an assessment shall be made only in exceptional circumstances.

Basis for the assessment

An assessment is made based on the information to which the authorities have access, and which is kept in its Anabin database (http://anabin.kmk.org/) by the Central Office for Foreign Education (ZAB).

If the information contained in the Anabin database is inadequate or is lacking in clarity, the staff at the International Office address a verbal or written enquiry to the ZAB. The information provided by the ZAB is merely a recommendation. It is the responsibility of the relevant doctoral commission of the respective Faculty to decide whether the applicant is to be allowed to pursue postgraduate studies. The MLU generally follows the recommendations of the ZAB.

What does the assessment consist of?

First, it is established whether the institution awarding the qualification is widely recognised as a university (accredited, attested, etc.) in its country of origin, and can consequently also be recognised as a university in Germany. An assessment is then made of whether the foreign qualification is equivalent in type to a German qualification entitling the holder to pursue postgraduate studies. The ZAB assumes that doctoral candidates will have acquired a foreign qualification which is the equivalent of a German Master's degree, and that they will have written a dissertation in the course of their studies.

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1 cf. PhD regulations of the Faculties of Natural Sciences I – III and of the Center of Engineering Sciences dated 13.6.2012, Art. 3 (3); PhD regulations of the Faculties of Philosophy I, II and III dated 9.2.2011, Art. 3 (3); PhD regulations of the Faculty of Theology dated 10.12.2014, Art. 3 (3); PhD regulations of the Faculty of Law, Economics and Business dated 14.12.2011, Art. 3 (3) (Dept. of Law); PhD regulations of the Faculty of Law, Economics and Business dated 15.5.2007, Art. 5 (2) (Dept. of Economics and Business); PhD regulations of the Faculty of Medicine dated 9.12.2008, Art. 5 (5).
3 When postgraduate students are offered an employment contract at the MLU, the HR Department verifies whether they meet the preconditions for a (50 %) E13 post: this implies that an assessment is also made of the equivalence of any foreign qualifications.
When is the assessment made?
According to the general provisions governing PhD regulations at Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg, dated 7 April 2015, applications for acceptance as a doctoral candidate should be filed at about the same time as one begins to prepare one's thesis, but no later than one year before applying for admission to the doctoral examination procedure.

In order to avoid any complications arising at an advanced stage of the doctoral research project, ideally the equivalence of foreign academic qualifications should be established before the project begins, but no later than immediately thereafter.

The procedure; documents to be submitted for assessment
Those wishing to pursue a doctoral degree must submit all of the necessary documents for acceptance as a doctoral candidate to the Dean's Office of the respective Faculty. The documents required in order to make an assessment of foreign qualifications are:

- A certified copy of all university certificates (e.g. Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, diploma) in the original language
- A copy of officially certified translations (into German or English) of all certificates not issued in the German, English or French languages
- A copy of proof of academic performance/transcripts of records (including a summary of subjects and grades) in the original language
- A copy of officially certified translations (into German or English) of all proofs of academic performance not issued in the German, English or French languages

Once all of the above documents have been submitted in full, the Dean's Office shall forward them to the International Office for consideration.

In well-founded cases (e.g. where an application has been made for a grant from the DAAD or another external funding source, or in the case of structured doctoral programmes), the academic supervisor and/or the coordinator of the structured doctoral programme may also make a direct request for an assessment to the International Office. The same documents must be submitted as to the Dean's Office. Direct enquiries by those wishing to pursue a doctoral degree should be avoided if at all possible.

The International Office shall notify the respective applicant (the Dean's Office/Professor) in writing of the result of the assessment.

Conversion of grades awarded at foreign universities into the German grading system
In some cases (e.g. applications to the state for a scholarship), in addition to conducting an assessment of the foreign academic qualification, the grade awarded at a foreign university will also have to be converted into the German grading system. This is done at the International Office, using the so-called modified Bavarian formula.

Enquiries to the International Office should be addressed to: Esther Smykalla (Tel.: 0345-5521538, email: esther.smykalla@international.uni-halle.de)

*cf. Art. 1 Sect. 2*