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**Title** Following the Bologna Process, did the introduction of the BA/MA degrees in teacher training in German Higher Education impact on grade development?

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Following the Bologna Process, did the introduction of the BA/MA degrees in teacher training in German Higher Education impact on grade development?

With an ever increasing number of (under-) graduate programmes, grade development has long been an issue for research, concerning various fields of study, also in the UK and the USA. The issue of grade development is important, not alone for the student, but also for the institute, for it also serves as a regulator, regarding how the institute ranks the performance of its students. One area of grading that has an expansive impact on education – both compulsory and higher education, is that of teacher training (Koedal 2011). This work analyses the grade development of teacher training graduations for secondary schools in German Higher Education, and researches as to whether the application of the Bologna Process has impacted on grade development in secondary teacher training degrees. For with the complexity of structural reforms, in particular Bologna, policies create knock-on effects, and analysing the differences and questioning the comparability pre- and post- Bologna, is imperative to understanding the developments resulting from the policies, and their processes. Further research is carried out to probe as to whether or not there is a recognisable pattern in the grade developments in teacher training. Following on from this, the work analyses as to whether or not the BA or MA teacher training graduation grades are similar to the former Staatsexam grades.

Since committing themselves to Bologna in 1999 (Hackl 2001), Germany's implementation of the Bologna Process was followed by a structural upheaval to its higher educational system. The introduction of the BA and MA graduations was also incorporated into the teacher training education, whereby the BA would replace the pre-Bologna "Vordiplom" or intermediary exam and the MA would, in some cases, replace the Staatsexamen (the state examination, which is the qualification for certain state jobs). Thereby, it is fair to say that the German higher education has also experienced a massive restructuring of its qualifying procedures, also for teacher training (under-) graduates. Therefore, drawing comparisons between the pre-Bologna qualifying courses (Staatsexam) and the post-Bologna structure (BA/MA graduations), with the aid of German higher education federal data in a variety of secondary school teacher training subjects allows for an analysis, and this therefore lends to an understanding of the different types of grade developments that exist amongst German teacher training qualifications.

This research was made possible due to a project funded by a German Research Foundation, who agreed to support research on trends and differences of grading in German higher educational institutions, from the 1960s to the present day. The project incorporated a three-pronged approach, including qualitative research using focus groups with state examiners, secondly, archival research facilitated a time series approach, in conjunction with quantitative analysis. The research included accessing federal data of all German graduates from 1995-2013, which totalled 3,8 million cases. This data can only be accessed, and only locally analysed in one of the few federal data centres. Despite the complexities, this latter method forms the basis for this work, facilitating a descriptive and inferential analyses of these developments. Due to the temporal scope of the data, both the pre-Bologna phase, and the introductory phase of BA/MA grades can be analysed. In some cases, where the numbers were small, German data protection laws prohibited the use of the data. However, this method made it possible to compare graduate grades of the pre- and post- Bologna Process, also distinguishing between different secondary school teaching training levels.

The transition from pre-Bologna to the BA/MA in teacher training combination furthers the need to explore the typologies of grading (HU 2005). This structural transition raises many questions – such as the consequence of structural changes on students' final grades. The work presents the differences and similarities in grades from different levels, contributing to an understanding of structural changes and the type of impacts that it can have on grading amongst teacher training graduates in Germany, pre- and post- Bologna. To date, what has emerged from the analysis, is that similar types of grades exist between the BA and the old Staatsexam. However, regarding the MA, there is a statistically significant improvement in the grade. The relevance of the different graduations, for a similar qualification is pertinent to understanding the grade development, also because of the state appointments that rely on the grade. What also emerged is that, despite the upheaval to the educational system, the different degrees show stability in their grades.

#### References:

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