

Aalen University



STUDENT REPRESENTATION and QUALITY MANAGEMENT



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1 STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

1.1 GERMAN NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

Germany has a central organisation which provides public services for the economic, social, medical and cultural support for students in German Universities. The German National Association for Student Affairs (Deutsches Studentenwerk – DSW) has 58 local (regional) student service organisations. In cooperation with the universities and the city administrations, they help to create a society based on equality.



Abbildung 1. Member of the German National Association for Student Affairs (Deutsches Studentenwerk)¹

The Deutsche Studentenwerk (DSW) is a voluntary association of student services in Germany. Their contributions include improvement of the tertiary education and participation in shaping the university life. In order to reach these goals, DSW will contribute its share. In forming the knowledge of the DSW, the voluntary members of the local Associations for Student Affairs, especially students and professors, collaborate in the organisation and in committees next to the legal representatives of the National Association for Student Affairs.

The DSW encourages its members to achieve their goals, while respecting their self-reliant independence. The DSW:

- Supports the interests of its members and their know-how into policy making on the federal and regional levels

¹ <http://www.studentenwerke.de/main/default.asp?id=01801>

- Provides general support to local associations for student Affairs e.g. seminars, conferences, training, publications, etc.
- Engages in lobbying and advocacy efforts
- Nurtures and develops collaborative relationships with other institutions and organisations with the same goals
- Carries out tasks within its mission through public administration, institutions and organisations
- Defends the interests of university students in social policy

The German National Association for Student Affairs is a non-political, non-religious and non-ideological independent association.

1.1.1 THE STRUCTURE

The DSW has three bodies: The General Assembly, the Board of Directors and the Secretary General. It also has an advisory board (Kuratorium), which is composed of rectors, students, representatives of federal and regional government, the German Cities Association (Deutscher Städtetag), unions and employers as well as members of parliament and other public figures.

The Council of the federal states (Länderrat) consults the board of directors and the secretary general in all matters of fundamental importance. The students council (Studierendenrat), established in May 2004, also plays an important role. It is composed of student members who are actively involved in the bodies of local Studentenwerke. In addition to this, there are nine committees on specific subjects which consult the association.

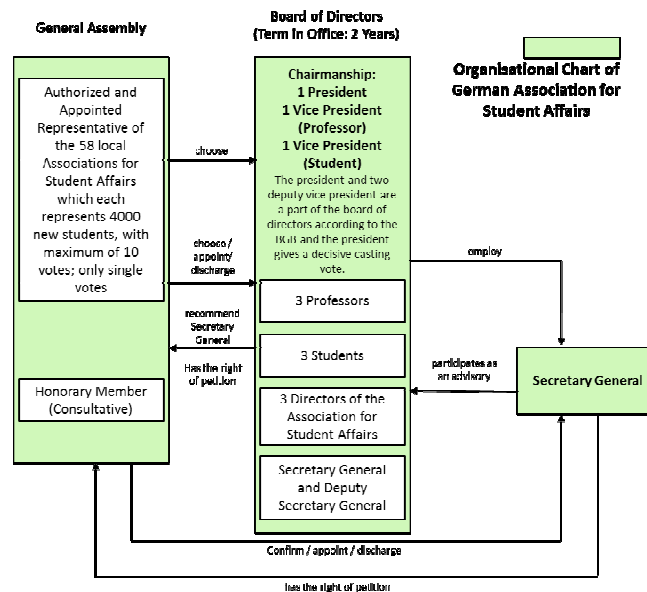


Figure 1. Structure of German National Association for Student Affairs (DSW)²

² <http://www.studentenwerke.de/pdf/DSW.pdf>

1.1.2 DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The German National Association for Student Affairs (DSW) strives to be international, intercultural, open and tolerant. The growing internationalisation of the European higher education subjects DSW to have its own Department for International Relations. Following are the vision, mission and activities of the Department for International Relations.

Vision

The German National Association for Student Affairs (Deutsches Studentenwerk – DSW) strives for higher education to be an international, intercultural, open and tolerant higher education area, in which the social and economic well-being of all students are guaranteed by strong, independent, professional and well-equipped student services organisations.

The growing internationalization of the European higher education area (EHEA) involves not only research and teaching, but also involves the understanding that excellent social and economic living conditions for all students is a precondition for successful learning. It also requires broad access to higher education for all social groups in a society of knowledge.

Therefore, the Deutsches Studentenwerk is working towards free, democratic and accessible higher education for everyone, regardless of social background or nationality.

The international and intercultural activities of DSW intend to create a free exchange of experiences, mutual learning, and the creation of new knowledge in all important areas of student affairs.

Mission

As a national association, we support the internationalisation of local Studentenwerke (the local student service organisations) on two levels:

- *Externally, DSW supports the development of long-term partnerships, exchange programmes and international cooperation of the 58 German Studentenwerke with partners in Europe and overseas. In addition, the DSW shares its approach and experiences with these initiatives in discussions at international conferences and with different organisations*
- *Internally, DSW is actively involved with the intercultural division of Studentenwerke and assists with the integration of international students in Germany to help create a tolerant, open and culturally diverse higher education area*

Activities

In order to turn this vision into a reality, the mission of DSW is translated into specific tasks, the Department for International Relations of Deutsches Studentenwerk:

- *Supports the local Studentenwerke in international cooperation, partnerships and exchange programmes*
- *Works to create a friendly welcome and integration of international students in Germany*
- *Defends the model of strong and independent student service organisations on the international level*
- *Coordinates and manages the exchange of experience with student service organisations in Europe, North America and Asia*
- *Promotes the exchange of experts as well as knowledge on the international level by means of conferences, delegations, exchange programs and similar activities*
- *Works closely with European partners, e.g. within the framework of the European Council for Student Affairs*
- *Influences the decisions and developments in the field of international educational policy*
- *Cooperates with international organisations such as EU-institutions, UNESCO, and Council of Europe etc.*



Figure 2 Logo of Ulm Association for Student Affairs³

The regional “Ulm Association for Student Affairs” offers students access to state benefits in various areas from student finance, grants (BAfÖG), student accommodations, university gastronomy services, social care to counselling.

The federal grant BAfÖG is essential for many students to be able to finance their studies. Project related investment funds and further national funds support the on-going operation of the Ulm Association for Student Affairs. Together with local grants the Ulm Association for Student Affairs is able to offer quality services at reasonable prices. Besides that, the Association for Student Affairs acts in the interest of the students as a legal entity for agreements with third parties, e.g. the “semester ticket” agreement with a transport association in the region to enable students a cheap commuting.

As a university cross-organisational and information platform, it is in the interest of Ulm Association for Student Affairs to maintain and develop these services. The equal representation within the board by universities, student representatives and independent consultants ensure a balanced and controlled investment and usage of funds.

By the middle of 2012, Ulm Association for Student Affairs serves about 20,000 students. The Ulm Association for Student Affairs is a non-profit organisation under public law. Generated surpluses are used to repay current liabilities, reserves for equity and replacements and new investments.

The goal of Ulm Student Association for Student Affairs is to implement the statutory grant programme and to provide best economic and social conditions for students of the universities in Aalen, Biberach, Schwäbisch Gmünd, Neu-Ulm, and Ulm. The staffs of Ulm Association of Student Affairs are a partner for students in terms of:

- Student finance and loans
- Student housing
- University gastronomy
- Social matter and counselling

Offering good services together with achieving optimal efficiency is the focus of Studentenwerk Ulm. As a university cross-organisational and information platform, the Studentenwerk Ulm ensures to act sustainably and maintain the access of good quality services and state benefits for students.

³ <http://www.studentenwerk-ulm.de/>

Following diagram shows the structure of Ulm Association of Student Affairs:

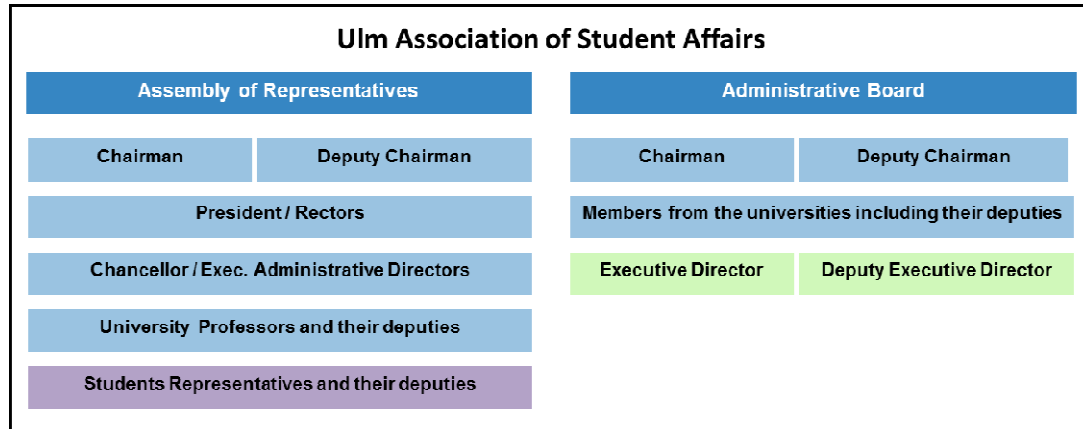


Figure 3. Structure of Ulm Association of Student Affairs⁴

1.2.1 INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTENWERK ULM IN AALEN UNIVERSITY

At Aalen University, the Ulm Association of Student Affairs (Studentenwerk Ulm) offers their services in these areas⁵:

- University Gastronomy: Cafeterias and Refectory
- Consultation on student finance matters
- Psychological support

1.3 JUGENDWERK AALEN

Jugendwerk Aalen or translated as “Youth Office Aalen” is a non-profit foundation. It administrates the student residence halls in Aalen. Currently the Youth Office has 5 different residence halls located in Aalen⁶. In comparison to many other regional Associations of Student Affairs, the Ulm Association of Student Affairs is not running student residence halls in Aalen directly, but has mandated the Jugendwerk Aalen to do so.

⁴ www.studentenwerk-ulm.de/wir-ueber-uns/organe-und-strukturen.html

⁵ <http://www.studentenwerk-ulm.de/standorte.html#c124406>

⁶ www.wohnungsbau-aalen.de/20

2 STUDENT COMMITTEES IN GERMANY

In Germany, the actual form of student representation depends on the states. In most states there is a General Student Council at every university. The General Student Council (Allgemeiner Studierendenausschuss or AStA) is the acting executive board and the external representing agency of the student body at most German Universities. Besides the General Student Council (AStA) there exists also an official student union (“Verfasste Studierendenschaft”) except for in the states of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg. However, whereas in both states, the student union had been abolished in the 1970ties, it is going to be reinstated in Baden-Württemberg due to the new green party / social democrats state government.

2.1 VERFASSTE STUDIERENDENSCHAFT BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

The state parliament of Baden-Württemberg has decided on June 27, 2012 the reinstatement of the in 1977 abolished constituted student union (“Verfasste Studierendenschaft”). For the moment, the student representatives in a university are organised within the General Student Council (AStA) only and as such they send some members into the academic senate of the university. The General Student Council is however not a constituted student union. Therefore, they have neither a real statute nor financial autonomy. Both their regulations and the budget which comes from the university are decided through the academic senate with major votes from the professors. According to the Higher Education Act, a General Student Council (AStA) is meant for a cross faculty-student council and to promote social, intellectual, artistic and athletic interest of the students.

The “Verfasste Studierendenschaft” Baden-Württemberg will be a student union who represents the interests of the students in a university. Legally, the term “Verfasste Studierendenschaft” means that all enrolled university students are automatically members of this union for their university. The students are referred to as a student union and they are *verfasst* (constituted) due to the legal entity of public law and order, so that they may act on legal transactions and sign agreement or contract in their own names. The Student Union is to be seen as more independent member of the university.

Konkret heißt dies, dass sich die Studierendenschaft um hochschulpolitische Themen, wie die Auswirkung der Bologna-Reform an der jeweiligen Hochschule beschäftigen kann, aber auch ein Semesterticket für die Studierenden mit den Verkehrsbetrieben aushandeln oder zur Anbindung des ÖPNV an die Hochschule Stellung nehmen kann. Die Studierendenschaft kann

Veranstaltungen abhalten und Referentinnen und Referenten einladen, um die Studierenden über politische Themen zu informieren.

The student union will be more powerful than the General Student Council as it will be allowed to discuss and formulate educational policy matters and may also organise events about more general political issues (whilst nevertheless keeping the principle of neutrality in the sense that it cannot support for instance a single political party). It can formulate and publish statements related to matters of concern like for example related to the strategic orientation of the university, its sustainable development or scientific results and their consequences for society and nature when being applied in practice.

2.1.1 COOPERATION WITH THE STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

Both the student union and the student associations for student affairs are committed to serving the university students. After the abolition of the student union in the 1970s, the Student Associations for Student Affairs in Ba-Wü had to take on important tasks which belonged in the past to the student union.

With the re-enactment of student union law in Baden-Württemberg, it is not allowed to have a double structure which could cause double expenses. Therefore, agreements with the Student Associations for Student Affairs will always be required in concerned areas to separate the tasks to each jurisdiction.

3 COMMITTEES AT AALEN UNIVERSITY

The management of Aalen University is conducted through a number of committees of varying competencies, one of the essential components of an academic administration being to work on committees indeed. For example, the senate decides in matters of instruction, studies and research which are of fundamental meaning and which are not ordained by law to be decided exclusively by another authority, department or university institution. The university council on the other hand, forms the key legislative body of the university and is involved in issues of finance, expansion, the addition and discontinuation of study courses, etc. All members of Aalen University have the right to become committee members and cast their vote. As a representative, the professors, other staff, and students each form a different group. Students of Aalen University have the right to choose their representatives annually. Following diagram

shows the organisational structure of Aalen University. It helps to understand the bigger picture of structure,

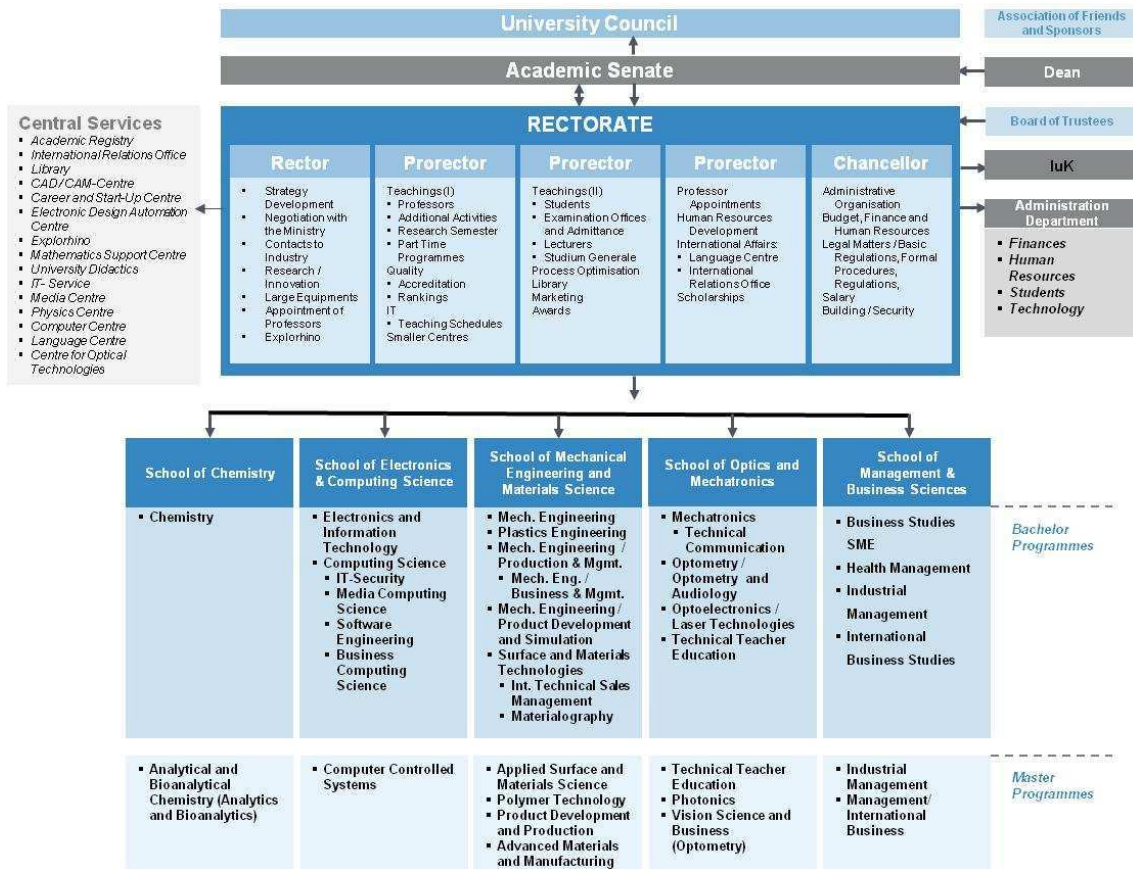


Figure 4. Organisational Structure of Aalen University

3.1 UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

Due to a change in the legislation governing higher education, the university council was newly established on 1 September 2000. The university council has the following tasks (excerpt from the university charter): The university council is responsible for the development of the university and suggests measures for improving the university's profile and increasing competitiveness and efficiency. It also supervises the management of the rectorship.

The particular tasks of the university council are:

1. participation in choosing members of the rectorship in accordance with § 12 Art. 5, § 13 Abs. 2 and § 13 b Art. 2,
2. approval of budget estimates and the determination of economic plans,
3. determination of the annual statement of accounts,

4. passing resolutions on structural, developmental and architectural planning,
5. laying out principles for the provision of equipment; the instructional and applied research staff should also be assigned efficiently to the tasks at hand - here criteria such as performance, workload and evaluation results will be taken into consideration,
6. approval of decisions to add on to, change, close or classify university facilities and joint commissions,
7. passing resolutions on functional descriptions of professors' positions,
8. statements on setting up, changing or discontinuing a course of study,
9. statements on regulations for studies and exams,
10. statements on the fundamental order and changes to it,
11. acceptance of the rector's yearly report.

The university Council consists of eleven members. Six of these members are external member from the university, coming very often from industry in the case of universities of applied sciences. The term of office of a member is three years. A two-time re-election is allowed for a member. Students send one representative into this committee. Following is a simple diagram to show the structure of Aalen University Council:

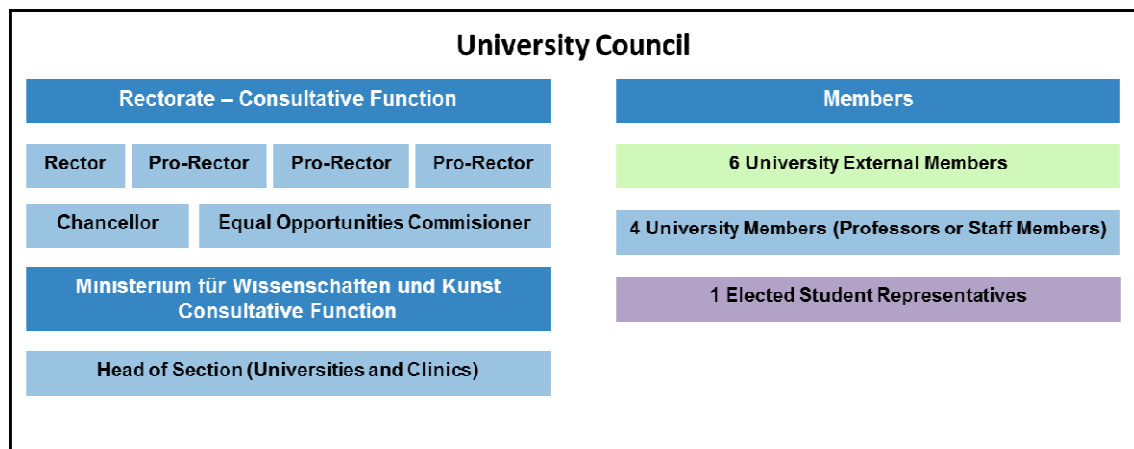


Figure 5. University Council Organisational Structure⁷

⁷ <http://www.htw-aalen.de/dynamic/img/content/hochschule/personalrat/gesetze/grundordnung.pdf>, Grundordnung der Hochschule Aalen vom 21.06.2005

3.2 GENERAL STUDENT COUNCIL OF AALEN UNIVERSITY - ASTA

The Allgemeiner Studierendenausschuss or AStA is the General Student Council at Aalen University. The executives of this council are, therefore, the representatives of the students (until the re-institution of the student union (Verfasste Studierendenschaft)). AStA represents the interests of the students both in and out of the University. As a public board, AStA represents the student in both Higher Education Laws and Regulations. The student council helps the students in matters related to topics such as BAföG (student financial matters), students with disabilities or with children. Moreover, AStA contributes in many other student projects at the University in collaboration with UStA e.V., the faculty student representatives and the rectorship.

The University student council is elected annually in the summer semester. In Baden-Württemberg Universities such as Aalen, AStA consists of four student members who are also directly counted as members of the academic senate. In addition to the regular general student council meetings, there are several meetings which are held together with the rector and faculty student representatives. Moreover, there are four deputy members who act for the main member in case of absences. The term of office for the student representatives is one year.

3.3 ACADEMIC SENATE

The Academic Senate of Aalen University is the central, co-determinate body for academic purpose⁸. The senate of Aalen University is responsible for decision making concerning the university or beyond a faculty.

The rector (the chairperson), the prorectors, the deans and the administrative director (chancellor) are members of the senate by virtue of their offices. Five professors, three other staff members and four students receive seats by election; the authorized representative for women's affairs also takes part. The senate decides in matters of instruction, studies and research which are of fundamental meaning and which are not ordained by law to be decided exclusively by another authority, department or university institution.

⁸ <http://www.htw-aalen.de/hochschule/gremien/senat.php>

The senate is responsible in particular for:

1. the election of the rector and the prorectors,
2. passing resolutions on the fundamental order,
3. passing resolutions on the enactment of regulations for the administration and the use of university facilities,
4. passing resolutions in conjunction with fixing the number of admitted persons,
5. passing resolutions in conjunction with setting up, changing and discontinuing courses of study, university institutions and joint commissions,
6. statements on structural and developmental plans,
7. statements on outlines of budget estimates and economic plans,
8. statements on functional descriptions of professors' positions; the statement is not applicable when the functional description is in accordance with the resolved structural and developmental plans,
9. decisions of fundamental meaning in issues of applied research and development as well as technology transfer,
10. passing resolutions due to the suggestions made by the departments concerning study regulations and rules for university exams or statements on university exams, through which one may acquire a university degree,
11. passing resolutions due to suggestions made by the department or statements on suggestions for the appointment of professors,
12. accepting and discussing the rector's yearly report,
13. accepting and discussing the yearly report of the authorized representative for women's affairs

The meetings of the academic senate are generally not public. The public meetings require consent of the members of the senate itself.

The members of student council (AStA) are also members in the academic senate. Therefore, they are involved in the senate activities and are obliged to give their votes to the points above. The term of office for the student representatives is one year.

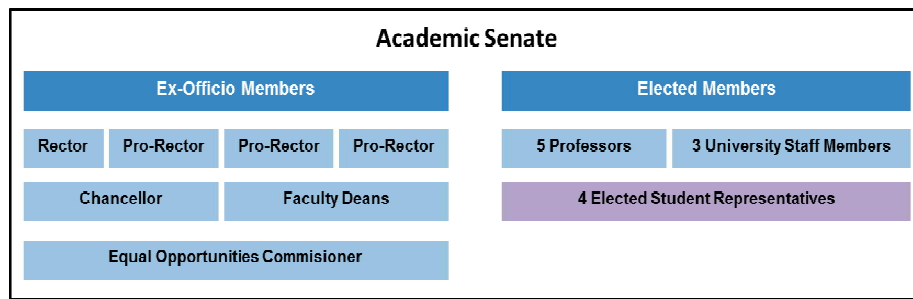


Figure 6. Academic Senate Organisational Structure⁹

3.4 FACULTY BOARD (FACULTY COUNCIL)

The faculty council consists of professors, staff members and selected students of each faculty. The duties of a faculty council are to enact on the study and examinations regulations, such as introduce it, amend it or withdraw the regulations under the rector and dean's supervision. The faculty council is also involved in structural development and changes within the faculty, which include the distribution of funding, evaluation of teaching, etc¹⁰.

A student can voluntarily work for the faculty council. The student representatives are chosen at the same time as the student council (AStA), which happens annually. It is also possible to work for both the student council and the faculty council. A voting member's term of office is four years and for the student it is one year.

Following is the organisational structure of the faculty council and greater faculty council at Aalen University:

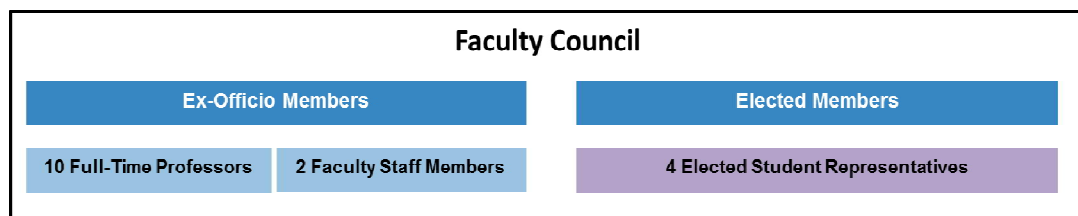


Figure 7. Faculty Council Structure¹¹

⁹ <http://www.htw-aalen.de/dynamic/img/content/hochschule/personalrat/gesetze/grundordnung.pdf>, Grundordnung der Hochschule Aalen vom 21.06.2005

¹⁰ <http://www.asta.htw-aalen.de/Fakult%C3%A4tsrat.html>

¹¹ <http://www.htw-aalen.de/dynamic/img/content/hochschule/personalrat/gesetze/grundordnung.pdf>, Grundordnung der Hochschule Aalen vom 21.06.2005

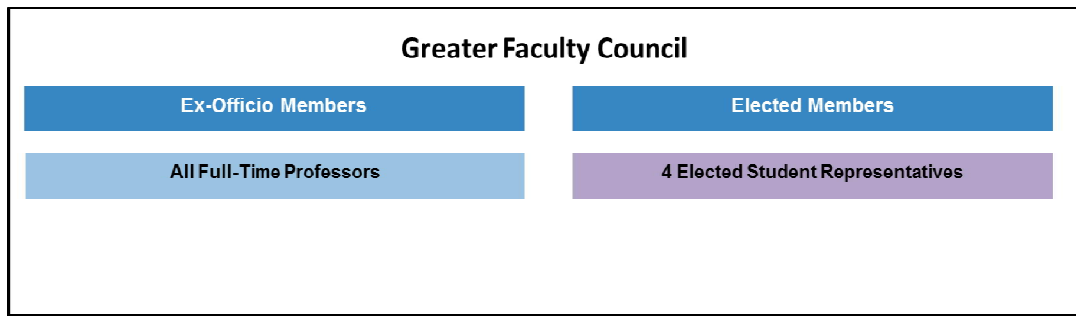


Figure 8. Greater Faculty Council¹²

3.5 DEPARTMENTAL STUDENT COUNCIL

The Departmental Student Council¹³ represents the interests of the students of a degree programme. They are in charge of student affairs at departmental level such as departmental events. The Departmental Student Council has 2-3 public meetings in a semester. These meetings serve as a chance to exchange information between the various student bodies and also a chance for the Student Council of Aalen University to report about current issues in the Academic Senate, the Rectorate, UStA and the AStA. In addition, AStA supports the Departmental Student Council financially. An active Departmental Student Council is allowed to apply for the funding of their projects.

Any student is welcomed to join and be active in a departmental student council. To request for an active membership, the student can attend the meeting and apply there. A departmental student council usually consists of a chairman, deputy chairman, treasurer, minute taker (note taker), and communication person (media)¹⁴. The structure itself depends on each department.

¹² <http://www.htw-aalen.de/dynamic/img/content/hochschule/personalrat/gesetze/grundordnung.pdf>, Grundordnung der Hochschule Aalen vom 21.06.2005

¹³ <http://www.asta.htw-aalen.de/Fachschaftsrat.html>

¹⁴ http://www.kmu-fachschaft.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=57&Itemid=59

4.1 INDEPENDENT STUDENTS COMMITTEE - USTA

The “Unabhängiger Studierendenausschuss” or UStA¹⁵ is an independent student committee at Aalen University. In 2008, UStA turned into UStA Services Ltd. This company was established by students at the Aalen University to offer better services for students, professors and employees of the university.

UStA is responsible in organizing cultural and sporting events for students, events that support the connection between the students and industry, other projects, services and events to promote education, training and research and most of all, offer students services for a better student life at Aalen University. UStA has various divisions which are Band, CampusRadio, Event, International, Kino (Cinema), Art and Culture, Communication Media, Party Utensils, UStA-Shop, and Sports.

UStA Membership is open to everyone. To become a head of the division, a member could request to take the available position. In case of disputes, the board of management will regulate it.

4.2 FREIE TECHNISCHE VERBINDUNG HOHENSTAUFEN (F.T.V. HOHENSTAUFEN)

F.t.V. Hohenstaufen¹⁶ is a vibrant fraternity of Aalen University with competences and a traditional background. The establishment of this fraternity goes back to 1963 when the university was a school of electroplating and surface technology in Schwäbisch Gmünd. The purpose of this fraternity is to offer students opportunities besides the theoretical knowledge, such as social skills and rhetoric abilities. Due to the network between students, professional engineers and also connections to other universities, it is possible for a member to experience the informative exchanges through cultural and social events which could lead to lifelong friendships.

To become a member of this fraternity, one can visit their office and apply for the membership. It is an uncomplicated process and a future member is registered to this

¹⁵ <http://usta.htw-aalen.de/>

¹⁶ <http://www.ftv-hohenstaufen.de/>

fraternity, which is followed by an official ceremony to hand over the fraternity's strap to the "young brother" (new member). Anyone can request a membership as long as they are male and an enrolled student of Aalen University.

F.t.V. Hohenstaufen holds its tradition by being a fraternity, which is also the reason why they cannot accept any female members. This is not an act of misogyny, it is simply a tradition. There are only two events during the semester which are closed for ladies, and for their other activities ladies are most welcomed.

4.3 WOHNHEIMSPRECHER – RESIDENCE HALL REPRESENTATIVE

Every semester it is possible for a person who lives in the student residence hall to nominate someone or apply himself for the residence hall representative position. The responsibilities of a residence hall representative include standing as a medium between Jugendwerk Aalen, the caretaker, and the students who live in the residence hall, being a regulator in case of disputes and problems. Further responsibility is to manage, if it exists, the residence hall's fund.

4.4 WOHNHEIMTUTOREN – RESIDENCE HALL TUTORS

Residence Hall Tutors are meant for the international students who are residing in Aalen. The tutors are supposed to be their contact person during their stay in Aalen. Every semester it is possible for a person who lives in the student residence hall to nominate someone or apply himself for the residence hall tutor position. The student has the responsibility to help if the international student has some matters to deal with. The tutor should be reachable at any time and for different matters.

The Residence Hall Tutors are under the project MOST-KIND (www.most-kind.de) of the Aalen University's International Center. The purpose of residence hall tutors is not only to mediate the communication between the office, the caretaker and the international student, but also to be a contact person in case they need support, e.g. help to translate documents, going to a doctor, etc.

4.5 (FACH-)TUTOREN – (ACADEMIC) TUTORS

In Aalen University there are possibilities for students who do well academically to work for the university as a subject academic tutor. He or she is then responsible for tutoring a class. As a tutor, they have to support the students during the semester to prepare for an exam in the specific subject. An academic tutor can also be hired to support a particular international student who has difficulties in a single subject (one to one support).

4.6 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

There exists further student associations possessing an international character and being either target group related like the National Association of Foreign Students BAS or subject related like AIESEC (Business students) or AIESEC (Engineering students). The last two associations are truly international associations in the sense that their activities are global with an organizational structure of local (national) chapters.

4.6.1 BAS (THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS / FEDERAL UNION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN GERMANY)

The BAS (<http://www.auslaendischestudierende.de>) meaning “Bundesverband ausländischer Studierender” represents the interests of foreign and stateless students in Germany. It is the federal association of local foreigner sections within student councils and committees at German universities.

4.6.2 AIESEC (ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES ETUDIANTS EN SCIENCES ECONOMIQUES ET COMMERCIALES)

Present in over 113 countries and territories and with over 86,000 members, AIESEC is the world's largest youth-run organization, initially thought at for Business students only. Focused on providing a platform for youth leadership development, AIESEC offers young people the opportunity to participate in international internships, experience leadership and participate in a global learning environment. AIESEC is run by young people for young people, enabling a strong experience to all its stakeholders. It is organized in national chapters and within a country in local (regional) chapters.

- International: <http://www.aiesec.org/>
- Germany: <http://www.aiesec.de>
- Serbia: <http://www.aiesec.org.rs/>

4.6.3 IAESTE (THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EXCHANGE OF STUDENTS FOR TECHNICAL EXPERIENCE)

The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE) is an independent, non-profit and non-political student exchange organization. It provides students in technical degrees (primarily Science, Engineering and the applied arts) with paid, course-related, training abroad. With around 100 countries involved and exchanging over 4000 job offers each year worldwide, it is the largest organization of its kind in the world. IAESTE A.s.b.l (IAESTE Association sans but lucratif. Registered in Luxembourg) is an association of member countries, made up of partner agencies representing academic, industrial and student interests. These agencies include NGOs, universities, government bodies, and student volunteer groups. Each member is responsible for the administration of the exchange in its own country, through their National and Local Committees. NB. Membership level varies depending on length of membership and coverage of the country represented.

The Association was founded in January 1948 at Imperial College in London, where representatives from ten European countries agreed the initiative. The geographical coverage soon spread to include exchange in around 100 countries on all continents, and IAESTE became a registered body according to Luxembourg law in 2005. Since its inception, IAESTE has exchanged more than 335 000 students worldwide, playing a key role in the development of young engineers and scientists. IAESTE maintains consultative or operational relationship with various agencies of the United Nations including UNESCO and UNIDO.

Each year the IAESTE Annual Conference, which is held in January, brings together the representatives of each member country to decide issues of general policy and to carry out the exchange of traineeship offers, although online exchange throughout the year is in place via the IAESTE-Intraweb.

- International: <http://www.iaeste.org/>
- Germany: <http://www.iaeste.de>
- Serbia: <http://www.iaeste.ac.rs/>

5 QUALITY MANAGEMENT

5.1 QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN GERMANY

The process of quality assurance accreditation, newly established in Germany's higher education system in the nineties, shall ensure quality in higher education teaching and studying, enhance student mobility and provide students, employers as well as higher education institutions with a reliable orientation and improved transparency as regards the bachelor- and master-programmes. By resolution of the *Kultuministerkonferenz* (Standing conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany), an *Akkreditierungsrat* (Accreditation Council; <http://www.akkreditierungsrat.de>) had been established in 1999.

The *Akkreditierungsrat* is an independent organization responsible for accrediting agencies and in certain cases accrediting degree programmes. More precisely it serves to fulfill the following tasks:

1. Accreditation and re-accreditation of accreditation agencies by the time-limited granting of the entitlement to accredit study courses through the award of the foundation's seal
2. Compilation of the common and the specific structural guidelines of the *Länder* into binding guidelines for the accreditation agencies
3. Regulation of minimum requirements for accreditation procedures including the prerequisites and limits of bundled accreditations
4. Monitoring of accreditations undertaken by the accreditation agencies

Since 1994, various structures have been established for supporting both internal and external evaluation and these now cover the institutions of higher education in all sixteen German states. Meanwhile, in Germany a two-tiered system of evaluation is widely applied which combines internal and external evaluation.

For Bachelor's and Master's study courses, the Standing Conference has adopted accreditation as an instrument of quality assurance which is functionally separate from the state approval of study courses: As with the other study courses, the state approval refers to guaranteeing the fundamental financial means for the study courses to be set up and the inclusion in the higher educational planning of the respective Land. In contrast to this, the objective of the accreditation is to guarantee standards in terms of academic content, the maintenance of structural guidelines, and to determine the professional relevance of the degrees. It is to ensure quality in international competition and create transparency for international collaboration. In the accreditation system, the state is assuming its responsibility for higher education studies through structural requirements for study offers, which guarantee the equivalence of qualifications and the possibility of changing to another higher education institution. Observance of the structural requirements is a pre-requisite for the accreditation of a study course. They form the basis for the accreditation process. Land legislation determines to which extent accreditation is a pre-requisite for the state approval of a new study course. It is essentially performed by external peer review. Periodically, the study courses are re-accredited.

In December 2007, the Standing Conference resolved to enhance the accreditation of study programs through the implementation of a system accreditation scheme by which the internal quality assurance system of an entire higher education institution is assessed for the quality of its learning and teaching. The responsibility for quality assurance in terms of the given criteria is thus transferred to the higher education institution. The subject of assessment is whether the higher education institution provides for a quality management system ensuring the implementation of these criteria. System accreditation aims to reduce the administrative burden of higher education institutions and to accelerate certification.

More generally accreditation is an evaluation based on agreed standards, resulting in a formal, public recognition of a programme (or an institution). It is a democratic, transparent process resting upon self- and peer-assessment for improvement of academic quality and public accountability. There are two complementary procedures: first an evaluation procedure consisting of the self-evaluation of the applicant plus the on-site inspection and the report of the evaluator group, followed by the accreditation procedure in which the relevant expert team (an accreditation agency possessing the license from the Accreditation Council) analyses and discusses the self-report and the evaluators' recommendation, before the accreditation

commission decides on accreditation, conditional accreditation subject to provisos or conditions, or denial of accreditation¹⁷.

5.2 QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

The supervision of higher education institutions is exercised by the relevant state Ministry of Science and Research so in the state of Baden-Württemberg the Ministry of Science, Research and Arts in Stuttgart. External evaluation is performed by regional evaluation agencies at state level or by networks or associations of higher education institutions covering all states.

5.3 QUALITY MANAGEMENT AT AALEN UNIVERSITY

The quality assurance provisions of Aalen University are based on the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG)¹⁸, the provisions of the Standing Conference (KMK) and the criteria of the Accreditation Council. The university has introduced a quality management system (quality assurance provisions) that covers all areas including teaching, research, administration and management. Aalen University has a perennial strategy for continuous quality improvement, which is monitored continuously by means of an operational quality circle.

The further development of programs is continuously monitored through annual strategy meetings with the governing body of our institution. Another important quality assurance process is the institution-wide evaluation of all teaching and learning activities, which includes individual course interviews, surveys of whole degree programs and alumni surveys. Each study course is evaluated at least every other semester. The survey of the whole degree program is conducted every two years and is designed for continuous improvement with respect to the concept, the organization and the quality of student service. The continuing education of the teaching staff is supported by offering a wide range of activities for the

¹⁷ <http://www.hrk.de/themen/lehre/arbeitsfelder/qualitaetssicherung-und-entwicklung/akkreditierung/> and <http://www.hrk-nexus.de/projekt-nexus/good-practice/>

¹⁸ Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education Area, 2.3.1, http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_v03.pdf

improvement of didactic skills. Additional quality assurance measures are not mentioned here due to space limits.

The external quality assurance of degree programs at our institution is currently performed via the Program-/Cluster accreditation (all degree programs at our institution have been accredited). The Aalen University seeks to adopt system accreditation within the next two years and continues to develop its quality assurance provisions in line with the requirements for the system accreditation.

6 REFERENCES

[Aalen University Website](#)

(Internet page of Aalen University in German, some features are also available in English)

[Deutsches Studentenwerk](#)

[Studentenwerk Ulm](#)

[Jugendwerk Aalen](#)

[Verfasste Studierendenschaft Baden-Württemberg](#)

[AStA](#)

[UStA](#)

[F.t.V Hohenstaufen](#)

[MOST-KIND](#)

AIESEC

- International: <http://www.aiesec.org/>
- Germany: <http://www.aiesec.de>
- Serbia: <http://www.aiesec.org.rs/>

IAESTE:

- International: <http://www.iaeste.org/>
- Germany: <http://www.iaeste.de>
- Serbia: <http://www.iaeste.ac.rs/>



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