

Glossary for the Federal and State Quality Orientation Framework for German Schools Abroad

Explanation of terminology

QUALIFICATIONS

German schools abroad may offer the following qualifications:

- German International Abitur (*Deutsches Internationales Abitur, DIA*) – general qualification for university entrance in Germany.
 - German qualifications for lower secondary education, *Hauptschule*: first general school-leaving qualification (*Hauptschulabschluss*)
 - *Realschule*: middle school-leaving qualification (*Mittlerer Schulabschluss, MSA*)
 - *Gymnasium*: eligibility to transition to the qualification phase of a gymnasium course of studies, including the MSA
- German Language Diploma I and II of the Conference of Ministers of Education (*Deutsches Sprachdiplom, DSD*) - First Level (DSD I), First Level for Vocational Schools (DSD I PRO), and Second Level (DSD II)
- Vocational qualifications
- International Baccalaureate in mixed-language form (*Gemischtsprachigen International Baccalaureate, GIB*)
- German qualification for entrance to a university of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulreife*)
- National secondary qualifications

State-run schools in the host country with a German department can offer:

- The general qualification for university entrance in Germany (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*) in parallel to the national qualification of the host country, on the basis of inter-governmental agreements
- The *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat (OIB)* at German-speaking international departments within the French education system; this awards the national qualification in parallel to the general qualification for university entrance in Germany (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*), on the basis of intergovernmental agreements

The portfolio of qualifications offered by a school depends on the type of school and the approval granted by the Conference of Ministers of Education (see below). Within the member states of the European Union, national secondary qualifications are recognized as equivalent.

ALUMNI

“Alumni” or “Ex-Alumni” associations create points of contact between former students (alumni) and their schools. Much like the ZfA itself, the schools abroad overseen by the ZfA have an interest in the experiences of students who graduated from German schools and DSD schools. A wide range of alumni networks already exist or are in the process of being established. This project is supported by the ZfA. Alumni can provide valuable information or recommendations to younger generations of students, for example regarding

studying in Germany. They are ideal both as ambassadors for their schools and for learning the German language.

EMPLOYER

The school authority (school association) is the contractual partner and employer of foreign service teachers and federal programme teachers. The ZfA pays grants to teachers based on a separate contract and funding decision. The receipt of funding from the ZfA does not constitute a service or employment relationship with the federal government.

WORK PLANS

Subject-specific work plans are a concretization of the school curriculum. In a work plan, the binding competence expectations of the school curriculum are supplemented with additional specifications, objectives, topics, and didactic-methodological indications to create lessons that systematically build on one another.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure specifies the structure and hierarchy of an organization. It describes who makes which decisions to whom. The organizational structure can be formally represented by an “organigram” (organizational chart).

FOREIGN SERVICE TEACHERS (ADLK)

Foreign service teachers (*Auslandsdienstlehrkraft*) are teachers on leave from school in Germany who have been temporarily assigned to a school abroad by the ZfA to perform tasks that support the school structurally.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT FOR SCHOOLS ABROAD (AQM)

Since 2003, the federal and state governments have supported the systematic development of a pedagogic quality management system (*Pädagogische Qualitätsmanagement, PQM*) at German schools abroad. In 2015, the PQM concept was expanded into a system entitled Quality Management for Schools Abroad (*Auslandsschulqualitätsmanagement, AQM*) that now additionally encompasses the non-pedagogical areas of schools. The original PQM concept continues to play a central role in the AQM concept, since pedagogical processes are the core tasks of any school. But the orientation framework now consistently incorporates non-pedagogical areas into its definition of quality with a holistic approach. The AQM’s approach follows the *governance understanding* of school management.

FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE

The Federal Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) exercises technical oversight over the ZfA and specifies the requirements of foreign cultural relations and education policy for German schools abroad. It represents the ZfA to the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany and other institutions involved with or invested in German schools abroad.

The status of “German school abroad” is granted by the Federal Foreign Office based on a contract with the school.

All important decisions that affect German schools abroad are made in consultation with the Federal Foreign Office (Department 605 – School Department). The Federal Foreign Office is represented in the Federal and State Committee for School Work Abroad (chaired by each of the Länder on an annually rotating basis).

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOARD (BdV)

The representative of the board (*Beauftragte des Vorstands*) is employed by the school authority and assumes certain responsibilities on behalf of the school board. Acting in a supportive capacity, the representative of the board does not have any direct authority to give instructions. His or her purpose is to give the principal and the administrator a direct person of contact within everyday school life. The representative of the board works to optimize collaboration between the school board, the principal, and the administrator.

REVIEW VISIT (BILANZBESUCH)

As a federal supervisory authority, the ZfA analyses and evaluates the quality and funding eligibility of each German school abroad according to its federal responsibilities.

The review visit (*Bilanzbesuch*) is a key instrument associated with this task. It is performed after a suitable period has elapsed since the BLI (approx. 3 to 3.5 years). Among other things, the review visit requires the school to give an account of the development processes agreed and initiated after the BLI and the results of these processes. Its goal is to establish a systematic and binding procedure to strengthen the quality of each school and lay the foundations for needs-based federal funding decisions. The results trigger development impulses at the schools and generate recommendations about the type and scope of future funding.

FEDERAL PROGRAMME TEACHER (BPLK)

Federal programme teachers (*Bundesprogrammlehrkräfte, BPLK*) are usually teachers who have completed their first and second state examinations working temporarily at a funded school institution abroad without a permanent position. According to an agreement between the Federal Foreign Office and the Education Ministers of the Länder, teachers on leave from school can also receive a placement as federal programme teachers.

FEDERAL OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION (BVA)

The Federal Office of Administration (*Bundesverwaltungsamt, BVA*) is the central service provider for the federal government. Headquartered in Cologne, the BVA was founded in 1960 to relieve other authorities of responsibilities that are not part of their core activities. Today, the BVA performs over 100 tasks for almost every federal ministry, as well as the Federal Chancellery and various other authorities and institutions. The variety of tasks has been a defining feature of the BVA since it was founded. In 1968, the Federal Foreign Office transferred its supervisory authority for schools to the Central Agency for Schools Abroad (ZfA), which is part of the Federal Office of Administration.

FEDERAL-STATE COMMITTEE FOR SCHOOL AFFAIRS ABROAD (BLASchA)

BLASchA is the steering committee for German schools abroad. Its members are the Federal Foreign Office (Department 605), representatives of each Ministry of Education, and the management of the ZfA. The KMK secretariat is also represented and serves as the office for BLASchA, which meets three times a year (March, September, December). BLASchA makes decisions both on fundamental matters relating to German schools abroad (e.g. setting school objectives, staffing issues, etc.) and on individual school matters (e.g. examination-related questions, timetables, curricula, etc.) relating to the activities of schools abroad. For example, based on recommendations from BLASchA, the Conference of Ministers of Education (see below) can formally recognize a German school abroad or issue examination regulations for the German schools abroad system.

FEDERAL-STATE INSPECTION (BLI)

The BLI is an external evaluation by inspectors from the federal and state governments to evaluate the quality of a school. Using transparent instruments and procedures, a differentiated report on the school's strengths and weaknesses is prepared that also highlights potential for development.

The primary strategic goal of the BLI is to secure and further develop the quality and refine the profile of the 140 German schools abroad, which serve as key vehicles of the German foreign cultural relations and education policy. This is achieved by systematically determining, evaluating, and giving feedback on the quality of each school based on a set of global standards and expectations. At the same time, steering knowledge is generated within the German schools abroad system for the strategic orientation of specific schools. The BLI ensures accountability regarding the fulfilment of the funding contract and the legitimate use of funding, while also generating development-oriented impulses for specific measures to improve school quality, on behalf of both the schools themselves and the funding bodies within the context of the German foreign cultural relations and education policy (AKBP).

CONTROLLING

Controlling is a control instrument that supports processes with key figures and reports possible corrective measures to management where necessary.

GERMAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (DaF)

German as a foreign language (*Deutsch als Fremdsprache, DaF*) describes the status of the German language for any speakers or learners living in Germany or abroad whose native language is not German. DaF is also a specific term describing German lessons that specifically target this group of people. Many universities offer DaF courses. Universities teach basic knowledge of DaF in different ways, for example as part of a teaching diploma programme. The concept of DaF is distinct from that of DaZ (*Deutsch als Zweitsprache* – German as a second language), which describes non-native speakers who either live in Germany or for whom German is spoken by one parent but is not the predominant family language.

German as a foreign language plays a central role at German schools abroad and other schools in national education systems that offer the German Language Diploma (DSD) of the Conference of Ministers of Education (described as DSD schools). Dedicated textbooks are available for teaching German as a foreign language, as well as a framework plan for German schools abroad and a series of examinations whose level is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

GERMAN LANGUAGE DIPLOMA (DSD) OF THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION

The DSD is an examination in German as a foreign language administered at schools located abroad, in other words intended for students attending German schools abroad, German-speaking departments at state-run schools abroad, and DSD schools. The DSD I diploma certifies competence at the B1/A2 level, and the DSD II diploma certifies competence at the C1/B2 level. The examination must be overseen at the place of examination by a foreign service teacher on school leave. An upper secondary teaching post is a prerequisite to qualify for administering the DSD II examination.

GERMAN INTERNATIONAL ABITUR (DIA)

The German International Abitur (*Deutsches Internationales Abitur, DIA*) is the final examination of the eight-year *Gymnasium* course at German schools abroad. It is based on a set of global examination regulations that have been approved by the ministries of education of each country. The international nature of this examination is reflected in the fact that up to 50% of lessons are conducted in a foreign language or the national language, and up to 50% of the examination may be administered in a foreign language or the national language. The DIA is treated as equivalent to the Abitur by universities in Germany. It directly entitles an individual to begin studying in Germany. The DIA is also recognized by universities in the member states of the European Union, as well as by various other universities around the world.

SUBJECT LESSONS IN GERMAN (DFU)

Subject lessons in German (*Deutschsprachiger Fachunterricht, DFU*) play a key role in German schools abroad and national schools that offer German qualifications or the GIB. Lessons conducted in German, with the exception of German as a foreign language, must reflect the specific language prerequisites of students and the inherent challenges of teaching subjects in German. The DFU lessons are based on internal school concepts, agreements, and regulations that fundamentally aim to promote German language skills in a subject-specific manner. The ZfA helps with the special methodological requirements of DFU lessons by providing specialized preparation and training measures, in particular for topics related to blending learning, as well as by supporting the development of suitable teaching materials.

EVALUATION

Evaluation refers to the process of systematically collecting and analysing information or data to facilitate assessment decisions based on well-founded evidence. It is based on objectives established beforehand (typically confirming, improving, and/or developing practical activities) and collaboratively defined evaluation standards. The evaluation process includes giving feedback on the collected data to the relevant parties and may trigger follow-up measures and consequences.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Evaluation (typically) conducted by external experts who are not directly involved in the planning, implementation, or execution of an intervention (activity, measure, programme).

FUNDING BODIES

The “funding bodies” are the Federal Foreign Office, the Central Agency for German Schools Abroad (ZfA), and the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as the Conference of Ministers of Education (KMK).

FURTHER TRAINING

This term encompasses any preparation measures for teachers at schools funded by the Federal Republic of Germany. The ZfA holds preparatory courses in Bonn that specifically prepare teachers for their deployment.

Regional training centres for German schools have also been established around the globe, offering further training courses (regional training) specifically tailored to the needs

of schools in each region. Around 12-14 regional training courses are held in the various regions every year.

COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE (CEFR)

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is a joint foundation for developing curricula, examinations, textbooks, etc., in target languages across Europe. It gives a comprehensive description of the knowledge and skills that learners must acquire to be able to communicate successfully during their activities. The description also addresses the cultural context of language. The CEFR defines competency levels corresponding to the requirements of various contexts.

MIXED-LANGUAGE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (GIB)

The Mixed-Language International Baccalaureate (GIB) is a special form of the International Baccalaureate. Based on contracts between the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) and the ZfA, final examinations around the globe may be held in German in the subjects of history and biology (additionally mathematics and chemistry since 2019). The other subjects are taught and examined in one of the working languages of the IBO, namely English, Spanish, or French. Examinations for the DSD II of the KMK are typically also administered alongside IBO examinations in the subject of German at GIB schools. The GIB entitles students to enter university in most countries around the world. The requirements for recognition at German universities are based on a resolution by the KMK (agreement on the recognition of the “International Baccalaureate Diploma/Diplôme du Baccalauréat International, resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education of March 10, 1986, as amended). The term GIB is not a specifically protected term; graduates receive an IB diploma. The GIB is currently offered at 34 German schools abroad.

GOVERNANCE

In education research, the term “governance” is used to discuss how a constellation of actors within an educational organization can be arranged in such a way as to optimally accomplish the various goals shared by the actors. For German schools abroad, the actors of this approach are the principal, the school board, and the administrator.

INDICATORS

Indicators are empirically recorded key figures (either qualitative or quantitative) that aim to indirectly provide information about facts that are difficult or impossible to measure. Indicators are single variables that describe the condition, nature, or quality of a complex feature (e.g. monthly income as an indicator of social class). Ideally, an indicator should be a measurable value that can be unambiguously calculated. However, since many areas in the education system are impossible or difficult to measure, indicators can more generally be circumstances, events, processes, or results that are considered by the relevant parties to reflect whether or not a certain quality criterion has been satisfied. (Example: one feature of a “good school” is the use of adequate teaching methods. How can we know whether this is the case? One possible indicator: a variety of teaching methods are used, and the teachers are able to explain why each method is used.)

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB)

The IB is an international academic qualification offered by the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) in Geneva. The IB has a standardized curriculum around the globe with externally assessed final examinations and is recognized by many universities

around the world to entitle students to begin their studies if certain conditions are met. The requirements for recognition at German universities are based on a resolution by the KMK (agreement on the recognition of the “International Baccalaureate Diploma/Diplôme du Baccalauréat International, resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education of March 10, 1986, as amended). (See also Mixed-Language International Baccalaureate.)

INTERNAL EVALUATION / SELF-EVALUATION

A project where the members of a certain institution are themselves responsible for evaluating the entire project or specific interventions (activities / measures / programmes) within it (internal evaluation). In the case of a self-evaluation, the party implementing the intervention is the same as the party evaluating it.

CRITERION

An identifier or feature that allows a more general property to be assigned to an object/person/institution. Quality criteria can for example be features that reflect a “good” object/person/institution (e.g. a “good school”, “good teaching”). However, they do not guarantee quality in any particular case; this can only be determined using quality indicators.

CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION (KMK)

The Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany (*Kultusministerkonferenz, KMK*) is an association of ministers and senators from the federal states responsible for education, universities, research, and cultural affairs. It was established by an agreement between the federal states.

The KMK was founded in 1948, before the Federal Republic of Germany itself. It originated from the “Conference of German Education Ministers” held on February 19-20, 1948 in Stuttgart, attended by participants from each of the occupation zones introduced after the end of the Second World War. The same year, after the ministers from the Soviet occupation zone were prohibited from further participation by the authorities in their zone, the ministers of education in the three western occupation zones agreed to make the conference a permanent institution. This institution was founded as the “Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder” (Conference of Ministers of Education, *Kultusministerkonferenz*) and a permanent secretariat was created to facilitate collaboration.

Address: Secretariat of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of the Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany, German Schools Abroad, Department II C, Taubenstr. 10, 10117 Berlin, www.kmk.org.

KMK REPRESENTATIVE

Each state of the Federal Republic of Germany appoints a representative who is granted a vote to represent the state’s interests in the BLASchA committee and who oversees matters relating to schools abroad on behalf of the state. These state representatives are also available as a point of contact for applicants to German schools abroad to answer questions about this service. The president of the Conference of Ministers of Education (representing all states) instructs the state representatives to represent the KMK by administering examinations at schools within the region of responsibility of each state. The KMK representatives are responsible for pedagogical and supervisory matters that fall under the responsibility of the Conference of Ministers of Education at these schools (educational programmes and qualifications), and they administer the German final examina-

tions. BLASchA arranges yearly visits to the relevant schools to conduct the oral examinations in graduating classes, and the KMK representatives typically visit the schools every two years. The concepts of examiner, head of examinations, or chairman of examinations refer to the responsibilities of the KMK representative. The KMK representatives supervise each examination region according to a four-year cycle.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission statement is a written declaration or commitment by a school regarding its pedagogical self-understanding, as well as its foundational goals and values. The mission statement answers the question: who are we and what do we stand for? It provides information about the school's pedagogical orientation and lays the foundations for strategic goals, which are then defined in consideration of the results of internal and external evaluations.

NATIONAL PRINCIPAL

In addition to the school principal assigned from Germany, regulations in the host country may also provide for the appointment of a national principal. Among other things, these national principals serve as a liaison with the national supervisory school authorities.

LOCAL TEACHERS (OLK)

In addition to foreign several teachers and federal and state programme teachers, there are also local teachers (*Ortslehrkräfte, OLK*) at every school facility abroad. Local teachers are either teachers from the region or teachers recruited from a German-speaking country that have been hired by the local school authorities under the usual conditions of local employment. Schools may also employ educators, social pedagogues, and administrative staff as local staff (*Ortskräfte, OK*) to perform extracurricular roles. Local staff and local teachers are remunerated exclusively by the local school authorities and have no legal relationship with the ZfA. To make it easier for schools to recruit local personnel in Germany, the ZfA maintains a database of applicants for German schools abroad that enables suitable applicants to be selected online. The schools can then establish contact independently.

PEER REVIEW, PEERS

A peer review is a form of self-evaluation by colleagues. Peers, or “critical friends”, are typically individuals from the same profession. In a school setting, this could for example be a group of colleagues from a neighbouring school. Peers are invited to visit the school as a team to determine the school's quality in specific areas agreed between this team and the school or standardized quality areas, then report their findings back to the school.

Within the AQM process, peer review is performed after self-evaluation in preparation for a federal-state inspection (BLI). A “visit from critical friends” is the first step away from self-evaluation and towards a critical external perspective.

PROCESS FACILITATION

Process facilitation is part of the professional support system of the federal and state governments to secure and develop the quality of German schools abroad. Each process facilitator is responsible for a regional association of German schools abroad.

The process facilitators deployed around the world provide systematic support to German schools abroad with the implementation of development projects mandated within the

AQM framework and independent development projects (mission statement, school curriculum, school programme, lesson development, self-evaluation, peer review, federal-state inspection, school action plan, quality seal). Process facilitators have a contractual relationship with the ZfA as foreign service teachers and support schools in specific regions with development.

Each of the 15 (2020) global training regions has a “Regional Training Centre” that serves as an office for process facilitation by the Central Agency for Schools Abroad (ZfA) within the region. The 16 (2019) process facilitators of the ZfA are responsible for the entire training tableau of their regions, in consultation with the Central Agency and the Pedagogical Advisory Board, and are also responsible for preparing and implementing “Regional Training Courses” (*Regionalen Fortbildungen, ReFos*).

Once ReFos have been announced by the process facilitators, the schools in each region can register potential applicants. These applicants then serve as multipliers by propagating the contents of the ReFos to their schools. The advice offered by process facilitators respects the autonomy of each school and its specific choices regarding processes and working priorities. The standards established by the funding bodies within the framework of the German foreign cultural relations and education policy, and in particular the orientation framework for German schools abroad, provide a foundation for this work.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

The specialized pedagogical supervision for German schools abroad is provided differently in each of the eight regions. Each region is overseen by a regional representative of the ZfA (federal supervisory authority for schools) who is responsible for any questions relating to staffing, financial, and material support for institutions in the region. Their systemic and pedagogical core tasks include steering quality development in schools by target agreements, exerting oversight over schools, and giving advice on school development, information, complaint, and conflict management systems, staffing management and development by the school’s principal, and the implementation of new educational policy projects and pedagogical innovations.

INTERNAL TEACHER TRAINING (SchiLF)

Closely linked to regional training measures. Many schools have a SchiLF coordinator who determines the school’s individual and specific needs. The SchiLF coordinator is responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating further training measures.

SCHOOL PROGRAMME

School programmes are a conventional control instrument for school development processes in German-speaking countries. A school programme is a binding position paper, regularly evaluated and updated, that states the key principles of the mission statement and specifies how short- and long-term development goals and measures will be clarified, prioritized, and implemented.

SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The school authority that sponsors a German school abroad is typically a school association that consists of members with a special interest in maintaining and developing a school facility with a focus on German on behalf of students from Germany and elsewhere. The school association elects a school board from among its members.

SCHOOL BOARD

The school board represents the school association externally and internally. It makes decisions about the school's workforce and concludes or terminates employment contracts (contractual partners) on behalf of the association. Pedagogical leadership of the school falls outside of the scope of responsibility of the board.

HOST COUNTRY

The country in which a German school abroad is located. German schools abroad are regulated by the laws and authorities of their host countries in different ways.

PRINCIPAL

The principal is the school's headmaster or head teacher; this refers to a single individual, as opposed to the extended principal's office.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Many of the students attending German schools abroad change schools at some point in their education. Students who change schools after beginning their education are called transfer students. They may require special support due to differences in learning prerequisites, especially language skills.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A steering committee coordinates the school development process; it acts on behalf of the principal with a mandate from the teacher's conference (*Gesamtkonferenz*) and reports to other committees. Each school group is represented in the steering committee. In the context of AQM, the scope of the steering committee can extend beyond pedagogical areas, provided that the school administration and the school board are adequately represented; if so, it may be described as an AQM steering committee.

RESPONSIBLE PERSONS

The persons responsible for the school are the board, the principal, and the administrator.

ADMINISTRATOR

The administrator manages the administration of school operations. In this role, he (or she) supports school development, together with the employees of the administrative department and in collaboration with the principal and the board. Hierarchically, the principal is the superior of the administrator.

ZfA SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

The scientific advisory board consists of around 15 members from higher education who specialize in DaF, DFU, digitalization, school development, and inclusion. It advises and supports the ZfA on technical matters from a scientific perspective.

CENTRAL AGENCY FOR SCHOOLS ABROAD (ZfA)

In 1968, the Federal Foreign Office transferred its federal supervisory authority for schools to the Central Agency for Schools Abroad (ZfA), which is part of the Federal Office of Administration. On behalf of the Federal Foreign Office and in collaboration with the federal states, the ZfA supports over 140 German schools abroad and around 1,000 national schools that offer the German Language Diploma (DSD) of the Conference of Ministers of Education. The tasks of the ZfA include providing pedagogical, staffing, and financial support to schools operating abroad.

The ZfA assigns around 2,000 teachers from Germany to positions abroad and supports them with pedagogical and personal issues. It promotes quality-oriented school development and supports the establishment of new schools with German profiles. The ZfA advises private and public schools (school association boards, school administrations, and state partners abroad) on pedagogical, economic, and organizational matters. The advice provided by the ZfA aims to allow the schools to organize themselves independently and develop their competitive strength on international “education markets”.