

## Call for papers – Special issue

### ***University Access and Study of Non-Traditional Students: The Situation in Austria, Germany and Switzerland.***

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## To the main topic

In Austria, Germany, and Switzerland (D-A-CH countries), school-leaving qualifications, such as the *Abitur*, the *Allgemeine Universitätsreife*, the *Maturität*, or the *Berufsmaturität*, primarily entitle students to enter higher education. Most students enter higher education via such school-based qualifications. In all three countries, however, it is possible, based on vocational education and training qualifications, to obtain a university entrance qualification and to apply for a course of study even without such a school leaving certificate. In Germany, the level of vocational education and training qualification determines which fields of study can be chosen by those applicants (subject-specific or general university entrance qualification) and which other requirements, such as aptitude tests, must be met. While in Germany studies can be started at universities and universities of applied sciences, in Austria and Switzerland mainly universities of applied sciences are open for vocationally qualified persons without university entrance qualification or *Matura*. However, there are exceptions here as well, e. g., the *Studienberechtigtenprüfung* or the *Berufsreifeprüfung* in Austria, in Switzerland the *Passerelle*, the *sur dossier* for studies at universities of applied sciences or entrance examinations or “special admissions” for studies at a university. We refer to students without a school-based university entrance qualification who obtain an authorization to study based on their vocational education and training qualification as *non-traditional* students, thus using this term in a narrow definition (cf. WOLTER et al., 2015; SLOWEY & SCHUETZE, 2012).

This issue of the magazine is dedicated to institutional and individual perspectives on college access, study, and postgraduation transitions for this group, focusing on both undergraduate first degree programs and participation in postgraduate programs (including degree and certificate programs). Qualitative and/or quantitative studies are welcome.

The D-A-CH countries have in common that non-traditional students form a small group. However, both from a biographical and theoretical perspective of social inequality, but also for educational and higher education policy reasons, the so-called Third Educational Path (FREITAG, 2012) and its students are relevant. Access to higher education for this group makes it possible to correct educational decisions over the life course and to respond flexibly to further professional training needs and to personal, educational interests. Their access to higher education can contribute to the social opening of higher education institutions (WOLTER et al., 2015) and to the stabilization of demand for higher education and to meeting an increased need for highly skilled workers. Non-traditional students also embody the interest in lifelong learning. At the same time, education policy and higher education lecturers continue to ask whether students without a school-based university entrance qualification can successfully complete a degree program and in what ways they can be supported to do so.

Two levels of consideration can be taken into account, both in a comparison between the D-A-CH countries and at the respective country or university level: the institutional and the individual level. Institutionally, questions arise such as:

- What regulations on university access without a school-leaving certificate exist in the three states? To what extent are they used? How much time do they require?
- How are the regulations implemented in the federal states or cantons and at the universities? Are there differences between undergraduate studies and continuing education courses (and within continuing education courses, e. g., between degree programs, certificate courses, and their possible accumulation into degree programs)?
- What justifications are used to establish *which* form of advising and support services for the target group? How do these prove themselves?
- Which higher education institutions do many vocationally qualified students enroll in and why? Are these universities more “open”? Are they trying to attract the target group, or is there a higher degree of fit or suitability in the courses offered or the forms of study?

With a view to individual decisions and educational trajectories, the following topics could be the subject of contributions, whereby a comparison with other student groups is of particular interest:

- What are the study motives of non-traditional students? How is their decision process to study? How is the transition to higher education?
- Do the study motives, study courses, study experiences, or support needs differ between undergraduate and postgraduate studies?
- How does the study program progress and is it completed successfully? Are there effects of regulated trial studies (Probstudium) in Germany?
- To what extent and with which motives do students make the transition from a bachelor's degree to a master's degree or a doctorate?

- How is the transition to work structured? What occupational returns are achieved by university graduates without a school-leaving certificate?

## **References**

**Freitag, W.** (2012). *Zweiter und Dritter Bildungsweg in die Hochschule. Forschungsstand und Forschungsbedarfe*. Hans-Böckler-Stiftung, Arbeitspapier 253. Düsseldorf: Hans-Böckler-Stiftung.

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**Wolter, A., Dahm, G., Kamm, C., Kerst, C. & Otto, A.** (2015). Nicht-traditionelle Studierende in Deutschland: Werdegänge und Studienmotivation. In U. Elsholz (ed.), *Beruflich Qualifizierte im Studium: Analysen und Konzepte zum Dritten Bildungsweg* (p. 11–33). Bielefeld: W. Bertelsmann Verlag.

## **Guidelines regarding the journal**

The ZFHE is a peer-reviewed online journal that publishes scientific contributions of practical relevance concerning current higher education development issues. The focus is on didactical, structural, and cultural developments in teaching and learning. Topics that are innovative and still regarded as open in respect of their design options are preferred.

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## **Submission information**

German or English contributions may be submitted in two possible formats:

**Scientific contributions** within the main theme should comply with the following criteria: The contribution...

- presents innovative perspectives, arguments, problem analyses etc. on the key topic;
- focuses on essential aspects of the key topic;
- is theoretically supported (i.e. it offers a clear connection to the scientific discourse of the topic under discussion);
- provides scientific insights with added value at least in some parts;
- clearly elucidates the methodology used to acquire knowledge;
- follows the relevant citation rules consistently (APA style, 6th edition);

- comprises up to 33,600 characters (incl. spaces, as well as cover page, abstract, bibliography and author information)

**Workshop reports** comprise the instructional presentation of practical experience, good practice examples, design concepts, pilot projects, etc. Workshop reports should comply with the following criteria:

- demonstrates potential for knowledge transfer;
- describes illustrative aspects and factors for the purpose of theory formation;
- systematically and transparently presented (e.g., no incomprehensible clues to details in an area of practice);
- follows the relevant citation rules consistently (APA style, 6th edition);
- up to 21,600 characters (incl. spaces, as well as cover page, abstract, bibliography and author information).

## **Submission and review schedule**

**June 20, 2022 – Submission deadline for complete articles:** Please upload your contribution(s) to the ZFHE journal system (<https://www.zfhe.at>) in the corresponding section (scientific contribution, workshop report) of ZFHE 17/4 issue in anonymous format. To do so, you must first register as an author in the system.

**September 05, 2022 – Feedback/Reviews:** Scientific contributions and workshop reports are evaluated in a double-blind process (see below).

**October 17, 2022 – Revision deadline:** Where necessary, contributions may be revised according to feedback and recommendations from the reviews.

**December, 2022 – Publication:** In December 2022, the finalized contributions are published under <https://www.zfhe.at> and also made available in print.

## **Review Process**

All submitted contributions will be examined in a double-blind peer review process to guarantee scientific quality. The editors of the current issue propose the reviewers for the respective theme and allocate individual contributions to the reviewers; they also determine which contributions will be accepted. The selection of reviewers and the review process for each thematic issue are always supervised by a member of the editorial board.

## **Formatting and submission**

In order to save valuable time with the formatting of the contributions, we kindly ask that all authors work with the template from the beginning. The template can be downloaded from the ZFHE website under the following links:

[https://www.zfhe.at/userupload/ZFHE\\_17-4\\_TEMPLATE\\_de.docx](https://www.zfhe.at/userupload/ZFHE_17-4_TEMPLATE_de.docx)

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Since we must be able to edit the texts, they must be submitted unlocked/unprotected in in Microsoft Word (.doc), Office Open XML (.docx), Open Document Text (.odt) or Plain Text (.txt) format. Please do not submit any PDF files! Submissions in the “Scientific Contribution” and “Workshop Report” categories must first be made in anonymous format in order to guarantee the double-blind review process. Please remove all references to the author(s) of the document (including in the document properties!). Upon a positive review result, this information will be re-inserted.

### **Questions?**

If you have any questions regarding the content of the issue, please contact Walburga Freitag ([freitag@dzhw.eu](mailto:freitag@dzhw.eu)), Christian Kerst ([kerst@dzhw.eu](mailto:kerst@dzhw.eu)) or Jessica Ordemann ([ordemann@dzhw.eu](mailto:ordemann@dzhw.eu)).

For technical and organizational questions, please contact Elisabeth Stadler ([office@zfhe.at](mailto:office@zfhe.at)).

### **We look forward to your submissions!**

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