

Framework regulations for running certification programs

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This document is a translation of an original legal text in German. It is for information purposes only and provided in order to outline the content of the German original. In all matters of interpretation, the German original shall take precedence.

1 Scope

(1) The Steinbeis+Akademie offers certification courses in the field of continuing professional development/staff training. Responsibility for the thematic design and quality assurance of certification courses is held by the Steinbeis+Akademie in collaboration with the institute running each course. Responsibility for the organization and administration of certification courses lies with the Steinbeis+Akademie institute carrying out the course, based on defined quality standards.

(2) Prevailing certification rules define uniform standards as well as the design and procedures for all certification courses offered by the Steinbeis+Akademie. These rules are supplemented by the constitution of the Steinbeis+Akademie and the certification examination rules applicable to individual certification courses.

2 Basis

The legally binding basis for running certification courses is provided by the proposed and approved certification examination rules of the institute carrying out each course. The content of certification examination rules is based on the quality standards of the Steinbeis+Akademie as determined by these rules and related guidelines.

3 Qualifications

Certification courses may be offered as Advanced Studies or Basic Studies. The following table outlines possible types of qualifications for advanced and basic courses and the requirements to which they are subject.

Subject Area	Degree	Level of Knowledge	Admission Requirements	Scope of course	Evidence of academic achievement (minimum)
Advanced Studies	Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS)	In-depth knowledge in different fields; Interdisciplinary technical knowledge; Basic knowledge of scientific work	University entrance qualification Or vocational qualification Possibly further conditions fixed in the Code of Civil Procedure	≥ 300 hours	Written exam/Case and written elaboration
	Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS)	Broad, comprehensive professional knowledge Basic knowledge of scientific work	University entrance qualification Or vocational qualification Possibly further conditions fixed in the examination regulations	≥ 150 hours	Written exam/Case and written elaboration
Basic Studies	Diploma of Basic Studies (DBS)	Deepened knowledge in the respective field	No qualification except those who are fixed in the examination regulations	≥ 90 hours	Written exam/Case or written elaboration
	Certificate of Basic Studies (CBS)	Basic knowledge in the respective field	No qualification except those who are fixed in the examination regulations	≥ 30 hours	Written exam/Case or oral exam

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4 Admission requirements

- (1) Prerequisites for admission to an advanced certification course (qualification: DAS or CAS) are either a university entrance qualification or at least three years of appropriate vocational experience. Additional admission requirements may be laid down by respective certification examination rules.
- (2) There are no special admission requirements for acceptance to take a basic certification course (qualification: DBS or CBS), unless stipulated by the admission requirements of the respective certification examination rules of the institute conducting the course.

5 Certification committee

- (1) Responsibility for the organizational aspects of running certification courses, as well as organizing training, exams relating to sections of training, and final examinations, lies with the management of the institute running the course. To this end, a certification committee is appointed.
- (2) The members of the certification committee are the institute management, a lecturer with a scientific background working on the particular course, and a member of administrative staff at the respective institute. One member of the certification committee is elected to be committee chair. The possibility of an institute partner performing a consultative role should be regulated by the respective partnership agreement.
- (3) The role of the certification committee is to:
 - + Recognize or accept the validity of external and internal achievements
 - + Approve withdrawals from examinations
 - + Extend project/work deadlines in coordination with examiners
 - + Change the format of examinations to make allowances for disabilities
 - + Assess the successful or unsuccessful completion of required qualifications
 - + Adjudicate over instances of cheating
 - + Conduct reassessment and appeal proceedings
- (4) Decisions passed by the certification committee are subject to majority votes. In the event of a tie in votes, the chair shall decide on the outcome of the vote. Decisions made by the certification committee are documented in meeting minutes. Decisions made by the certification committee are to be communicated to affected parties in writing.

6 Running of examinations

- (1) Examinations are conducted by the lecturers with primary responsibility for courses who have been appointed as examiners by the Steinbeis+Akademie. For basic courses, lecturers and other appointees with proven experience in professional practice or education may be chosen as examiners if they have the same or equivalent qualification as the qualification gained through the examination. With advanced courses, the examiners of certification examinations must hold a bachelor's degree; the examiners of diploma examinations must hold a master's degree.
- (2) Oral exams are, as a rule, conducted by two examiners or one examiner plus an observer. A person may be only be appointed as an observer to examiners if they also have at least the same or equivalent qualification as the qualification gained through the examination. Key findings are captured in examination minutes.
- (3) After successful participation in a certification module, the participants of certificate courses are automatically approved and registered for exams as captured in the certification examination rules. Possible exemptions to this arrangement must be laid down by the certification committee of the institute conducting the course.

(4) Examination dates, examination formats, and examination criteria must be communicated to participants at the beginning of the course.

7 Allowances for disabilities

Allowances for disabilities are to be approved by the certification committee subject to an application from course participants with a proven disability or chronic illness. An allowance for a disability may be granted in the form of a deadline extension or recognition of an equivalent achievement attained in another form.

8 Evidence of achievement

(1) Successful participation in training courses is graded in writing and documented in a graded or ungraded confirmation of achievement. Definitions of the manner, scope, and admission requirements for examinations are captured in the respective certification examination rules.

(2) Evidence of achievement is deemed as fulfilled if at least 50% of the maximum attainable result is achieved.

8.1 Written exams

Written exams are tests completed alone or simultaneously with other course participants under supervision over a fixed period of time. They are used to test knowledge of a subject based on a task unknown to the candidates.

8.2 Oral exams

Oral exams entail a presentation prepared beforehand or a short talk followed by an interview. The aim is to test candidates' ability to explain and present topics within the context of a specialized area.

8.3 Case studies

(1) Case studies are used to allow course participants to outline and present a usually fictitious situation, including influencing factors. These factors mean that one or several plausible solutions may be arrived at. To present potential solutions, course participants may make a presentation or give a talk.

(2) Case studies are an adaptable method of providing evidence of achievement, with a focus on identifying solutions based on subject matter learned on a course. Case studies may be assessed in writing (e.g. as a test) or orally (e.g. as a presentation, possibly followed by a discussion). Test studies may be worked on alone or in a group with other examinees.

(3) The examiner may request that case study findings be submitted in writing or in the form of a presentation.

8.4 Written assessments (transfer paper, project paper)

(1) Written assessments of a topic may be requests in the form of a transfer paper or a paper on a course project. Such assessments enter into a previously covered topic in more detail.

(2) The aim of transfer papers is to capture in writing how specific topics of a seminar or course can be applied or implemented. In agreement with the lecturer responsible for the course, they may be submitted as an individual written paper or in the form of a presentation.

(3) Project papers deal with a project dealing with a certain task associated with the content of the course. The idea is that methods and insights acquired on the course are applied and implemented within the context of the project.

(4) If a written assessment is completed before or after a supervised examination, course participants must confirm in writing that they wrote the assessment themselves and that only the named sources and materials were referred to.

(5) Assessment timings and submission deadlines are defined by institute management. Timings and deadlines are binding for all participants. In the event that evidence of achievement cannot be provided in the timeframe defined by the institute conducting the course, the examinee must submit a request to the respective institute for a deadline extension. Decisions regarding deadline extensions are made by the examiner with the agreement of the certification committee.

9 Assessment of achievement

(1) Course achievements are evaluated by the examiner or examiners. Evaluation is based on the following:

Grade	Description of grade		Meaning	General assessment
1.0 – 1.4	Very good	=	Outstanding achievement	Passed
1.5 – 2.4	Good	=	Significantly above-average achievement	Passed
2.5 – 3.4	Satisfactory	=	Average achievement	Passed
3.5 – 4.4	Sufficient	=	Despite shortcomings, requirements were still fulfilled	Passed
4.5 – 6.0	Insufficient	=	Requirements were not fulfilled satisfactorily	Failed

(2) In the event that an assessment of achievement comprises more than one assessment, the grade is calculated by taking the average score. The grade is only calculated to one decimal place and further decimal places are ignored without rounding.

(3) In the event that no grade is awarded, it must be mentioned that the assessment is not graded.

(4) To pass an examination, a grade of at least Sufficient or Passed must be achieved.

(5) If the assessment of achievement is based on group work, it must be communicated in advance whether the examination will be in a group or individually. In the event that an examinee requests to be assessed individually, this request must be granted.

10 Repeating of assessments of achievement

(1) It is not permissible to repeat a passed assessment.

(2) In the event that an assessment is not passed, a course participant may repeat the assessment of achievement. An assessment can only be repeated another two times. Repeat assessments must be carried out within six months of the first assessment. If neither of the repeat assessments is passed, the overall assessment of achievement is deemed conclusively failed.

11 Withdrawal, sickness, absence

- (1) In the event that a course participant withdraws from an examination, the assessment is recorded as not conducted. Withdrawal from an assessment must be substantiated. The institute must be informed without delay in writing, providing the reason for withdrawing from an assessment.
- (2) An examination is considered failed if, after a binding registration, a course participant fails to attend an examination at the arranged time, or misses the exam, or withdraws from the exam without good reason. Subsequent withdrawal for medical reasons is not accepted.

12 Cheating

In the event that a course participant attempts to influence the outcome of an assessment (or that of another participant) through deceitful means, or attempts to use unauthorized aids, or brings aids to an assessment after announcement of a task, the assessment will be graded "Insufficient."

13 Review of assessments

Course participants may within four weeks of the announcement of examination results request permission to view their written assessment again, or view the grading of the assessment or oral examination minutes. Requests to view papers or grading minutes may be submitted orally through the institute management.

14 Appeal for reassessment

- (1) Examinees may appeal for a review of the grading of an assessment within four weeks. To help formulate objections, examinees must be allowed to view their examination papers and corresponding sample solutions. Appeals for reassessment must be submitted in writing, stating reasons, to the management of the institute conducting the course.
- (2) As part of the appeal process, the written objection will be forwarded to the examiner. The examiner is obligated to consider the appeal submitted by the examinee and, to the best of their ability, remember their original reasoning, review the parts of the assessment that have been challenged, and re-assess their evaluation.
- (3) As part of the appeal process, the certification committee will submit an evaluation on the basis of the appeal, examination achievements, and statements made by the examiner. The decision of the certification committee is binding and the course participant must be informed of the decision in writing.

15 Archiving

Written assessments and marking will be archived for three years after the awarding of grades. Course participants may ask to view their assessments and grades by submitting a written request to the management of the institution responsible for the examination.

16 Course completion documents

- (1) Course participants receive a completion certificate after successful completion of the examination.

This contains the following information:

- + Personal title, first name, family name, date of birth
- + Description of the qualification gained in keeping with Section 3

- + Field of training and specialization
- + Description of modules and assessment, if applicable
- + Overall grade, if applicable
- + Timing of the course
- + Completion date, or date when the last examination was completed
- + The institute that runs the course, plus signature
- + Stamp of the academy, plus signature

(2) The format of the course completion documents will be defined by the Steinbeis+Akademie and may only be used in the form in which they are provided. Changes to issued certificates are not permitted.

(3) In the event that examinations were not passed, course participants receive a confirmation of attendance for the seminars/modules they participated in.

17 Validity

These certification rules came into effect on Jan 1, 2018.