

Degrees and their meanings

Similar degrees from other countries might differ in their academic meaning.

Someone studying medicine in Germany finishes with the German **State Examination**; the final certificate is without any awarded title.

In other countries you might receive the certificate of a **MD** (Medical Doctor) with your final examination, or a diploma of „**dr.med.**“ and so on, nevertheless all these degrees are certificates of your finished study.

So, in Germany all these documents are not accepted as an equivalence to our academic Doctor's title and therefore do not qualify for postdoc-programs for example.

After a finished study (which in many countries consists of Bachelor and Master), the academic steps differ: in Germany these steps in general are „**Promotion**“ (for a Doctor's degree) and „**Habilitation**“ (for a position comparable to an associate professor).

Instead of these two steps, many other countries however offer just one: the „**PhD**“ which therefore might be compared to a German „Promotion“ („Dr.med.“; „Dr.sc.hum.“; „Dr.rer.nat.“, and so on) of high quality.

At our faculty you therefore apply for a „Doctorate“ receiving a degree like „Dr.med.“ or „Dr.sc.hum.“, not for the „PhD“ or the „MD“ (even if there is a lot of confusion about all these terms in general, and in application forms often the term „PhD-student“ is used).

If you already are a „PhD“, it is not possible to apply for a Doctor's degree since the „PhD“ is regarded as equivalent to it and the next academic step in Germany would be the „Habilitation“.

Since each country evaluates the equivalence of foreign degrees by its own, your home country should provide the information whether a German Doctor's title will later be accepted as „PhD“ or not.

Please note that it is not possible to „translate“ degrees. Each degree you use even in e-mail signatures and letters must be written in the form awarded to you by official certificate (using degrees you don't have is against law in Germany!).

So **NEVER** use the degree „PhD“ when you have received a German Doctor's degree, except this degree has been officially accepted as equivalent by another country and you received the **legitimacy** for using it as „PhD“. In the same way you are not allowed to use the term „MD“ when you have passed the German medical state examination which is without any title.