

Germany – DGHD (2016)

dghd – German Association for educational and academic staff development in Higher Education

Introduction

dghd (German Association for Educational and Academic Staff Development in Higher Education) is the association of German speaking countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland). Its members are institutions or persons that work and do research in the field of academic development or that are interested in developing the quality of Higher Education in German speaking countries.

Website is: <http://www.dghd.de>

Status

dghd is an association with charity status since 2008 and existed as bottom-up network/workgroup (German term is “Arbeitsgemeinschaft”) since 1970. Actually dghd has about 370 members mainly from Germany spread over all federal Länder. There is a clear shift from personal to institutional membership. The annual budget is about 50.000 Euro (=43.146 GBP).

Core activities

The core activities of dghd are an annual conference, financing the publication of one book per year (sent to all members for free), organizing a newsletter, workshops and supporting special interest groups and networks.

Actually there is an effort to have an impact on political issues relating to Higher Education and research on teaching and learning in Higher Education. A funding line initiated with a proposal by dghd to fund research alongside the “Quality Pact for Teaching” (funding programme of German Ministry of Education and Research to enhance teaching quality and study conditions at German Institutions of Higher Education, from 2011 to 2020, 2 billion euros) was successful and started in autumn 2013.

The dghd representatives worked out a position paper which was discussed and approved at the member meeting 2016. The paper was sent to important political players and discussed with political representatives at the dghd annual conference 2016. For the next conference 2017 the federal Ministry of Wissenschaft, Innovation and Research (Bundesland Rheinland-Pfalz) decided to associate their yearly conference “studying successfully” with the issue “Quality Teaching” in the dghd annual conference and stresses the need of integrating academic development structurally in Higher Education Institutes.

Annual conference

dghd asks a member institution at a University to host the annual conference. Until 2011 the conferences were more profession oriented with a strong pragmatic orientation with hands-on workshops and more informal-like exchange enriched by keynotes, national and international ones. The new elected board puts effort in integrating the profession with the research orientation which has grown with a ministerial funding line on Higher Education started in 2008/2009.

The last conferences have pursued a more academic oriented scheme setting up a steering committee, a double blind peer review process for contributions and international keynote speakers. The issue of the last Conference in Bochum 2016 was “Dialogue about Academic Development – Day of Teaching and Learning” and had about 550 participants.

A Conference of Young professionals and Researchers working within the fields of academic development, e-learning or evaluation was established as a joint venture of four different associations from similar fields and is held yearly since 2013. dghd was the initiating association for the joint venture.

Publication of annual book

There is a programme line called “Blickpunkt Hochschuldidaktik” with 130 volumes which exists since the 1990s and in which the annual Conference contributions are published as well as further relevant issues. Dghd participants get it posted at home for free. If the budget allows a second book is published for free. In 2013 an editorial board was initiated to decide the demands of books to be published in the programme line.

Mail-lists, Newsletters, Special Interest Groups and Networks

dghd sustains a Mailing list, a newsletter and supports Special Interest Groups (e.g. e-learning, coaching, support of young professionals), local Networks (north-east network) or Networks with special focuses (e.g. network of PhDs, network of Universities of Applied Sciences, network theology and academic development).

Award for best doctorate or Master Thesis

To support research work on academic development dghd started to award the “Johannes-Wildt”-price for the best doctorate and the best Master Thesis in 2014. Both prices are awarded with 1.000 Euro each and is awarded yearly.

Two questions for ICED

(still the same for two years now)

1. dghd needs a qualification system for novices working within the field academic development that integrates a scholarly approach. What are good strategies for dghd in order to be successful regarding the political and the institutional demands. Do we need an “academic developers profession”? Would a Masters study programme for Academic Developers be adequate?
2. How can we support our young researchers in being more successful in the field of funded research? There are questions on supporting interdisciplinary research and international research. Standards on research methods are very different and orientation is hard. There is a lack of career pathes that academic developer researchers can go.