

Equivalence Comparisons

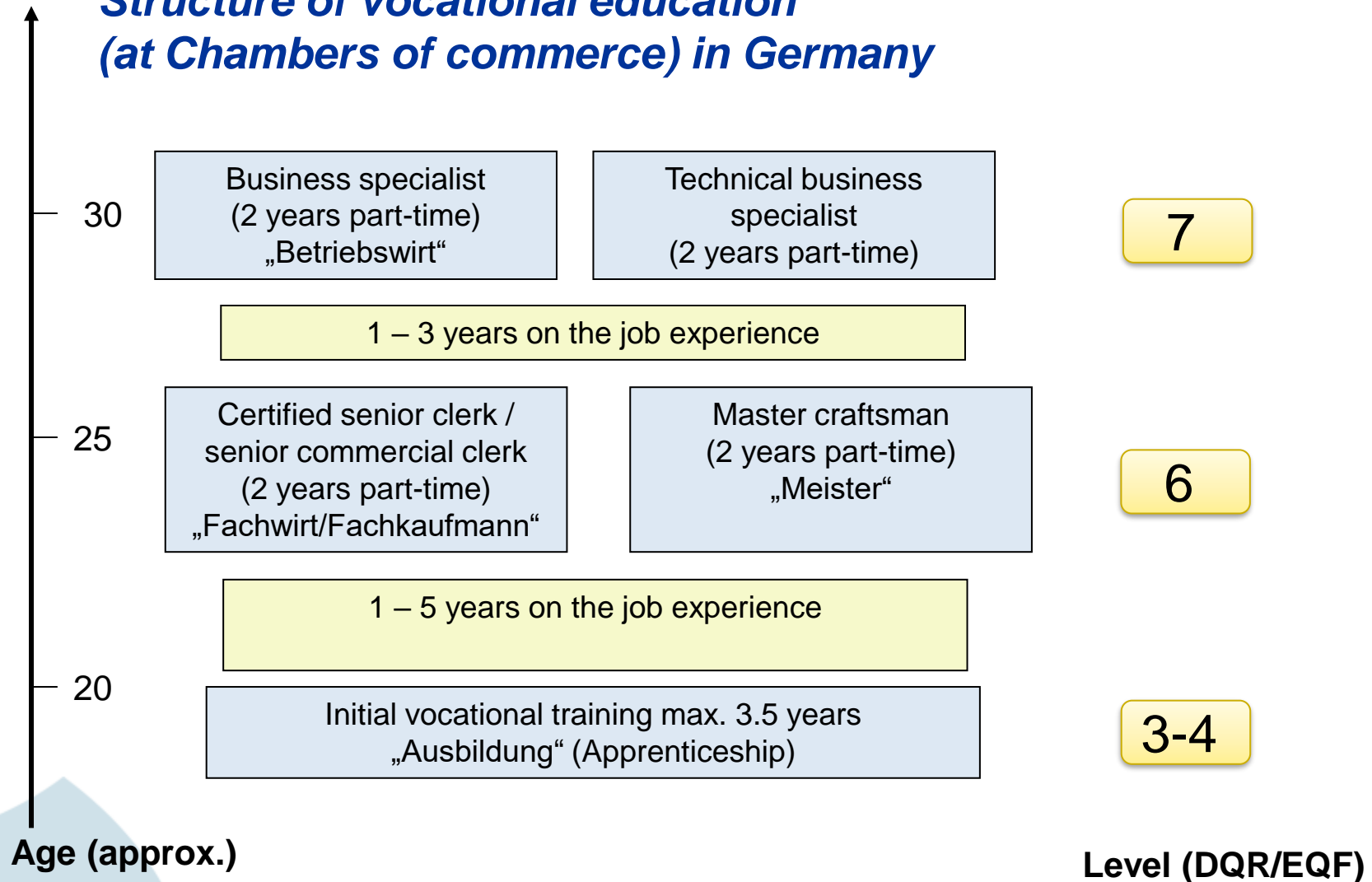
***as a Basis for Quality-Assured Recognition
of Vocational Learning Outcomes
for Study Modules at German Universities***

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The situation in Germany

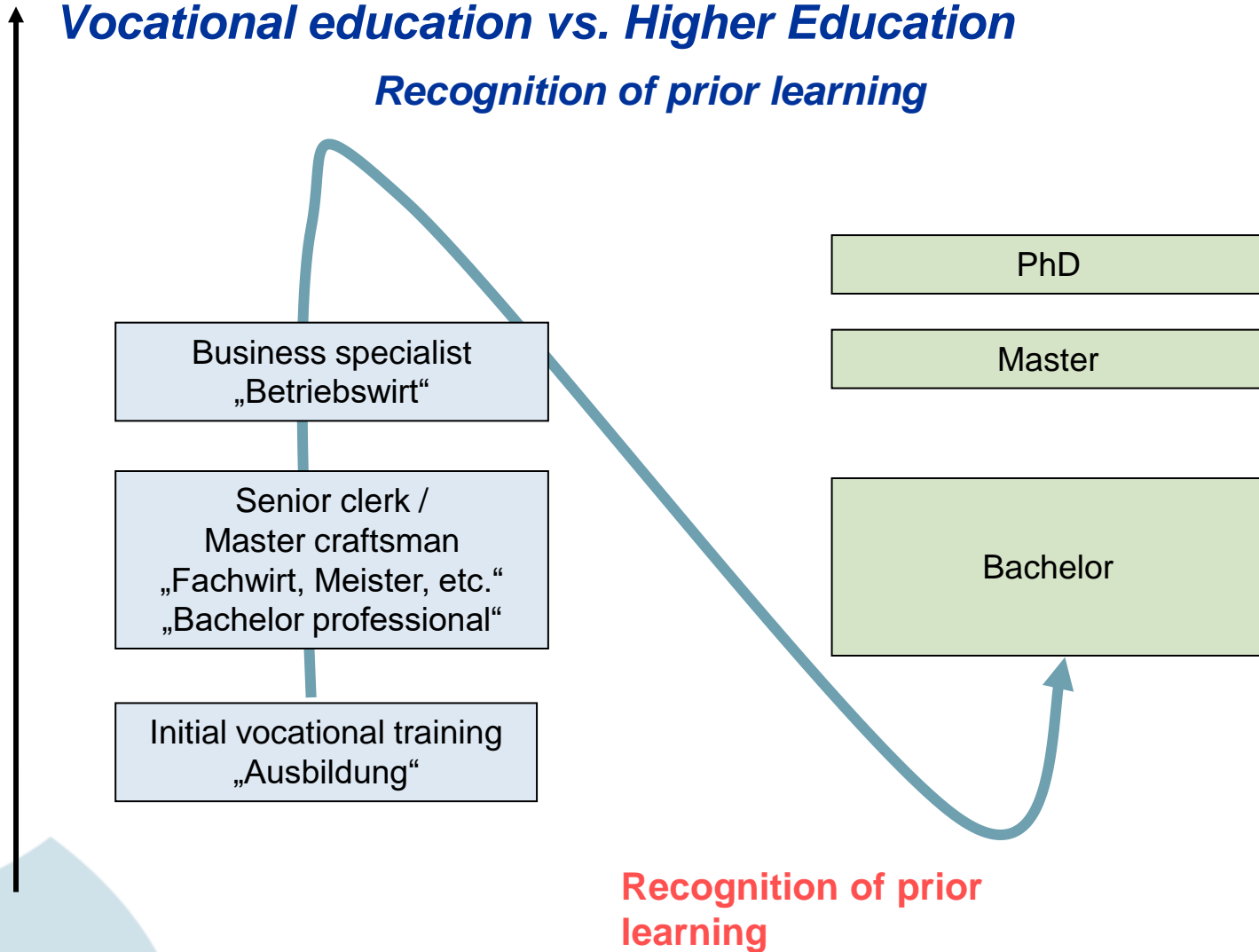
- Sophisticated vocational education system: The vocational education system has a long tradition in Germany, and provides high standards of education across a broad range of professions (325 state-approved professions).
- The systems of vocational and higher education are still largely separated.
- Employees with vocational degrees are interested in university programmes to get an university degree (bachelor/master)
- Even people with high vocational degrees and management experience (e.g. business specialists etc.) have to start their university studies in most cases at the lowest level (bachelor)
- There are a lot of redundancies between vocational training programmes and university study programmes

Structure of vocational education (at Chambers of commerce) in Germany



Vocational education vs. Higher Education

Recognition of prior learning



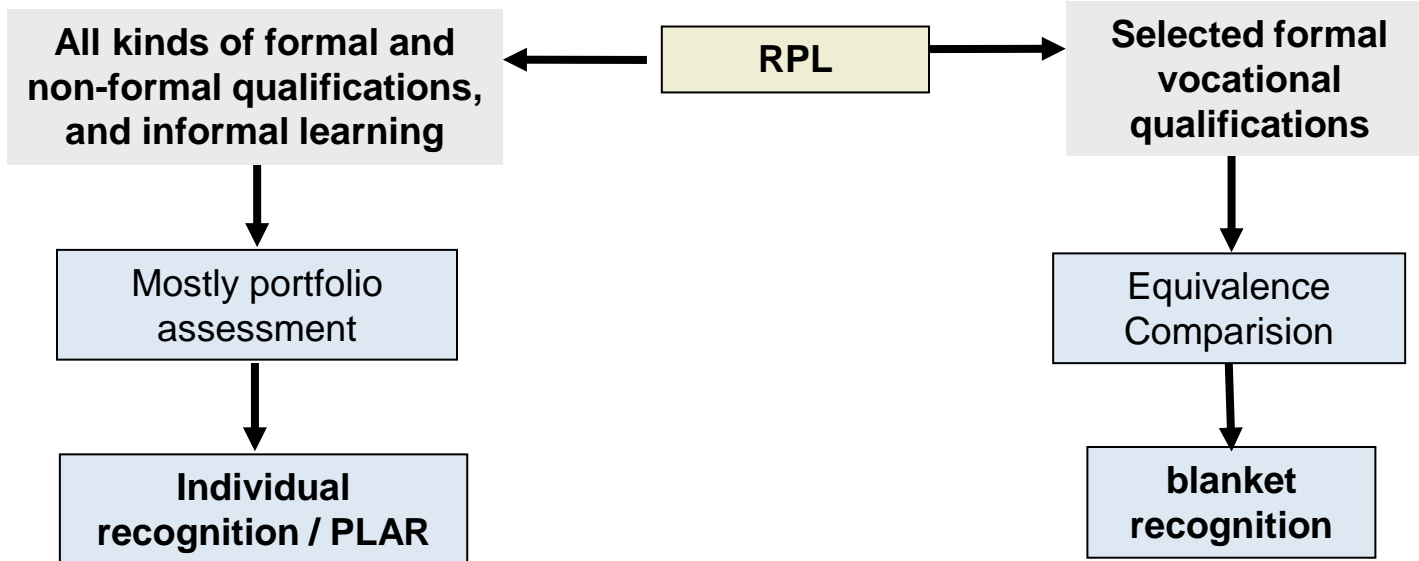
Recognition of Prior Learning

Objectives:

- Offer more flexible transitions between vocational and university higher education
- Reduce redundancies at the interface between vocational and higher education
- Stimulate life long learning
- Create new paths of education
- Validate previously acquired knowledge, skills, and competencies juster than now
- Shorten the length of study

Two options for recognition

Blanket vs. individual



	Senior industrial clerk	Distributive Trade	Organisation and Leadership	Annual accounts, financing and taxation	Cost and results accounting	Materials management	Human Resources Management	Production	Law	Σ
Bachelor of Arts Business Administration										
Voc. Law									x	x
Accounting				xx						xx
Cost and results accounting					xxx					xxx
Marketing		xxx								xxx
Production	x					x		x		xxx
Business law									x	x
Organisation			x							x
Personnel							xx			xx
Taxation Law				x						x

Individual Recognition / PLAR



Initial
counseling by
the examination
office



PLAR service helps to
prepare the portfolio



Assessment of the
portfolio by a
subject
representative
(lecturer)



Decision on
recognition or
rejection

Individual Recognition

Limits and Challenges

- The assessment of the portfolios causes a lot of work for the responsible lecturers.
- The individual application and its processing causes a high administrative effort.
- Staff is required to support and advise students in the preparation of the portfolio.
- Students often have problems providing evidence to prove the competencies they have acquired.
- Potential students are not able to find out about the amount of credit they can receive before they start their studies. Which modules can be credited is determined only through the crediting process.

The Alternative: „Blanket“ Recognition

Basic principles

- University checks only one-time the equivalence of the vocational qualification and the program of study at university (=equivalence comparison).
- The aim of the comparison is to identify those study modules that can be credited.
- University guarantees recognition for any holder of the vocational qualification
- Any holder of a certain qualification (e.g. Master craftsman, Certified senior clerk) gets exemption from equivalent university modules without individual assessment.

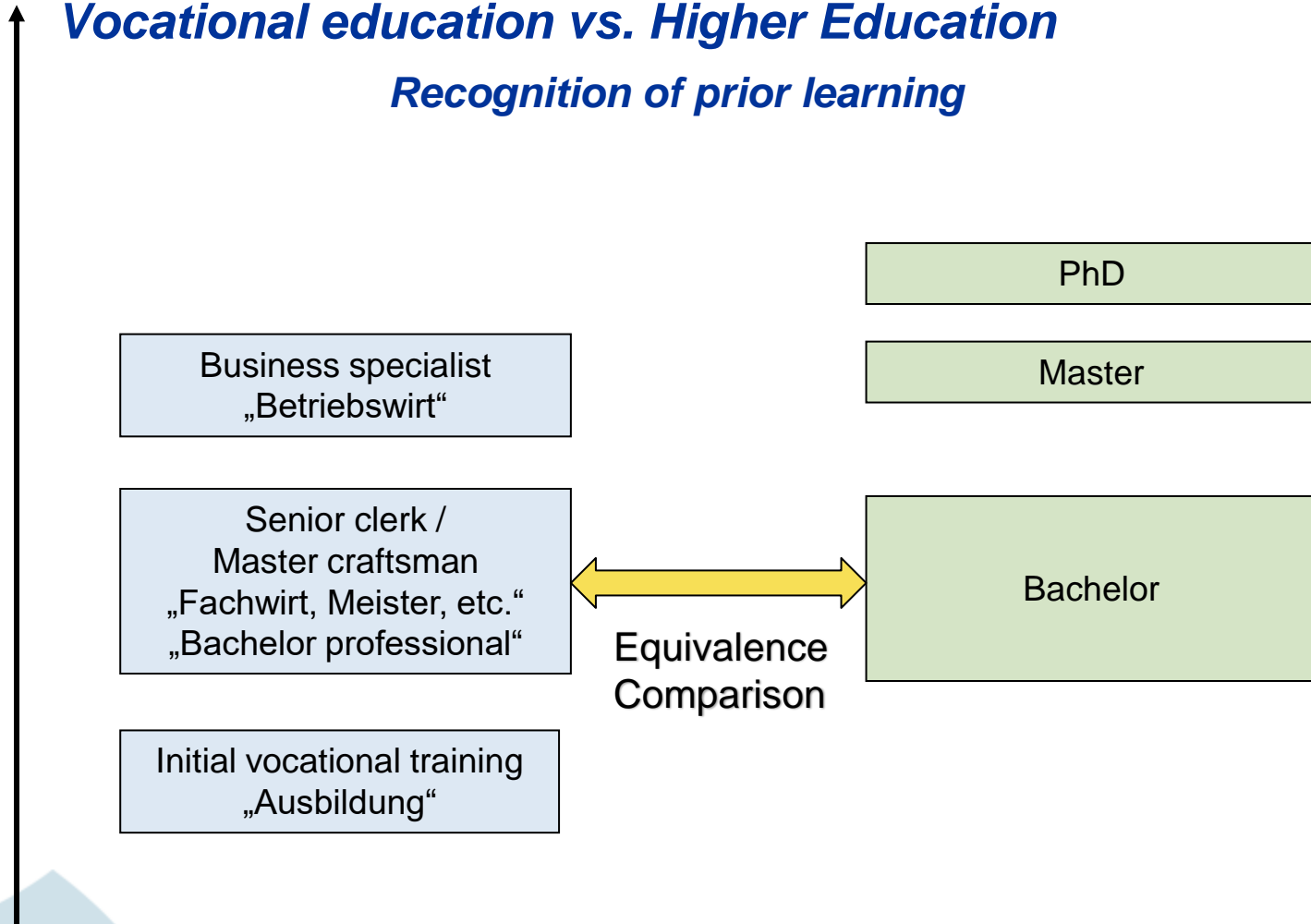
Equivalence Comparison

Characteristics

- A systematic comparison of learning outcomes from (two) different qualifications (here: vocational education vs. HE study program)
- Target: Identification of equivalent (not identical) learning units
- Objective: Implementation of a blanket recognition
- Equivalence with regard to content and level

Vocational education vs. Higher Education

Recognition of prior learning



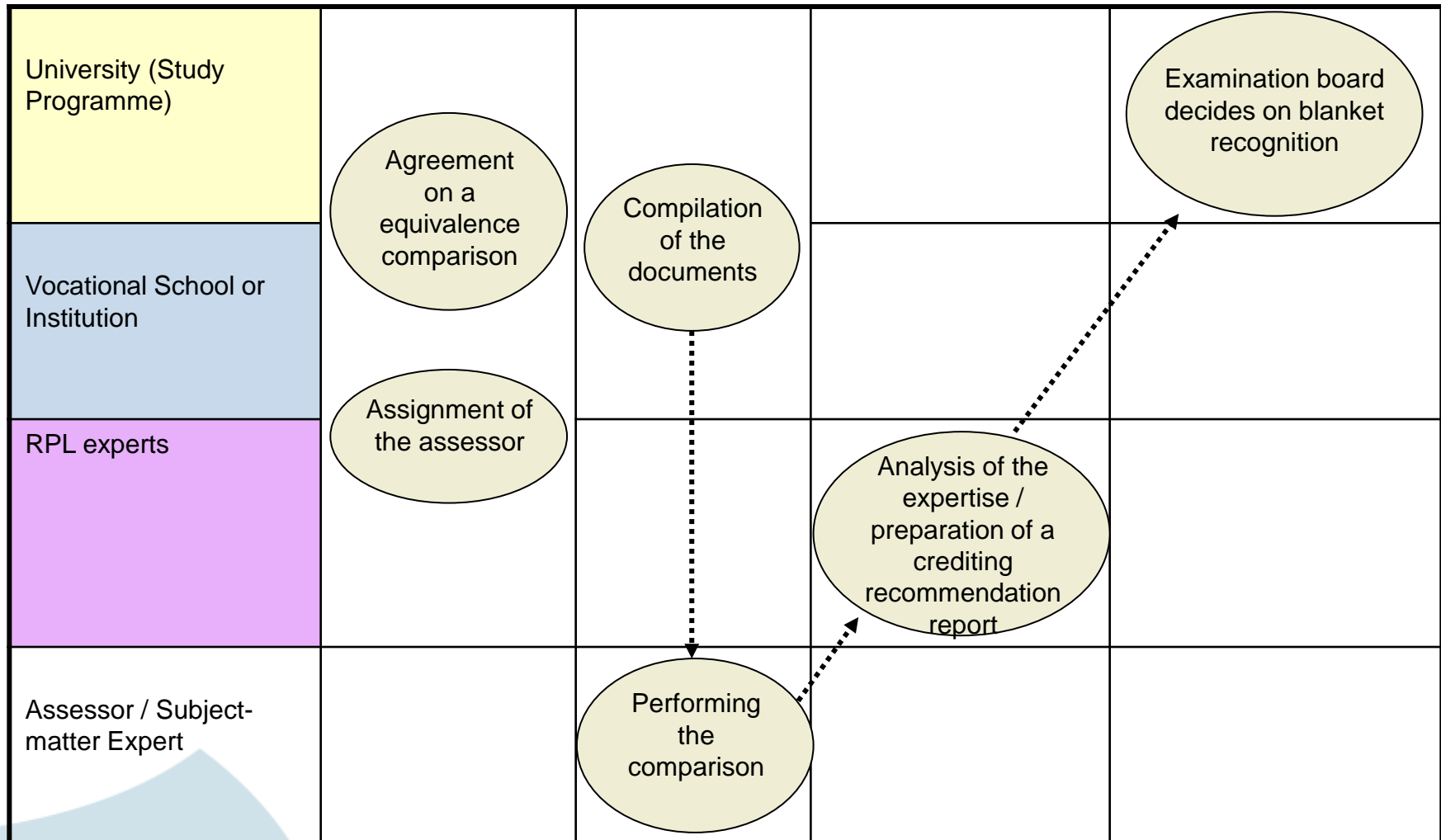
Equivalence Comparison at the University of Oldenburg

3 principles

- The comparison is performed by an independent expert
- The comparison is based on authentic evidence
- The level of learning units is measured by the MLI (Module Level Indicator)



Equivalence Comparison: Procedure



The Assessor / Expert

- Preferably an independent subject-matter „expert“.
- He/she shouldn't be employed in the institution that offers the training.
- She/he should have at least a university degree in a related discipline.
- A usual comparison takes about 40 hours.

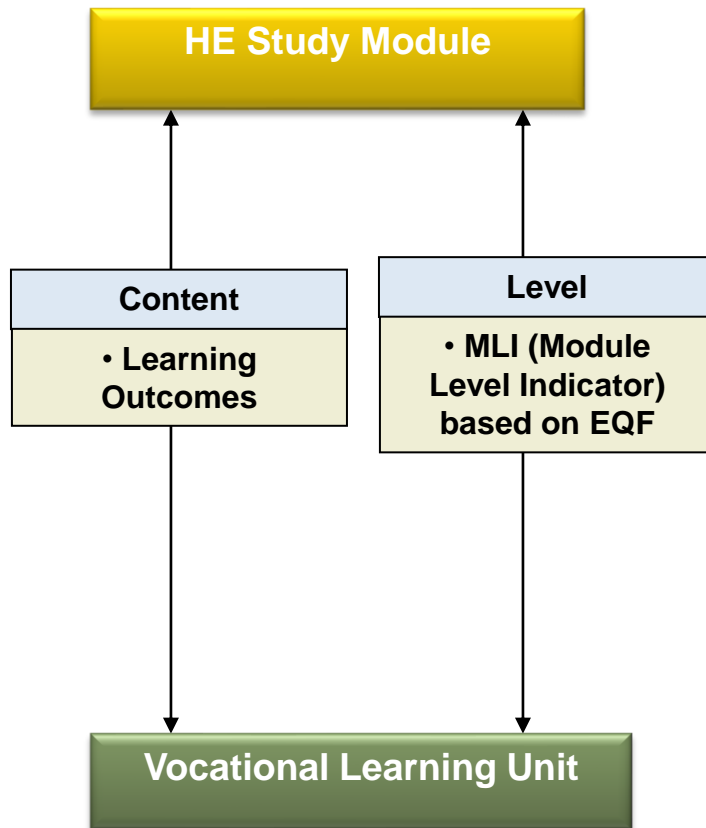
Authentic Documents as the Basis of the Comparison

Authentic documents from teaching / learning that answer the following questions **for each learning** unit:

- **What is taught and learned?**
 - Presentations of the lecturers,
 - scripts,
 - textbooks, ...

- **What is examined or assessed as learning outcomes?**
 - Examination tasks,
 - Examples of examination work,
 - Assignments or essays,
 - Examples of project reports, etc.

Equivalence Comparison



Equivalence Comparison

Experts assess

- the extent to which the contents of the module are covered by learning outcomes of the vocational qualification
- whether the level of the learning outcomes and skills to be accredited corresponds to the level of the corresponding module

Level assessment

Module A
(HE program)

Equal level or not?

Learning Unit
(Voc. Training)



An instrument for the
comparison of levels of
learning units:

Module Level Indicator
(MLI)

[https://uol.de/anrechnungsprojekte/
downloads](https://uol.de/anrechnungsprojekte/downloads)

Basis: European
Qualifications
Framework for LLL (EQF)

Results of an Equivalence Comparisons

Senior industrial clerk	Distributive Trade	Organisation and Leadership	Annual accounts, financing and taxation	Cost and results accounting	Materials management	Human Resources Management	Production	Law	Σ
Bachelor of Arts Business Administration									
Voc. Law								x	x
Accounting			xx						xx
Cost and results accounting				xxx					xxx
Marketing	xxx								xxx
Production	x				x		x		xxx
Business law								x	x
Organisation		x							x
Personnel						xx			xx
Taxation Law			x						x

Level:

SC > BA

BA-SC < 0,5

0,5 < BA-SC < 1,0

BA-SC > 1

n.a.

Learning Outcome Coverage:

x ≥ 20%

xx ≥ 40%

xxx ≥ 70%

Result:

Credit recom.

not recom.

Result of equivalence comparisons: Program-specific recognition recommendation



Results of Equivalence Comparisons (examples)

Study program: BA Business Administration

Senior Industrial Clerk	40 CP (5 Modules)
Master Craftsman	24 CP (3 Modules)
Business Specialist (Chamb. Comm.)	24 CP (3 Modules)
Senior Insurance Clerk	48 CP (6 Modules)
Senior Accountant	40 CP (5 Modules)

Study: Program: BA Pedagogy

Curative Educator	18 CP (2 Modules)
Senior Accountant	40 CP (5 Module)

Equivalence Comparisons and Blanket Recognition Experiences

- The equivalence comparisons resulted in credit amounts of 6 - 90 CP.
- In all cases, the recommendations of the experts were implemented by the study programs in the form of blanket recognition.
- Blanket recognition drastically reduces the effort required for recognition.
- Blanket recognition is used by students more frequently than individual recognition.
- Blanket and individual recognition complement each other well. Together they form a comprehensive system of RPL.

Thank you very much for your attention!

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