

# Academic Feasibility and Academic Success from a Student's Perspective

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# Academic Feasibility

- Key objective: Enabling the standard duration of study
  - Ensuring reliable and predictable academic operations
  - Minimal overlap
  - Reasonable average workload (including exam frequency)
  - Organizational aspects are communicated to students early on

# Thesis 1:

## The basics must be right!

- Sufficient resources
  - Capacity in the program and courses
  - Support options
  - Counseling and information services
- Qualification goals match in terms of content and level

# Thesis 1:

## The basics must be right!

- Workload and ECTS credits are consistent
- No overlap between courses and exams
- Instructors want to teach and continue their professional development in pedagogy

# Thesis 2: Workload is rarely distributed evenly

- Concentration of stressors over time
- In some cases, mandatory internships during the break between semesters in addition to exams → should increasingly be scheduled during the semester
  - **Students also need time off from constant stress**

# Thesis 3: Not all students take longer to graduate because they work

- If the **average standard period of study** and the **observed duration of study** differ, the reasons should be investigated
- If graduation within the standard period of study is achieved by only a fraction of students, there are likely structural problems

# Thesis 4: Semesters abroad rarely work without a loss of time

- Organization is often very time-consuming
- **Credit recognition** should be **generous**
  - Ultimately, the program's qualification goals must be met, not those of a single module
- Emphasize the aspect of **personal development**
  - and possibly award credit for
- Semester schedules vary internationally
  - but have been pushed back in Germany

# Thesis 5: Flexibility is underutilized and underpromoted

- 15 ECTS master's thesis (e.g., in teacher education programs)
- 7–8 semesters of RSZ in the bachelor's program and a correspondingly shortened consecutive master's program
- Individual study plans
- Recognition of work-study activities as internships
- Under state law: Bonus points instead of admission based on “homework”

# Thesis 5.5: Bureaucratic hurdles are too high

- **International experience**
  - e.g., long deadlines, high requirements, problems with credit recognition
- **Compensation for disadvantages**
  - e.g., current medical certificates for chronic illnesses
- **Flexibility**
  - e.g., part-time study, individual study plans, or course requirements

# Academic success

- **More than just evaluation and monitoring!**
  - A set of tools for identifying or investigating problems and driving further development
- Key objectives:
  - Ensuring the quality of competency development and the degree program
  - Assessing the feasibility of the program
  - Assessing diversity
    - Assessing content-related and organizational aspects
    - Requires closed-loop systems to evaluate the success of measures

# Thesis 6:

## Motivation is fundamental!

- Encourage prospective students to reflect
  - e.g., require a statement of purpose: Why study? Why this subject? Offer a feedback session
- Maintain motivation on an ongoing basis
  - Actively involve students in curriculum development
  - Create options
  - Demonstrate relevance and career paths
- Evaluate motivation (program survey)

# Thesis 7: There is a lack of communication and transparency

- Some students feel that their voices are not being heard
  - Evaluation fatigue
- Students are often unaware of evaluation results
  - Communication regarding this in the course
  - Website providing information on resulting measures
- Instructors often do not coordinate enough
  - e.g., to distribute the workload or coordinate modules

# Thesis 8:

## More data alone is not better

- Data must be **analyzed** and **interpreted**
  - Interpretive criteria and target values are often missing, e.g., “good” vs. “critical result” in certain evaluations
- Automatically determine key metrics (*dropout rate, duration of study, actual course of study, ...*)
  - Focus monitoring on problematic key metrics
  - And discuss what the issues are
- Monitoring measures should ideally be based on specific questions

# Thesis 9:

## Individual opinions are also valuable

*“The feedback isn’t meaningful.”*

- Small events should place special emphasis on qualitative feedback

# Thesis 10: Disadvantaged groups receive too little support

- Underrepresented groups do not enroll in higher education, are more likely to drop out, and experience discrimination more frequently
  - Social background
  - Migrants and people with migrant backgrounds
  - International students
  - Women and TINA\*
- The problem must be better identified and addressed
  - Consider whether internal targets can help
  - View diversity as an asset

# Role of accreditation

- Opportunities
  - Ensure (largely) minimum standards
  - Offering new perspectives
  - Provide feedback on perspectives for the further development of degree programs
- Limitations
  - Support implementation
  - Foster a culture of quality

# Role of accreditation

- Feasibility of study
  - Identifying and addressing structural barriers
    - Ensuring that required courses and a sufficient number of elective (or required) courses are offered
    - Early communication regarding courses and dates
    - Ensuring an appropriate workload
    - Avoiding overlaps
    - Communication regarding changes to regulations

# Role of accreditation

- Academic success
  - Verify that control loops are closed
  - Evaluate data from evaluations
    - Recommending measures to improve, for example, the feasibility of study programs and gender equity
  - Check the frequency and scope of evaluations
- Accreditation of the program demonstrates that students acquire the described competency profile
  - Requires relevant data

# Theses on Studyability

- (1) The basics have to be right!
- (2) Workload is rarely evenly distributed
- (3) Not all students stay in school longer because they work
- (4) Semesters abroad rarely work without losing time
- (5) Flexibility is underutilized and underpromoted
  - Bureaucratic hurdles are too high

# Theses on Academic Success & Dropout

- (6) Motivation is key!
- (7) There is a lack of communication and transparency
- (8) More data alone is not better
- (9) Individual opinions are also valuable
- (10) Disadvantaged groups receive too little support