

# The Berlin School of Economics as active part of the regional development

## Report within the OECD Review „Higher Education in the Region“

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### 1. Preface and Introduction

In June 2008, the „Berlin Board“, an advisory body of twelve high-level representatives from business, politics, culture, and academia to advise the Prime Minister and at the same time Mayor of the State and City of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit, suggested that Berlin participates in the OECD reviews of „Higher Education in Regions“. With higher education institutions (HEIs) and non-university research institutions playing an important role for the standing and the future economic, social, and cultural development for that knowledge-driven city region, analyzing and reviewing their impact and potential through the lens of an internationally comparative review seemed to provide ample opportunity for stocktaking and improving relationships between these sectors and the regional economy or to even boost closer collaboration. When the universities were asked to contribute to this review the Rektor Franz Herbert Rieger decided that the Berlin School of Economics, FHW, will participate in this review and use the opportunity to analyse our relation to the region. Annette Fleck and Friederike Maier were responsible for collecting the data, organizing internal discussions, participating in the meetings with the project team of the WZB and finally writing the report. We present here the main findings of our report.<sup>1</sup>

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1 The reporting team for the OECD, Ulrich Schreiterer and Lena Ulbricht WZB Berlin decided to highlight our university in special boxes of the report: special attention is put on our Dual programmes with Box 4.1 of the report (page 42), two of our study programmes are highlighted as examples for programmes tailored to needs of the regional labour market (box 4.2, page 43) and in other parts of the report special attention is put on our mentoring programme for female students with a migrant background (page 50) and the Harriet Taylor Mill-Institute (page 54). Their full report is available at the HTTP: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/30/10/43942109.pdf>

## 2. Teaching and Learning

### 2.1 Guiding Principles

One of the guiding principles at the Berlin School of Economics is to facilitate a strong link between academic theory and real-life practice. All our programmes are guided by the following principles:

- they have to prepare students for their future roles as academically trained employees in a rapidly changing world which needs people who are able to actively participate in these processes
- they have to improve students' opportunities to enter the labour market
- they have to focus on the importance of active citizenship in a democratic society
- they have to support the individual development of the students as socially responsible citizens
- they have to enable students to build and maintain a high level of knowledge.

These guiding principles materialize within our programmes in the following way: All programmes are based on a broad and multidisciplinary approach towards business and management studies or technology based studies and we combine a solid knowledge of relevant theory and methods from different disciplines like business and management studies, economics, law and social science, engineering and technologies with maths, information sciences, languages and training of „soft skills“. In each part of our study programmes students are asked to develop their ability to find solutions to real problems on the basis of their knowledge both in individual work and in group work. By developing their sense of methodology, students will be enabled to apply critical and constructive thinking to the problems at hand; they learn how to learn and how to solve problems, both in a theoretical and a practical way.

We think our programmes should prepare students for a world of global economic activities and therefore have a high degree of international aspects both in the content of our programmes and in the background of our students and professors and lecturers. We are highly aware of ecological aspects of the world developments and we therefore aim to support an approach of sustainability. We support all activities of gender equality and equality of opportunities and integrate gender and diversity aspects both in our study programmes and our daily work in the university. Over the last years, the university's commitment to gender equality and ecological issues has resulted in several respective awards.

## 2.2 *Diversity of students*

Our students do have a quite diverse background, both in terms of their educational levels, professional experiences, their social and ethnic background, and we are proud of having such a variety of people and life-experiences in our programmes. The diversity of our students is a source of inspiration and challenge in the daily teaching and learning process. As all our programmes are run in small groups with only 30 to 40 students attending a seminar or a lecture, the teaching and learning process is rather intense with a close relation between the professors or other lecturers and the students.

### 2.2.1 Bachelor and Master Programmes

We offer two distinct types of studies for Bachelor and Master Programmes: full-time or part-time university based programmes in *Faculty 1* and company-linked programmes in which the students have alternate phases of university and on-the-job training in *Faculty 2*.

All admissions to Bachelor programmes at *Faculty 1* are ruled by a numerus clausus, e.g. students have to apply and are accepted to the programme according to their overall average marks in their school leaving certificates, to their special marks in English and Maths, to waiting times and in some programmes we take positively into account if someone has already working experience in business administration or completed a vocational training. Two major entrance levels are required: either the general „Hochschulreife (Abitur)“ or the „Fachhochschulreife“ (one level below the Abitur). Students who do not fulfil these criteria have the possibility to apply according to the rules of § 11 of the Berlin Hochschulgesetz and will receive a preliminary admission to the programme. During the first year they have to prove that they are able to successfully follow the programme. In the programmes run with partner universities, the language skills and the maths skills are sometimes tested beforehand or an individual letter of motivation is needed.

With the exception of the two part-time programmes which do have a specific target group (potential entrepreneurs and already employed people), the university does not limit access to its bachelor programmes by high levels of additional requirements, but welcomes all young men and women interested in studying in its fields as potential students, irrespective whether they come from the region, from other places in Germany or from abroad.

However, in our own research on the social composition of our students we found, that students in the international programmes run with universities in England, France and other countries, which require a mandatory year in the partner universities abroad, are in average much younger than the students in the

other programmes, are more often financially supported by their parents and more often have a higher level of school leaving certificates.

The Master programmes which are run by *Faculty 1* are consecutive programmes, which require at least a Bachelor's degree and an academic knowledge in the relevant fields, i.e. in business or management studies or in economics. Most of the Master programmes are entirely held in English and try to recruit students from all over the world, a concept that works due to the high attractiveness of Berlin as a place for studying and living. More than 50% of the Master students are from other countries than Germany.

*Faculty 2* is the largest provider of company-linked programmes in Berlin. Due to the integration of the former Berufsakademie into the Berlin School of Economics in 2003, all students now receive a Bachelor's Degree. The precise number of students in each of the different parts of the programme is dependant upon the number of places offered by the participating firms.

80% of the companies are based in Berlin and Brandenburg. To participate in the programme the students need to have a contract as trainees with a company. Therefore, the actual number of participants is dependant from the development of the companies in the region and the recruitment and selection of students is entirely in the responsibility of the firms. The university does not intervene in these recruitment procedures, although we help young people in getting into contact with firms, and we offer a list of available places and give advice how to apply and inform students about the generally required skills. But the final recruitment decision lies within the firms.

The two different ways of recruitment, in *Faculty 1* by fairly anonymous processes ruled by indicators like marks and waiting times and in *Faculty 2* by highly discretionary decision making processes of responsible persons in single firms, result in a remarkable difference in the educational, ethnic and regional background of our students as the following table shows.

The students in *Faculty 2* have a higher educational level than the students in *Faculty 1*, an overwhelming majority of the students there has the highest educational level of the Allgemeine Hochschulreife, i.e. Abitur. This is in accordance with the aim of the company-linked programmes, because when they were first introduced in Baden-Württemberg, they aimed at offering an alternative for Abiturienten to a traditional university career or a traditional vocational training in the German apprenticeship system. The students in *Faculty 1* have a broader and more diverse educational background. This is in accordance with our target groups and reflects the historical background of the Fachhochschulen which should offer academic education to a broader range of students. Looking into detail of the data, we find a remarkable number of students in *Faculty 1* which come from the so-called „Zweiter Bildungsweg“ or have an Abitur restricted to business/economics studies as they are awarded by specialised schools. The di-

iversity of educational levels is one speciality the *Faculty 1* has a long experience with. It is sometimes a challenge for our teaching processes in which we have to balance between the generally high and demanding level of our academic programmes and the entrance qualifications from people with different educational backgrounds.

*Table 1: Students' Characteristics in 2008*

| <i>Characteristics</i>   | <i>Faculty 1</i> |             | <i>Faculty 2</i> |            |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|------------|
|                          | <i>abs.</i>      | <i>in %</i> | <i>abs.</i>      | <i>in%</i> |
| total number of students | 3,520            | 100,0       | 1,824            | 100,0      |
| thereof: males           | 1,663            | 47,2        | 920              | 50,4       |
| females                  | 1,857            | 52,8        | 904              | 49,6       |
| migrants*                | 484              | 13,7        | 17               | 0,9        |
| foreigners**             | 282              | 8,0         | 5                | 0,3        |
| region: Berlin           | 1,921            | 54,6        | 623              | 34,1       |
| Brandenburg              | 416              | 11,8        | 584              | 32,0       |
| educational level***     | 2,337            | 100,0       | 1,207            | 100,0      |
| Abitur                   | 1,466            | 62,7        | 1,152            | 95,4       |
| Fachhochschulreife       | 871              | 37,3        | 55               | 4,6        |

\* Bildungsinländer; \*\* including 139 guest-students from partner universities; \*\*\* only students from Berlin and Brandenburg

Source: internal data of BSE

Students in *Faculty 2* are less likely to be from Berlin, they more often come from Brandenburg, but defining Berlin-Brandenburg as one region we see that two-thirds of our students in both faculties have their origins in this region. We may therefore state that our recruiting background for the majority of students is the region Berlin-Brandenburg.

Additionally, we have to be aware that less than 1% of the students in *Faculty 2* have a migrant background, whereas their proportion in *Faculty 1* is more than 20%. Even if we exclude the 139 exchange students the proportion still is nearly 18%. With this proportion *Faculty 1* substantially contributes to the increase of the proportion of academically trained young people with a migrant background in the Berlin-Brandenburg region.

We try to increase the number of foreign students from our partner universities and from other parts of the world both as regular and as exchange students as we think that in a globalised world a multinational and intercultural learning culture is inspiring for our teaching and learning process and will help our students to develop competences for a modern working life. We have better opportunities in our faculty 1 to achieve higher numbers of foreign and exchange

students, because the programmes of this faculty are similarly structured to those at international partner universities which are much better suited for student exchange than the programmes run in *Faculty 2*.

We are quite active in presenting our study programmes in Berlin and outside. To recruit more international students we regularly go to fairs in the USA, China, Australia, Krakow and other international fairs. The proportion of exchange students (via Erasmus) and of students from other foreign countries is increasing over the last years, mainly due to our extended networking with partner universities. Berlin as an international location is one attraction, another one is the increasing number of seminars and programmes taught in English, so that those students are attracted who do not speak German. The university runs a very active international office and offers a broad variety of academic activities and daily life support.

### 2.2.2 MBA and non-consecutive Master programmes

The *Institute for Management Berlin* (IMB) offers five accredited MBA programmes, three Master programmes and two programmes leading to post-graduate certificates. In 2008 the IMB overall had 289 students inscribed.

Two MBA programmes are run full-time over a period of twelve months. They are particularly suitable for graduates and young professionals who have gained first experience in business and wish to strengthen their leadership skills to thoroughly prepare for international management positions. The *MBA European Management* is offered in cooperation with the London South Bank University (UK) and allows students to study in two European capitals. The programme qualifies for positions with companies in the European business environment. The *MBA European-Asian Programme*, also taught in English, is distinguished by its global management perspective and special focus on the Asian-Pacific economies as much as by its international group of students. This programme includes an integrated three-month company internship giving students the opportunity to utilise the knowledge they gained.

The IMB offers three part-time MBA-Programmes that enable students to combine their working life with management education. These programmes allow students to pursue part-time management education without interrupting their careers. They run over a period of 24 months. The *MBA Entrepreneurship* focuses on the needs of medium-sized companies. This programme covers a period of two years (four study periods/semester), organised in blocked periods with one week full attendance per semester and compact weekend seminars on one specific topic held every two or three weeks. The languages of tuition are German and English. The *MBA General Management – Dual Award* is held as blocked lectures and seminars in cooperation with Anglia Ruskin University

(Cambridge, UK). The key focus of this course is the business environment of companies in European trade. The languages of tuition are German and English. The *MBA Health Care Management* was developed with the assistance of experts in the area of health care management. Apart from basics in economics it trains management skills for leading positions within the health sector. Courses are held in blocks of eleven on-site phases. The language of instruction is German.

All MBA programmes are closely linked to companies either of the region or of the sector they cover. Participants have to pay fees, sometimes these fees are reimbursed by the students' employers.

Other programmes which are run by the IMB are non-consecutive Master programmes: The intercultural programme *Chinese-European Economics and Business Studies* provides students with key insights into major aspects of economic development in China and Europe. The skills taught entirely in English include analyses of specific aspects of trade relations and financial flows, and an understanding of the social and economic interrelations between these two geopolitical regions. It is a full-time programme over a period of two years. The students complete the first two terms in Berlin and then continue at the partner university, South-western University of Finance and Economics, in Chengdu, China. Students have to pay fees.

The Master programme *Sustainability and Quality Management* aims to develop specific competences in modern business management with main focus on environmental and quality Management with a clear focus on sustainable development. This part-time study programme extends over two years and takes place at two evenings per week and in several blocked seminars in German. Fees have to be paid.

The Master's programme *Labour Policies and Globalisation* is a one-year programme on Sustainable Development, Social Justice, International Labour Standards and Trade Unions. It is organised together with the University of Kassel and part of a multinational cooperation with partner universities in Brazil, India and South Africa. This unique global programme is jointly developed by universities and trade unions and other workers' organisations from around the world and aims at those candidates who have experience with labour and social movements, and who are willing to assist organisations in these fields to engage more effectively in social dialogue, public debate, and policy implementation. Participants analyse and discuss in a multidisciplinary programme the challenges of globalisation from a labour and trade union perspective. The programmes offer a multi-cultural and multiregional environment with students and lecturers coming from developing, transition and industrialised countries. Students spend the first term at Kassel university and then go to Berlin, after completion of a short internship. No fees need to be paid as the programme is subsi-

dised by organisations such as the ILO, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the Hans Böckler-Stiftung and trade unions.

Last but not least the IMB offers two certificate courses funded by InWent gGmbH. The first is Macroeconomic Policy Studies in cooperation with the FHTW Berlin and the People's Bank of China. The MPS programme (since 2000) is designed for young professionals employed in the financial sector from the People's Republic of China, Mongolia, and Viet Nam. MPS courses take 18 weeks, starting twice a year in March and September, and are held in Berlin. The second is InWent International Leadership Training (ILT) Hospital Management Asia (since 2007) which addresses managers with a first Bachelor degree and five years of professional experiences from China, Indonesia and Viet Nam working in the health care sector.

The programmes run by the IMB show that we are also specialized in further and adult education with an international perspective both in content and student profile. The IMB programmes are aimed at both younger business professionals and professionals in NGOs and trade unions as well as adult learners from developing countries.

The experiences with teaching and learning in an international and intercultural surrounding as practised in the IMB programmes have a positive spill-over on the Bachelor and Master programmes in the two faculties as the professors who teach are the same. In particular, intercultural teaching and methodologies used in our partner universities are very helpful to be used for improving our teaching in the Bachelor and Master programmes.

## 2.3 *The interrelation with regional stakeholders*

### 2.3.1 The students' relations

Since early 2000, the university is revising all its previous programmes not only due to the reorganisation process initiated by the Bachelor/Master programmes, but also in terms of the specific profile and target groups of our university. When we revise our programmes, we follow the overall idea that our programmes should reflect the needs for competences and skills both in a regional, national and international dimension. Our graduates should be enabled to be geographically mobile and to switch between different functional areas, positions and business sectors. Their grades should be based on internationally accepted standards of modern business, economics and engineering/technology curricula and give them internationally recognised skills and competences. Although not all of our students will search employment outside Berlin and Brandenburg, their studies should nevertheless enable them to do this.

All Bachelor students from *Faculty I* come in contact with the corporate world by the mandatory six months internship. We offer assistance in finding highly qualifying internships not only in the region, but also in other places of Germany or abroad. Not all internships are with private companies, some are in the non-profit sector (e.g. NGOs), in research institutes or with public authorities like ministries e.g. The B.A. Economics focuses on these latter sectors. Again, we think that a variety of employers may be considered when searching for an internship. Of all 450 internships in 2007, about 63% were in Berlin and Brandenburg, 25% in other parts of Germany and 12% of the internships were outside all over the world.

Other links between the students and the business world are the course materials used in our lectures, especially the case studies, which draw examples from the business community including some Berlin or Brandenburg based firms. Students also are in direct contact with firms when they write their thesis (Diploma, Bachelor or Master) in cooperation with a firm. The firms usually supply them with data and other useful material. Around 40% of our annual final theses are directly prepared with a Berlin or Brandenburg based firm.

Problems of Berlin-Brandenburg based firms or economic and social problems of the region are sometimes explored during our project-studies (Themenfelder). Nearly all students of *faculty I* have to participate in a project-study developed by a multidisciplinary team of lecturers. The topics cover a wide range from merger and acquisitions, the development of the service sector, corporate social responsibility to gender equality issues or managing diversity. Students are doing some empirical research, like the project-study in managing diversity focused on the situation of migrants in Berlin. In particular, the students did empirical research in firms, in community projects, discussed with teachers the situation in Berlin's schools and interviewed the Berlin Senate representative for integration. All their findings become part of their term papers. In another project-study, the students organised a conference to present the results of their studies to academics and firm representatives.

A small proportion of students is involved in research or knowledge transfer programmes related to firms in Berlin and Brandenburg. These students work as student assistants with professors of our university and are involved in the organisation of workshops, seminars or meetings with business partners in the region.

Based on our observations regarding the graduates' labour market entrance processes, we in 2008 developed a mentoring programme for female students with a migrant background which will be extended to male students from 2009 on. A group of actually 20 students is accompanied through their studies, their employment search and their first steps in the job by a group of highly professional women organised in ZONTA, an international professional women's

NGO. The women of the Berlin branch of ZONTA engage themselves as mentors for our students and the first experiences are very positive – as is reported from both sides. The mentoring project is developed and accompanied by a professor from *faculty 1* and administered by our „career service“. The project is mainly funded by the Berlin Masterplan. The responsible persons in the career service seek to extend the number of mentors and are actively working together with the association „Verband Berliner Kaufleute und Industrieller“. The Berlin branch of a big international corporation will join the mentoring programme in April 2009. We expect this programme to help our graduates with a migrant background to transform their skills and competences acquired during their studies in our university in appropriate positions in the labour market.

Our „Career Service“ offers a series of short-term training on job searching strategies, on developing business start ups, on presentation skills and communicative skills. The staffs give advices to the students on job search activities and organises seminars together with the employment agency. Cooperation here is institutionalised with the „Hochschulteam der Agentur für Arbeit Berlin Süd“. The programme is linked to „Sonderprogramme des Europäischen Sozialfonds“ and the „Job Portal“ of Berlin universities. More than 400 students per year participate in some of these activities.

The situation is different in *faculty 2* as students are employed in firms, which are at 80% based in Berlin and Brandenburg. They do have regular employment contracts, are paid according to the relevant wage agreements covering trainees, and are included in social security regulations. Parallel, they are students at our university.

The list of participating firms is long (more than 480 firms) and ranges from very small ones like chartered accountants to medium-sized firms in the tourism, banking, insurance and trade sectors up to international corporations like Bayer Schering, Bombardier Transportation or Daimler. Some public employers like the Berlin Stadtreinigung (BSR) are participating as well in the company-linked study programmes. Many of the bigger firms offer places not only in one study programme but in several: Bayer Schering for example employs students in the programmes Business Administration for Manufacturing, International Business Administration, Business Information Technologies and Information Technologies. Or another example: The Deutsche Bahn has students in the programmes Business Administration for Manufacturing, Business Information Technologies, Building, Electrical Engineering.

The list of firms shows the variety of the manufacturing and services industries in Berlin and Brandenburg. It is including all important bigger corporations in manufacturing, banking, trade, and the service sector industries, but also shows the structural limitations of the Berlin-Brandenburg region which is not as much industrialised as other regions in Germany.

The guiding principle of the study programmes in *faculty 2* is to organise the interrelation of university-based training and practical experiences gained in the firms and to transfer it into solidly recognised and broad academic skills and competences.

Nearly all Bachelor theses are written with the company which employs the student. Those students which do not write their thesis in their employing firm work on empirically based theses in cooperation with other companies. The university supervises these studies and has to guarantee the academic standards. We can state that the students' academic training is directly used by the local enterprises and therefore has a direct relation to the local/regional economy. Such a close link between local firms and the university is only to be found in company-linked programmes, and it imposes the responsibility on the university to keep academic standards of the programmes at a high level and keep an eye on the content of the firm-based training so that it fulfils our principles of enabling students to be sectorally, functionally and geographically mobile.

The students in company-linked programmes are per definition actively integrated in the regional employment system, and – according to our last survey in 2005 – about 60% of them remain with the firm in which they were trained for their first regular employment. Depending on the developments of the regional labour market, in some sectors a bigger share of students stayed with their employers (for example in banking and trade more than 90%), whereas in others like tourism only a minority found employment with the firm of their training.

Until now, *faculty 2* has not yet developed a mentoring programme like *faculty 1*, but is planning to involve its own alumni into such a form of individual coaching and mentoring. Students from *faculty 2* can participate in all activities offered by the Career Service, but due to their rather rigid time table and due to their already close contacts with the labour market they rather seldom attend these activities.

### 2.3.2 Development of study programmes

When the university develops its study programmes, either new programmes or major revisions of the existing ones, it usually takes into account the following considerations:

#### The employment system

Are there new emerging fields of employment in the region, at the national or international level? Are there new functional areas developing within firms, as part of self-employment or in other organisations like NGOs or in the public sector?

To answer these questions we review the developments in the labour markets, we analyse empirical studies and relevant literature reporting on new trends in the development of occupations and tasks etc. We also ask experts which are linked with our university as lecturers, alumni, or as external experts in our academic boards or who are partners in the company-linked programmes.

These investigations lead sometimes to some major revisions of programmes and sometimes they help to develop totally new programmes. Two out of our newly developed programmes in *faculty 1*, the B.A. and M.A. Economics and the B.A. Entrepreneurship are good examples. Since Berlin became the capital of Germany, there is an emerging market for economists especially in organisations like industrial associations, trade unions, NGOs or others, which do not need economists primarily trained for tasks in research institutes, but who are trained for understanding, interpreting and campaigning economic policy programmes. Thus, our programmes B.A.. Economics and M.A. International Economics combine a solid knowledge of standard economics with a specialisation in the fields of (national and international) economic policy, economics of the public sector, economics of the non-profit sector development and European policy. The internships of the students are often in organisations like ministries, non-profit groups and similar organisations. The B.A. Entrepreneurship was developed following the observation that Berlin has a relevant number of small firms whose owner is looking for a trained successor who seems to be not available in the own family or in the labour market. The second observation is that start-up firms do need some special knowledge in the stage of their foundation and within the first years to be successful. Both aspects are an essential part of the BA programme additionally to a solid knowledge in all fields of business administration. The programme includes seminars specially designed for start ups and family businesses, and it integrates coaching processes and skills related with business plans etc. We run the programme in a part-time form to enable the students to parallel work in their start-up business or continue working in the firm where they plan to become the successor.

Some of our programmes, especially the MBAs, but also some of the BA/MA programmes have advisory boards with external experts from the business world. These advisory boards have a variety of functions, including hints for the programmes' development, they assist in finding internships and organise relations to guest lecturers. In some programmes the advisory boards are involved in processes of evaluation and programme development. The experiences of external advisors for example were very important for the development of the MBA programme in Health Care Management.

The integration of stakeholders into the development is often ad hoc, but some of these processes are highly institutionalised: *Faculty 2* has a board called „Duale Kommission“, which is legally guaranteed. Its members are, apart from

the university members (dean and vice-dean, professors and students), six representatives from the partner firms, one representative from the Berlin Chamber of Commerce, and one representative from the employers' association and one from the trade union. This board's structure and tasks closely follow the tradition in the German vocational training system. Its tasks are not only to develop new programmes (like the programmes Electrical Engineering or International Business Administration which were developed in close relation with the firms, the university and the Dual Commission), but also to initiate major adaptations of already run programmes to the changing needs and developments in the firms and in the labour market. The dual commission is also responsible to check the quality standards of the firm-related training, to check whether participating firms are capable and suitable to fulfil the quality criteria, and to regulate all formal relations between the students, the firms and the university. We think that this structure is unique within the German university system and allows to develop high standard programmes tailored not only to the needs of the local economy, but also ensuring high competences for the students' applicable not only in one firm but in a variety of employment relations and over a life cycle.

#### Programmes offered by other universities in the region

Before we develop a new programme, we check the capacities already available in the region. We think that competition between different universities may be one argument, but it is a waste of tax payers' money by just always increasing the same programmes which do us not seem to be a good strategy. We therefore look for innovative programmes which are not yet available in the region. We also look for cooperation between universities in the region (as we run our Bachelor in Business Engineering together with the Technical University of Applied Sciences Berlin), and beyond, if the regional cooperation is not possible (see for example our M.A. Labour Policy and Globalisation with the University of Kassel) or not needed as in our international programmes with universities in France, Spain, the UK and China.

#### Our profile, our capacities (in quantity and quality) and our experiences/evaluations

All programmes offered at Berlin School of Economics have to contribute to the overall profile of the university and have to fulfil the guiding principles of our teaching and learning processes as described earlier. Before we develop new programmes we check if we have the capacities to teach and administer these programmes at high quality level. Thanks to special programmes initiated by the Berlin Senate (Masterprogramm, Strukturfonds), we were able to grow rapidly over the last years and therefore could develop programmes which we think

necessary for a high quality university in the fields of business administration and economics. Examples for this are our Bachelors in business law and business information technologies. The expansion of the local economy led to an increase of places in company-linked programmes which could be realised thanks to the additional means given by the Berlin Senate. We regularly evaluate our programmes by a questionnaire-based review from students and graduates, all programmes are accredited by the national agencies conducting accreditation processes in Germany, and last but not least our highest board, the Kuratorium, accompanies our programmes with all its experiences. Again, the Kuratorium includes not only the Ministry of Science and Education but also the Ministry of Economics, and – apart from the representatives of the university – representatives from Berlin-based corporations, non-profit organisations and other regional actors.

Stakeholders are actively involved in the development of our study programmes, students have a variety of contacts to regional firms and other regional actors either during their internships or because they are studying in company-linked programmes. We coach our students and graduates in career service units both in the faculties and in the IMB, and we cooperate with the branch for academics of the local employment agency. Our part-time lecturers are often employed in Berlin or Brandenburg based firms or within the public sector, and connect their professional experiences with their teaching activities in our university. Our regional stakeholders are not only private and public enterprises, but also NGOs, trade unions, associations with an ecological focus etc. Our profile is developed in cooperation with this variety of stakeholders and is therefore by no means balanced to only one or the other side of the employment system and society. We try to avoid restricting ourselves to a too narrow definition of our stakeholders and our target groups, both in terms of teaching, research, and transfer activities. Therefore, we have a certain experience in managing diversity within a university which is – at the first glance – highly restricted to a small field of disciplines and employment areas. We think that this is our strength also vis-à-vis our stakeholders and they appreciate and support our special profile.

### **3. Transfers in Research and Development**

The Berlin School of Economics has some research institutes which are founded and organised by the professors of the university. None of our research institutes focuses on the region per se, but all of them are closely linked to regional developments and regional partners.

To give some examples: within the institute Harriet Taylor Mill-Institute for Economics and Gender Studies, a DFG-founded research project examined

women's positions in the labour market for academically trained female economists and managers. The in-depth analyses included a historical study on the development of economics and business administration as an academic discipline in East and West Germany and the empirical research was conducted here in Berlin, because Berlin universities have good archives, they represent outstanding examples for the development over the last 100 years, and they allow to study the development in East and West. Another on-going project analyses the success or failure of highly skilled women as entrepreneurs and again this project is not only founded by regional agencies but also empirically based in Berlin.

Within the institute for *International Political Economy Berlin (IPE Berlin)* professors are conducting their research on social inclusion and social exclusion processes in modern western capitals, and Berlin is one of the areas researched.

The recently founded *Institute for Entrepreneurship, SMEs and Family Businesses (EMF Institute)* had its first conference on the development of family businesses with partners from Berlin, and it has an advisory board in which business partners from the region are involved.

The *Institute for Logistics (IfL)* will organise together with the Harriet Taylor Mill-Institute and the Bundesverband Logistik, Regionalverband Berlin-Brandenburg, a seminar on „Gender and Diversity Management in the Logistic Sector“ as one of its first activities, and the institute has acquired an endowed professorship (Stiftungsprofessur) from one of the leading logistic corporations in Germany which will be located in *faculty 2*.

Within the *Steinbeis Research Centre at the Faculty of Company-Linked Programmes*, firms especially from the construction sector are involved.

The *Institute for Resource Conservation, Innovation and Sustainability (IRIS) e.V.* focuses in its research and counselling project mainly on firms in the region. The *Institute for Resource Conservation, Innovation and Sustainability (IRIS) e.V.* started recently a new research and transfer programme in cooperation with regional firms called „sustainable economic development in the region“ which is aimed to enable regional firms to develop their business processes and products in a sustainable way. The programme will employ additional academic staff which will offer the firms counselling and practical help. It is co-financed by the European Social Found and the Senate of Berlin and will be running over a period of tree years.

Additionally, all our institutes and some of our faculties organise seminars, round table talks or conferences with regional partners which are not only addressed to students and other faculty members but also to the public. Again, some examples: our marketing department organises a series of seminars called „Marketing Forum“ during the semesters, in which firms and researchers present new developments in marketing. Our law department organises a so-called „Rechtsgespräch“ at least once a semester, in which current developments in

business law are discussed with external experts. The Harriet Taylor Mill-Institute organises a so-called „Werkstattgespräch“ at least once a semester, which presents interesting new developments, new research or political questions which are discussed always involving not only the academic side but also people which are actually working on the subjects either in companies or in politics or in NGOs. The *Institute for International Political Economy Berlin (IPE Berlin)* recently organised a round table seminar on the analysis of the current financial crisis which attracted an auditorium of more than 200 people from inside and outside our university.

Our regional networks regarding the transfer of research into policies and our business-related environment are well developed, although the university itself does not follow a strong policy in coordinating these activities. The institutes and departments get some minor financial and administrative support from the university, but the activities themselves are based on the enthusiasm of the professors and other staff involved.

With its changed role in the political arena, Berlin today is a good sounding board especially with respect to policy developments and policy making, and our policy-related studies find partners not only in business but also in political groups, parliamentary surroundings etc. both involving the regional and also the Federal level. More professors than before are invited experts to the parliamentary procedures, some of them are in scientific boards or are scientific advisers at the Federal or regional level. Again, the university itself does not follow a particular strategy to develop the FHW towards a policy-related entity, but supports these activities of its members mainly immaterially.

More institutionalised are all activities based on regional transfer programmes like the ESF programme for „Research Assistants“ (these assistants have the tasks to connect the universities research with implementation in regional firms; we currently employ four persons in projects related to business start-ups and family-based enterprises) administered by the Berlin Senate, or the Career Service activities (as already mentioned in chapter 2.3.1) which are also partially funded by the European Social Fund.

The research activities of our professors are broader than the research related to the institutes; they include a lot of individual research projects, done individually, in cooperation with other researchers, in cooperation with firms or other partners, in cooperation with researchers from other universities or research institutes, in national or international contexts etc. It is not possible to go into detail here, but what we may say is, that the university allows and supports a broad range of research activities by rewarding professors a reduction of the teaching hours per semester and by granting research semesters for those projects which were positively evaluated in an internal process and will result in external publications. Apart from other universities of applied sciences, we are

proud of having professors which are able to participate in the competitive publication process of refereed journals and invited papers handed in to international conferences. But both time and money available for our professors to engage in research activities are scarce so that they cannot compete on an equal basis with traditional universities in the fields of additional research funding and external funds etc. The university's regular financial means to support these activities are limited and the legal constraints are narrow, although the Berlin Senate increased the facilities just recently through its „Masterprogramm“. Therefore, we expect an expansion of our research activities in the years to come with a special focus on research done in cooperation with firms and other non-academic partners.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The expansion of the Berlin School of Economics in recent years has created a university which is highly embedded in the local economy, has sharpened its academic profile and has created a network of local firms, regional, national and international university partnerships. Our students come mainly from the region Berlin-Brandenburg and a majority of them stays in this region after the completion of their studies. Our study programmes are aimed to enable our graduates to be geographically mobile and to switch between positions within firms, between firms and business sectors. Their grades should be based on internationally accepted standards of modern business and economics curricula and give them internationally recognised skills and competences. Although not all of our students will search for employment outside Berlin and Brandenburg, their studies at least enable them to do so. The relations to the regional economy are very close (in our company-linked programmes) or close, both in terms of the students and in terms of the integration of regional stakeholders into the programmes of the university, e.g. as lecturers.

We compete with other universities not only in the region to attract the best students, but we regard ourselves as an university which does not limit the access to its Bachelor programmes – apart from the *numerus clausus* criteria – by high levels of additional requirements. We equally welcome all young men and women interested in studying in our fields, whether they come from the region, from other places in Germany or from other countries as potential students as long as they fulfil the criteria for the *numerus clausus*. We regard the social, educational and ethnic diversity of our students as strength and challenge at the same time.

Our programmes, especially the company-linked programmes, are a mirror of the industrial structure of Berlin, with all its problems, limitations and

chances, and our programmes help to train a highly skilled workforce which will be able to develop economically efficient activities in their jobs or in their own enterprises. The MBA programmes train people in middle and higher management positions and we know from our surveys that a major group moved up in their hierarchical positions and/or their remuneration after participation in the programmes. The programmes may not only have an individual advantage, but may also have helped firms in Berlin and Brandenburg to increase their human capital resources and (hopefully) their productivity. In special segments/occupations, the company-linked programmes may have developed a new, academically trained group within the professions' hierarchy.

Our research and development activities are related to the region but not in a systematic way, the issues are more driven by the individual's research capacities and focal subjects – the university did not develop a special infrastructure nor programmes to develop regionally addressed research. It is an open question within the faculties whether such a strategy is helpful and necessary. Nevertheless, since Berlin has established a common centre of research for all universities of applied science we are in need to re-organize our research processes.