



Continuing Higher Education and Lifelong Learning: An international comparative study on structures, organisation and provisions

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Anke Hanft and Michaela Knust The present study examines and compares the structure and organisation of continuing higher education in six countries: Austria, Finland, France, Germany, the UK and the USA. The focus is not just on current continuing education provisions at higher education institutions but also on the institutions themselves and their surrounding milieu. The study also attempts to move away from a purely national angle and to approach the topic from an international perspective. The conclusion is reached that when it comes to the development, establishment and professional implementation of continuing education provisions, German higher education institutions lag behind the other countries in the comparison in almost all areas. The main findings in terms of the three levels 'system', 'institution', and 'programme' are summarised below.

1 Continuing Education in the Higher Education System

There are considerable divergences, both nationally and internationally, in the definition of the German term "wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung" ("academic continuing education"). In the English-speaking world, a variety of terms such as "lifelong learning", "adult education", "continuing education", "continuing higher education", "university-level continuing education" or "continuing professional development" are often used as synonyms without any precise differentiation – and this is not perceived as a problem.

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