

# Professional Higher Education in Practice: Cooperation with Employers

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## *Preliminary remark*

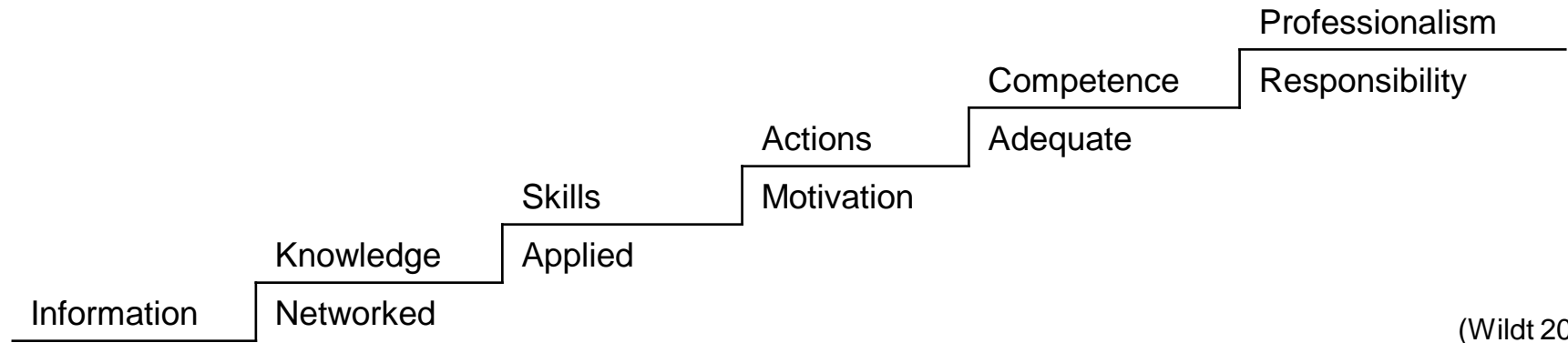
(Higher) education is the relation between theory informing practice and practice informing theory.

The distinction between academic HE and professional HE orientation is misleading.

# Preparing professionals for uncertain futures

„Competences are [...] in principle the dispositional skills to act self-organised in an open, complex and uncertain future.“

(translated from Erpenbeck 2005)



(Wildt 2006)

## Learning Environments as Laboratories of Reflection

Knowing-in-Action

Reflection-in-Action

Reflection on Reflection-in-Action

Implicit Knowledge

Ad-Hoc Strategies

Development of own Theories of Action

(Schön 1983, 1986)

# PHE – An emerging paradigm?

Changed Value Chain

Projekt based, Complexity und Specialisation



Competence: T-Shape

Broad understanding and deep overarching competences

Personality, (Multiple-)Specialisation, Interdisciplinary Expertise

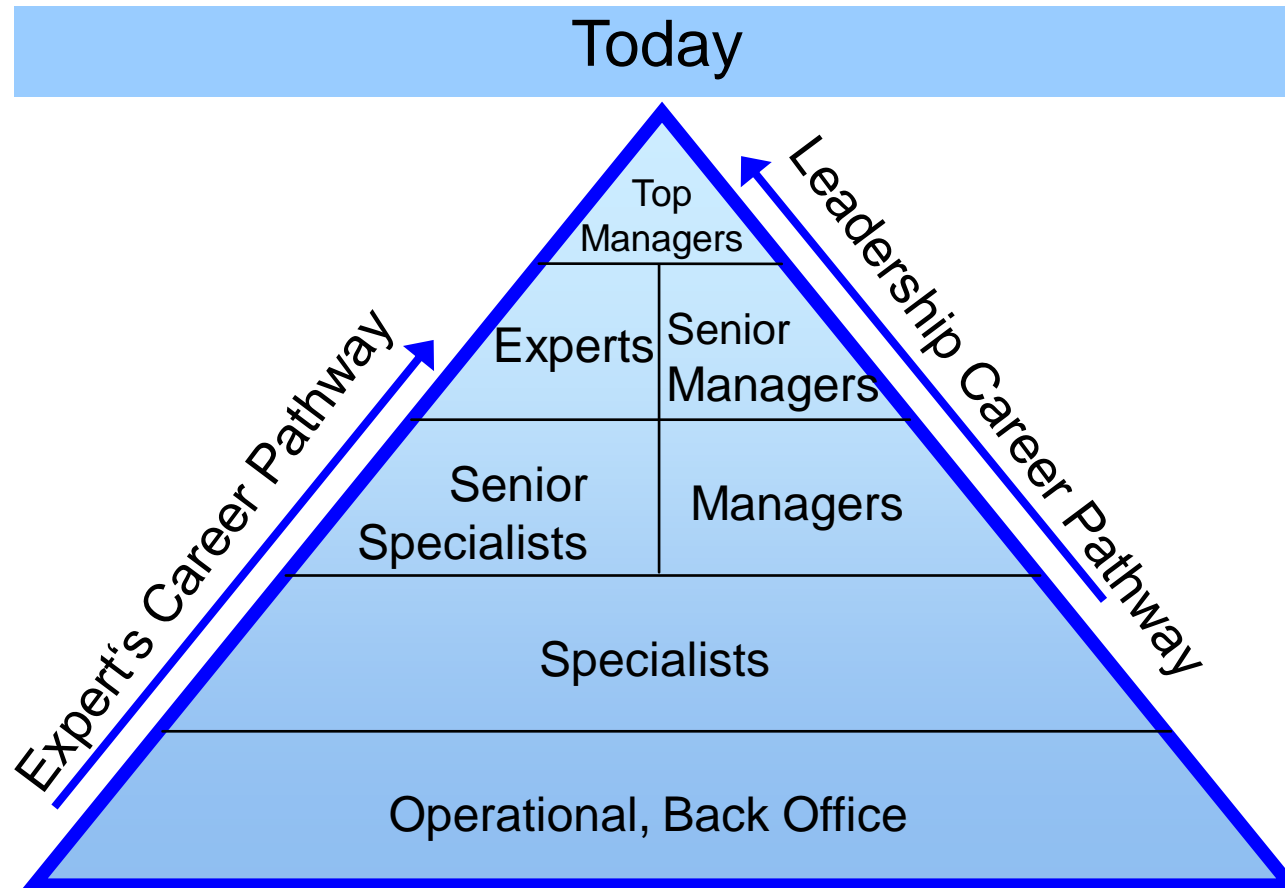
# T-Shaped professionals

Ability to act successful across disciplines,  
contexts and systems

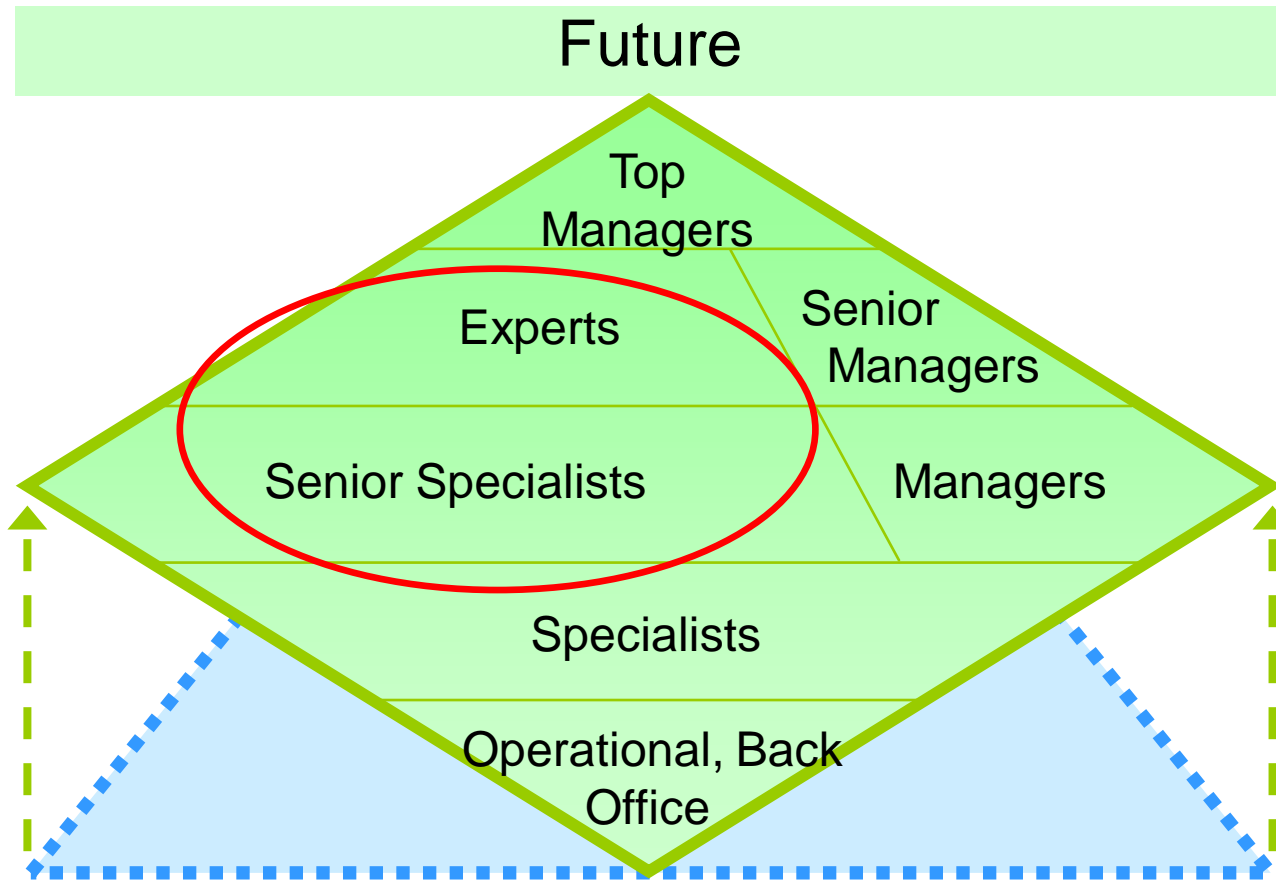


Depth in one knowledge  
field, depth in one system

# Qualification: Today's Scenario



# Qualification: Future Scenario



## Drivers:

- Globalisation
- Changed Value Chain
- Demographic Change
- Growing Complexity

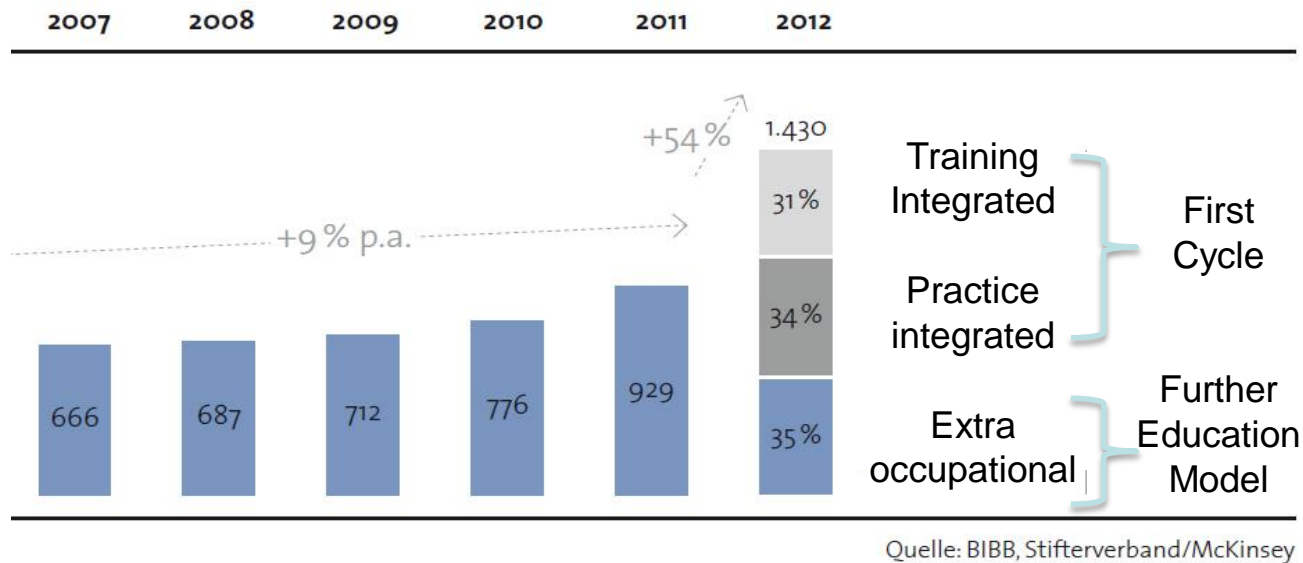
## And therefore ...

1. **More** higher qualifications
2. **New** academic job profiles
3. **Cross-Competencies** gain importance

**PHE is emerging to meet this new demand**



# Rise of PHE (partly German context)



## Characteristics of PHE

- Alternating Phases of academic study and practice phases
- Coherent approach to curriculum design (academic & practice)
- Contract for Training- and Study with partner organisation
- Practice Partner is selecting the students

**Emerging situation: Models from loosely coupled to fully integrated!**

## Advantages:

- Orientation on Needs
- Competent employees

## Challenges:

- Terminology
- Typology
  - PHE Institutions
  - Target groups
  - Financing
  - Cooperation btw. Academy and Practice
- Standards
- Quality Benchmarks

## HAPHE Project:

Harmoise approaches



**DHBW**

Duale Hochschule  
Baden-Württemberg

PHE –

A successful example

# „Dual“ Studies – How does it work?

## Theoretical knowledge

6 x 12 weeks of intensive studies at one of the 12 locations and campuses of the DHBW

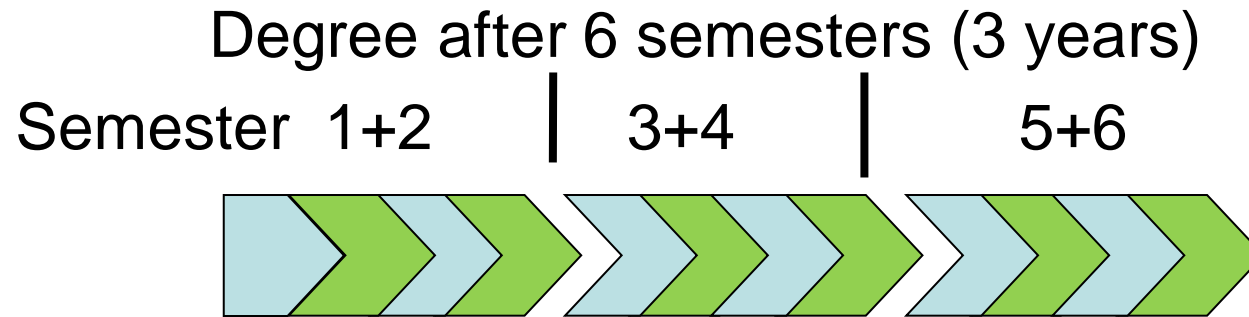


## Practical experience

- 6 x 12 weeks of practical qualification
- in one of over 9.000 partner companies



# Organisation of Studies

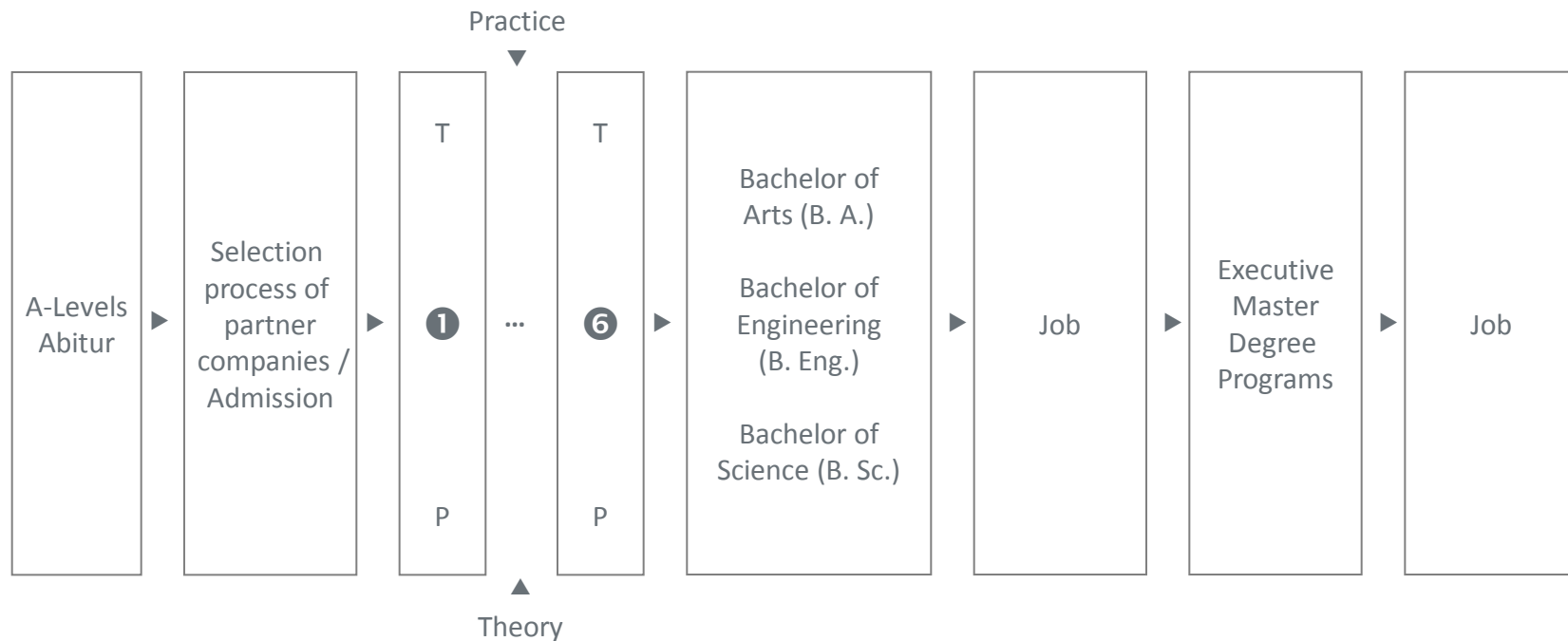


Each semester (24 weeks) is divided into 2 parts:

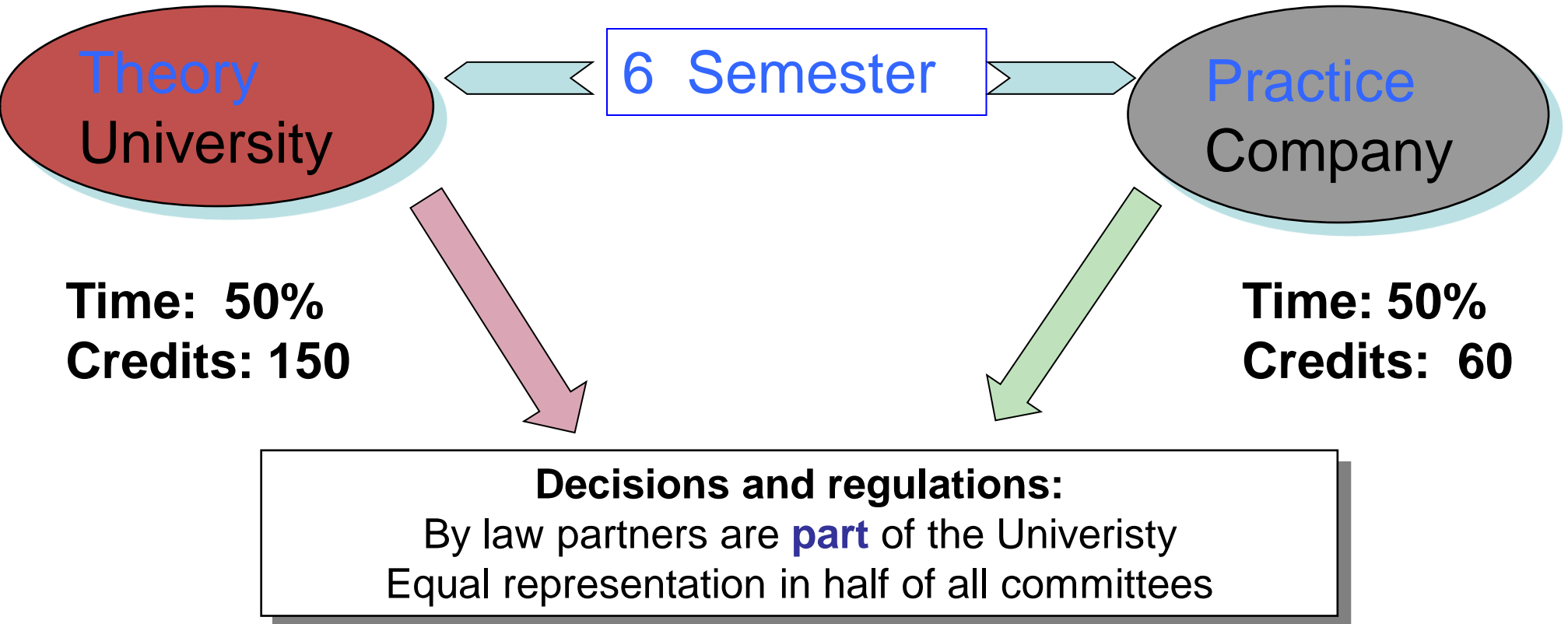


Work phases are embedded within pre- or post-placement lectures which distinguishes the model from on-the-job training

# The Architecture of Studies



# Linking Practice and Theory



# DHBW - FACTs

- ✓ 40 years experience
- ✓ 120.000 graduates
- ✓ 32.000 students in 2013
- ✓ 9.000 cooperating organisations

Partners investment: The private sector contributes about **900 Mill €/year** in student salaries (& expenses)

- ✓ 90 study programmes
- ✓ 10 % drop out rate

## Efficiency:

10% of all 220.000 university students in BW  
25% of all university graduates in BW



# Success Factors



# Success Factor 1: Joint Responsibilities

- By state law dual partners are members of the university
- Equal representation of dual partners and academia in central committees
- Deep integration of the dual partners into the university (University Council, Faculty Council, Programme Committees, (also: partly represented in Senat))
- Common definition of quality assurance mechanisms/instruments for both learning contexts
- Joint reflection of the achieved quality level and definition of actions for improvement

# Success Factor 2: Joint Definition and Assessment of Practice-Parts

## **Integrated curriculum development:**

- The modul descriptions are developed, consulted and agreed upon in joint work groups between academia and dual partners
- The study and assessment regulations as well as the modul descriptions for the practice phases of the study are defining the contents and objectives for the practice phases of study.

## **Common assessment of study progress and competence gain:**

- Thesis related to practice problems, project reports, reflection reports of student are taken as basis for assessment of study progress and competence gain.

# Success Factor 3: Integration of practice context in QA

- The dual partners are subject to an application and assessment process in which their suitability for dual study context is assessed by the head of a programme, the admission to the cooperative state university can be revoked.
- The assessment of the suitability is done on basis of defined criteria, related to equipment, qualification of the supervising personell, structure of the practice study phase (e.g. learning contracts and the definition of work time regulations).
- The dual partner organisations enter into a standardised study and professional apprentice contract with the students, in which they agree to observe the rules of the framework of the study regulations under which they operate.
- System accreditation: Comprehensive quality assurance process also covering ‚studies in practice‘



# Thank you very much!

- More about DHBW: [www.dhbw.de](http://www.dhbw.de)
- More about EFQUEL: [www.efquel.org](http://www.efquel.org)
- More about the HAPHE project:  
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