

[www.ighb.eu](http://www.ighb.eu)

# IGhB

*Internationale  
Gesellschaft  
heilpädagogischer  
Berufs- und Fachverbände*



## Guidelines

for Professional Development in Heilpädagogics



*International Society of  
Professional Heilpaedagogic  
Organizations (IGhB)*

Internationale Gesellschaft heilpädagogischer Berufs- und Fachverbände (IGhB)  
International Society of Professional Heilpaedagogic Organizations (IGhB)

Michaelkirchstraße 17/18

D-10179 Berlin

Fon: 0049 30 40605060

Fax: 0049 30 40605069

Web: [www.ighb.eu](http://www.ighb.eu)

eMail: [info@ighb.eu](mailto:info@ighb.eu)

Production run: 1,000

Published: November 2014

Print: flyeralarm | [www.flyeralarm.de](http://www.flyeralarm.de)

Design | Layout: DOUBLE-A-DESIGN | [www.double-a-design.de](http://www.double-a-design.de)

Internationale Gesellschaft heilpädagogischer Berufs- und Fachverbände (IGhB)  
International Society of Professional Heilpaedagogic Organizations (IGhB)

## **Guidelines for Professional Development in Heilpädagogics**

## Table of Contents

---

Preface .....	5
Responsibilities of the professional organisations .....	6
Working fields for heilpedagouges .....	6
Education of heilpedagouges .....	7
Competences .....	8
Vocational tasks and requirements .....	8
Heilpedagogics as scientific discipline.....	9
Normative and ethical-anthropological basic assumptions .....	9
Goals and tasks of the IGhB / Socio-political demands .....	11

# Guidelines for Professional Development in Heilpedagogics

## Preface

---

The IGhB presents the *Guidelines for Professional Development*, first drafted in May 2008, to its member organisations. These guidelines define a mutual view of heilpedagogic thinking, understanding and acting within different multicultural, historical, political and social circumstances.

With its work the IGhB contributes to international understanding in science and theory of heilpedagogics and defines quality standards of vocational tasks and skills. The term 'heilpedagogics' will be used internationally from now on.

The IGhB was founded in 2005. At the time of the first draft of the guidelines, the Society comprised seven heilpedagogic professional organisations from Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Slovakia and Hungary.

During the meeting on November 7, 2014, the members from Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Slovakia adopted the second version of the guidelines.

## Responsibilities of the professional organisations

---

The professional organisations in the IGhB are generally responsible for recognising and representing their members' specific interests.

They work in a participative and inclusive way in their respective society promoting social dialogue which is then carried on internationally.

The representation of interests and subsequent professionalisation are aimed at implementing vocational contents, issues and goals on both national and international public levels. The organisations inform about professional abilities, skills and competences and ensure the quality of heilpedagogic services with appropriate quality assurance measures. In some member countries, the organisations already perform statutory tasks such as registering and certifying professionals and/or institutions. The members of each country's professional organisation undertake to adhere to the professional ethics (occupational image/guidelines) of their organisation.

The professional organisations promote close integration of theory and practice within the occupational field by participating in committees of educational institutions (universities / colleges / professional schools) as well as in umbrella associations and other professional associations. As a member of those committees, the organisation speaks up for the needs and necessities of practical work. Furthermore, the organisations improve their members' professional skills by providing information and vocational training and further education as well as research in the field of heilpedagogics.

The member organisations of the IGhB consider themselves as counselling organisations of politics and society in the framework of inclusion, participation in social life and preservation/improvement of quality of life of people in difficult life situations. They take part in public debates about the needs of people in difficult life situations or people who might face such situations. The organisations constructively participate in legislative procedures and work together with self-help organisations and associations of persons with disabilities. The IGhB promotes the implementation and further development of the heilpedagogic profession on an international level by inviting and supporting new member organisations.

## Working fields for heilpedagogues

---

Heilpedagogues implement the IGhB guidelines and ethical foundations of the organisation in their day-to-day work and develop them further.

Heilpedagogues are trained professionals and are able to work in an interdisciplinary way. They strictly adhere to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), which was adopted by the General Assembly of the World Health Organization (WHO) in October 2005, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The heilpedagogic working fields are closely connected with each member country's traditions and social needs.

The following working fields of heilpedagogics change and develop in regards to work and life circumstances. This list is not exhaustive, but gives examples; some heilpedagogic working fields are only present in some IGhB member states.

Activity-related working fields:

- early support and education
- pre-school and elementary education
- schools (assist, promote, treat, support)
- institutions (assist, promote, treat, support)
- preventive help
- vocational preparation and education
- introduction and assistance with integrative measures, sheltered workshops
- assistance in living and leisure activities
- adult education (pedagogical-therapeutical fields)
- rehabilitation
- coaching and counselling

Job-related working fields in an ambulant or residential setting:

- neonatal unit / early intervention sites and social paediatric centres and ambulances
- heilpedagogic practice or office
- daycare centres and nurseries
- counselling centres for education, family and school issues / family centres
- ambulant and residential institutions for special education (daycare centres and homes)
- clinics for psychiatry/psychotherapy
- child welfare, youth welfare and family assistance, family support services
- alternative projects in the field of child welfare, youth welfare and social welfare (intensive heilpedagogical individual measures)
- schools (regular schools, special education schools and schools for children with learning difficulties)
- vocational training centres / rehabilitation institutions / workshops for people with disabilities
- ambulant and residential homes and residential groups for disabled people
- retirement homes, nursing homes and ambulant services

In some European countries, heilpedagouges typically work in healthcare institutions (hospitals, ambulances, diagnostic centres).

Heilpedagouges also work in leading positions, ministries and organisations.

## Education of heilpedagouges

---

Heilpedagogic actions are professional actions.

The professional qualifications are documented by training and university degrees which show the required knowledge, skills and competences.

The IGhB uses the European Qualification Framework (EQF) which shows international qualification profiles in a comparable way.

These guidelines are not supposed to compare European or international occupational profiles, but to focus on professionalism and fundamental principles that are valid in each country.

The profession “heilpedagogue” can be achieved on three educational levels:

- scientific university education (doctorate / Magister (Mag. or M.A.) / Diplom (Dipl.) / Bachelor (B.A.) / Master (M.A.))
- universities of applied sciences (Diplom (FH) / Bachelor (B.A.) / Bachelor of profession (Bsc) / Master (M.A.) / Professional Master (Msc))
- education at professional schools and academies (especially in Germany) “state-certified heilpedagogue”

The different educational levels ensure both the scientific foundation and practical skills of heilpedagogues.

Heilpedagogues adhere to the principle of lifelong learning. The professional organisations provide the appropriate framework.

## Competences

---

Heilpedagogic services can only be provided by heilpedagogues. This applies in particular to heilpedagogic services and actions regulated by legal guidelines.

Heilpedagogues work independently and professionally and are able to assess the necessity of heilpedagogic actions as well as determine their form, duration and frequency.

Due to education and training, heilpedagogues have specific vocational competences.

1. Professional competences: professional knowledge and skills regarding assessment and diagnosis, treatment and therapy, education, support, assistance, counselling, research and planning.
2. Social competences: ability to cooperate and counsel within the social system as well as in disciplinary and interdisciplinary situations.
3. Reflexive competences: heilpedagogues have to be able to appropriately reflect their actions (reflexive evaluation, intervision, supervision) due to their responsibility for their professional actions. Evaluation is primarily oriented on professional and normative-ethical values.

## Vocational tasks and requirements

---

Heilpedagogic concepts of action integrate prevention, diagnosis, indication, implementation and evaluation of measures and methods of support, education, counselling, therapy, psychosocial rehabilitation and assistance of their recipients in the relevant field.

This holistic approach requires understanding of the client’s individual abilities and limits as well as evaluation of expectations, obstacles and competences of the social environment. The goal is participation and a high personal quality of life. Heilpedagogic actions are focused on the person as a whole, his or her relations to the social environment, the current situation and institutional requirements. This requires increasing political and social commitment.



Heilpädagogic actions are fundamentally directed to implement participation and improve quality of life of people in difficult life situations or people who might face such situations. Furthermore, heilpädagogues work in heilpädagogic science and research. They provide the foundation for practical day-to-day care and encourage a professional discussion between heilpädagogic practice and science and answer questions regarding professional issues.

Heilpädagogues with additional training are also able to work in strategy and concept development of institutions, supervision, quality development and managing positions.

An increasing number of heilpädagogues run their own independent practice; some of them have already been quality assured by national organisations.

The various tasks of our profession (occupational image) are described in each IGhB member country's publication.

## **Heilpädagogics as scientific discipline**

---

Heilpädagogics means the empiric science which is researching and publishing with its own history and methods.

The main focus is diagnosis, therapy, support, education and counselling of people in difficult life situations or people who might face such situations as well as counselling and assistance of relatives.

Heilpädagogics is characterised as being individual and interactive as well as based on values and meaning. On the one hand, it is based on the complexity of human existence and supports clients in their development, independence and ability to participate in a personal way. On the other hand, heilpädagogics considers and influences relevant social conditions required for a comprehensive participation in social life.

This work is based on results of reference disciplines such as neurology, paediatrics, sociology, psychiatry, gerontology, somatopathology, developmental psychology, clinical psychology, genetics, ethics, personality and social psychology, psychotherapy, social legislation, linguistics and more.

Various focuses have been developed around heilpädagogics over time. Close disciplines are e.g. special pedagogy, special needs education or rehabilitation pedagogy, but also social work and social pedagogy.

## **Normative and ethical-anthropological basic assumptions**

---

The awareness about and the confrontation with normative, ethical and anthropological basic assumptions and topics is an essential and fundamental part of heilpädagogics. This is part of the reason why heilpädagogics – and thus the IGhB with its member organisations – is able to take a clear and profound position on socio-political issues and problems as well as initiate ethical debates about values and norms.

First and foremost, the IGhB refers to human rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The announcements of the UNESCO, WHO and the Salamanca Declaration are the most important statements concerning human dignity of people in difficult life situations. In this context, heilpedagogics advocates the rights of all people and encourages a respectful attitude towards everyone.

The right for human dignity is an essential part of heilpedagogics which is particularly reflected in the working fields and in borderline situations at the beginning and end of life. Heilpedagogics protects, cares for and defends each person's subjective-individual, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual integrity.

As part of the demand for a comprehensive social justice for everyone, the irrevocable right to self-determination for everyone is especially worth mentioning. In the discipline of heilpedagogics, we feel that dialogue is essential which is why we always promote intersubjective orientation within our working fields. A human being is a person who develops, learns and acts and for whom these processes are important for his or her whole life.

This is why the terms and phenomenons of education and upbringing are especially important in heilpedagogics: Upbringing happens during the pedagogical processes at the beginning of life and sometimes goes on in adulthood. In contrast to that, education is a lifelong process; heilpedagogics mainly takes action in adult life as well as in working with senior citizens.

## Goals and tasks of the IGhB / Socio-political demands

---

The International Society of Professional Heilpädagogic Organisations contributes to the implementation of participation in the respective member states. This is achieved by participating in political debates in a professional way and taking part in diverse discussions in various member countries. The inclusion of people in difficult life situations is an indispensable goal of heilpädagogic work.

The goals and tasks of the Society are outlined in the cooperation agreement of the participating organisations ([www.ighb.eu](http://www.ighb.eu)).

**These guidelines have been phrased in an international framework for the first time and have now been updated. Heilpädagogics is developing more and more into an international discipline. This development comes with a constant specification of these guidelines.**

Adopted at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the IGhB in Utrecht, Netherlands and submitted to the member organisations' directors for ratification.

Utrecht, November 9, 2014

Prof. Dr. Xavier Moonen | IGhB President

## Publisher

---

Internationale Gesellschaft heilpädagogischer Berufs- und Fachverbände (IGhB)

International Society of Professional Heilpaedagogic Organizations (IGhB)

Michaelkirchstraße 17/18

D-10179 Berlin

Fon: 0049 30 40605060

Fax: 0049 30 40605069

Web: [www.ighb.eu](http://www.ighb.eu)

eMail: [info@ighb.eu](mailto:info@ighb.eu)



*This document is available as PDF for download  
in German or English on <http://ighb.eu/downloads/>*