



German law enforcement authorities have three career brackets, the lowest being the "*Mittlerer Dienst*", followed by the so-called "*gehobener Dienst*" and the "*Höherer Dienst*". Only Federal Customs (Bundeszollverwaltung), Justice and Corrections (of the 16 States) still employ personnel of the very lowest career bracket "*Einfacher Dienst*".

The career structure was originally based on Army ranks:

- Einfacher Dienst (Lower Service) = Private Soldiers
- mittlerer Dienst (Middle Service) = Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) e.g. Corporals, Sergeants, Warrant Officers
- gehobener Dienst (Upper Service) = Junior Officer / Company-grade Officer e.g. Lieutenants and Captains
- höherer Dienst (Senior Service) = Staff Officers i.e. Major upward

Entry into "*Mittlerer Dienst*" requires successful completion of 10 years of schooling, or successful trade training and time-based experience within that position. Held at a Police Academy Police, education and training runs over 2.5 years. Trainees commence with the rank (*dienstgrad*) of *Polizeimeister-Anwärter*. The highest possible rank in this career bracket is *Polizeihauptmeister mit Zulage*. In the mid to late seventies the "*mittlerer Dienst*" was disestablished for detectives.

Today nine of 16 States recruit solely for the career bracket of the "*gehobener Dienst*".

Entry into the "*gehobener Dienst*" requires a high-school diploma / A-level (*abitur*) and three year mix of education and training at a College/University of Public Administration (*Verwaltungsfachhochschule / Hochschule der Polizei*). The highest possible rank within this career level is *Erster Polizei-/Kriminalhauptkommissar*.

Direct entry into the "*höherer Dienst*" is possible, usually requiring a university degree in law, business management, economic, or psychology, but the majority of these officers are drawn from the "*gehobener Dienst*". Selection criteria for the "*höherer Dienst*" varies from state to state. Being a Masters' degree course, education runs over four semesters at the *Deutsche Hochschule der Polizei* (German Police University) – the only centralised educational institution of the German police.