

The Bucerius Law School Ltd Hamburg (Germany)

Martin Vorberg provides a useful accompaniment to Katherine Read's account of her recent trip to visit various German law libraries, by describing the first privately-owned law library in Germany.

Introduction

The **Bucerius Law School** is the first privately operated law school in Germany and was founded in October 2000 with the goal of offering prospective law students an alternative to the usual legal education provided at German state universities. It is named after Gerd Bucerius (1906–1995), a lawyer, politician, and foundation editor of the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*.

The main objective was to create an academically accomplished, practice-oriented, and bilingual legal education with the emphasis on international business law. Bucerius Law School graduates acquire the “LL.B.” degree and are prepared to complete Germany's First State Examination in Law. Each October 100 students begin their studies. For those students seeking financial assistance, such aid is available, ensuring that admissions are determined solely on the basis of a student's abilities.

Unlike the semester system used by Germany's public universities, the academic year at Bucerius Law School is divided into trimesters; the program lasts four years, including the period during which the First State Examination in Law is taken. Foreign language courses conducted in Chinese, English, Russian, and Spanish, lectures in business administration, and a diverse, obligatory general studies program are also part of the Bucerius Law School curriculum.

Students at Bucerius Law School gain insights into legal practice through mandatory internships. Furthermore, practising members of the legal profession actively participate in teaching the students. In order to be better prepared for the demands of a global economy, students spend a significant part of their studies at one of the 82 affiliated universities all over the world, 33 of them located in North America. In addition to various lectures held in English, the school offers an array of courses on both national and international business law. Foreign guest students and Bucerius Law School students alike take part in a specially designed program in International and Comparative Business Law in English.

Today, there are 520 students at our Law School, and we are preparing a study course “Master of Law &

Business” for 30 students from abroad, which should start in September 2006. The complete financing of the Bucerius Law School results from the “Zeit-Stiftung” (a foundation for public utility), a growing number of famous sponsors, and from our students. The complete abnegation of financing with taxes establishes great possibilities for our Law School and enables us to face the huge challenges in the competition with German universities and their law faculties.

The Library

The Library of Bucerius Law School is named after its main sponsor “Hengeler Mueller”, a well-known law firm with principal offices in Düsseldorf and Frankfurt.

At first, the library was housed in a spartan pavilion in the courtyard of the law school; then, in August 2002, it was moved to the renovated main building. There, in a rotunda on the first floor, the library displays its current stock of law journals as well as providing online search facilities via five PCs, in a side wing branching off from the reading room containing the complete collection of monographs and back issues of publications. The speedily increasing stock of books and journals (about 1,000 items per month) necessitated an extension of the library onto the ground floor of the main building, though not until mid 2003.

Our reference library, whose stock is accessible round the clock to our 520 undergraduates, research and teaching assistants, graduate students as well as professors, is for study and research purposes. The library's resources comprise about 62,000 publications from all areas of law (among these 1,000 legal Festschriften and 10,000 postdoctoral theses) and about 200 subscriptions to legal periodicals, all of which, together with the highly-specialised contents of the sixteen professorship libraries, can be searched via the online catalogue (OPAC).

Internet access through WLAN is also available to library users, as well as access to Bucerius' intranet, various library catalogues and the most important legal databases (BeckOnline, Jurion, Juris, Kuselit, LexSoft/LexOnline, LexisNexis and Westlaw International).

The library's acquisition range includes all areas of law, with the emphasis on business law, European law,



Fig. 1 Bucerius law school building

and international law. Basic supply is determined by students' needs; and a stock of more sophisticated materials is orientated towards professors and academic staff. The library acquires literature on private insurance law, business constitution and business administration law, company and capital market law, criminal business and criminal tax law, the Europeanisation and internationalisation of German criminal law, international maritime and environmental law with reference to international business law, foundation law, and the law relating to non-profit organisations.

The collection is supplemented by a sophisticated basic stock of works covering the history of law, philosophy of law, and sociology of law, as well as diverse literature relating to items of the Bucerius Law School's general curriculum.

The Library is a member of BIALL, IALL, CILIP, and some other German law library working groups and library associations.

Library staff

The Library staff consists of three full-time librarians, two full-time library assistants, one trainee, and five (predominantly collegiate) back staff.

For the benefit of our patrons, we offer general introductory presentations for our new students every year (either in English or in German), individual support,



Fig. 2 Law library interior

the possibility of acquisition requests and a virtual information space (due to the fact that staff only cover 40% of the Library's opening time), and a document delivery service for professors, academic staff, and students during their period of examinations.

We offer apprenticeships and internships for future library assistants and students of the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (future librarians) as well.

And finally, we always strive for communication and cooperation with other European law libraries (e.g. Squire Law Library, Cambridge or Juridicum Library, Vienna) including short visits and staff exchanges.

The AjBD (i.e. Arbeitsgemeinschaft für juristisches Bibliotheks- und Dokumentationswesen, roughly translated: Working Group for Law Library and Documentation Systems) is a federation of academic law libraries, documentation centres, and other legal institutions in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Personal memberships are possible as well. At present, the AjBD denotes more than 170 mostly institutional members.

The AjBD aims to foster the law library and documentation systems in German language countries by further training and discussion events for law librarians, by legal advice in law library relevant topics, and by the publication of subject papers within the series *Arbeitshefte der AjBD* and in the journal *Recht – Bibliothek – Dokumentation* (RBD), which appears three times a year.

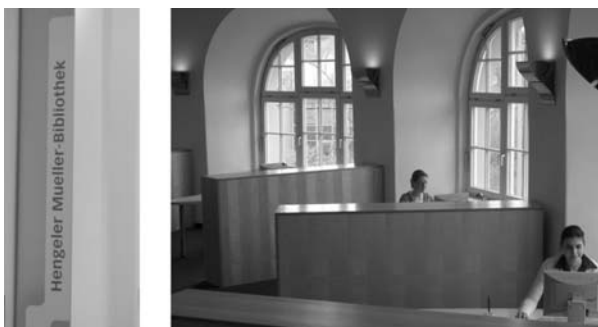


Fig. 3 Reading room

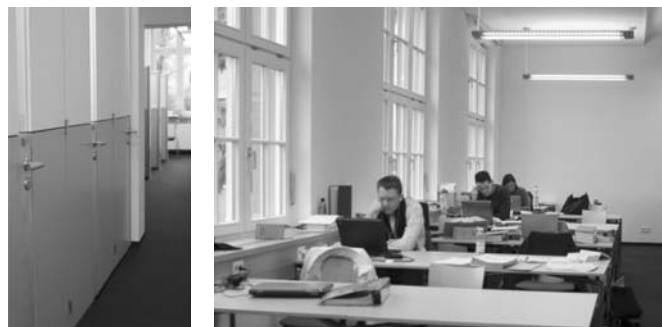


Fig. 4 Rolling shelving Fig. 5 Reading room

Contact:

Martin Vorberg (Head Librarian)
Bucerius Law School Ltd
Jungiusstrasse 6, D-20355 Hamburg, Germany

Phone: 0049-40-30706-134 / Fax: 0049-40-30706-135

Email: martin.vorberg@law-school.de

URL: www.law-school.de

Excursus:
The German "AjBD"

The AjBD offers to its members:-

- Reduced fees for further education events,
- Gratis acquisition of the journal RBD,
- Reduced subscription to the series *Arbeitshefte der AjBD*,
- Gratis advice with individual law library relevant problems.

For those services the AjBD asks for a membership of 30 Euros per year.

Contacts via www.ajbd.de (unfortunately only in German language! Any support possible is offered by Martin Vorberg, contact details above.

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Current Awareness

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This *Current Awareness* column, and previous *Current Awareness* columns, are fully searchable in the *caLIM* database (Current Awareness for Legal Information Managers). The *caLIM* database is available on the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies website at: <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/library/caware/caware.htm>

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