



VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

AUSTRIA

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION



VET IN EUROPE 2022

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Contributors: Wolfgang Bliem, Sabine Tritscher-Archan (ReferNet Austria) and Silke Gadjji (Cedefop)

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Table of contents

- Chapter 1. Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET.
- Chapter 2. Main challenges and policy responses.
- Chapter 3. External factors influencing VET.
 - 3.1. Demographics.
 - 3.2. Economics.
 - 3.3. Labour market.
- Chapter 4. Education attainment.
 - 4.1. Share of high, medium and low level qualifications.
 - 4.2. VET learner share of the total VET population.
 - 4.3. VET learners by level.
 - 4.4. Female share.
 - 4.5. Early leavers from education and training.
 - 4.6. Participation in lifelong learning.
 - 4.7. VET learners by age.
- Chapter 5. VET within education and training system.
- Chapter 6. Apprenticeship.
- Chapter 7. VET governance.
- Chapter 8. VET financing mechanisms.
- Chapter 9. Teachers and trainers.
 - 9.1. VET teacher types.
 - 9.2. Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers.
- Chapter 10. Shaping VET qualifications.
 - 10.1. Anticipating skill needs.
 - 10.2. Designing qualifications.
- Chapter 11. Quality assurance.
- Chapter 12. Validation of prior learning.
- Chapter 13. Incentives for learners.
- Chapter 14. Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision.
- Chapter 15. Guidance and counselling.
- Vocational education and training system chart.
- VET Programme Types.
 - Pre-VET programme (Polytechnische Schule, PTS), leading to ISCED 341.
 - Pre-VET programmes (berufsbildende mittlere Schulen, BMS), leading to ISCED 351..
 - Apprenticeship training leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (Lehrlingsausbildung).
 - School-based VET programmes offered at intermediate vocational schools (berufsbildende mittlere Schulen, BMS) leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354..
 - School based VET programmes offered at colleges for higher vocational education (berufsbildende höhere Schulen / BHS), leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 354/554..
 - Healthcare programmes leading to ISCED 351 and 353..
 - Nursing programme leading to ISCED level 454 (Diplomierte/r Gesundheits- und Krankenpfleger/in, GuK).
 - Add-on VET programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554 (Aufbaulehrgänge).
 - Post-secondary VET school programmes leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554 (Kollegs)..
 - Master craftsperson et al. programmes and qualifications offered at ISCED level 554..
 - Bachelor programmes at Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS / Fachhochschulen, FH) leading to EQF level 6, ISCED 665.
 - Master programmes at Universities of Applied Sciences (Master-Studiengänge an Fachhochschulen) leading to EQF level 7, ISCED 767.
- References.

CHAPTER 1.

Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

Summary of main elements (1)

Austrian vocational education and training (VET) ranks high, as demonstrated by its differentiated offer and high attractiveness: around 70% of each age cohort follow a VET path at the end of compulsory education. The final year of compulsory education (year 9) and the first of upper secondary education coincide. Most school-based VET comes under the remit of the education ministry. Governance of apprenticeship is shared by the ministries of economy (company-based track) and education (school-based track), the social partners and the *Länder*. There is also a variety of VET programmes at tertiary level and for adults.

Upper secondary level

Alongside general education programmes, learners can choose from various VET options:

- different types of 1- or 2-year pre-VET (*Polytechnische Schule*, PTS, ISCED 341; *berufsbildende mittlere Schule*, BMS, ISCED 351): learners acquire general education and basic vocational skills preparing them for further school-based VET and apprenticeships;
- 3- to 4-year school-based VET (BMS, ISCED 354, EQF 4): combine general education and respective occupational competences and qualifications to perform medium-level jobs. Those who complete an add-on VET programme (lasting 2 to 3 years) or take the higher education entrance exam (*Berufsreifeprüfung*, BRP) also obtain general access to higher education studies;
- 5-year school-based VET (*berufsbildende höhere Schule*, BHS, ISCED 354-554, EQF 5): offer high-quality occupation-related training while strengthening learners' general education. They lead to double qualifications for senior positions in business and general access to higher education at the same time (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*);
- apprenticeships (ISCED 354, EQF 4) last 2 to 4 years and are offered in some 230 occupations to learners having completed compulsory education. They lead to qualifications at medium level. Graduates can progress to qualify as master craftsperson or, with relevant work experience and/or additional exams, access tertiary level training in a related field. By completing the *Berufsreifeprüfung* or an add-on VET programme, they can obtain general access to higher education;
- VET programmes in the healthcare sector last 1 to 3 years and are offered at ISCED 351 and 353. Three-year nursing programmes are offered at ISCED 454 and provide access to tertiary-level training in related fields.

Tertiary level

Post-secondary VET programmes (ISCED 554, EQF 5) last 2 to 3 years and provide high level professional training. They are available in various specialist areas and graduates attain the professional qualifications of the corresponding BHS.

Universities of applied sciences (FH) provide practice-oriented bachelor (EQF 6) and master programmes (EQF 7) in different fields. Some are based on the dual principle, where theory and practice in enterprises alternate. Many are open to people in employment.

Adult learning/continuing VET

Adults can acquire the same qualifications within formal education and training as those open

to the young. A diverse range of institutions offers continuing training and progression opportunities to complement or upgrade people's initial qualifications. These include programmes awarding or preparing for tertiary/ post-secondary vocational qualifications, such as industrial master and master craftsperson certificates, certified accountants, or for law enforcement services. They also provide training within active labour market measures.

Distinctive features (2)

The broad range of available VET programmes is not only reflected in the various types of training and qualification levels but also in the fields of study, which include business, engineering, tourism, fashion and agriculture. Programmes can be adapted to regional economic contexts and skill needs and allow learners to develop their strengths and talents in the best possible way.

Work-based learning is central to VET, particularly in apprenticeships where learners spend 80% of their training time in a company. School-based VET is also practice-oriented, including learning in workshops, labs, training restaurants and practice firms, complemented by mandatory work placements in companies. Project and diploma assignments as part of the final exam of the 5-year VET programme (EQF 5) are often set by companies or carried out with their collaboration.

Much attention is paid to the acquisition of key competences (including teamwork, digital and entrepreneurial skills). At least one foreign language is mandatory – in some study fields (such as tourism) up to three – and is also used as a working language at several schools. Competence-orientation is a key principle in VET.

The number of apprentices (within the dual VET-track) being trained is driven by company demand. The training is based on a training contract between the company and the apprentice and learners need to follow a respective school-based programme. Early leaving rates from education and training have been comparatively low (8.1% in 2020) and there has been a training obligation since 2017: all young people must participate in mainstream school-based programmes, apprenticeships or other recognised training until the age of 18.

[1] Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443> [accessed 27.8.2021]

[2] Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443> [accessed 27.8.2021]

CHAPTER 2.

Main challenges and policy responses

Despite its wide recognition, VET faces several challenges:

- basic skills: the latest OECD-PISA results reveal that the share of learners with low achievement in reading literacy and maths is comparatively high. Companies tend to point to young apprentices' basic skills gaps. This drives the current government's goal that no young person should leave compulsory education without having achieved basic competence levels in reading, writing and maths;
- value of non-formal training: Austria has a relatively segmented education system; permeability is limited, particularly between non-formal and formal programmes at higher levels. Public perception of formal and non-formal qualifications is not the same. The national qualifications framework (NQF) is expected to provide a new perspective on them, as assignment to NQF levels is based on learning outcomes, irrespective of the institutional context in which they were acquired. Since end of 2019 it has been possible to assign non-formal qualifications to NQF;
- lack of skilled workers: there is a shortage of skilled workers which is mainly attributed to demographic developments and the increased attractiveness of general education. Several measures have been introduced to attract more people to VET, such as the possibility to follow part-time apprenticeship for parents and people with health problems (from 2020) (3).

[3] Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publications Office.
<http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/667443> [accessed 27.8.2021]

CHAPTER 3.

External factors influencing VET

3.1 Demographics

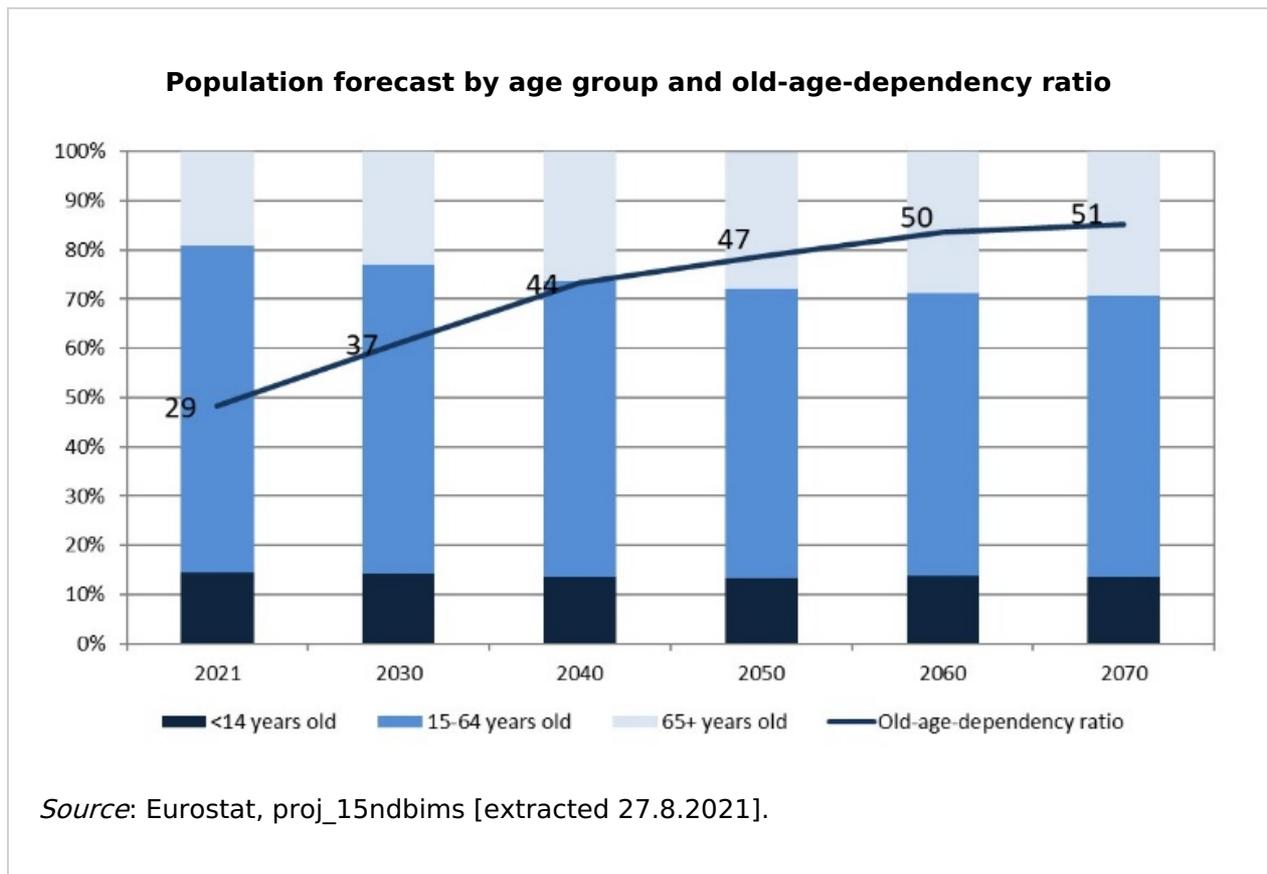
Population in 2020: 8 901 064 (4)

The continuous increase in the size of the population since the mid-1980s is mainly due to the growing influx of foreign nationals, rising particularly sharply in recent years. Overall, 17,1% of the Austrian population are foreign nationals (5).

It increased since 2015 by 3.8% mainly due to migration (6). According to the projection of Statistics Austria, based on assumptions on fertility, mortality and migration, the population will continue to grow to nine million people by 2022, to over 9.2 million by the year 2030 and to 9.45 million people by 2040 (+6% compared to 2019).

The demographic development reveals that the population is ageing, as in many other EU countries. In 2021 only 19,2% of the Austrian population were aged 65 years or older; the share of this population segment in the population overall is expected to increase to over 29% by 2070.

The old-age-dependency ratio (8) is expected to increase, from 29% in 2021 to 51% in 2070. This means there will be fewer than two people in employment for every pensioner.



The demographic structure and dynamics in Austria – mainly driven by migration and an aging society – will have an impact on available resources as well as on the demand for education (9).

Because of migration, support structures (such as classes in German) have been created for the acquisition of German as a foreign language (language of instruction) and measures have been taken to make it possible for migrants to complete VET programmes: these include transition courses and the 'b.mobile' programme (10) of the Austrian economic chambers.

The demographic development towards an 'aging society' has an impact on the education sector. In order to keep pace with changing labour market needs, lifelong learning (LLL) became an imperative which must encourage especially older workers to participate in further and higher qualification (VET) programmes.

3.2 Economics

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the Austrian Economy and with total of 346 000 enterprises they represent 99.6% of all enterprises. In 2019, SMEs employed 2.1 million people (67 % of all employees) and trained 53 200 apprentices (63 % of all apprentices) (11). This means that SMEs provide work to around two-thirds of the entire workforce.

87% of SMEs are micro-enterprises with fewer than ten employees. 11% are small enterprises employing between ten and 49 people, around 2% are medium-sized enterprises with 50 to 249 employees. The share of large enterprises in the total number of Austrian companies is only 0.4%, but they employ roughly one third of all employees. Especially for SMEs – and particularly for micro and small enterprises – VET that is properly differentiated and adjusted to current and future requirements is very important because these companies, as a rule, do not have their own in-house human resource development and research departments (12).

Since the 1960s, the Austrian economy has undergone fundamental changes. In 1960, agriculture and forestry still boasted an 11% share in the gross value added. The services sector, at around 42%, was behind the manufacturing sector (47%). In the 1970s, structural change started and continues until today; it has led to a shrinking of the primary and secondary sectors to the benefit of the tertiary sector. Today more than 70% of the value added is created in this sector, which also employs around 70% of the workforce. In response, new specialisations and qualifications have been introduced in the education sector (mainly in wholesale and retail trade, tourism, healthcare) to meet the requirements of the economy. In addition, increasing attention is being paid to teaching key competences, which play a major role in the services-oriented economy (13).

The most important manufacturing sectors (by turnover 2020) and export sectors of the Austrian economy with the dominance of SMEs are (14):

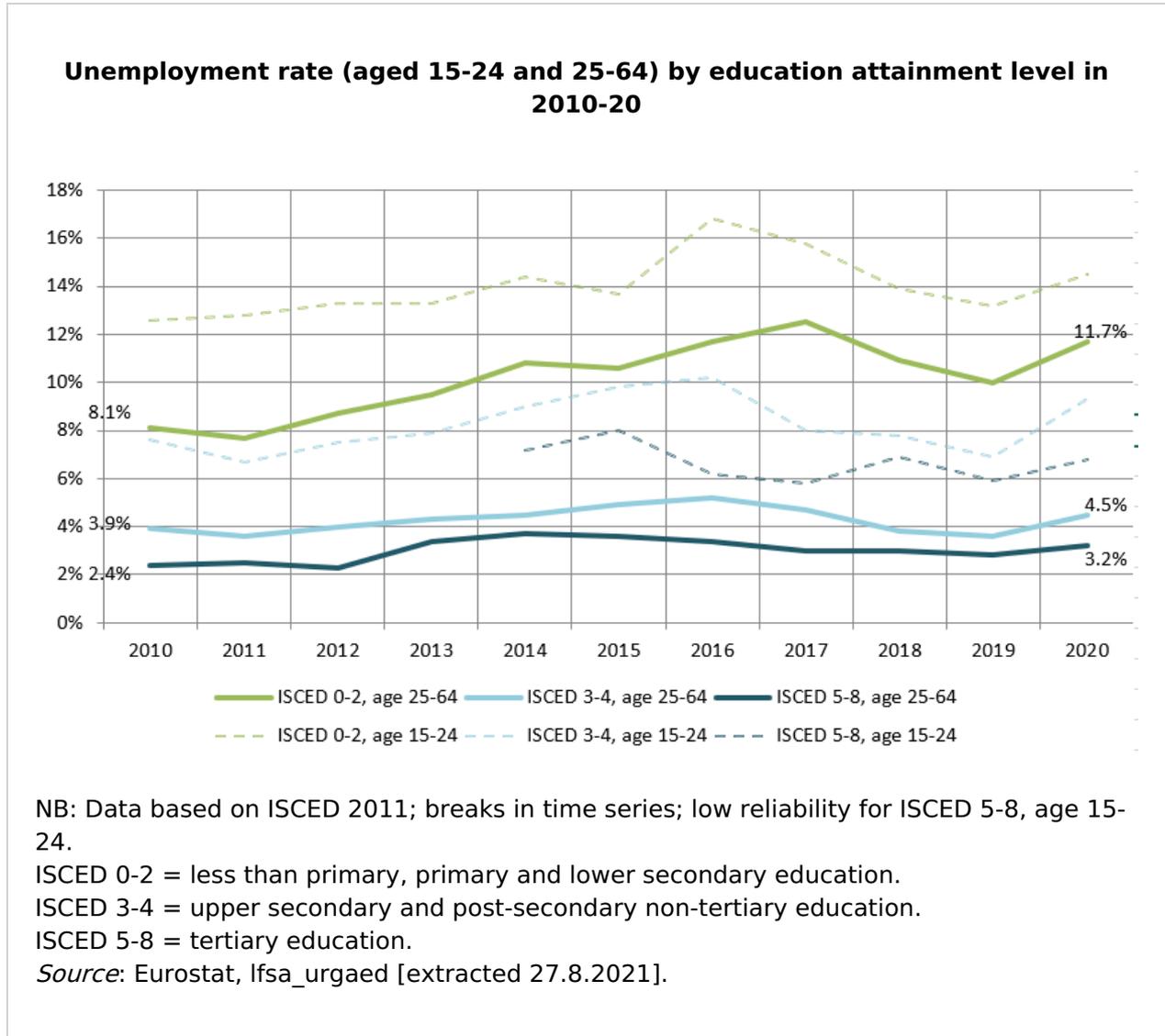
- energy supply;
- machinery and motor vehicles;
- metals and metal products;
- electrical and electronic equipment;
- food and feed;
- petroleum, chemical and pharmaceutical products;
- plastic, glass, wood, paper products.

In terms of foreign trade, tourism, environmental technology, construction and infrastructure, creative industries, training and the service sector are strong sectors (15).

3.3 Labour market

In Austria around 200 professions are regulated (16); they require a specific professional qualification when accessing or exercising them. Certificates/diplomas are generally very important to enter the labour market, although for most jobs they are not a formal requirement.

Total unemployment (2020): 4.7% (6.2 % in EU-27); it fell by -0.6 % percentage points (pp) compared to 2016 (17).

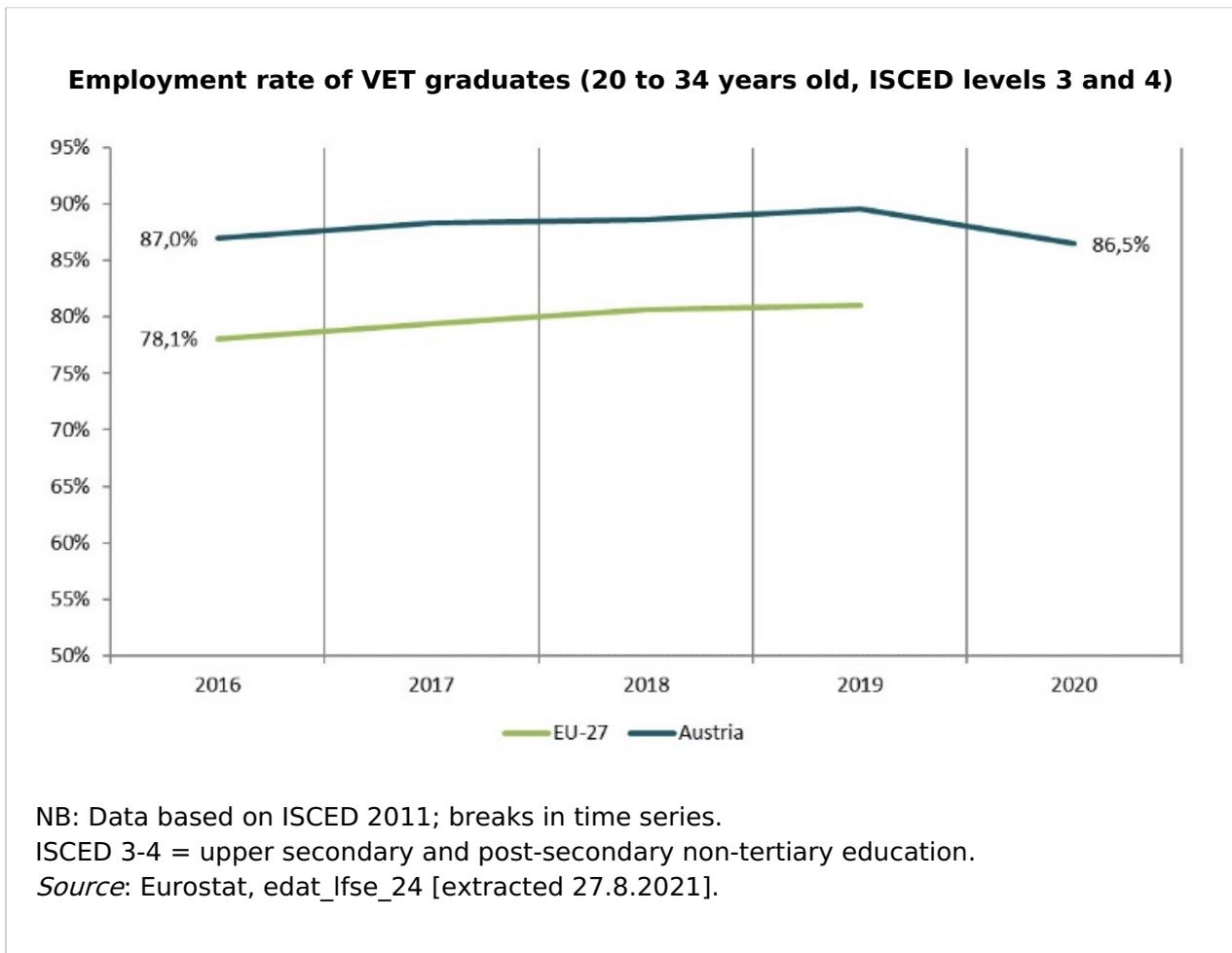


Unemployment differs strongly for persons with low-, medium- and high-level formal education.

In 2020 the unemployment rate of persons (aged 25-64) without an upper secondary qualification was 11.7%, more than twice as high as persons with at least upper secondary education (4.5%) and almost four times higher than people with tertiary education background (3.2%). Younger people (aged 15-24) with no or lower formal qualifications are especially affected by significantly higher unemployment risks and rates.

In 2020, Austria had the sixth lowest unemployment rate (14.5%) in an EU-27 comparison (22.5%) among young people (15 to 24-year-olds). This is particularly due to the varied VET programmes offered at the upper secondary level.

The employment rate of 20 to 34-year-old VET graduates decreased slightly from 87% in 2016 to 86.5% in 2020; it is 5.5 percentage points above the EU 27-average (81% in 2019) (18).



The employment of 20 to 34-year-old VET graduates of ISCED levels 3 and 4 fell from 87% to 86.5% (-0.5 pp) between 2016 and 2020 (19).

This high level is due to the wide range of vocational programmes at upper secondary level, which make it possible for graduates to enter the labour market directly (20).

The employment rate of 20 to 34-year-old VET graduates at ISCED levels 3 and 4 is higher compared to that for all 20 to 34-year-old graduates and the decline between 2016 and 2020 is smaller (2016: 83.8%, 2020 83%) (21).

[4] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 27.8.2021].

[6] NB: Data for population as of 1 January. Eurostat table tps00001 [extracted 27.8.2021]

[8] Old-age-dependency ratio is defined as the ratio between the number of persons aged 65 and more over the number of working-age persons (15-64). The value is expressed per 100 persons of working age (15-64).

[10] See https://www.wko.at/site/fachkraeftepotenzial/b_mobile.html

[16] See <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regprof/index.cfm>

[17] Source: Eurostat, une_rt_a [extracted 27.8.2021].

[18] Eurostat table edat_lfse_24 [extracted 27.8.2021].

[19] NB: Breaks in time series. Eurostat table edat_lfse_24 [extracted 27.8.2021].

[21] NB: Breaks in time series. Eurostat table edat_lfse_24 [extracted 27.8.2021].

CHAPTER 4.

Education attainment

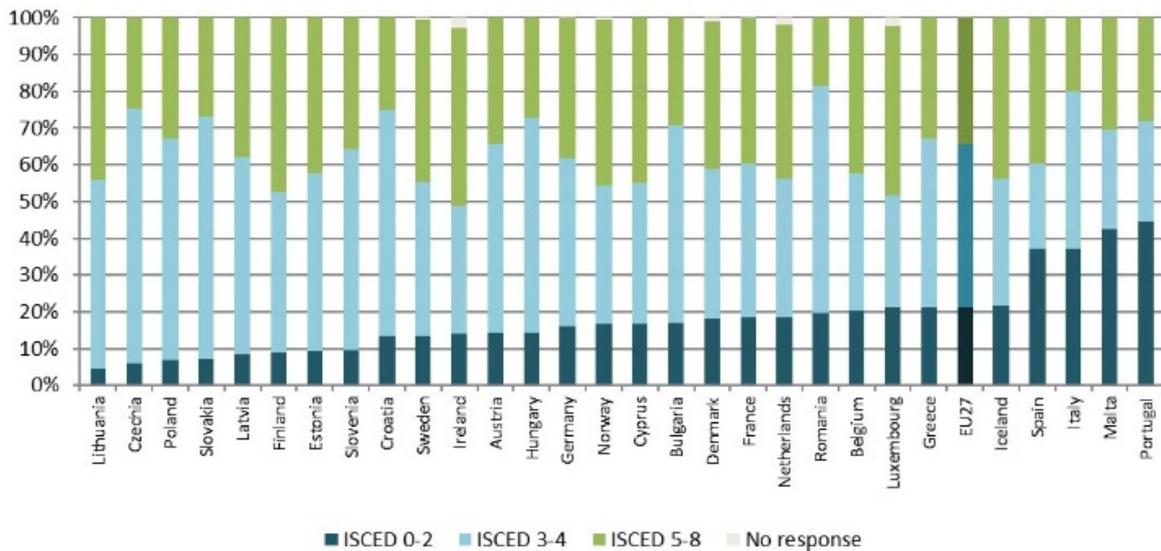
4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

In 2020 more than half of 25 to 64-year-olds (51.5%) acquired a qualification in an education programme at ISCED level 3 or 4, i.e. an apprenticeship diploma or a qualification from a school for intermediate vocational education or a general secondary school. This also reflects the importance of the upper secondary sector within the Austrian education system.

About one third of the population (34.2%) of 25 to 64 years old completed a tertiary education programme, including also 'short programmes' (ISCED 5) below the bachelor degree, such as the qualification obtained at a 5-year school-based VET programme or at an industrial master college. But many programmes aiming at vocational further and higher qualifications (such as the engineer qualification, the financial accountant qualification, qualifications obtained in the police force) are offered outside the formal education system and are not included in ISCED (22).

The share of the population with no or low-level qualifications (ISCED 0-2) is significantly lower (14.3%) compared to the EU-27 average (21.3%), and the share of the medium-qualified (51.5 % at levels 3-4) significantly higher (EU-27: 44.5%). The shares of the high-qualified (ISCED 5-8) are almost balanced (AT: 34.2%, EU-27: 34%).

Population (aged 25 to 64) by highest education level attained in 2020



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011. Low reliability for 'No response' in Czechia, Iceland, Latvia, and Poland.

ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.

ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.

ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.

Source: Eurostat, lfsa_pgaed [extracted 27.8.2021].

For more information about VET in higher education in Austria please see the case study from Cedefop's changing nature and role of VET in Europe project (23).

4.3 VET learners by level

In Austria nearly 70% of all upper secondary education VET learners (ISCED level 3) are enrolled in vocational programmes compared to 48.4% in the EU-27 average (2019) (24).

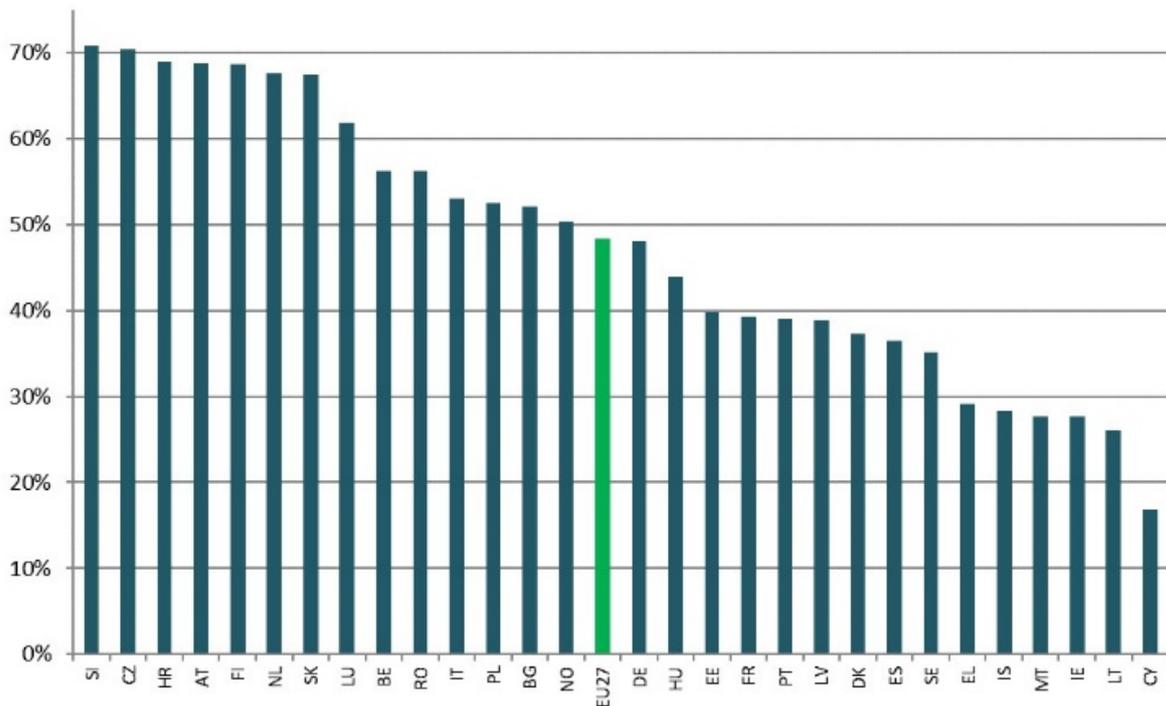
This is primarily due to the high attractiveness and inflow of approximately 40% - a relative constant rate since the mid-1990s - of an age cohort to the apprenticeship training in Austria.

Share of learners in VET by level in 2019

	lower secondary	upper secondary	post-secondary
not applicable	68.8%	100%	

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs01, educ_uoe_enrs04 and educ_uoe_enrs07 [extracted 27.8.2020].

Share of initial VET learners from total learners at upper secondary level (ISCED level 3), 2019



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs04 [extracted 27.8.2021].

4.4 Female share

Around 70% of each age cohort opts for a VET programme at the end of compulsory education (25). There are more male learners in these programmes (80% choose a VET programme) than female ones (70%) (26).

Education choices of females and males in IVET differ:

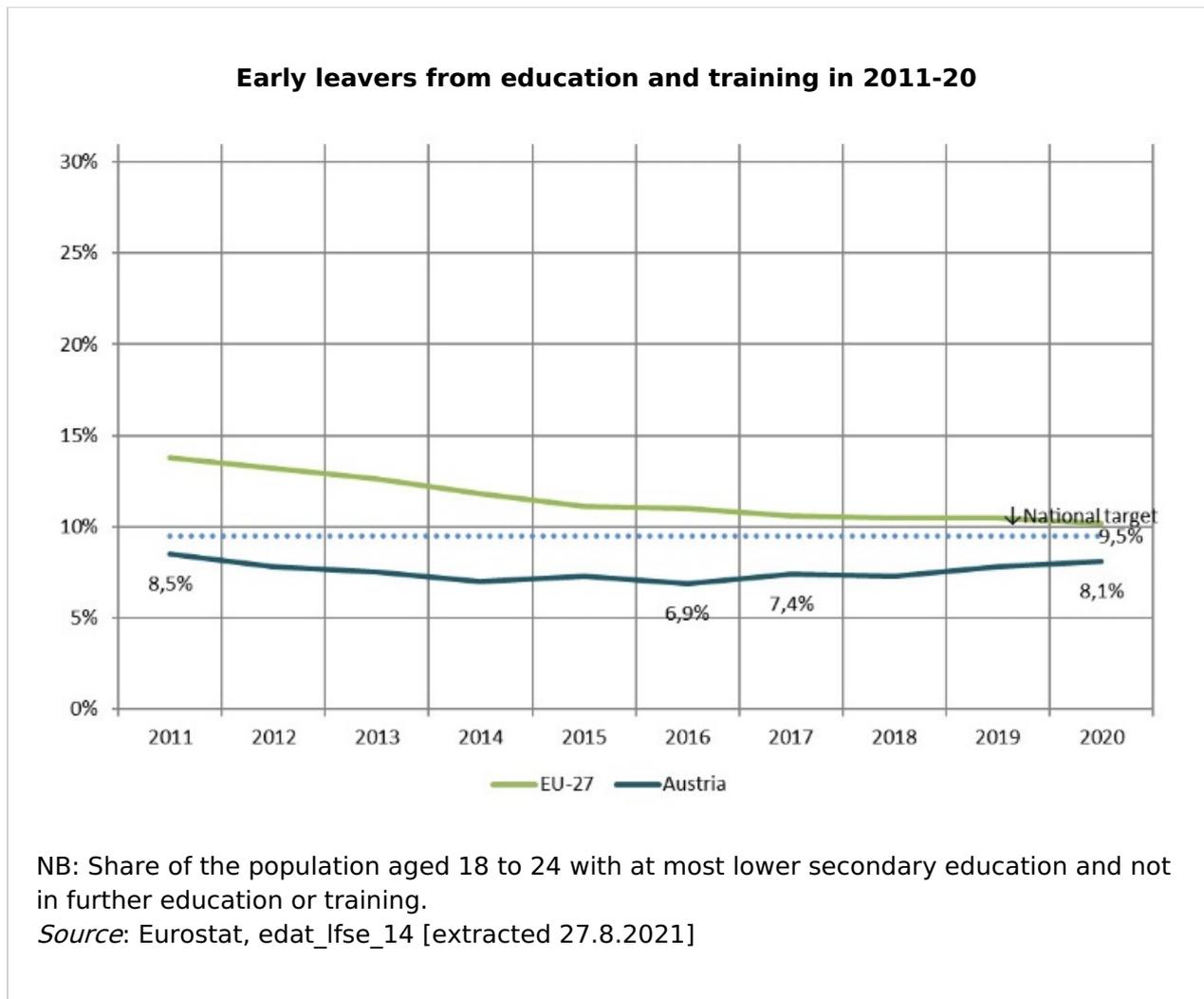
- young males are traditionally overrepresented in apprenticeship training (77%) with the main focus on technical trades and crafts. They also favour technical branches in school-based VET;
- young females generally prefer school-based VET with commercial, economic, social, healthcare and pedagogical programme orientation.

4.5 Early leavers from education and training

In Austria the share of early leavers from education and training – 18 to 24-year-olds, who have not graduated from upper secondary level and are currently not in education and training – has slightly decreased from 8.5% in 2011 to 8.1% in 2020. The national target of 9.5% in 2020 has already been passed and is clearly below the EU-27 average (10.1%) with the European benchmark of less than 10% for 2020.

This relatively favourable figure in comparison to the EU-27 is attributed to the wide and

differentiated range of education and training programmes after compulsory schooling, especially apprenticeship training and the VET school sector.



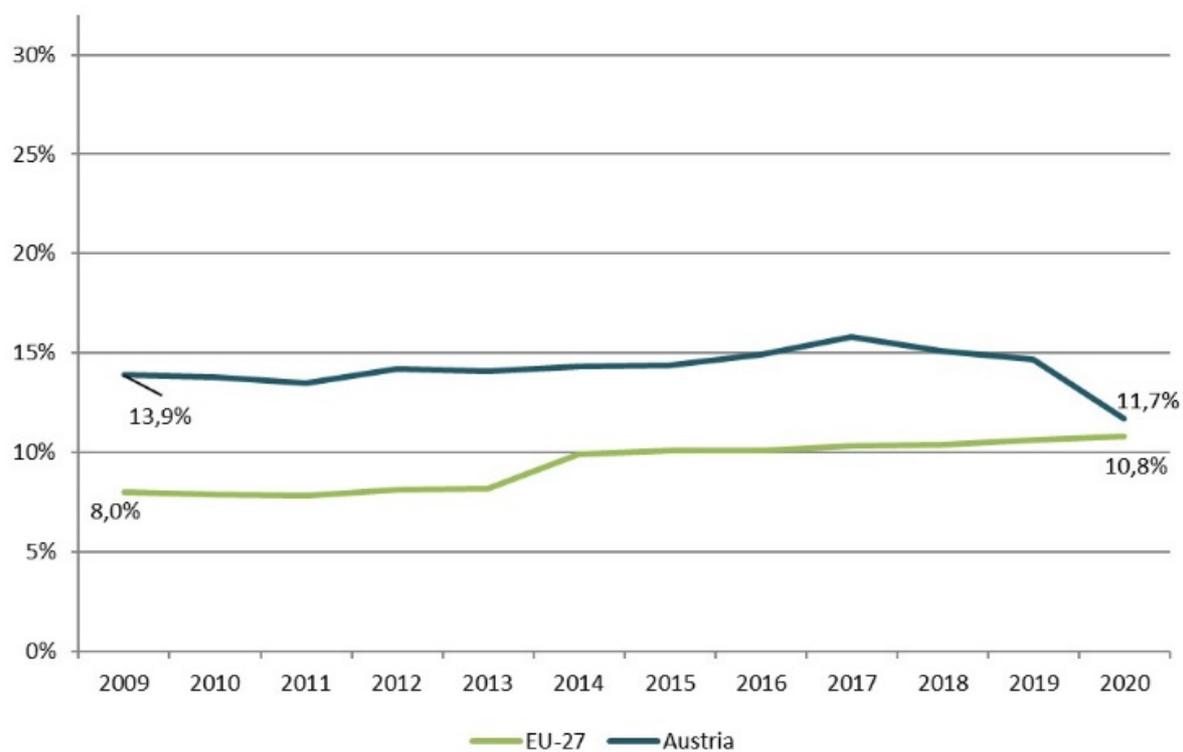
4.6 Participation in lifelong learning

Austria has already achieved, even exceeded, the EU benchmark for lifelong learning of 15%, reaching 15.8% in 2017. However, after a slight decline until 2019, participation plummeted massively to 11.7% in 2020 and is thus again well below the EU benchmark. The reason for this slump is the COVID-19 pandemic, which has left deep scars in continuing education. The Austrian government in 2011 upgraded the national target for adults aged 25 to 64 to take part in lifelong learning to 20% by 2020 (27).

LLL participation is generally higher among women than men (28) but is only slightly above the EU-27 average (10.8%) after the decline in 2020.

Especially in an aging society, lifelong learning (LLL) will become imperative to keeping pace with the (future) requirements of the economy. Encouraging participation of older employees in further and higher qualification programmes is essential (29).

Participation in lifelong learning in 2009-20



NB: Share of adult population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training.

Source: Eurostat, trng_lfse_01 [extracted 27.8.2021].

[24] Eurostat table edat_lfse_24 [extracted 17.8.2021]

[25] Eurostat table edat_lfse_24 [extracted 17.8.2021]

[27] <https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Strategie1.pdf>[accessed 27.8.2021]

CHAPTER 5.

VET within education and training system

Structure of the Austrian education system:

- kindergarten or preschool education (ISCED 0);
- primary level (ISCED 1);
- lower secondary level (ISCED 2);
- upper secondary level (ISCED 3-4);
- post-secondary non-tertiary level (ISCED 5);
- tertiary level (ISCED 5-8).

General compulsory schooling starts at the age of six and lasts 9 years. To promote equality of opportunity and employability, a training obligation up to the age of 18 has been established after completion of compulsory schooling; this means that young people are obliged to take part in a training programme or attend an educational measure up to the age of 18.

- primary level (4 years, learners aged 6 to 10): before entering the 4-year primary school, half-day attendance at nursery school/kindergarten is obligatory. For children with special educational needs (SEN) integrative classes are set up at primary school or there are specific special needs schools which are geared towards the education requirements of individual types of disability;
- lower secondary level (4 years, learners aged 11 to 14): at this education level learners can choose to follow general secondary education offered at the academic secondary school (AHS) or at the middle school (MS). In these school types, the learners with SEN can either attend integrative classes or the fifth to eight grade of a special needs school. To switch from primary school to MS or the lower cycle of AHS, learners need a positive final certificate of the fourth class of primary school; for entering the lower cycle of AHS, additional performance requirements (such as specific marks in the main subjects) and possibly an entrance examination are foreseen;
- upper secondary level (one to 5 years, learners aged 15 to 19): the first school year of upper secondary education is, at the same time, the final year of compulsory education. Compulsory education ends after attendance of 9 school years; there is no separate compulsory school certificate. At the upper secondary level, learners can choose between general and (pre-) vocational education programmes. Many of these programmes support direct entry to the labour market, provide access to post-secondary programmes and/or lead to the tertiary sector either directly or upon acquisition of higher education entrance qualifications;
- post-secondary and tertiary level (different durations; learners aged 19+): higher VET programmes (which aim to provide further and higher qualifications, especially for holders of initial VET qualifications), many of which are organised in cooperation with work-based learning in companies, are offered in the formal education context (schools and universities) but also the non-formal context (outside schools in adult education institutions). Higher education programmes, which lead to Bologna qualifications and are primarily academically oriented and designed as pre-professional, are offered at universities, universities of applied sciences and university colleges of teacher education;
- education outside the formal education system: many adult education establishments provide programmes for personal and professional continuing education. There are also programmes which make it possible for adults to acquire qualifications in the formal education sector. For the unemployed and those threatened by unemployment, programmes are offered as part of active labour market policy.

At secondary level, learners can choose from various pre-VET and VET options in different occupations/ sectors:

- different types of 1- or 2-year pre-VET (*Polytechnische Schule*, PTS, ISCED 341; *berufsbildende mittlere Schule*, BMS, ISCED 351): learners acquire general education, key competences and basic vocational skills preparing them for further school-based VET, apprenticeships and simple jobs on the labour market;
- 3- to 4-year school-based VET (*berufsbildende mittlere Schule*, BMS, ISCED 354, EQF 4): learners strengthen their general education and acquire the respective occupational competences and qualifications to perform medium-level jobs. Those who complete an add-on programme or take the *Berufsreifeprüfung* (exam for people whose initial VET does not automatically qualify them for entry into higher education) also obtain general access to higher education studies;
- 5-year school-based VET (*berufsbildende höhere Schule*, BHS, ISCED 354-554, EQF 5): combining theory and practice, these programmes offer high-quality occupation-related training while strengthening learners' general education. They lead to double qualifications for senior positions in business and general access to higher education at the same time (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*);
- apprenticeships (dual track training) (ISCED 354, EQF 4) in some 230 occupations and trades for learners from age 15 onwards, after compulsory education. They lead to qualifications at medium level. Graduates can progress to qualify, for instance, as master craftsperson or, following additional exams, access tertiary level training in a related field. By completing the *Berufsreifeprüfung* or an add-on programme they can also obtain general access to higher education;
- training for occupations in the health sector: access to programmes preparing for care and medical assistant professions (ISCED 351 and 353) and other occupations in the health sector (ISCED 351) requires completed compulsory education, being of minimum age, and/or a specific qualification. Training to become a specialist and general care nurse (ISCED 454) is being upgraded to bachelor level. This process will be completed by 2023.

VET at post-secondary level

The introduction of ISCED-2011 has had the result that a series of VET programmes which had formerly been classified as 'post-secondary, non-tertiary' are now considered as 'tertiary'. Due to this change in classification, the number of post-secondary programmes is now reduced while the number of tertiary programmes has risen. ISCED Category 4 basically only comprises schools for healthcare and nursing (ISCED 454). However, the programme to become a specialist and general care nurse offered in this school is being upgraded to a bachelor programme at universities of applied sciences. This process will be completed by 2023, so no VET programmes at ISCED level 4 will be provided in the future.

VET at tertiary level

At tertiary level (ISCED 5 to 8) a wide range of VET programmes are offered. These are provided at higher education institutions, in particular by universities of applied sciences and university colleges of teacher education:

- bachelor and master programmes provided at the universities of applied sciences (FH, ISCED 665 / 767) are offered both as full-time and also as part-time (with extended overall programme duration). A period of work placement is a mandatory part of the bachelor programme curriculum. The programmes are completed with an academic thesis followed by a final exam. Successful completion of an FH master's programme entitles graduates to access subject-related PhD courses at university.
- teacher education programmes offered by university colleges (PH, ISCED 665) aim to train compulsory school teachers for the type of education selected in a 4-year bachelor

programme. These PH programmes focus on imparting knowledge and skills related to teaching and didactics as well as their application in school life. There are practical teacher training phases within the bachelor programme as well as an induction period, a 1-year phase in which graduates teach at a school under the supervision of a mentor.

Tertiary VET is also provided in special schools or in adult learning centres. This includes add-on courses (*Aufbaulehrgänge*) and post-secondary VET programmes (*Kollegs*), which both lead to the same qualification as offered by the 5-year school-based VET programme at secondary level. There are also special schools offering the industrial master programme (*Werkmeisterschule*) and the building craftsperson programme (*Bauhandwerkerschule*). Preparation for the master craftsperson examination (*Meisterprüfung*) is offered by master craftsperson schools (*Meisterschulen*) within the formal education system or by adult learning centres, which are not considered to be part of the formal system.

CHAPTER 6.

Apprenticeship

Learners can acquire qualifications in one of the 230 legally recognised apprenticeship programmes with different area specialisations (construction, electro, information technology, wholesale and retail) offered at ISCED 354 level (EQF 4). Apprenticeship training takes place at two places of learning: in the training company and at vocational school. A prerequisite for taking part in an apprenticeship is the successful completion of 9 years of compulsory education.

Learners need to find themselves an apprenticeship place in a company to be able to access this programme. Once a training company is found, learners need to sign an apprenticeship agreement with the authorised apprenticeship trainer, which is recorded by the apprenticeship offices (*Lehrlingsstellen*).

There is an Austrian-wide training regulation (*Ausbildungsordnung*) for every apprenticeship. It includes the job profile (*Berufsbild*), a type of curriculum for the company-based part of training, which lays down the minimum knowledge and skills to be taught to apprentices by companies. The competence profile (*Berufsprofil*), which is also part of the training regulation, formulates in a learning-outcome-oriented manner the competences apprentices acquire by the end of their training in both learning sites. The social partners are essentially in charge of taking decisions about what in-company curriculum and/or competence profile an apprenticeship occupation is based on and they exert a decisive impact on the structure and content of apprenticeship training via their work in relevant advisory councils.

At the end of the apprenticeship period, every apprentice can take the apprenticeship-leaving examination (LAP), comprising practical and theoretical parts. The apprenticeship qualification can also be acquired via a so-called exceptional admission. For this purpose, relevant periods of professional practice and attendance of relevant course events are credited as a substitute for formal apprenticeship training.

Following successful completion of the LAP, graduates have various progression options, such as taking the master craftsman exam for a skilled craft. Access to HE programmes can be acquired by taking the exam called *Berufsreifeprüfung* (BRP) during or after the apprenticeship training. For many, an apprenticeship also forms the basis for a self-employed career. According to the 2019 Labour force survey, around 32% of self-employed persons in Austria have an apprenticeship degree as their highest completed qualification and around 25% of managers in the business sphere have completed an apprenticeship. (30)

The increasing tendency for young people to want to acquire a professional qualification, preferably in apprenticeship training, combined with the fact that the willingness of companies to train apprentices has decreased, has led to the expansion of supra-company training (*ÜBA, Überbetriebliche Berufsausbildung*). Originally conceived as a temporary education offer until entry to a regular, company-based apprenticeship, ÜBA was incorporated as an equivalent part of dual VET in 2008. Now it is possible for young people who do not find a company-based apprenticeship post or have not been accepted by a VET school to spend the entire duration of the training in an ÜBA, which is funded publicly through Public Employment Service Austria. The school-based part of apprenticeship training is provided at the regular vocational school.

The heterogeneity of people interested in dual VET has also resulted in the establishment of inclusive VET in 2003. Inclusive VET is mainly intended for young people who, at the end of compulsory schooling, have special educational needs and have not graduated from lower secondary level. It can be implemented in two variants, either the training period can be

extended by 1 or 2 years, or only selected competences of an apprenticeship are taught (partial qualifications). People in these inclusive VET programmes are supported by vocational training assistance (*Berufsausbildungsassistenz*) (31). This advises and supports the training companies and young people before and during the training.

A relevant apprenticeship training scheme has also been set up for especially talented young people who find learning easy: in 2008 the 'apprenticeship with the matriculation certificate' scheme (*Lehre und Matura*) was introduced; this enables apprentices to acquire the *Berufsreifeprüfung* (BRP) parallel to their apprenticeship training and to attend preparatory courses and complete partial exams free of charge. Since 1997 they have also had the option to complete the entire BRP after obtaining their apprenticeship diploma (32).

Learn more about apprenticeships in the national context from Cedefop's European database on apprenticeship schemes: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/apprenticeship-schemes/scheme-fiches>

CHAPTER 7.

VET governance

The responsibilities for VET at the upper secondary level are widespread: pre-vocational schools and most of the mainly school-based VET programmes are under the responsibility of the education ministry. This ministry is responsible for tasks such as preparing important school legislation, elaborating framework curricula, selecting, paying and providing further training for teaching staff, and maintaining schools.

However, VET programmes offered in agriculture and forestry, and in the healthcare sector, have different governance structures: the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for building and maintaining 5-year school-based VET programmes in agriculture and forestry and for selecting teachers at these schools; the health ministry is responsible for the legal basis of programmes in the healthcare sector. The construction and maintenance of their training establishments are largely taken on by the provinces on behalf of the Federation.

The education directorates in the provinces are responsible for enforcing school legislation, including quality assurance, school supervision and education control.

The competences for dual VET are within the spheres of the Ministry of Economy, which is responsible for the legal bases and content of the company-based part, and the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for the complementary school-based training (curricula, selection of staff).

The social partners are also involved significantly in the governance structure of apprenticeship training (designing the training regulations, carrying out the assessment procedures).

[31] to learn more about the vocational training assistance see the flyer for Berufsausbildungsassistenz [Vocational training assistant] in English: [https://neba.at/neba-leistungen/berufsausbildungsassistenz/warum-bas?task=callelement&format=raw&item_id=624&element=1bd14ef3-f766-4dad-843b-49437aa92d48&method=download&args\[0\]=0](https://neba.at/neba-leistungen/berufsausbildungsassistenz/warum-bas?task=callelement&format=raw&item_id=624&element=1bd14ef3-f766-4dad-843b-49437aa92d48&method=download&args[0]=0) [accessed 27.8.2021]

CHAPTER 8.

VET financing mechanisms

For VET (33) offered at the upper secondary level, the education ministry is responsible, in most cases, for paying teachers and providing further training for teaching staff and maintaining schools. Exceptions are the payment for VET programmes offered in the healthcare sector, where the provinces pay the costs for the respective teachers, as well as those offered in agriculture and forestry. Here, the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for paying the teachers of 5-year school-based VET programmes in agriculture and forestry. The costs for teachers at schools of agriculture and forestry are shared equally by the Ministry of Agriculture and the provinces.

The funding of the company-based part of apprenticeship training is taken on by the training companies; State subsidies are also available. The school-based part is funded by the Ministry of Education. The costs of the paying teachers are shared with the provinces. The Ministry of Agriculture and the provinces are responsible for dual VET in agriculture and forestry.

Teachers in programmes in the healthcare sector are paid by the provinces. The construction and maintenance of the training establishments is also largely taken on by the provinces on behalf of the Federation.

The funding of CVET depends on what type of training is attended. In most cases, the costs of CET are borne by the participants and/or companies. There are, however, a number of measures (such as educational leave) and financial subsidies (in the form of grants and tax relief) in order to (partially) cover expenses. All these initiatives aim to serve as incentives to take part in CET in order to improve the companies' economic situation and strengthen the CET participants' position in the labour market.

Model calculation: Comparison of the public expenditure for IVET, per learner/apprentice for 1 year (2018 or 2018/19)

Programme	Costs per person/apprenticeship place and year (in EUR)	Total public expenses per person/ apprenticeship place and year (in EUR)
Dual VET (company and VET school)	VET school: 5 056 State subsidies: 1 548	6 737
Supra-company training (training in a state-funded workshop and at VET school)	VET school: 5 056 PES: 13 179 Province: 1 046	19 291
School-based VET programmes	10 983	10 983

Source: Dornmayr/Nowak 2020 (34).

CHAPTER 9.

Teachers and trainers

9.1 VET teacher types

VET has the following types of teacher:

- general subject teachers (in school-based VET programmes, including VET schools of apprenticeship training);
- VET-subject teachers (in school-based VET programmes, including VET schools of apprenticeship training);
- IVET trainers (in-company trainer in apprenticeship training and in supra-company apprenticeship training (ÜBA)); trainers (in adult learning centres).

Teachers

The training of teachers (35) changed when the Federal Act on the New Teacher Training Scheme came into force in July 2013. Since then, all teachers have been trained as part of tertiary bachelor and master programmes (ISCED 6 and 7) at universities and university colleges of teacher education.

The study offer for teachers at secondary level comprises the following two programmes:

- teacher training programme for secondary general education programmes (ISCED 2 to 5): this programme qualifies graduates to teach learners aged between 10 and 19 years old in the general education subjects offered at a secondary level programme;
- teacher training programme for secondary VET (ISCED 2 to 5): this programme qualifies graduates to teach learners aged between 14 and 19 years old in the VET subjects or packages of subjects of secondary VET chosen in the study programme.

All teacher training programmes require a one-semester introductory and orientation period (*Studieneingangs- und Orientierungsphase* or StEOP).

Teachers in VET schools – with the exception of teachers of general education subjects – must prove that they have relevant work experience in the business world before they start teaching. Students with relevant work experience are employed at a school and complete their studies part-time. Full-time students must acquire their professional practice during their studies.

The master programme can be completed immediately after the bachelor programme. For teachers at part-time vocational schools and for VET-teachers of occupation-related practice or theory who have a relevant tertiary qualification at master level, it is optional to complete this additional master programme.

In any case, new teachers are accompanied by a mentor in their first year of service (1-year induction year).

IVET trainers:

As well as having a minimum age of 18 years, an IVET trainer needs to furnish proof of certain qualifications. This proof can take the form of the IVET trainer exam, the IVET trainer course, or a substitute for exam or course attendance (such as the master craftsperson exam, or completion of the industrial master college). Most IVET trainers carry out their training as part of their main work but larger companies often have full-time trainers.

IVET trainer courses are offered by the adult education establishments of the social partners. In

40 periods of instruction completed with an expert interview, they aim to impart the necessary pedagogical, psychological, training plan-related and training method-specific as well as legal knowledge and skills required for the training of apprentices. The course contents are the same as those of the IVET trainer exam.

CVET trainers:

There are no regulations on the required qualifications of trainers in adult learning centres/CVET provider institutions, though relevant know-how in the subject they teach is essential. In many cases these are individuals who practise a profession and impart relevant specialisations. Commercial and technological courses, for example, are taught by practitioners from business, and language classes by native speakers. Didactic skills are not required, but people with teaching practice are preferred. Trainers mainly exercise their profession in a self-employed capacity.

For CET programmes funded by the Public Employment Service or other public bodies (especially the provinces), the funding bodies increasingly require proof of the pedagogical and didactic qualifications of the trainers or course leaders of the CET institutions. Special certification programmes (certified adult educators) enable trainers to prove their competence.

9.2 Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers

CPD for teachers:

According to the new Service Code (*Dienst- und Besoldungsrecht*) (36), all teachers – irrespective of the school at which they teach and which subject they teach – are obliged to undergo further development measures to improve their profession-oriented competences. By order they are required to attend in-service training events for up to 15 hours per school year while there are no lessons. In-service training programmes may be connected with absence from teaching only if in the significant interest of the service.

CPD events are primarily offered by [university colleges of teacher education](#) (PHs). Teachers can register for these events via the system 'PH-Online' in order (depending on the duration of the event) to be granted leave by the school management or the school supervision to attend this event.

CPD measures are financed by provincial funds. These funds are provided directly to the provider establishment so that participation is free of charge for the teachers.

CPD for trainers:

There is no CPD obligation for IVET trainers. However, CPD programmes are offered at adult education establishments; in some cases, in-house CET programmes are also available. In recent years so-called IVET trainer colleges (*Ausbilderakademien*) and IVET trainer forums have been set up in most Austrian provinces with the aim of providing CPD specifically for IVET trainers. Most are coordinated by the regional economic chambers, in cooperation with the respective chamber's CET institution, and offer certification in various stages. They also promote experience exchange and networking between IVET trainers. The latter is also the goal of regional and sector-specific get-togethers for IVET trainers.

The Economic Chamber funds measures related to the CPD of IVET trainers in their interaction with apprentices, such as pedagogy, didactics, personal development, diversity. The funding covers 75% of the course fees but no more than EUR 2 000 per trainer and calendar year. A prerequisite for support is minimum participation of 8 hours.

[35] For detailed information about the training of teachers and trainers in Austria, see

Eurypedia: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/teachers-and-education-staff-1_en [accessed 31.8.2021] and <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/teachers-and-trainers> [accessed 31.8.2021].

- [36] See Federal Law Gazette https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokument.wxe?Abfrage=BgblAuth&Dokumentnummer=BGBLA_2013_I_211 [accessed 31.8.2021].

CHAPTER 10.

Shaping VET qualifications

10.1 Anticipating skill needs

Existing VET programmes are regularly developed, updated and adjusted to guarantee that VET is business- and labour-market-oriented. One major goal of this adjustment process is to achieve congruency between VET and employment as well as between qualification supply and demand, attempting to appraise future developments at an early stage and respond to them. In Austrian VET there are different anticipation processes that lead to curriculum adjustments. Major stakeholders in this process include the social partners, which can frequently support coordination between educational provision and qualification requirements and/or make statements on curriculum drafts. The outcomes of various analyses of qualification requirements are also considered in this process.

Mechanisms and processes to anticipate qualification requirements

The most important include:

- skill needs studies: these are mostly conducted for specific sectors and industries (e.g. timber, IT), but also for regions (such as federal provinces) and education programmes (certain specialisations of colleges for higher vocational education, dual VET, etc.). The main beneficiaries of these studies are stakeholders in these sectoral/regional areas as well as staff responsible for the curriculum and other areas in the VET pathways that are of relevance for the specialisations;
- skills barometer of PES Austria (AMS-QB) (37): this online system, which was set up in 2002, summarises current and foreseeable labour market trends and qualification requirements and makes them accessible to the general public in a structured format via the internet. The AMS-QB uses existing written data (e.g. from skill needs studies), labour market statistics and analyses and information gathered in interviews with experts from the various occupational areas. Contents refer to the whole of Austria, and they are complemented by summary information presented for every province and analyses of job ads;
- 'New skills' activities: in 2009 a standing committee on new skills was founded at PES Austria. This committee, in which relevant ministries, the social partners and their CET provider establishments are represented, functions as advisory board for PES Austria in questions concerning the design of education offers within active labour market policy and the activities to be undertaken to identify future skills needs. Since the committee's foundation, roundtable discussions have been held in which company experts from various vocational areas (such as HR) and education experts (e.g. representatives of providers) have discussed and exchanged information about current and future skills needs/trends. This should give providers a first-hand picture on skills requirements of the economy to be able to design or adjust their offers adequately. Besides these roundtable (group) discussions, one-to-one/in-depth expert interviews (mainly with key companies of a vocational area) have also been conducted. Other 'New skills' activities have included presentations and information events, to inform learners, employers and CET interested people about skills requirements and trends. Since 2018 the 'New skills' activities have focussed on the subjects 'digitalisation' and 'Industry 4.0'. (38)

See also Cedefop's skills forecast (39) and European skills index (40).

10.2 Designing qualifications

In the following, the processes during the development of curricula are presented for various VET programmes.

School-based VET

The educational objectives and content of VET schools at the upper secondary level are laid down in framework curricula. They are issued by the education ministry. Although the acquisition of professional competences has always been a key goal of VET, competences have been defined explicitly in the curricula since 2012 as a result of the development of the national qualifications framework and its orientation towards learning outcomes. The competence-oriented curricula specify the knowledge and skills that learners have acquired by the end of their training and which qualify them to act appropriately in different situations at work. As well as subject-related competences, interdisciplinary competences are also listed as they are considered of major importance in Austrian VET.

Initiatives towards curriculum reforms and/or the introduction of new subjects/area specialisations are launched by the education establishments themselves or by the Ministry of Education. In so-called curriculum steering groups and working groups, teachers and experts of the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with representatives of the economy, prepare draft curricula for the respective subjects. As well as a number of other institutions, the social partners also receive the drafts to issue their statements. In the implementation of the framework curricula, schools are entitled to change the number of lessons of individual subjects autonomously within a given framework or develop their own focuses, taking account of (regional) economic requirements.

Special curricula can be established for individual school locations as school pilot projects to be able to respond swiftly and flexibly to current developments such as in technology, society or on the labour market.

Dual VET (apprenticeship)

The training content for every apprenticeship occupation is laid down in training regulations (defining in-company curricula/competence profiles for the company-based part) and curricula (for the school-based part). The Ministry of Economy issues the in-company curriculum and the competence profile (the activity description formulating the competences which apprentices need to have acquired by the end of their training at the company and vocational school) as part of the training regulation. The initiative to modernise existing and develop new in-company curricula/competence profiles (new apprenticeship occupations) is usually launched by companies or the social partners. The Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship (BABB) – which comprises social partner representatives and advises the Ministry of Economy in dual VET issues – also introduces proposals or prepares expert opinions about possible reforms. The specific designing of in-company curricula/competence profiles, and the orientation towards current and future qualification requirements, is generally conducted by BABB subcommittees or the education research institutes of the social partners, mainly *ibw* Austria – Research & Development in VET. Framework curricula for vocational schools within the framework of apprenticeship training are designed in a similar way to those for school-based VET. Framework curricula are laid down in analogy to company-based training.

Since 2020 training regulations for apprenticeship occupations must be reviewed and modernised at least every 5 years. This is to ensure that all apprenticeship occupations meet the latest professional and technical standards and respond quickly to economic and social developments. To this end, according to the law, results of current research and development must be taken into account and suitable institutions must be commissioned with these quality development tasks.

Programmes at universities of applied sciences (UAS)

The initiative to modify existing or introduce new fields of study at UAS frequently comes from the business sphere. For the curriculum, which is prepared by a development team, an application for accreditation needs to be submitted to the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria). An important part of this application is proof that the economy has a demand for graduates and the planned degree programme can expect demand from potential participants. This proof can be furnished, for example, in the form of needs and acceptance analyses. The accreditation of a degree programme is granted for a maximum of 6 years by the Ministry of Education following a decision by AQ Austria. During that time, it is possible to make necessary adaptations by submitting change applications. Upon expiry of this period, it is necessary to submit an application for reaccreditation, which follows the same rules as the initial accreditation.

Continuing vocational education and training (CVET)

CVET finds it easiest to adjust programmes to skills requirements and to respond to the economy's needs most quickly. Providers often cooperate with professional organisations and companies to tailor their offers to needs. They also use the information from skills needs analyses and the results of the New skills activities.

[37] See AMS. Qualification barometer <http://www.ams.at/qualifikationsbarometer> [accessed 31.8.2021].

[38] for more information on the new skills initiative and results see <https://www.ams.at/newskills> [accessed 31.8.2021].

[39] Cedefop. Skills forecast. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-visualisations/skills-forecast> [accessed 31.8.2021].

[40] Cedefop. Skills panorama. <https://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en/indicators/european-skills-index> [accessed 31.8.2021].

CHAPTER 11.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance in VET is a highly differentiated and permanent process.

The regular updating of curricula and training plans is a major part of quality assurance and many other measures are taken to maintain the attractiveness of VET among learners and companies and to safeguard the recognition of the qualifications.

The VET Quality Initiative (QIBB) for school-based VET (41), sets up the framework conditions in a way that successful teaching and learning is guaranteed. Defined processes and instruments enable systematic planning, observation, documentation, evaluation of and reflection on the quality of procedures and results (42). Since the beginning of the school year 2021/22, a new quality management system for schools (QMS) will be established gradually over the next 2 years, in which QIBB will be merged with the Quality framework for general education schools (SQA). The content of the new quality framework (in force from January 2021), forms the basis for this. (43)

The aims of QMS include:

- to know exactly what prerequisites students have and how their potential can be further developed;
- to promote cooperation among teachers;
- to formulate school-specific development goals and to monitor regularly the achievement of these goals;
- to distribute responsibilities and competences appropriately within the school and

to be in active exchange and close cooperation with external cooperation partners.

Another major element of quality assurance at 5-year school-based VET programmes is the partly standardised final examination, which was introduced in the school year 2015/16. It consists of standardised exams in the language of instruction (most often German, but also Slovene, Croatian and Hungarian), in applied mathematics and in a foreign language (English, French, Italian or Spanish). The assignments for these exams, as well as the duration and time of their implementation, are laid down centrally for the whole of Austria. The uniformly defined exam assignments and assessment criteria mainly aim to ensure the objectivity and reliability of the exam results and promote the transparency and comparability of the final exam.

The Federal Institute for Quality Assurance in the Austrian School System (IQS), introduced in July 2020, monitors education and provides analyses and scientific expertise for the evidence-based further development of the school system. (44)

In dual VET, many quality-assuring measures are carried out in addition to the regular adjustment of apprenticeship occupations to economic and technological developments. These measures include the accreditation of training companies: every company that wants to train apprentices is obliged to undergo an accreditation process. This consists of an examination by the apprenticeship office with the cooperation of the Chamber of Labour to check if the company meets the legal and corporate prerequisites for apprenticeship training to teach the knowledge and skills foreseen in the competence profile.

In 2013 the Ministry of Economy set up the clearing office for apprenticeship-leaving examinations at ibw Austria – Research and Development in VET (45), responsible for:

- safeguarding a uniform quality standard by examining the assignments of the

- apprenticeship-leaving examination,
- evaluating guidelines and proposed solutions for compliance with the respective examination regulation, subject-related correctness, practical relevance and didactic quality.

The apprenticeship-leaving examination is organised by the apprenticeship offices and is taken before a board of examiners. This ensures that training and validation are separated, which significantly contributes to objectivity and quality assurance.

The quality management in apprenticeship training initiative (QML), launched in 2013 by the social partners, has the objective of reducing the number of apprenticeship dropouts and increasing the success rate in apprenticeship-leaving examinations. The QML builds on annually evaluated indicators of apprenticeship dropouts, the number of those who (do not) attempt to take the apprenticeship-leaving examination as well as (un)successful apprenticeship-leaving exams. In the case of apprenticeship occupations where the dropout rate or the failure rate in the apprenticeship-leaving examination are relatively high, more in-depth analyses are carried out jointly with the competent sectoral representations to find the reasons as far as possible and take related measures (such as adapting the in-company curricula, improving career guidance, and measures to support apprentices including private tutoring or coaching, IVET trainer courses, and supporting materials for training companies).

The Vocational Training Act (BAG), amended in 2020, stipulates that training regulations for apprenticeship occupations must be reviewed and modernised at least every 5 years. This is to ensure that all apprenticeship occupations meet the latest professional and technical standards and respond quickly to economic and social developments. To this end, according to the law, results of current research and development must be taken into account and suitable institutions must be commissioned with these quality development tasks.

Quality-assurance measures are also taken in the post-secondary and tertiary sectors, as in the definition and implementation of master craftsman and proof of competence examinations. The main basis for this is formed by the *European guidelines on quality assurance in higher VET* (46), which have been developed in analogy to the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area (ESG) with substantial involvement of Austria.

[41] See Bmbwf. Quality management system for schools. <https://www.qms.at/> [accessed 31.8.2021].

[42] With the Education Reform Act (Federal Law Gazette, I No 138/2017 https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2017_I_138/BGBLA_2017_I_138.pdf 31.8.2021)), in force since autumn 2017, new regulations regarding quality assurance at schools have been introduced. This act foresees the establishment of a monitoring system which comprises quality management and resource controlling. QIBB is to be merged with SQA, the quality management system of general education schools, and further developed. First results of this extensive reform are to be expected for 2020.

[43] for more information see Bmbwf. Quality management system for schools. <https://www.qms.at/> [accessed 31.8.2021].

[44] see Federal Institute for Quality Assurance in the Austrian School System. <https://www.iqs.gv.at/> [accessed 31.8.2021].

[45] See IBW. <https://ibw.at/> [accessed 31.8.2021].

CHAPTER 12.

Validation of prior learning

Validation of non-formal and informal (prior) learning is a topic gaining international importance. In Austria, major importance is traditionally attached to formal education qualifications from the school-based, dual and higher education sectors. However, learning also increasingly takes place outside formal education in adult learning institutions, on the job, and within the framework of voluntary activities. Rapid changes on the labour market – due to technology and globalisation – require a formal pathway to be followed by the need to learn, brush up and deepen existing knowledge. To promote competence acquisition outside the formal education context and encourage lifelong learning, a strategy to validate non-formal and informal learning was published by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science in 2017 (47). This strategy defines a framework for the further development, coordination and network formation of existing validation approaches. The goal is to promote quality and foster trust as well as enhance visibility and access to validation offers.

[47] See https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Strategie_zur_Validierung_nicht-formalen_und_informellen_Lernens.pdf [[accessed 31.8.2021].

CHAPTER 13.

Incentives for learners

There are various incentives for VET learners (or their families) irrespective of the type of education and training they have chosen (48):

- for learners who have reached full legal age and attend a school or HE institution, family allowance is prolonged and still granted until their 24th birthday; in certain cases, this entitlement can be further prolonged;
- learners for whom family allowance is received may apply to a public transport authority for free transport on the route between their home and school/training company (*Schülerfreifahrt*); in this case, they need to pay a flat-rate contribution of EUR 19.60 a year. Where no public means of transport is available, they may apply for a school or home commuting grant;
- required school textbooks are provided to learners free of charge;
- the Schooling Allowances Act (*Schülerbeihilfengesetz*) (49) provides for the following three types of allowance:
 - school allowance is granted to learners from grade 10 onwards who attend an upper secondary programme and are in need of financial support;
 - boarding school and travel allowance (*Heim- und Fahrtenbeihilfe*) are offered to learners from grade 9 onwards, in case that they cannot stay in their parents' house because the school location is too far away. Financial need must also be proven. The basic amounts of school allowance and boarding school allowance are EUR 1 130 and EUR 1 380 per year; they can be increased or reduced depending on financial needs. Travel allowance is EUR 105 per year. A further extraordinary allowance may be granted in cases of 'social hardship';
 - special allowance is granted to learners, who have been working for at least 1 year and for the last 6 months before their final exam, where they stop working to prepare for the exam.

In IVET, the following financial incentives are available for apprentices (50):

- apprentices can apply for state funding for attending a preparatory course for the apprenticeship-leaving examination (up to 100 % of the course fees);
- the second or third attempt to sit the apprenticeship-leaving examination is free of charge (no examination fees or material costs);
- language courses and foreign work placements organised within the Erasmus+ programme are part-funded by the state (EUR 15 per day).

Funding for supplementary training measures (Digi cheque) is provided for participation in courses that teach or consolidate the content of the occupational profile or vocational school as well as occupational competences that cut across occupational profiles (e.g. in the areas of digitalisation, resource management or climate protection). Funding is provided for 100% of the course costs for a maximum of three courses up to a maximum of EUR 500 per course.

Attending CVET programmes is financially supported (directly and indirectly) by the state, the provinces or municipalities. The social partners provide the following funding as do individual companies:

- provinces and municipalities, as well as social partners, provide funding for course fees in various forms (education cheques, educational accounts, education vouchers). Preferred funding target groups are employees, young people, and those at a disadvantage on their respective regional labour markets;

- companies often partly fund the CVET activities of their employees by providing direct funding or allowing their employees to attend courses during paid working hours;
- PES Austria finances skills training and retraining measures within the framework of active labour market policies;
- PES Austria is also responsible for the education leave scheme. Any employee who has been employed within the last 12 months for a minimum period of 6 months may take educational leave. During this, IVET or CVET as well as language courses may be attended, resumed or completed both in Austria and abroad. Written proof must be furnished that education measures of at least 16 to 20 weekly hours have been taken. During the leave period, subsidies are granted to the level of the unemployment benefit that the employee would get in the event of unemployment. There is a minimum and a maximum daily rate, depending on prior earnings;
- employees have the possibility to write off costs as expenses for occupationally relevant CVET measures when filing their tax returns at the end of each year.

[48] For more information about funding in education, see Eurypedia:
https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/funding-education-1_en
[accessed 31.8.2021].

[49] See <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10009531> [accessed 31.8.2021].

[50] See <https://www.wko.at/service/bildung-lehre/Lehrlinge.html> [accessed 31.8.2021].

CHAPTER 14.

Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

In 2008 a new funding scheme was introduced for training companies offering apprenticeship posts. This scheme is not only intended to increase the number of apprenticeship posts offered but also improve the quality of training. Within this funding scheme, there are various types of support (51):

- basic support (*Basisförderung*): every training company is entitled to basic support. This comprises three gross apprenticeship incomes in line with the collective agreement in the first apprenticeship year, two in the second year, and one each in the third and fourth years. The training company can apply for basic support at the end of the respective apprenticeship year;
- training alliances and additional VET courses: subsidies also cover inter-company and supra-company VET measures and the acquisition of competences which go beyond the in-company curriculum. Attending a preparatory course for the apprenticeship-leaving exam can also be funded;
- apprenticeship for adults: the training of adults (18+) is funded if they are paid as unskilled workers, i.e. more than apprenticeship income;
- companies where apprentices pass the apprenticeship-leaving exam with good results or distinction can also apply for grants;
- subsidies are also available for CET measures for IVET trainers;
- financial means are also available for measures taken for apprentices with learning difficulties (such as tutoring courses);
- in the course of the COVID-19 crisis, a takeover bonus (*Übernahmeprämie*) was introduced as additional support for apprentices who cannot be trained further in their original company, e.g. due to insolvency or company closure. This takeover bonus also applies to apprentices who are taken over from a supra-company apprenticeship training (ÜBA).

Other benefits cover non-wage labour costs:

- there are reduced rates for the company's health insurance contribution for apprentices (3.35 % instead of 7.65 %) and for the unemployment insurance contribution (2.4 % instead of 6 %);
- the contribution to accident insurance for apprentices is waived throughout the entire apprenticeship.

Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) also runs apprenticeship post support schemes designed to integrate problem groups into the labour market. Companies receive a flat-rate grant towards the costs of an apprenticeship. The grant includes the following categories of apprentice:

- young women in apprenticeships with a low proportion of women (below 40%);
- disadvantaged apprenticeship post seekers (young people who have mental or physical disabilities or emotional problems, learning deficits, or who are socially maladjusted);
- adult apprentices (18+) with qualification/employment problems (e.g. dropouts).

In CVET, training providers can also receive subsidies in order to be able to offer courses free of charge. Two initiatives are relevant in connection to vocational training:

- adult learning initiative (52): financed by national and ESF means, the aim is to enable

young people and adults to acquire basic skills (reading skills, basic skills in German or in another language, mathematical and digital skills) and the compulsory schooling qualification free of charge;

- apprenticeship training and HE entrance exam (53): apprentices can attend preparatory courses for the *Berufsreifeprüfung* (HE entrance examination for graduates of NQF level 4 VET qualifications) and take the four partial exams free of charge.

[51] See https://www.wko.at/service/bildung-lehre/Gesamtuebersicht_Foerderarten_lehre.html [accessed 31.8.2021].

[52] See <https://www.initiative-erwachsenenbildung.at/initiative-erwachsenenbildung/was-ist-das/> [accessed 31.8.2021].

[53] See <https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/zentralmatura/bm.html> [accessed 31.8.2021].

CHAPTER 15.

Guidance and counselling

There is considerable diversity of institutions, providers and initiatives in the field of information, counselling and guidance on learning and occupations. The main providers are the education institutions, the public employment service and the social partners. Counselling and guidance is offered at the following levels in education institutions:

(a) all schools of lower and upper secondary level offer counselling and guidance from the fifth school grade through counsellors and career guidance officers. They are available for schoolchildren and parents and provide information about possible education paths, access requirements, as well as the qualifications and entitlements to be acquired. They also give young people a basic overview of CET options. Guidance is conducted by teachers who have the relevant qualifications and who are termed, depending on the school type, school counsellor (*Schülerberater/in*) or education counsellor (*Bildungsberater/in*) and provide their counselling services in addition to their teaching activity. In the final 2 years of lower secondary level, career guidance is a compulsory subject totalling 32 hours a year. The aim of these lessons includes improving the learners' decision-making competence, social skills, determination and perseverance. Short periods of work placement at companies and personal contacts with people from different occupations aim to help learners examine their career aspirations and take independent decisions;

(b) career guidance plays a particularly important role at prevocational schools as this school type is at the interface between obligatory and further schooling. Career guidance aims to inform learners and parents about regional possibilities in apprenticeship training and, in vocational guidance classes, prepares them for so-called real-life encounters (such as days of practical work experience) as well as important information events and job information fairs;

(c) in school-based VET programmes at upper secondary level (BMS and BHS) (54) teachers with specialist qualifications also work as career guidance officers. Learners at BMS and BHS have already taken their first decision about their professional career. But, thanks to the good level of general education provided at schools, the entire range of professional development options is also open to them;

(d) most universities offer both psychological counselling offices and career planning centres, bodies which are within the sphere of responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The psychological student counselling services at universities and university of applied sciences (*Fachhochschule*) offer general course guidance, psychological counselling, psychotherapy, aptitude diagnostics, coaching, and supervision, etc. to holders of the upper secondary school-leaving certificate and HE students. Career planning centres at universities support students on their entry into the world of work by offering one-to-one counselling, information events on topics such as job applications and CVs, as well as individualised career planning. The centres also organise seminars on areas such as presentation techniques, rhetoric and IT, as well as events such as careers fairs and company presentations;

(e) in the CET sector education counselling and career guidance is becoming increasingly important. This is particularly evident in the establishment of comprehensive education databases (55), an Austria-wide platform for education counselling, and the merger of institutions to guarantee independent and supra-institutional information and guidance services. Major adult learning establishments, such as the institutions run by the social partners frequently offer their own guidance services. Around 70 career guidance centres (BIZ) of AMS offer comprehensive information about occupations, their contents and requirements, about

initial education and training, CET paths, the labour market and employment options across Austria. Apart from information material in the form of brochures, information leaflets and videos, The Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) also develops information databases on occupations and on initial and continuing education and training programmes for different target groups (56). For apprenticeship post seekers, AMS operates the online apprenticeship post platform (57) jointly with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber.

EURES (European job mobility portal) advisors who are employed at AMS provide information about job offers and working conditions in other countries of the European Economic Area. Anyone who is interested can use the information and service offers provided by BIZ free of charge. Print media, videos and online databases are available for customers to obtain information themselves. For young people in need of career guidance there is a selection of tools (e.g. the compass for occupations, interest test). The advisors working at BIZ provide support in information search and are available for one-on-one counselling talks to assist in career and education decisions. BIZ also provides services for specific target groups (learners, teachers, parents) and on specific topics (career guidance, presentations of occupations, job applications, days of technology for girls). AMS offers one-on-one counselling talks for people registered as unemployed. These talks aim to match the jobseekers' personal requirements, strengths and intentions with the situation on the labour market. There is also the possibility to take part in training programmes and courses (vocational guidance courses, training for job applications, job trials, skills training and qualification courses). In special cases, (young) women can take advantage of assistance in career choice, skills training and qualification. AMS also supports school-based information activities by means of a large number of brochures, career guidance films, occupational information and CET databases on the internet, and by organising events and trade fairs.

The different chambers offer education counselling and career guidance. The chambers of labour and trade unions provide these services mainly via their joint adult learning institutions: the vocational training institutes (bfi). They publish information material and organise information events. The counselling services of the economic chambers and their adult education institutions, the institutes for economic promotion (WIFIs), focus on IVET and CVET. These services are offered across Austria at several locations in the career guidance centres or so-called talent centres. With an online career information tool (58) the economic chambers have their own web portal where job descriptions, VET and CVET options, tips on career choice and job applications, as well as a large variety of service materials, are offered, in some cases in several languages. The career guidance centres of the Economic Chambers provide comprehensive information material on a self-service basis and organise events geared towards the world of work, such as sector presentations, school and information events, as well as training for job applications. As well as information for groups (such as school classes), one-on-one counselling talks are also offered. A special focus of many career information centres of the Economic Chamber and the institutes for economic promotions is on so-called talent checks (for young people) and potential analyses (for adults), which are comprehensive diagnostic procedures to determine interests, aptitudes, strengths and potentials as a basis for educational and career guidance. (59).

Please see:

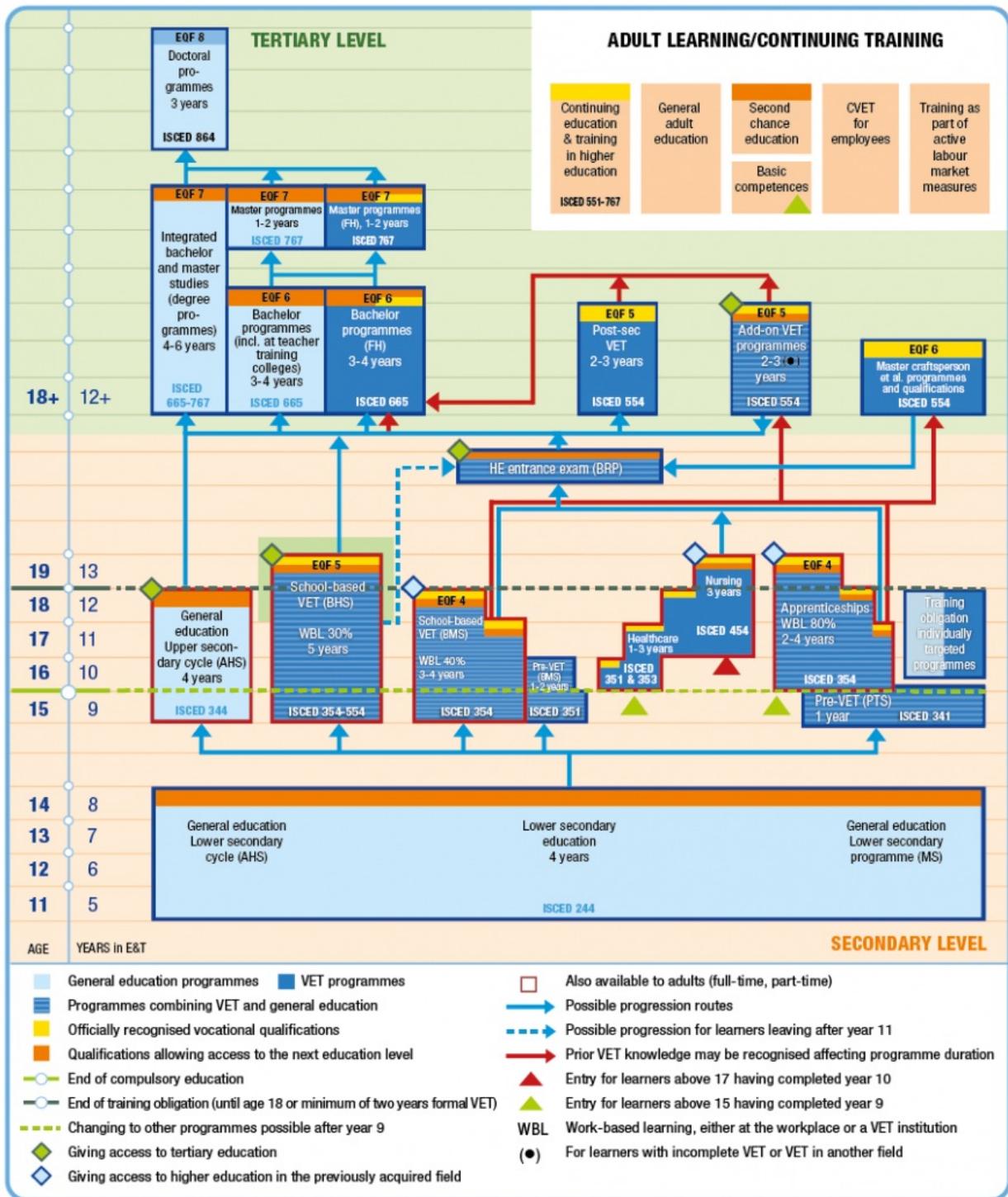
- Guidance and outreach Austria national report (60);
- Cedefop's Resources for guidance – Labour market information (LMI) toolkit (61);
- Cedefop's inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices – Austria (62).

[54] BMS (Berufsbildende mittlere Schule): school for intermediate vocational education; BHS (Berufsbildende höhere Schule): college for higher vocational education.

[55] <http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at> [accessed 31.8.2021].

- [56] Accessible online at the landing page <https://www.karrierekompass.at/> [accessed 31.8.2021].
- [58] <https://www.bic.at> [accessed 31.8.2021].
- [60] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/guidance-and-outreach-inactive-and-unemployed-austria> [accessed 31.8.2021].
- [61] <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/toolkits/resources-guidance/toolkit/where-can-you-find-more-information-in-your-country-and-elsewhere> [accessed 31.8.2021].
- [62] <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices> [accessed 31.8.2021].

Vocational education and training system chart



NB: Simplified. ISCED-P2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Austria, 2022.

VET Programme Types

EQF 4
Apprenticeships
WBL 80%
2-4 years
ISCED 354

Apprenticeship training leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (Lehrlingsausbildung)	
EQF level 4	ISCED-P 2011 level 354
Usual entry grade 10	Usual completion grade 11 to 13
Usual entry age 15	Usual completion age 17 to 19
Length of a programme (years)	From 2 to 4 years, usually 3 years (two thirds of apprenticeship professions)
Is it part of compulsory education and training? ✗ A prerequisite for taking up apprenticeship training is completion of 9 years of compulsory schooling.	Is it part of formal education and training system? ✓
Is it initial VET? ✓	Is it continuing VET? ✗

Is it offered free of charge? ✓

Attendance at a vocational school for apprentices is free of charge. The training company is obliged to grant leave of absence to the apprentice for attending the programme offered at the vocational school while continuing to pay the apprenticeship income. As compensation the company has the possibility to apply for public subsidies ('basic funding').

Is it available for adults? ✓

Around 24% start an apprenticeship at age 18 and above (75).

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- dual programmes consist of 80% workplace training in a company, 20% training in a vocational school

Main providers

Training companies (enterprises, free professions such as lawyers, public institutions and organisations and supra-company training providers on behalf of Public Employment Service Austria)

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies > 80%

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)

Apprenticeships as dual track training combine:

- company-based training (80%);
- attendance of VET school for apprentices including workshops at schools (20%).

Main target groups Apprenticeship training is accessible to young people and adults.

Apprenticeship training is also available for learners with special educational needs either by:

- prolongation of the apprenticeship period by one or at maximum 2 years;
- acquisition of a partial qualification.

Young people who are trained in a prolonged apprenticeship period are also obliged to attend a vocational school. The training is completed with the apprenticeship-leaving examination.

The acquisition of partial qualifications is restricted to selected competences of an in-company curriculum. There is also an obligation to follow a programme offered at a vocational school, the extent being adjusted to the individual situation of the apprentice. The final examination covers the previously determined competences. The level achieved is determined by professional experts and one member of the vocational training assistance. The partial qualification is accompanied by vocational training assistance; this aims to advise and support the training companies as well as the young people before and during the training.

Both forms of training are offered by training companies. (Young) people who do not find an apprenticeship post in a company, can complete apprenticeship training at supra-company training providers (*überbetriebliche Berufsausbildung, ÜBA*), which offer company-like conditions in workshops on behalf of the Public Employment Service Austria as part of active labour market policy. As for the school part, ÜBA-apprentices attend the regular VET school for apprentices.

People with migrant background (non-Austrian citizenship) made up less than 14% of all apprentices in 2019 (76).

Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)

The only entry requirement to enrol in apprenticeship training is the fulfilment of compulsory schooling (9 school years). About one third of apprentices have completed their compulsory education by attending a 1-year prevocational school after having completed the 8-year lower secondary general education.

Assessment of learning outcomes	<p>After fulfilling the apprenticeship period, apprentices normally register for the apprenticeship-leaving examination (<i>Lehrabschlussprüfung</i> / LAP).</p> <p>This exam aims to establish whether the candidate has acquired the skills and competences required for the respective apprenticeship occupation and is able to carry out the activities specific to the occupation himself or herself in an appropriate manner.</p> <p>The exam consists of a practical and a theoretical examination. Provided that the apprentice has met the education objectives of the last year of the programme offered at the vocational school, he is only required to do the practical part of the exam.</p> <p>The subjects the exam covers are laid down in the national exam regulation (<i>Prüfungsordnung</i>) for each apprenticeship occupation (77). If the candidate fails parts of his exam, he can retake these parts.</p>
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Diplomas/certificates provided	<p>After passing the apprenticeship-leaving examination (<i>Lehrabschlussprüfung</i> / LAP) the graduate receives the apprenticeship diploma (<i>Lehrabschlussprüfungszeugnis</i> / LAP-Zeugnis).</p> <p>It certifies that the holder has the skills and competences required for the respective apprenticeship occupation and is able to carry out the activities particular to the occupation himself or herself in an appropriate manner (78).</p> <p>Apprenticeship diplomas are fully recognised by VET and labour authorities and highly appreciated in the labour market and economy.</p> <p>All apprenticeship-leaving exams are assigned to EQF level 4 (79).</p>
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Examples of qualifications	<p>In 2021, there were 226 state-recognised apprenticeship occupations (80), such as brick layer, bank clerk, hotel and catering assistant or dental technician.</p>
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Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	<p>After passing the apprenticeship-leaving examination, graduates can either remain in the labour market or acquire further qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • master craftsperson or aptitude examination; • add-on courses (ISCED 554) (<i>Aufbaulehrgänge</i>) with a duration of 3 years that lead to the qualification of a 5-year school-based VET programme (BHS); • general higher entrance exam (<i>Berufsreifeprüfung</i>, BRP), which grants access to higher education programmes.
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Destination of graduates The education-related employment career monitoring (*Erwerbskarrierenmonitoring*, BibEr) of Statistics Austria done for the graduation year 2016/17(81), analysed labour market status 18 months after graduation. Results show that graduates are primarily orientated to the labour market entry (compared to other education pathways):

- 77% of the apprenticeship graduates were employed and only 5% continued in (formal) education;
- approximately 8% were registered as jobseekers at the public employment service (AMS) (82).

This can be considered as positive indication of the job mobility of apprenticeship graduates due to a high labour demand for skilled workers and qualified specialists.

For many, apprenticeship training is also the basis for a career as an entrepreneur. According to the 2019 Labour Force Survey, around 32% of self-employed persons in Austria have an apprenticeship degree as their highest completed qualification.

Awards through validation of prior learning ✓

The Vocational Training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz*, BAG) (83) also opens access to the apprenticeship-leaving exam to those who have not completed any formal training (apprenticeship or school), providing them with the possibility of acquiring a formal professional qualification. In concrete terms, they must meet the following conditions:

- be above 18 years old;
- furnish evidence that they have acquired the knowledge and skills required for the respective apprenticeship occupation, such as by exercising a relevant semi-skilled or other practical activity of appropriate length or by attending a relevant course event;
- completion of at least half of the period stipulated for the respective apprenticeship occupation is accepted as evidence if there is no other possibility of entering into an apprenticeship contract for the remaining apprenticeship period.

In line with the 2011 amendment to the Vocational Training Act the practical apprenticeship-leaving examination can also be taken in two parts. The first part comprises identification of the exam candidate's existing qualifications while in the second part he/she is required to prove the remaining skills. This provision applies if exam candidates:

- are aged 22 or over;
- have, as part of higher qualification schemes, completed educational measures rated as suited by the Regional Advisory Board on Apprenticeship (84).

General education subjects ✓

The focus of education at vocational schools is on occupation-oriented specialist instruction (with about 65%), which also includes practical training in workshops and/or laboratories. The rest covers general education subjects (such as German, mathematics) (85).

Key competences ✓

The competence-oriented curricula specify the knowledge and skills that learners need to have acquired by the end of their training and which qualify them to act appropriately in different situations at work. As well as subject-related competences, related key competences are also listed which vary according to the specific apprenticeship training (e.g. team work, digital and entrepreneurial skills). At least one foreign language is mandatory in all programmes. Key competences are considered of major importance in the VET sector.

Application of learning outcomes approach ✓

The competence profile (*Berufsprofil*), which is also part of the training regulation, formulates in a learning outcome-oriented manner the competences apprentices acquire by the end of their training in both learning sites. Although the acquisition of professional competences has always been a key goal of VET, competences have been defined explicitly in the curricula since 2012; this is a result of the development of the national qualifications framework and its orientation towards learning outcomes (86).

Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners

Allocation of learners at upper secondary level / 10th school grade (2018/19) (87):

37%: apprenticeship programmes;

13%: 1 to 4-year school-based VET programmes (intermediate level);

26%: 5-year school-based VET programmes (higher level);

24%: general education programme.

The share of learners in this programme type was 37% of the total number of all VET learners at upper secondary level (from 9th to 13th grade) in 2019. (88)

[76] Dornmayr, H.; Nowak, S. (2020). *Lehrlingsausbildung im Überblick 2020, Strukturdaten, Trends und Perspektiven [Apprenticeship overview 2020: structural data, trends and perspectives]*. Vienna: *ibw*. Research report; No 203 <https://ibw.at/resource/download/2114/ibw-forschungsbericht-203.pdf>. [accessed 31.8.2021]

- [77] See list of apprenticeships including the training and exam regulation for each apprenticeship occupation: <https://www.bmdw.gv.at/Themen/Lehre-und-Berufsausbildung/lexicon.html> [accessed 3.9.2021].
- [78] BMDW (2018). Apprenticeship system. Dual Vocational Education and Training in Austria. Vienna. https://www.bmdw.gv.at/dam/jcr:06e40203-2f9c-4070-ab2b-182cccd1ed83/Apprenticeship%20system_barrierefrei.pdf [accessed 3.9.2021].
- [79] For more details, see the Austrian qualifications register: <https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/nqr-register/nqr-zuordnungen/>
- [80] Including 15 agricultural and forestry apprenticeships occupations. See: BMDW; WKO (2021). *Lehrberufe in Österreich – Ausbildungen mit Zukunft. [Apprenticeship in Austria: training with a future]*. https://www.bic.at/downloads/de/broschueren/lehrberufe_in_oesterreich_2021.pdf [accessed 11.9.2021] See also: *ibw* (2019). *Lehrberufsbezeichnungen Deutsch-Englisch [Dual VET qualifications German-English]*. <https://ibw.at/bibliothek/id/278/>
- [81] The aim of this project is to render the employment career statistically evaluable of all persons living in Austria after their leaving a formal educational institution. Especially the transition from education to the labour market represents an important chapter in the employment biography. The variety of attributes allows for analyses of various aspects of those careers at the start as well as during their further development on the labour market. <https://www.statistik.at/en/statistics/labour-market/employment/labour-market-careers/monitoring-of-education-related-employment-behaviour> [accessed 23.6.2022].
- [82] The remaining 10 % include, among others, non-active persons and persons doing their military or civilian service. Dornmayr, H.; Nowak, S. (2020). *Lehrlingsausbildung im Überblick 2020: Strukturdaten, Trends und Perspektiven [Apprenticeship overview 2020: structural data, trends and perspectives]*. Vienna: *ibw*. Research report; No 203. <https://ibw.at/resource/download/2114/ibw-forschungsbericht-203.pdf>. [accessed 31.8.2021]. See also https://www.statistik.at/statistiken/arbeitsmarkt/erwerbstaetigkeit/erwerbskarrieren/bildung_erwerbskarrierenmonitoring-biber [accessed 23.6.2022]
- [83] Vocational training act: <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10006276> [accessed 3.9.2021]
- [84] More information on the apprenticeship system in Austria: https://www.bmdw.gv.at/dam/jcr:06e40203-2f9c-4070-ab2b-182cccd1ed83/Apprenticeship%20system_barrierefrei.pdf [accessed 3.9.2021]
- [85] More information on the apprenticeship system in Austria: https://www.bmdw.gv.at/dam/jcr:06e40203-2f9c-4070-ab2b-182cccd1ed83/Apprenticeship%20system_barrierefrei.pdf [accessed 3.9.2021]
- [86] Tritscher-Archan, S. (2016). *Vocational education and training in Europe – Austria*. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports. http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/2016_CR_AT.pdf
- [87] Statistik Austria (2021). *Bildung in Zahlen 2019/20 – Tabellenband*. [Education in numbers 2019/20]. Vienna. <https://www.statistik.at/services/tools/services/publikationen/detail/981?cHash=82af200a8ac42d378f4eb0cd93ff9122> [accessed 23.6.2022].
- [88] Own calculation based on the school statistics of Statistics Austria, STATcube query, <https://statcube.at> [extracted 6.9.2021].

EQF EQF: 6 (master craftsperson qualification); the other qualification in this VET programme category are not yet classified.

Master craftsperson et al.
programmes
and qualifications
ISCED 554

Master craftsperson et al. programmes and qualifications offered at ISCED level 554.

EQF level	EQF: 6 (master craftsperson qualification); the other qualification in this VET programme category are not yet classified.	ISCED-P 2011 level	554
Usual entry grade	12	Usual completion grade	13 to 14
Usual entry age	18+	Usual completion age	19 to 20+
Length of a programme (years)	Duration varies among the different specific programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • master craftsperson programmes: 1 to 2 years • industrial master programme: mostly 2 years • building craftsperson programme: mostly 2 years 		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✗	Is it continuing VET?	✓

Is it offered ✘
**free of
charge?**

Is it available ✔
for adults?

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

**Learning forms (e.g. dual,
part-time, distance)**

- special tuition in theory and practice
- instruction by experts from the specific professions/fields
- some programmes are full-time, some are part-time

Main providers

- CET providers of the social partners (e.g. WIFl, bfi)
- public schools (offering also school-based VET programmes at upper secondary level)

**Share of work-based
learning provided by
schools and companies** 60%

**Work-based learning type
(workshops at schools, in-
company training /
apprenticeships)**

- learning in workshops and labs
- focus on learning from real-work situations

Main target groups

These programmes target adults with relevant IVET qualifications plus professional practise and the intention of acquiring intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship competences.

**Entry requirements for
learners
(qualification/education
level, age)**

- minimum age of 18 years
- successful completion of an initial VET path at upper secondary level

**Assessment of learning
outcomes**

- in industrial and building craftsperson programmes: final examination
- graduates of master craftsperson programmes can sit the master craftsperson examination offered by Master Craftsperson Authorities

**Diplomas/certificates
provided**

Final certificate (*Abschlusszeugnis*)

The qualifications are fully recognised by VET and labour authorities and highly appreciated by labour market and economy.

Examples of qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • master craftsperson automotive engineering • industrial master • building craftsperson
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	<p>Graduates can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • directly enter the labour market (asset for improving in-company career options or changing companies); • set up one's own company or take over a business; • can enter a range of CVET options; • on certain conditions can obtain access to a bachelor degree programmes at a University of Applied Science; • have access to the <i>Berufsreifepprüfung</i> (BRP) which grants access to higher education institutions.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✗
General education subjects	✗
Key competences	✓
	Key competences play a crucial role in all programme types of the VET sector in Austria (143).
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓
	With the development of the national qualifications framework, learning outcomes have been made more explicit in the curricula of all schools in the VET sector.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	The share of learners in this programme type was 1.2% of the total number of all VET learners at upper secondary and post-tertiary level in 2019. (144)

[143]See Tritscher-Archan, S.; Petanovitsch, A. (2016). *Key competences in vocational education and training – Austria*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series. https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/ReferNet_AT_KC.pdf [accessed 6.9.2021]

[144]The Post-sec VET and Add-on VET programmes are included in the Austrian school statistics. Own calculation based on the school statistics of Statistics Austria, STATcube query, <https://statcube.at> [extracted 6.9.2021].

EQF 6

Bachelor programmes

(FH)

3-4 years

ISCED 665

Bachelor programmes at Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS / Fachhochschulen, FH) leading to EQF level 6, ISCED 665

EQF level	6	ISCED-P 2011 level	665	
Usual entry grade	12+	Usual completion grade	15+	
Usual entry age	18+	Usual completion age	20+	
Length of a programme (years)	From 3 to 4 years <ul style="list-style-type: none">• day form: 3 years• evening form (part-time basis): 4 years (145)			
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓	
Is it initial VET?	Yes and no, depending on the qualification obtained before entering a bachelor programme. For general education graduates in upper secondary education and training, it is initial VET.		Is it continuing VET?	Yes and no, depending on the qualification obtained before entering a bachelor programme. For VET graduates in upper secondary education and training, it is CVET.

Is it offered free of charge? ✓

In general, bachelor programmes offered at Universities of Applied Sciences are financed by the public, so attendance is free of charge for the learners.

Providers of study programmes are, however, entitled by law to charge tuition fees (2021: 363.36 EUR per semester) (147).

Is it available for adults? ✓

ECVET or other credits 180 ECTS (146)

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)

- Bachelor programmes are research- and practice-oriented;
- a period of work placement is a mandatory part of the curriculum;
- some are based on the dual principle, where theory and practice in enterprises alternate (148).

Main providers Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) (*Fachhochschulen*, FH)

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies 40 %

Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)

- learning in workshops and labs
- mandatory work placements
- bachelor thesis is often set by companies or carried out with their collaboration

Main target groups Bachelor programmes target adults with a higher entrance qualification (*Matura*). However, also graduates of intermediate VET programmes, which do not end with a HE entrance examination, can – under certain conditions (work experience, entrance examination) – enter bachelor programmes at UAS.

Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)

- HE entrance qualification
- work experience, if required
- entrance examination, if required

Assessment of learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular assessments during the study year • course certificates and examinations • bachelor thesis (149)
	<p>A failed course or bachelor exam can be repeated twice. A single repetition of a study year is possible (150).</p>
Diplomas/certificates provided	<p>A bachelor degree is given to learners who successfully completed their bachelor thesis and passed the bachelor examination.</p>
	<p>The bachelor qualification is fully recognised by VET and labour authorities so graduates can follow further studies or enter the labour market.</p>
Examples of qualifications	<p>Qualifications in accordance to the specific study field, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of science in health studies (BSc) • Bachelor of science in engineering (BSc) • Bachelor of arts in business BA)
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	<p>Graduates can further progress to a master programme offered at ISCED level 767.</p>
Destination of graduates	<p>Information not available</p>
Awards through validation of prior learning	<p>✓</p> <p>Learning and examination achievements that have already been completed as part of another degree programme, in vocational training or in academic work in companies or non-university research institutions, can be credited towards the current degree programme if they are equivalent in terms of content and scope. Appropriate proof must be submitted (examination certificate, curriculum, etc.).</p> <p>Recognition is done individually by the respective programme director.</p>
General education subjects	<p>✗</p>
Key competences	<p>✓</p> <p>Key competences play a crucial role in all programme types of the VET sector in Austria (151).</p>
Application of learning outcomes approach	<p>✓</p>

**Share of learners in
this programme type
compared with the
total number of VET
learners** Information not available

- [146]University of Applied Sciences Act:
<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung/Bundesnormen/10009895/FHStG%2c%20Fassung>
8.9.2021]
- [148]Cedefop (2021). *Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publication Office.
https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4189_en.pdf [accessed 6.9.2021]
- [149]University of Applied Sciences Act:
<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung/Bundesnormen/10009895/FHStG%2c%20Fassung>
[accessed 8.9.2021].
- [150]University of Applied Sciences Act:
<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung/Bundesnormen/10009895/FHStG%2c%20Fassung>
[accessed 8.9.2021].
- [151]See Tritscher-Archan, S.; Petanovitsch, A. (2016). *Key competences in vocational education and training – Austria*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.
https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/ReferNet_AT_KC.pdf [accessed 6.9.2021]

EQF 7

Master programmes

(FH)

1-2 years

ISCED 767

Master programmes at Universities of Applied Sciences (Master-Studiengänge an Fachhochschulen) leading to EQF level 7, ISCED 767

EQF level	7	ISCED-P 2011 level	767
Usual entry grade	16+	Usual completion grade	17+
Usual entry age	22+	Usual completion age	23+
Length of a programme (years)	Usually 2 years In exceptional cases, there are also shorter and longer master degree programmes. (152)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗		Is it part of formal education and training system? ✓
Is it initial VET?	✗		Is it continuing VET? ✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✗ In principle, study programmes (bachelor and master) at universities of applied sciences are financed by the public sector on the basis of approved and filled study places. This funding is earmarked to cover the costs of research and teaching. To cover additional cost, providers of study programmes are entitled by law to charge tuition fees limited to EUR 363.36 per semester from students. (154).		Is it available for adults? ✓

ECVET or other credits	Usually 120 ECTS, but there are also programmes with 60 and 90 ECTS. (153)
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master programmes are research-oriented. • some programmes are based on the dual principle, where theory and practice in enterprises alternate (155)
Main providers	Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS / Fachhochschulen, FH)
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	20 %
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning in workshops and labs • master thesis is often set by companies or carried out with their collaboration
Main target groups	Master programmes are aimed at adults who have already completed a bachelor programme in the same or a similar field of study.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	As a rule, the entry requirement is the completion of a relevant bachelor degree.
Assessment of learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular assessments during the study year • course certificates and examinations • master thesis (156) <p>A failed course or master exam can be repeated twice. A single repetition of a study year is possible (157).</p>
Diplomas/certificates provided	<p>Master thesis followed by a master examination before an exam commission/diploma</p> <p>The Master qualification is fully recognised by VET and labour authorities and highly appreciated by labour market and economy.</p>
Examples of qualifications	<p>Qualifications in accordance to the specific study field, e.g. (158)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master in arts in business (MA) • Master in science in engineering (MSc) • Master of arts in arts and design (MA)

Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates can further progress to doctoral programmes.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	<p>✓</p> <p>Learning and examination achievements that have already been completed as part of another degree programme, in vocational training or in academic work in companies or non-university research institutions can be credited towards the current degree programme if they are equivalent in terms of content and scope. Appropriate proof must be submitted (examination certificate, curriculum, etc.).</p> <p>Recognition is done individually by the respective programme director.</p>
General education subjects	✗
Key competences	<p>✓</p> <p>Key competences play a crucial role in all programme types of the VET sector in Austria. (159)</p>
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available

[153]University of Applied Sciences Act:

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung/Bundesnormen/10009895/FHStG%2c%20Fassung%208.9.2021>

[155]Cedefop (2021). Spotlight on VET – 2020 compilation: vocational education and training systems in Europe. Luxembourg: Publication Office.

https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4189_en.pdf [accessed 6.9.2021]

[156]University of Applied Sciences Act:

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung/Bundesnormen/10009895/FHStG%2c%20Fassung%208.9.2021>

[157]University of Applied Sciences Act:

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung/Bundesnormen/10009895/FHStG%2c%20Fassung%208.9.2021>

- [158] More information on VET schools and colleges:
<https://www.abc.berufsbildendeschulen.at/vet-schools-and-higher-colleges-in-austria/>
 [accessed 8.9.2021]
- [159] See Tritscher-Archan, S.; Petanovitsch, A. (2016). *Key competences in vocational education and training – Austria*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.
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