VET schools and colleges in Austria

Information brochure of the General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sports
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The Austrian school system and the variety of offers, particularly in the VET sector, enable our students to complete cutting-edge, quality-oriented training that is recognised across Europe. For many countries the Austrian VET system sets the standard, in part thanks to the low youth unemployment rate because of this system.

Around 80 percent of Austrian students participate in an initial vocational education and training programme. This proves the attractiveness of VET schools and colleges as well as apprenticeship training in Austria. In this way, young people lay the foundation for a successful start to working life and also have good career opportunities internationally.

The tradition of VET schools and colleges in Austria dates back to the 19th century. Since then, the school-based VET sector has undergone continual expansion and further development with much success.

This brochure presents the individual school types within the VET school system and addresses innovative, forward-looking educational topics as well as continuing professional development and lifelong learning in the adult education sector.

Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek
Federal Minister of Education and Women’s Affairs
The VET school sector in Austria has, historically speaking, a magic date: on 11 January 1758, *k. und k. Real- und Zeichnungsakademie* was founded in Habsburggasse, in Vienna’s first district, with eleven pupils. The school, which was involved in textile production, shows the long tradition of this school system, which spread rapidly in the second half of the 19th century based on a concept of Baron Dumreicher and the practical experience of Wilhelm Exner, and now, more than a century later, is in full bloom with its diversity and high level of acceptance.

Important in this respect is the “systemic diversity” of vocational education and training in Austria, which ranges from dual training in schools and companies onto schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education. This means that 14-year-olds can choose between a wide range of education and training pathways which, on the one hand, help them develop their personal skills and aptitudes and, on the other hand, also find alternatives in training when the first educational priority proves to be not an option.

In this regard, initial vocational education and training in Austria accounts for 80 percent of pupils, which is unique in Europe and in the OECD countries. The entire education and training system is considered exemplary in Europe. Nevertheless, hard work is still required every day to maintain the high level and, despite the drop in the number of 14-year-olds, to keep offering such an extensive choice of VET options.

This brochure presents the wide range of VET courses available in Austria as well as the individual school types within the entire system, important educational initiatives are addressed and the development of VET as a concept of lifelong learning is discussed. Many thanks to the staff in the General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sports for their hard work in this regard.

SektChef Dr. Christian Dorninger
Head of the General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sports
at the Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs
01 The Austrian education system

Simplified Chart
Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs
BMBF

FEDERAL MINISTER
Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek

Federal Minister’s Office
Internal Audit
Division of Information Technology
Education Statistics
Gender

GD I
General education
Quality development and assurance
BIFIE
University colleges of teacher education

GD II
Vocational education and training
Adult education
School sports

GD III
Staff and school management
Legal issues

GD IV
Women’s affairs and equality of opportunity

Directorate for
International Affairs

Directorate for Budget
Organisational issues controlled by the Ministry
Budget
Facilities
Public relations
Approval of teaching material
Central funding coordination
GD II

Vocational education and training, adult education, school sports

- Fundamental aspects of vocational education and training
- National and international educational policy strategies
- Planning and equipment issues
- Gender mainstreaming
- Cost and activity accounting
- Educational standards
- QIBB
- ESF coordination
- Key pedagogical projects
- Lifelong learning strategy
- Ministry priorities VET school sector

Areas:
Overall coordination of adult education, lifelong learning strategy, non-formal and informal learning, schools for people in employment
Research and technology initiative FTI – strategy; coordination of research and schools

Unit 21: Part-time vocational schools
- Part-time vocational schools (dual training) – pedagogical issues
- Berufserlebnisprüfung (in cooperation with Unit 25) [S]

Unit 22: Schools and colleges of engineering, arts and crafts
- Secondary schools and colleges of engineering, arts and crafts
- Direct supervision of specific schools and colleges of engineering and crafts
- Centres of applied research
- Building craftsperson and master craftsperson school and industrial master colleges

Unit 23: Schools of business, colleges of business and educational counselling
- Schools of business and colleges of business administration
- Entrepreneurship education [S]
- COOL Cooperative Open Learning [S]
- ACT – the Austrian Center for Training Firms [S]
- Public relations [S]
- Initial and continuing training for guidance and counselling teachers [S]
- Foreign languages [S]

Unit 24: Schools and colleges of social and services industries, Colleges of agriculture and forestry
- Schools and colleges of management and service industries, schools and colleges of tourism, schools and colleges of fashion, colleges of art and design
- Colleges of agriculture and forestry
- Schools of social occupations and of social care occupations
Unit 25: Adult education
  - Adult education, continuing education and training, lifelong learning
  - Acquisition of educational qualifications by adults
  - Berufsreifeprüfung (in cooperation with Unit 21) [S]
  - Federal Institute for Adult Education

Unit 26: Initial, in-service and continuing education and training for teachers in the VET school sector, VET data [S]
  - Coordination of in-service and continuing training programmes of university colleges of teacher education
  - Initial, in-service and continuing education and training for teachers
  - Statistics and data analysis
  - Training of head teachers

Unit 27: Strategy and quality development in vocational education and training [S]
  - Strategic planning and national implementation of European training policy
  - Europass, Leonardo Da Vinci, Cedefop, Arqa-Vet
  - Educational standards in VET
  - Competence-oriented teaching
  - Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act for schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education, Vocational Training Act
  - National Qualifications Framework NQF
  - ESF measures
  - Quality in VET QIBB

Unit 28: Physical education and sport; school competitions, construction of sport facilities, federal school camps
  - Physical education and sport instruction
  - School competitions
  - Construction of sports facilities
  - Federal sport academies; federal school camps

[S] = for the GD’s sphere, cross-unit
The General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sports at BMBF (GD VET)

GD VET fulfils the tasks of school administration for the VET school sector which, based on legal provisions, fall within the sphere of competence of BMBF (Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs). School legislation is implemented at the governmental school authorities, i.e. the regional education boards at provincial level.

GD VET is responsible for the following areas of school-based education and training (at the upper secondary level):
- pedagogical matters and subject- and occupation-specific issues (e.g. curriculum development);
- in-service and continuing education and training of teachers;
- location and facility management;
- school development and education research;
- international cooperation; and much more.

This General Directorate is also the umbrella organisation for adult education and school sport/sport-related issues within the sphere of competence of BMBF.

The VET school sector

provides initial vocational education and training (IVET) programmes of differing duration and at various levels in addition to broad general education from the ninth school year.

The VET school sector comprises the following institutions:
- Part-time vocational schools
- Schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts
- Schools of business and colleges of business administration
- Schools and colleges of management and services industries
- Schools and colleges of tourism
- Schools and colleges of fashion, colleges of art and design
- Schools of social occupations
- Colleges of agriculture and forestry
- Federal sport academies
- Kindergarten teacher training colleges and colleges of social pedagogy including special forms and pilot projects.

A variety of VET pathways

With the exception of part-time vocational schools (school-based training within the dual system), they can be organised in different forms with courses of differing length (1-5 years):

Schools for intermediate vocational education:
- 3 or 4 years: full-time school from the 9th school year; IVET qualification
- 1 or 2 years: full-time school from the 9th school year; basic vocational training

College for higher vocational education:
- 5 years: full-time school from the 9th school year; IVET qualification

Add-on course:
- 3 years: full-time school from the 9th school year following completion of a school for intermediate vocational education

Post-secondary VET course:
- 4 semesters: full-time school after the matriculation certificate (the educational objective of the college for higher vocational education)

Schools and colleges for people in employment:
- 4-8 semesters: the above-mentioned school types in the form of an evening school

It is possible to change between the individual types of VET schools and colleges with the same curriculum. Should the curriculum differ, examinations are required (in certain subjects).

Education and training pathways to VET schools and colleges

After completing primary school (years 1-4), pupils can complete the lower secondary level (years 5-8) either at academic secondary school (lower cycle) or the new secondary school. Admission to VET schools and colleges (at the upper secondary level) is possible upon successful completion of year 8.

Depending on the previous education and desired school type, additional entry requirements include previous school performance in specific subjects and/or an entrance examination. Some 80% of Austrian young people at the age of 14 opt for the VET sector route.

Initial vocational education and training (IVET)

is the major concern of VET schools and colleges, alongside the provision of general education. Graduates of these courses have direct entry into a profession or different forms of continuing vocational education and training (CVET) opportunities, depending on the level of their qualifications.

Schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education have been experiencing continuous growth in the number of students for three decades, not least because of the balanced provision of broad general education, occupation-related theory and occupation-related practice (including compulsory or optional work placements, depending on the type of school) and because of a variety of specific training opportunities and special training focuses of varying duration.

Since the early 1990s, colleges for higher vocational education have become very popular. Their students graduate with the matriculation and diploma certificate and, thanks to the combination of professional
qualifications, general access to higher education and the recognition of the available courses at European level, these establishments ensure a high qualification level.

Framework conditions

Relevant basic legislation is embodied in the School Organisation Act (SchOG) and School Education Act (SchUG) and can be changed by Parliament acting with a simple majority following a consultation process. The curricula of the various school types are decreed by an ordinance of BMBF.

Costs and finance

With the exception of private schools, VET school and college attendance is free. This also applies to post-secondary VET courses and the special forms for people in employment. Contributions for textbooks, travel to school and materials have to be made, however. Fees are charged for school trips and other events as well as boarding facilities (grants are possible). The Federal Government bears the costs of facilities and maintenance of public schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education with the exception of schools of agriculture and forestry and part-time vocational schools (where costs are borne by the respective provincial government, which is also in charge of these schools). The Federal Government also meets the salaries of teachers of federal schools and colleges including those at private schools with public-law status. The costs for teaching staff at part-time vocational schools and schools of agriculture and forestry are shared by the Federal Government and provincial governments.

School supervision

At the upper secondary level, responsibility lies with the regional education boards competent at provincial level. Regional school inspectors, each of them in charge of a particular school type, are entrusted with supervision. Colleges of agriculture and forestry and some schools and colleges for engineering and crafts, however, are under direct supervision of BMBF.

Involvement of other ministries

Certain areas of the VET sector fall within the remit of other ministries, such as the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (e.g. company-based training of apprentices and accreditation of professional qualifications), the Federal Ministry of Health (e.g. schools for healthcare and nursing) and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management.

The social partners

The Austrian system of economic and social partnership is based on voluntary cooperation between statutory and voluntary interest groups and between these and government representatives, with statutory interest groups comprising representatives of employers (Austrian

Federal Economic Chamber), employees (Federal Chamber of Labour) and agriculture (Standing Conference of the Presidents of the Agricultural Chambers) and voluntary interest groups comprising the Federation of Austrian Industry and the Austrian Trade Union Federation. In the field of school-based education, the social partners are involved in legislation and the adoption of ordinances (for new curricula, for example).

Cooperation with the business sphere

Cooperation with the business sphere plays a major role for all those involved in the VET school sector. On the one hand, curricula and special focuses are thus adapted to the requirements of the economy, on the other, companies offer subject-specific professional apprenticeship training and/or places for mandatory work placements. Results of research and development are implemented in a practice-oriented way in joint projects between schools and the business sphere, e.g. in the form of diploma or project work. Nearly all teachers of occupation-related and practice-oriented subjects boast practical experience in the private sector.

Educational counselling and career guidance

at schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education is provided by specially trained teachers, who are available for information and guidance, preparation for decision-making, assistance and individual advice to pupils. One to three teachers at every school are active in guidance and counselling, depending on the number of students there.

Educational counselling teachers work with feeder schools, educational counselling teachers at general secondary and lower-cycle academic secondary school, new secondary school and other advisory services for pupils in their final year (Public Employment Service Austria, the Austrian Students’ Union at university level, etc.).

Key pedagogical projects

The new upper cycle

An amendment to the School Organisation Act (Federal Law Gazette no. 9, 14 February 2012) forms the legal basis for the new upper cycle. It will enter into force in the whole of Austria in 2016. This reform aims to step up individual learning support and provide remedial measures to students. By spreading learning content (competence modules) over semesters, students are supported in performing gradually and continually.

The cornerstones of the new upper cycle:

- Scope: The new upper cycle applies to all three- to five-year schools and colleges from year 10 onwards: academic secondary school, school for intermediate vocational education, college for higher vocational education.
• Adjustment of curricula: Curricula are formulated with competence orientation. The syllabi of the various subjects from year 10 onwards will be split into competence modules for every semester.
• Assessment on a semester basis: From year 10 onwards, students will get semester reports with qualifications and rights which were previously reserved to year-end reports. This means that every semester must be completed with positive marks. Where competences have been assessed as negative, pupils need to take semester exams; the teaching content which still needs to be learned and, at the same time, is the subject matter of the semester exam is additionally documented (supplementary sheet of the semester report). Here, all performances marked as positive will be registered and only negative marks need to be corrected, which means that students assessed as negative need to study smaller bundles of the teaching content. Semester exams and their first and second repetition are possible within the two following semesters. A third exam attempt is only possible before students take the final exams.
• Repetition of the school year: The option of correcting negative marks very soon after failing by taking semester exams aims to prevent repetitions of school years. This means that students can always progress to the next higher grade with two subjects marked as “fail”. This ensures that students remain part of the class community. For pupils with more than two negative marks, the class conference can permit that students move up one time with three subjects marked as “fail”.
• Promotion of young people with learning weaknesses and special talents: An extended early warning system with performance agreements, individual learning support to implement previously agreed remedial measures (learning facilitator) aim to help prevent negative marks. Participation in individual subject classes in a higher semester aims to promote talents in a special manner.
• Completion of the upper cycle: Only pupils who have completed all subjects with a positive mark can sit the matriculation and diploma exam.

Modularisation at schools for people in employment
In 2010 at schools for people in employment – of which there are some 80 locations in Austria – the school subjects were already implemented in a modular format for people in employment in line with the amendment to the School Organisation Act. “Module” denotes the curriculum of a subject in one semester; this facilitates the advancement of employed students at schools and makes adult-oriented educational programmes possible. The new Act has also led to progress in terms of the recognition of non-formally acquired knowledge and andragogical support. This allows people in employment to access programmes, add-on courses and post-secondary VET courses in modularised forms.

Partly standardised matriculation and diploma exam
With the introduction of the partly standardised, competence oriented matriculation and diploma exam (eRDP) in 2015/16, standardised basic competences, the same framework conditions for all students as well as objectification will be created.1

The matriculation and diploma exam comprises three cornerstones with seven exam sections:
1. a diploma work including its presentation and discussion
2. standardised and non-standardised written exams with options (depending on the school type)
3. oral (non-standardised) exams with various options (depending on the school type)

Pupils can decide themselves if they want to take three written and three oral or four written and two oral partial exams.

• All students write a diploma work either alone or in a team (of 2-5 people) which covers a topic that corresponds to the educational objective of the respective school type. The diploma work covers a problem which requires comprehensive theoretical and practical knowledge coming up to the state of the art in the subject disciplines or in business and technology and also requires creative and innovative approaches to solutions.
• Written exams such as German, English, French, Italian, Spanish and Applied Mathematics are laid down centrally. In addition, there are non-central subject-specific exams which aim to test key qualifications specific for the school type. Written exams that have been marked negative cannot be repeated at the next possible date. There is also the option of taking a compensation exam about the subject matter in the form of an oral exam.
• The oral exams are also standardised by specifying topic areas in the individual exam areas. Although these exams are prepared and checked by the teachers at the school location, comparability is ensured by specifications, such as the development of a competence-oriented assignment, which not only require reproduction but also transfer and problem-solving competence. The reorganisation of the exam committee – examiner and assessor who jointly make a proposal on the mark – also contributes to a certain degree of standardisation of the exam procedure.

Competence-oriented teaching
In the future, acquired competences will be even more a measure of the success of learning processes – knowledge that has been learnt “by heart” plays an ever decreasing role in our technologised, occupation-oriented information society. For this reason, for some years the focus of the Austrian VET school sector has been on competence-oriented teaching. Competences play a major role in the VET sector as they are a prerequisite for the ability to exercise an occupation and the ability to take part in higher education programmes. Competence

1 The legal bases are an amendment to the School Education Act (Federal Law Gazette no. 52, 19 June 2010), and the Regulation on final examinations (Examination Regulation for the college for higher vocational education) of 30 May 2012 (Federal Law Gazette II no. 77) and 6 August 2012 (Federal Law Gazette II no. 265).
comprises a network of connected aspects such as applicable knowledge, abilities, understanding, know-how, acting, experience and motivation, and is therefore the requirement for overcoming a specific (problem) situation and solving a specific task.

Due to the paradigm shift from subject- to competence-oriented teaching, pupils learn how to transfer factual knowledge into competent action and how to use existing knowledge when they take certain steps. The goal of the VET school sector is to further develop learning and teaching towards competence orientation, which is to become a key element of the planning and realisation of teaching and of performance assessment. New forms of teaching and learning are to be the focus here. Competence-oriented teaching is to be seen as an overall concept for developing and safeguarding the quality of school work.

With systematic project management and a project group comprising representatives of educational administration, university colleges of teacher education, academia and schools, measures have been and are being developed and implemented for competence-oriented teaching design, which are regularly supported by in-service training measures.

**Measures and activities**

- **The starting point is the educational standards** in VET: They provide teaching staff with an instrument to orient their work even more towards competences.

- **Competence- and learning outcome-oriented curricula**: As well as educational standards, they constitute another major element to encourage the competence orientation of teaching. Competence- and learning outcome-oriented curricula focus on the competences (learning outcomes) to be achieved. This means there is a change in the objectives of curricula, away from “mere” content (input) towards results (outcome). “Learning outcomes” means statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process. (Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning).

  Competence- and learning outcome-oriented curricula are based on the competence models specified in the educational standards for the VET sector. In concrete terms, the descriptors of the educational standards are allocated to the learning and teaching objectives of the individual learning/teaching contents. Therefore these objectives build on the developed competence models, follow the approach of learning outcome orientation and also contain social and personal competences.

  Curricula also refer to previous and future classification systems such as ISCED and the future European credit transfer system for vocational education and training (ECVET) in Austria and this makes it easier to allocate qualifications to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) based on learning outcomes.

  The basis for the preparation of curricula is the “Guidelines for the preparation of competence- and learning outcome-oriented curricula” for all school types in the VET sector.

- **BMBF training programme**

  “Competence-oriented teaching”: This training programme has been and is provided in the subjects that cannot be allocated to the xRDP. Major contents are the definition of terms related to the topic of competence orientation, the development of teaching and learning methods as well as new learning formats, social forms and assessment criteria, the use of educational standards and the development of examples for classroom use to promote competence-oriented teaching.

- **The Competence Centres East and West**: The Competence Centre East (Upper Austrian University College of Teacher Education) – responsible for the provinces Vienna, Lower Austria, Burgenland, Upper Austria and Salzburg – and the Competence Centre West (Tyrol University College of Teacher Education) – responsible for the provinces Carinthia, Styria, Tyrol and Vorarlberg – have to fulfil the following tasks:

  - development and implementation of standardised in-service training formats for various reform projects of BMBF;
  - intensification of relations between the points of contact in in-service training departments in VET divisions of university colleges of teacher education and strengthening of cooperation to ensure in-service programmes in the various provinces are standardised and conducted jointly. Since 2010 when the Competence Centres were set up, 80% of teachers have been trained in the new formats of the standardised matriculation and diploma exam in the subjects mathematics, German, English and the second modern foreign languages: French, Italian and Spanish. In-service training events have been held on the design of competence-oriented teaching in the subjects that are not examined in the course of the standardised matriculation and diploma exam. Events have been held on the new diploma exam and the nationwide pilot training programmes on individual learning support have been put into practice.
  - Points of contact for schools, teachers, in-service trainers regarding reform measures of BMBF and link between BMBF, regional education boards and teachers.
Educational standards in VET

Educational standards in VET focus on the final qualifications of schools for intermediate vocational education (year 11) and of colleges for higher vocational education (year 13), on the core process of “teaching” and describe, based on competence models, cross-curricular and multi-disciplinary core competences which students (are to) achieve by the end of the training. They are therefore a proof of qualifications for the graduates’ portfolio at the interface to the world of work or a further (tertiary) educational institution. They enable learning outcomes to be represented and compared optimally at national and European level. The overall project aims to develop and implement competence-oriented teaching in the entire area of school-based VET.

Since 2004 BMBF (GD VET) has been working together with working groups of teachers both on educational standards for all school types and also for specific school types. This development process is supported and evaluated scientifically by the Universities of Graz and Salzburg as part of a pilot phase. In this phase, the developed standards were and are being tested at selected pilot schools before being published on the website www.bildungsstandards.berufsbildendeschulen.at.

In the VET sector it was decided not to have the educational standards (attainment of the standards) externally examined. The educational standards in VET are therefore not examples of exams but should be seen as suggestions and orientation in teaching and should also be used as a means of self-evaluation. They will be integrated into practical teaching as examples for classroom use in order to define the objectives for pedagogical and didactic work and intensify requirements for the problem-solving capacities of students.

The project structure comprises the four stages of the development process:

Stage 1 is about preparing the competence model and formulating the core competences to be acquired in the form of descriptors. In stage 2, a variety of examples for classroom use are prepared, which are coherent tasks that can be integrated into the teaching process. They can be used as suggestions and guidance for the classroom and contribute towards improving the quality of teaching.

Stage 3 is about piloting the examples for classroom use with the aim of guaranteeing high quality and comprehensibility of the educational standards.

Stage 4 is about conceiving the pedagogical foundations for competence-oriented teaching and implementing the required support measures.

Vocational training research

Setting up networks – planning – developing further
As well as commissioning individual research projects when necessary, a decisive pillar for the strategic development of VET is the VET Research Conference (BBFK), which has been held every two years since 2008: www.berufsbildungsforschung-konferenz.at.

The conference is organised by the Vocational and Adult Education and Training Department of the Austrian Association of Research and Development in Education (ÖFEB) and supported by GD VET of BMBF jointly with Public Employment Service Austria (AMS).

The VET Research Conference is supported and planned by a programme committee, comprising representatives of BMBF and AMS as well as academics from public and private research establishments.
The priority topics of the conference are current (socio-economic) developments where research projects are required.

The objectives of the conference are the following:
- exchanges and formation of networks of VET experts, between researchers at university-based and non-university-based institutions, between Austrian experts and specialists from other German-speaking countries,
- the promotion of academic research projects against the background of current developments (priority topics of the respective conference),
- the improvement of quality in Austrian VET research by means of exchanges, the formation of networks and the promotion of young talents,
- the stimulation of research in German-speaking countries by promoting young academics,
- the creation of evidence for (strategic) decisions in VET.

The results are documented in conference proceedings published by BMBF and in this way they are also made accessible to a wider circle of stakeholders and researchers.

Gender mainstreaming in VET

Equality of opportunity in education, training and the world of work
Gender segregation in some VET school types and consequently also a lacking balance of the sexes in training and professional pathways result in inequality of employment and career opportunities. The activities related to this topic have a long tradition and are rated as highly important in the General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sports. This is reflected by:
- the active participation of specialist units for business, engineering, social and services education in several school development projects with the specialist units for gender-specific educational issues and academic secondary schools,
- the inclusion of the topic of equality of opportunity in the context of the VET Quality Initiative QIBB by means of the following measures, among others:
  - the integration of the orientation towards the gender mainstreaming objectives in the mission statement of GD VET,
  - the provision of evaluation instruments for students and teachers of the VET school sector on the topic of “gender-responsive teaching” and “gender-responsive school management”,
  - the preparation of a hand-out “QIBB gender_diversitätskompetent” (“QIBB gender diversity competent”) for schools as support in the integration of objectives and measures of gender equality into quality and school development work.

The exam and certificate termed Berufsreifeprüfung
The introduction of the Berufsreifeprüfung (or BRP) in 1997 has led to increased permeability of the education system. Whereas the Berufsreifeprüfung does not lead to the acquisition of any professional qualifications, it provides the general higher education entrance qualification to graduates of the dual system (apprenticeship-leave examination), graduates of schools for intermediate vocational education of at least three years’ duration, graduates of schools for healthcare and nursing, graduates of schools for paramedical training, as well as to graduates of the skilled workers’ examination pursuant to the Vocational Training Act for Agriculture and Forestry and people with the entrance examination pursuant to the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation. Prior school attendance is not required for admission to the Berufsreifeprüfung examinations.

Berufsmatura: Apprenticeship with the matriculation certificate
Since 2008 preparation for the Berufsreifeprüfung (also termed Berufsmatura in German) examination has been offered parallel to apprenticeship training and is also fully subsidised in this form (under the name Berufsmatura: Apprenticeship with the matriculation certificate). Apprentices who are interested in general education sign up to this programme; as early as at the age of 19 they can be awarded access to higher education combined with a vocational qualification.

Preparatory courses are offered by adult education institutions recognised by BMBF (e.g. the vocational training institutes or BFIs, the economic promotion institutes or WIFIs, adult education centres or Volkshochschulen) and some schools in the VET sector. Examinations can also be conducted at certified adult education institutions in up to three specialist areas. Similar preparatory courses organised at adult education institutions or by associations can be attended by apprentices free of charge.

In principle, examinations set by schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education and their special forms for people in employment can be taken without prior school attendance. This also applies to the matriculation and diploma exam and the final examination of schools for intermediate vocational education.

Cooperative open learning
COOL (cooperative open learning) is a pedagogical concept for the development of teaching based on reforms of teaching for the lower and upper secondary level. COOL is not a ready-made scheme but an approach that is developed at the respective school location. The focus is on the attitude of the actors involved at the school: COOL makes it possible for students to introduce their intellectual and emotional skills, different talents, creativity, curiosity and social competence to the classroom. As an initiative of the schools of business and
colleges of business administration, the COOL impetus centre, which was set up by BMBF as early as in 2001, supports the COOL schools and disseminates the concept. GD VET at BMBF is responsible for the strategic and content-related implementation of COOL. The COOL concept is already being implemented by as many as 150 schools in Austria, mainly in the VET sector. Since 2004 school locations have had the possibility to be certified internally.

Electronically assisted learning

In the VET sector, mobile, digital learning facilitators and learning platforms are already part of everyday teaching routine in many classes.

Supplementing the notebook PC class projects held since 1998, for the past three years there have been more and more BYOD (“bring your own device”) classes at schools, where students use their own tablet PC, netbook PC or notebook PC in the classroom for taking notes, doing research and learning at home in most subjects.

With this form of teaching, which is increasingly gaining ground, occupation-specific competences can be acquired through technology-enhanced learning at five didactic levels overall, ranging from the application of IT and the internet, e-learning and social learning, on to IT support in everyday work contexts and the training of future IT experts.

Since 2002, exchanges about all pedagogical and organisational issues related to electronically assisted learning have been taking place in the e-learning cluster, which comprises around 160 upper-cycle secondary schools (schools for intermediate vocational education, colleges for higher vocational education and academic secondary schools) and, due to the large interest, can be followed at two major e-learning events of BMBF each year. As well as “learning from one another”, since 2009 local, vertical clusters have also been held in these e-learning projects between upper-cycle schools and other local intermediate and primary schools to enhance digital competence (e-education).

Evaluation results, experiences and materials about these topics are made available to interested schools and teachers at http://elc20.com/ and www.eeducation.at.

CEBS

The language competence centre of the General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sports offers support to teachers in implementing modern, up-to-date foreign language didactics (Common European Framework of Reference, education standards, and the European Language Portfolio ESP 15+). The nationwide language contest, which is held every year, gives pupils of all VET schools and colleges the opportunity to compete on an Austria-wide basis. A diagnostic procedure for English, prepared and continually developed with international experts, provides a tool for teachers of English to assess the performance of their pupils and support them individually.

Many contacts with international organisations and participation in projects of the European Commission and Council of Europe round off the expertise of this competence centre.
Young people who have concluded an apprenticeship agreement with an authorised apprenticeship trainer (company) or a training contract are obliged to attend part-time vocational school. This type of vocational education and training is termed dual VET system (or dual system) as educational tasks are split between two providers: the company or supra-company institution and part-time vocational school.

The Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy is responsible for the training regulation (the contents of company-based training), the Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs for pedagogical matters of part-time vocational school. Company-based training is financed by the training enterprise, the costs for part-time vocational school are borne by the public, with the federal government and provincial governments sharing the costs. The federal provinces are responsible for the construction and equipment of part-time vocational schools. The federal and provincial governments each contribute 50% of the funds for part-time vocational school teachers.

Occupational areas

Part-time vocational schools are attended for as many school years as necessary for the apprenticeship training. Depending on the apprenticeship, the length of training is between two and four, but usually three years. Currently there are some 200 recognised apprenticeships, which can be summarised under the following groups of apprenticeships:

- Construction engineering
- Office, administration, organisation
- Chemical industries
- Printing, photographic, graphic and paper industries
- Electrical engineering, electronics
- Catering
- Health and body care
- Commerce and trade
- Wood, glass and ceramic industries
- Information and communication technologies
- Food, beverage and tobacco industries
- Metal technology and mechanical engineering
- Textiles, fashion and leather industries
- Animals and plants
- Transport and storage

Due to ongoing structural changes in the economy and society, apprenticeship occupations are also subject to constant modifications. A dynamic development of new apprenticeships can be identified in the services sector in particular.

The apprenticeship-leave examination is taken after completion of the apprenticeship period to establish whether the apprentice has acquired the necessary skills and knowledge for the apprenticeship occupation in question and is able to carry out the activities particular to that occupation in a proper manner. The apprenticeship-leave examination is divided into a practical and a theoretical section and consists of a written and oral part.

If the student has fulfilled requirements according to the teaching objective of the final year of part-time vocational school, the examination will only consist of the practical section.

In the course of the apprenticeship-leave examination of a four-year apprenticeship, candidates have the option to take a voluntary additional area-specific exam. Successful completion of this voluntary area-specific exam means the partial exam for the corresponding specialist area does not have to be taken as part of the overall Berufsfreiprüfung exam (also termed Berufsmatura in German, see below).

Following successful completion of the apprenticeship-leave exam, graduates have the following continuing education and training (CET) options, among others: taking the master craftsman exam for a craft, with parts of the exam waived; taking a professional diploma examination for another regulated craft or trade or being admitted to it where the entry requirement is a relevant initial VET qualification; access to further qualifications via the Berufsfreiprüfung exam or Studienberechtigungprüfung exam as the prerequisite for taking up studies at universities, Fachhochschulen, post-secondary VET courses and university colleges of teacher education.

A curriculum with a framework character

The curriculum of part-time vocational school is a curriculum with a framework character which specifies learning outcomes, contents and procedures for planning and implementing learning processes. It enables teachers to conduct their educational work independently and responsibly within the given scope.

It is the task of the regional boards of education to lay down both the number of lessons and the syllabi of the individual subjects for the individual grades within the given framework by issuing additional curriculum provisions where this is not specified by the curricula.

The syllabus of every subject includes:

- the educational and teaching objective that specifies the learning outcomes, competences and skills which the pupils will be taught and the knowledge they are to have;
- the scope of teaching contents;
- the teaching principles as guidelines for the work of teachers.

Educational objectives

It is the task of part-time vocational school to teach the basic theoretical knowledge in part-time subject-specific classes, promote and expand the company-based
training or professional practice and expand general education.

Educational work at part-time vocational school takes account of the close connection with the world of work which is triggered by company-based training. On the basis of practical experiences, the pupils at part-time vocational schools are encouraged to independently acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes and take part in CVET measures.

The focus on cross-curricular treatment of the teaching content aims to qualify pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in different situations. Project-oriented teaching, particularly in the higher grades, makes it possible to understand the connections between the individual syllabi and subjects.

Holistic education implies that personal development is seen as very important at part-time vocational schools, with the focus on extending and developing social skills such as openness, teamwork and the ability to deal with conflict, promoting communicative skills and strengthening self-competence such as self-assessment, confidence and the ability to deal with stress. For this purpose, problem- and process-oriented teaching methods, group training sessions, partner work and other social forms of teaching as well as presentations, discussions, etc. are applied.

Educational content

Within the scope of this task, the compulsory subjects of the curriculum include: German and Communicative Competence, a job-related foreign language, Political Education, Business Studies and the necessary technical theory and practical subjects required for the respective apprenticeship occupation (including Religious Education in the provinces of Tyrol and Vorarlberg).

Optional subjects are a modern foreign language, German and Religious Education (except in Tyrol and Vorarlberg), with Physical Education and Sport possible as optional exercises.

Teaching in part-time vocational schools can be organised as follows:

- **All-year round:**
  - i.e. at least on one full school-day or at least two half-school-days a week
- **By block:**
  - i.e. for at least eight weeks continuously
- **Seasonally:**
  - i.e. teaching takes place in block form at a particular time of year

The variety of organisation forms is due to an agreement between the business sphere and those responsible for school instruction and takes account of the needs of the individual economic sectors and regions.

Teachers at part-time vocational schools

At part-time vocational school, a distinction is made between teachers of Groups I, II and III. Teachers of Groups I and II have a teaching load of 23 hours per week and teach general education and business-related subjects (Group I) or occupation-related theory (Group II). Since 2007, part-time vocational school teachers have been trained at university colleges of teacher education, for which the following access requirements apply:

a) for Groups I and II: successful completion of the matriculation and diploma exam of a specialist college for higher vocational education or successful completion of a matriculation exam or a Berufsreifeprüfung and a relevant VET programme;

b) for Group III (occupation-related practice): successful completion of a specialist master craftsperson examination or an equivalent relevant qualification, and

c) in all cases: at least three years of relevant professional practice.

Regular students who have fewer than 120 ECTS credits are obliged to provide evidence of general university entrance qualifications (e.g. the matriculation exam, the Berufsreifeprüfung exam or the Studienberechtigungsprüfung examination).

The 1st and 2nd semesters as well as the 5th and 6th semesters must be completed on a part-time basis, the 3rd and 4th as full-time study courses. Graduates are awarded the academic degree Bachelor of Education (BEd). The provincial governments have sovereignty over of vocational school teachers and employ future pedagogues as contract teachers at the beginning of their careers.

Characteristics of dual VET

The Austrian apprenticeship training system is a very practice-oriented VET scheme whose importance is rated highly across the country. Due to the wide range of qualification options – from partial qualifications to high-tech occupations and the Berufsreifeprüfung certificate – apprenticeship training opens up all qualification opportunities offered by the Austrian VET market. Whether with or without the matriculation certificate, dual training is adjusted flexibly to the different talents and needs.

Young people who boast a matriculation certificate and take up an apprenticeship enjoy shortened training periods and improved employment opportunities upon successful completion of the apprenticeship-leave examination. There is a high demand by the economy for young people who complete an apprenticeship successfully; these skilled workers make up a considerable proportion of self-employed people in business start-up statistics. In addition, the path to self-employment has been made easier by the validation of the specialist qualifications acquired in the course of the training, which leads to the waiving of exam sections of the master craftsperson exam.
But apprenticeship training also offers young people with social or physical disadvantages or the less gifted a suitable track to realise their potential in the area of vocational skills, as individual needs are met in a very targeted manner, which makes it possible to provide major stimulus for the integration of this group of people into the world of work.

**Inclusive vocational education and training**

Inclusive VET aims to create a suitable training track at the level of apprenticeship training for socially or physically disadvantaged young people or less gifted youths to realise their potential in the area of vocational skills. Inclusive VET is offered both as an apprenticeship training scheme with a longer training period and as a VET programme that impart partial qualifications in order to provide access to the labour market for those people who cannot acquire an apprenticeship diploma. Thanks to the possibility of a tailored training programme it is possible to cater to the individual abilities, skills and needs in a targeted manner at the company and in special independent training establishments as well as at part-time vocational schools.

**Cooperation between part-time vocational schools and the world of business**

Cooperation and partnership between all stakeholders in VET independent of the place of learning is a key factor ensuring the success of the dual training system. Modern-day VET requires a close connection between theory and practice, between school-based instruction and in-company practice.

Large retail chains and also industrial enterprises are increasingly using the potential inherent in apprenticeship training and, in cooperation with part-time vocational schools, are developing complementary training schemes tailored to their future skilled workers. These intensified contacts and cooperation ventures between the world of business and part-time vocational school represent major sources of stimulus for the further development and quality assurance of apprenticeship training.

**Support scheme: Berufsmatura – apprenticeship with the matriculation certificate**

The support scheme “Berufsmatura: apprenticeship with the matriculation certificate”, which was launched in 2008, aims to open up prospects and use potential. Apprentices who have concluded an apprenticeship agreement or training contract are already given the opportunity to prepare for the Berufsreifeprüfung exam during their apprenticeship period in free-of-charge courses, with the possibility of already completing three partial exams before their apprenticeship-leave exam. Candidates have to pass one of the partial exams with positive results before the apprenticeship-leave exam so they are still eligible for the support scheme afterwards and are able to complete the remaining exams for the Berufsreifeprüfung free of charge up to a maximum of 5 years after the apprenticeship-leave exam. The costs for the preparatory measures are borne by the federal government. The organisation of the measure is carried out by provider organisations in the provinces.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
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<td>149</td>
<td>130,975</td>
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Source: BMBF Zahlenspiegel 2013, school year 2012/2013
**Education and training programmes**

Schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts primarily provide educational programmes for **initial vocational education and training (IVET)**. These include the following:

- **the 5-year colleges for engineering**, which cover years 9-13, introduce both the theory and practice of the respective subject from the beginning, and provide post-secondary forms of teaching and learning in the final year: colleges for engineering are completed with a matriculation exam;
- **the 4-year schools for intermediate vocational education** (years 9-12), which are completed with a final examination and are linked to the post-secondary sector via add-on courses, the *Studienberechtigungsprüfung* or *Berufsreifeprüfung*;
- **the 2-year add-on courses**, leading graduates of subject-specific schools for intermediate vocational education to the educational objective of the related 5-year colleges for higher vocational education; in the case of 3-year schools for intermediate vocational education, a so-called *preparatory course* must be completed before entry to the add-on course;
- **the (4-semester) post-secondary VET courses** (years 13-14), which require university/higher education entrance qualifications and are completed with a diploma exam.

As well as IVET programmes there are also differentiated continuing VET programmes for people in employment. These include:

- **the 8-semester colleges for higher vocational education for people in employment**, which lead to the same educational objective as the respective 5-year colleges for higher vocational education and are designed in modular form. Apprenticeship diploma holders start in the first semester, graduates of schools for intermediate vocational education or industrial master colleges enter in the third semester;
- **the 6-semester post-secondary VET courses for people in employment** (night school), which correspond to the related semesters of the colleges for higher vocational education for people in employment in the last four semesters, require university/higher education entrance qualifications and are completed with a diploma exam; it is the same with 4-semester post-secondary VET courses;
- **the 7-semester schools for intermediate vocational education for people in employment**, which are completed with a final examination and are linked to the post-secondary sector via add-on courses, the *Studienberechtigungsprüfung* or the *Berufsreifeprüfung* examination;
- **the industrial master colleges**, building **craftperson schools and master craftsperson schools** which are all completed with a final exam and serve to provide higher vocational qualifications.

**Autonomous structural leeway**

Decentralisation and thus **school autonomy** creates structural leeway – at school level mainly as regards teaching, at provincial level mainly relating to resource management. School autonomy in teaching means that regional needs can be met and the school profile enhanced (curricular autonomy).

**Curricular autonomy** facilitates both the selection of special focuses as foreseen by the curriculum and the development of training focuses which are chosen autonomously by the school. In addition, schools can develop alternative compulsory subject areas which enable the students to design their school career in line with individual talents and interests. Furthermore, optional educational programmes, such as optional subjects, may be specified within the scope of the school’s autonomy to provide important additional qualifications for practice.

**Area specialisations**

Schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts offer more than **20 area specialisations**, which enable focuses on the various fields of technology.

These institutions cover all the major disciplines within industry, crafts and trade by offering related modern educational programmes. These include the following areas, for example:


**Specialisations within an area** are possible due to training focuses or the schools’ autonomous focuses.

**Educational objectives**

Schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts teach **top-quality subject-specific and methodical competence** for advanced studies, the in-depth general and conceptual knowledge required for independent participation in continuing education and training, as well as **specialist knowledge and skills required for exercising a profession**.

As well as subject-specific education, particular attention is also paid to the further development of those **general qualifications and personal and social skills** to safeguard the graduates’ employability and enable them to participate successfully in lifelong learning through self-study or study programmes at establishments of higher learning.
Schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts believe a key objective is the students’ acquisition of entrepreneurial, innovative thinking and acting based on well-founded business and legal competences.

The specific objectives and purpose of these schools and colleges are the following:

- **Schools for engineering, arts and crafts** aim at the acquisition of subject-specific basic knowledge and skills that enable their graduates to exercise an occupation in the engineering, arts or crafts sector immediately upon completion and they also aim at extending and deepening the acquired general education.

- **Colleges for engineering, arts and crafts** aim at the acquisition of higher-level general and subject-specific education that enables graduates to exercise a senior occupation in the engineering, arts or crafts sector in industry and trade and leads to university/higher education entrance qualifications.

### Educational content

In order to meet general educational objectives, all curricula include a common curriculum architecture, which is adjusted to the individual educational programme and area specialisation. This curriculum architecture comprises the areas of general education, occupation-related theory and occupation-related practice. Scientific knowledge and IT skills are taught as a foundation and also for specific occupations in accordance with the requirements of the respective subject area. Taking into account the qualifications and licenses which entitle their graduates to exercise specific occupations as entrepreneurs according to the curricula, the schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts teach legal, business-related and entrepreneurial competences to the appropriate extent.

The underlying principles of all subjects are practice orientation and topicality of content. Apart from the workshops, construction exercises and exercises in different laboratories, mandatory work placements as well as projects including diploma projects are taught. Project-based teaching staff, in many cases in cooperation with businesses constitute additional elements of specialist training. Mandatory work placements are of differing length: in the 5-year colleges for higher vocational education they last for 8 weeks; in schools for intermediate vocational education they last for 4 weeks in general; in the so-called “schools for intermediate vocational education with work placement” an additional work placement of 12 weeks is compulsory in the final school year.

### Qualifications

**Final examination**

Upon passing the final examination at schools for intermediate vocational education in engineering, arts and crafts and schools for intermediate vocational education for people in employment, graduates boast professional qualifications enabling them to immediately exercise the respective occupations and giving them access to regulated professional activities. The final certificate additionally entitles them – in the case of 3-year schools for intermediate vocational education, following completion of a preparatory course – to entry to a subject-related add-on course or the 3rd semester of the college for higher vocational education for people in employment.

Final examinations are also foreseen for master craftsperson schools, foreperson courses and building craftsperson schools.

**Matriculation and diploma exam**

Graduates of colleges for higher vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education for people in employment acquire a double qualification: The matriculation and diploma certificate opens up access to the university/higher learning sector and enables holders to immediately exercise professions at executive level in the engineering, arts or crafts sector in industry and trade. A central component of the matriculation and diploma examination is the diploma project, where the students must comprehensively and independently examine a topic from the specialist area. These diploma projects are conducted in the final year under the supervision of experienced teaching staff, in many cases in cooperation with the business sphere. This not only enables the students to gain major subject-related experience in real projects but also often make the first contacts for subsequent employment.

**Diploma examination**

The post-secondary VET courses are completed with a diploma examination. As the students at the post-secondary VET courses have already acquired university/higher education entrance qualifications, the diploma examination comprises the subject-specific modular exams of the matriculation and diploma exam, in particular the diploma project.

**Other certificates**

Due to the acquisition of certificates of relevance for various occupations, practice-oriented, competence-based teaching also leads to additional qualifications for students. Certificate courses are offered in foreign languages (e.g. the First Certificate of English or the Business English Certificate), informatics (e.g. the ECDL; CISCO or Microsoft network technology), business (e.g. SAP, EBCL) and quality assurance.

**Credit transfer of subject-specific knowledge**

For studying at Fachhochschulen and universities, graduates of colleges for engineering, arts and crafts can be awarded credits individually for subject-specific competences. This can lead to a reduction of the time they need to study.

As already in the previous mutual recognition directives, at the EU level the high educational level of colleges for engineering is taken into account in Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, which entered into force on 20 October 2005.
Graduates of colleges for engineering can submit an application to the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy to be awarded the professional title Ingenieur/Ingenieurin following at least three years of relevant professional practice. A prerequisite for being awarded the professional title Ingenieur/Ingenieurin is that the respective college for engineering or area specialisation is listed in the Ingenieur Ordinance (pursuant to §3 of the 2006 Ingenieur Act) and that the practical training has been subject-oriented.

Quality
In line with their responsibility towards stakeholders, schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts have implemented the quality management system QIBB, which builds on state-of-the-art and recognised principles of quality management and is oriented towards the European quality framework CQAF (Common Quality Assurance Framework) (see QIBB, www.qibb.at).

The cornerstones of QIBB are medium- and short-term plans on the basis of school and work programmes, evaluations, quality reports and the agreement on development and implementation objectives within the framework of management and performance reviews. QIBB is not only limited to the school level but also covers the provincial level (school supervision) and the federal level (GD VET at BMBF). This ensures that processes affecting several organisational levels are also covered by quality management.

Mission statement
QIBB of the engineering, arts and crafts school sector builds on the joint, nationwide valid mission statement of colleges for engineering, which can be supplemented to include statements specific to the school location. The mission statement includes the core messages on ongoing educational processes, which are presented in the following seven quality areas: “educational mission”, “innovative programmes”, “quality”, “environment for learning and working”, “personnel” and “internationalism”. The core messages in brief:

- offer their students well-founded technical or industry-specific education and training as well as comprehensive general education geared towards personal growth;
- view their core competence in the development of innovative programmes in all areas of technology;
- secure their special trademark “practice orientation of VET programmes” through the combination of theoretical education and occupation-related practice, through the practical experience of the teaching staff and intensive cooperation with business and industry;
- consider themselves committed to the highest standards in terms of quality and their continuous further development in their work;
- offer their students support and encouragement in a motivating environment for learning and working;
- consider the skills, experience and commitment of staff as key essentials for successfully implementing their educational functions;
- deliver their education and training work with a strong focus on international aspects and create mobility, cosmopolitanism and intercultural understanding.

The Austrian schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts …

Source: BMBF Zahlenspiegel 2013, school year 2012/2013

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<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
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<tr>
<td>Colleges for engineering, arts and crafts, including industrial master colleges</td>
<td>144</td>
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05 Schools of business and colleges of business administration

Business-oriented training at upper secondary level
Schools and colleges of occupations in the business sector are run at a total of 118 locations throughout Austria and are characterised by relatively equal standards of education and training in the core area of the programmes. With business administration, foreign languages, general education, information and communication technologies, and key qualifications as the pillars of their programmes, they see themselves as competence centres of the business sphere. They include practice-oriented forms of learning and teaching of values and a sense of responsibility.

The college of business administration, which is completed with a matriculation and diploma examination after five years, provides comprehensive general education and advanced business-oriented training in an integrated form.

The school of business – in a similar way to the college of business administration – provides general education and business-oriented training in an integrated and practical manner geared to the respective profession. Following school attendance of three years, students take a final examination.

The add-on course is offered for graduates of schools of business and leads to the matriculation and diploma examination in six semesters.

The post-secondary VET course can be attended by graduates of a matriculation exam of an academic secondary school or of a matriculation and diploma exam of a non-business-oriented VET school as an additional post-secondary qualification. It lasts for four semesters and is completed with a diploma exam.

For people in employment both post-secondary VET courses and colleges of business administration are also run as courses for people in employment; at some locations these school types are additionally offered as distance learning courses for people in employment, comprising classes at school (social phase) and independent learning of a part of the syllabus (individual phase).

Both at the school of business and in the add-on course as well as at the college of business administration, students have to complete a compulsory work placement at a company, most appropriately before the final year.

College of business administration
Colleges of business administration prepare graduates for exercising advanced qualified occupations in all sectors of the economy (trade, commerce, industry, etc.) and administration. In addition, they enable graduates to work on a self-employed basis.

- Of major importance is a comprehensive entrepreneurship education, which qualifies pupils as active and responsible entrepreneurs, employees and consumers in order to help shape the economy and society.
- Advanced specialist training programmes are offered in the form of training focuses, which schools can select or even create themselves according to school autonomy provisions. The curriculum – oriented towards learning outcomes based on relevant education standards and competence grids – is structured into clusters: Personality and Educational Career, Languages and Communication, Entrepreneurship – Business and Management, Society and Culture, Mathematics and Natural Sciences.

Business education, the Entrepreneurship – Business and Management cluster, comprises the following subjects: Business Administration (main subject), Corporate Accounting, Business Informatics, Office Management and Applied Informatics, Economics, Law; Business Training, Project Management, Practice Firm, Case Studies; and the special training focus.

- In these subjects, students are taught subject-related theoretical and practical knowledge and skills as well as management skills by using state-of-the-art information and communication technologies, which they can apply immediately in the business sphere.
- In their final year, pupils prepare a diploma project of pre-scientific character on a business-related topic commissioned by companies or business partners. They gather practical experiences in the compulsory work placement and the work in the practice firm.
- Pupils reach the linguistic level of B1 or B2 respectively according to GER in at least two modern foreign languages, enabling them to use these languages both in everyday situations and in business contexts, with a particular emphasis on practice-oriented language learning.

In the field of general education, essential knowledge of cultural, social, and scientific issues is imparted, taking into account the students’ personal development at the same time, in order to train them to become independent, responsible individuals with a successful professional career and private life (cluster: Personality and Educational Career). In all subjects, particular emphasis is placed on the development of specialist and cross-curricular skills and competences to enable graduates to meet the demands of their future professional activity and personal environment.

The integration of general as well as technical and vocational education (double qualification) enables graduates of colleges of business administration to engage in business-oriented activities at executive level in all sectors of business and administration and gives them access to tertiary educational establishments (universities, Fachhochschulen, etc.).
Special forms of colleges of business administration are the college of business administration for business informatics and the post-secondary VET course for business informatics (digital business) at the college of business administration, where an in-depth ICT specialisation is combined with the colleges’ highly recognised business education.

School of business

The school of business is characterised by special practice-oriented training: This allows graduates to acquire not only specialist competence (the knowledge and skills required to solve business-related problems) but also key qualifications (personal and social competences such as communication and presentation skills, teamwork, conflict management skills, etc.) that are decisive for tackling professional challenges successfully.

The curriculum of the school of business also combines subjects into clusters: Linguistic Competence, Social Competence and Personal Development, Business Competence, as well as Society and Environment. The clusters complement one another in content and topics and facilitate the development of cross-curricular competences. Within the clusters, schools have the autonomy to introduce changes.

The school of business therefore sees itself as a place where pupils train the competences required for practice, develop entrepreneurship and, in this way, recognise their opportunities in the labour market, use them and make a successful start to their professional future:

- reduction of theoretical knowledge and strengthening of practical application,
- orientation towards learning outcomes based on relevant educational standards and competence grids,
- forms of learning and teaching which activate students,
- acquisition of practice-oriented business competence in school-based practice firms with involvement of business partners and with the work placement,
- the option of a combined all-day form with learning support,
- adaptation of the school organisation to the intentions laid down in the curriculum.

Practice-oriented training is of special importance for schools of business and is also included in the educational mission laid down for all subjects.

- This is underlined by the operation of practice firms as training locations for entrepreneurial thinking and acting: The practice firm is where competence- and practice-oriented teaching is in line with the business-oriented educational objective. References to practice firms are included in all subjects.
- All students prepare and work on a business-related project/final work, usually in teams, in which project management methods are applied. Required tasks range from finding topics and planning, organisation and implementation, to documentation and presentation. These projects and final works are carried out on behalf of companies or business partners.

- Compulsory work placement: The curriculum of the school of business requires students to complete a compulsory work placement and keep a practice portfolio (which is noted in the final certificate).

Career opportunities

Dependent employment

Graduates of schools of business and colleges of business administration are qualified to engage in business-oriented and administrative activities at intermediate and executive level in all sectors of business and administration. As far as employment and social insurance regulations are concerned, the matriculation and diploma certificate obtained at a college of business administration as well as the final certificate acquired at a school of business are recognised as equivalent to proof of completion of an initial vocational training programme in the respective field, thus providing the entitlements granted to holders of a certificate of apprenticeship.

Self-employment

Graduates of colleges of business administration can engage in an independent professional activity in a non-regulated craft or trade immediately after the matriculation and diploma exam, graduates of schools of business can do so immediately after completing their final examination. For regulated trades, job-specific work experience of differing duration and a professional diploma examination are required.

Graduates of schools of business and colleges of business administration are granted exemption from the entrepreneurial examination required for a self-employed activity.

Specific features

Schools of business and colleges of business administration are characterised by the following distinguishing features:

- Spiral curriculum: Key contents are covered repeatedly in the course of the training with an increasing level of detail and level of complexity.
- Entrepreneurship education: Entrepreneurial thinking and acting constitutes an integral part of all subjects. All schools of business and colleges of business administration aim to teach standardised core competences in business and general fields.
• **Practice-oriented training at practice firms**
A practice firm is a virtual enterprise that is active on the national and international practice firm market and deals with all business situations that also come up in a real company. Students rotate jobs in the various departments. The premises called *BWZs*, where practice firms operate above all, are equipped with all state-of-the-art office, information and communication technologies like real offices.

• **Cooperative open learning**
Many locations offer forms of cooperative open learning which aim to teach students to work in an increasingly independent and responsible way.

• **Diversification due to special focuses**
Special focuses are extension areas which are selected autonomously by the school, take account of regional demands and are offered from the third year at colleges of business administration. Students select them from their school’s available courses in accordance with their interests.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>51,576</td>
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</table>

*Source: BMBF Zahlenspiegel 2013, school year 2012/2013*
**Schools and colleges of management and services industries**

**Educational objectives**
As well as sound general education, schools and colleges of management and services industries (including add-on courses, post-secondary courses in VET, schools for intermediate vocational education) provide intensive vocational training in occupation-related practice, occupation-related theory and business-oriented subjects. They teach thinking patterns as well as working and decision-making skills which graduates can apply and put into practice directly in careers in the sphere of business (particularly in the advanced-level services sector and service design), administration – including in the social, health and cultural fields – and in the hotel, restaurant and catering (horeca) sector.

Further essential objectives include: personal growth and development, capacity for professional mobility and flexibility, creativity, ability to take criticism, social involvement, teamwork, cooperation skills, and communicative skills in German and other languages.

The five-year colleges and the three-year add-on courses also provide university entrance qualifications.

**Educational content**
Schools and colleges of management and services industries impart content related to the subject areas of religion; language and communication; business; society; arts and culture; mathematics; science and nutrition; hotel, restaurant and catering services; physical exercise and sport; as well as the in-depth area which is selected autonomously by the school.

The curricula of the colleges and post-secondary VET courses additionally provide for mandatory work placements of a total of 12 or 8 weeks.

**Career opportunities for graduates**
Graduates start careers in fields of activity of various branches of the business sphere, the tourism and catering industries, in administration – also in the field of health and social services – at the administrative and clerical levels, e.g. as managers of communal kitchens and canteens, dieticians, specialists for cooking and service, purchasers for the hotel and restaurant industry, hotel clerks, office workers, customer advisors, etc.

**Pursuit of regulated professions on a self-employed basis:**
Relevant occupations with proof of professional practice: hotel and restaurant industry, travel agency sector.

Due to the liberalisation of the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act, access to nearly all master craftsperson and professional diploma examinations is possible, provided the general conditions for exercising a craft or trade and for completion of practical periods, if appropriate, are satisfied.

**Additional VET offers**
In addition, individual locations offer the following VET programmes, for example in one and two-year courses: Cultural Administration and Congress Management; Environment and Business; Social Management; Communications and Media Design; Catering and Sales Management; Health and Fitness; additional training in Sport.

**Specific features**
Depending on the school location: “Junior Sommelier/Sommelière Austria”; “Cheese Connoisseur in Austria”; language certificates.

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**Schools and colleges of tourism**

**Educational objectives**
In addition to sound general education, schools and colleges of tourism (including add-on courses, post-secondary courses in VET, schools for intermediate vocational education) provide intensive vocational training in occupation-related practice, tourism-specific and business-oriented subjects. They teach thinking patterns as well as working and decision-making skills which enable graduates to immediately exercise a profession in the business sphere, particularly in the tourism and leisure industry.

Further essential objectives include: personal growth and development, capacity for professional mobility and flexibility, creativity, ability to take criticism, social involvement, teamwork, cooperation skills, and communicative skills in German and other languages.

The five-year colleges and the three-year add-on courses also provide university entrance qualifications.

**Educational content**
Schools and colleges of tourism impart content related to the subject areas of religion; general education; language and media; tourism and business; hotel, restaurant and catering services; work placement and applied project management; physical education and sport; sports animation; as well as the extension area selected autonomously by the school.

In addition, the curricula provide for mandatory work placements with a duration of between 12 and 32 weeks, depending on the school type.
Career opportunities for graduates
Graduates start careers in fields of activity of various branches of the tourism and leisure industry and administration on the administrative and clerical levels, e.g. as hotel and restaurant assistants, managers of communal kitchens and canteens, product developers in tourism, specialists for cooking and service, purchasers for the hotel and restaurant industry, hotel clerks, office workers, customer advisors, etc.

Pursuit of regulated professions on a self-employed basis:
Relevant occupations with proof of professional practice: hotel and restaurant industry, travel agency sector. Due to the liberalisation of the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act, access to nearly all master craftsperson and professional diploma examinations is possible, provided the general conditions for exercising a craft or trade and for completion of practical periods, if appropriate, are satisfied.

Additional VET offers
In addition, individual locations offer the following VET programmes: school of tourism; school for restaurant trade; information and communication technology for tourism; college of tourism for fairs and exhibitions; international hotel and tourism management; international course in hotel management; hotel specialisation course for adults.

Specific features
Depending on the school location: “Junior Sommelier/Sommelière Austria”; “Cheese Connoisseur in Austria”; Junior Barkeeper language certificates.

Schools and colleges of fashion, Colleges of art and design

Educational objectives
In addition to sound general education, schools and colleges of fashion (add-on courses, post-secondary courses in VET, schools for intermediate vocational education) provide intensive vocational training in occupation-related practice, occupation-related theory and business-oriented subjects. They teach thinking patterns as well as working and decision-making skills which enable graduates to immediately exercise a profession in the business sphere, particularly in the fashion and textile industry.

Further essential objectives include: personal growth and development, capacity for professional mobility and flexibility, creativity, ability to take criticism, social involvement, teamwork, cooperation skills, and communicative skills in German and other languages. The five-year colleges and the three-year add-on courses also provide university entrance qualifications.

Educational content
Schools and colleges of fashion impart content related to the subject areas of religion; language and communication; science and mathematics; society and culture; business; product development and production; as well as the extension area selected autonomously by the school: there is a choice between fashion and production techniques, fashion design and graphic design, fashion marketing and visual merchandising, applied business management, fashion management and design. In occupation-related theory and occupation-related practice, the colleges of art and design offer content from the following areas: media expression processes, studio for three-dimensional design, studio for two-dimensional design.

In addition, the curricula of colleges, schools for intermediate vocational education and post-secondary courses in VET provide for mandatory work placements with a duration of 4 weeks.

Career opportunities for graduates
Graduates start careers in fields of activity of various branches of the clothing industry and administration on the clerical and administrative levels, e.g. as production managers, fashion designers, office workers, secretaries, clerical workers, business assistants, customer advisors, team assistants, etc.

Pursuit of regulated professions on a self-employed basis:
Relevant occupations with proof of professional practice: tailor, ladies' clothing; tailor, men's clothing. Due to the liberalisation of the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act, access to nearly all master craftsperson and professional diploma examinations is possible, provided the general conditions for exercising a craft or trade and for completion of practical periods, if appropriate, are satisfied.

Additional VET offers
In addition, individual locations offer the following VET programmes (partly in the form of school pilot projects): School and Add-on Course for Aurally Handicapped; College of Fashion and Product Design; College of Product Management and Presentation.

Schools of social occupations

Educational objectives
Schools of social occupations provide the following programmes: either preparation with a duration of several years for later specialisation in the social field or for training in the healthcare and nursing sector, or vocational training with a duration of several years for occupations in the social field. There are also schools and courses for people in employment. Admission to the profession on completion of studies is regulated by regional laws.
- **School of social services** (2 years, from year 9), pre-professional qualification.
- **School of social occupations** (3 years, from year 9), pre-professional qualification.

### Schools of social care occupations

- **Specific focus on care for the elderly (including nursing):**
  (as of the age of 17 or 19, positive completion of an upper secondary school or college or IVET programme), professional qualification pursuant to the Health Care and Nursing Act and provincial laws, IVET programme.
- **Specific focus on working with families (including nursing):**
  (as of the age of 17 or 19, positive completion of an upper secondary school or college or IVET programme), qualification only possible at diploma level! Professional qualification pursuant to the Health Care and Nursing Act and provincial laws, IVET programme.
- **Specific focus on working with the disabled (including nursing):**
  (as of the age of 17 or 19, positive completion of an upper secondary school or college or IVET programme), professional qualification pursuant to the Health Care and Nursing Act and provincial laws, IVET programme.
- **Specific focus on accompanying the disabled (including a module on basic health care):**
  (as of the age of 17 or 19, positive completion of an upper secondary school or college or IVET programme), professional qualification pursuant to the Health Care and Nursing Act and provincial laws, IVET programme.

These schools are also offered as forms for people in employment! Qualification possible either at specialist level (2-3 years) or at diploma level (3-4.5 years).

**Mandatory work placements** most often form part of classes or can also be completed during school holidays.

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<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; services industries</td>
<td>110  35,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>29  10,331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>17  3,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>3   1,948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>58  7,880</td>
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*Source: BMBF Zahlenspiegel 2013, school year 2012/2013*
Colleges of agriculture and forestry

Colleges, add-on courses

Educational objectives
In addition to sound general education, colleges of agriculture and forestry provide intensive vocational education and training which qualifies graduates to exercise occupations in agriculture and forestry in the respective area specialisation as well as related areas. Priority is given to qualifications that meet the multifunctionality of agriculture and the requirements of nature, the economy as well as academic and technical progress. Graduates are to be open for the concerns of people in rural areas and display quality awareness. By involving them in major, cross-curricular projects, graduates are taught the knowledge and skills which ensure implementation in professional practice.

The major educational objectives include: personal growth and development, capacity for professional mobility and flexibility, creativity, ability to take criticism, social involvement, teamwork, cooperation skills and communicative skills in German and other languages.

The five-year colleges of agriculture and forestry and the three-year add-on courses are completed with the matriculation and diploma examination and provide graduates with the higher education entrance qualification.

Area specialisations
- Agriculture
- Wine and Fruit Production
- Garden and Landscape Design
- Horticulture
- Agricultural Engineering
- Forestry
- Agriculture and Food Supply Management
- Food and Biotechnology

Specific focuses
- Information and Environmental Management
- Product Marketing and Regional Tourism
- Nutrition Management
- Nutrition Ecology
- Business Management
- Business and Production Management
- Project and Regional Management
- Environmental Technology
- Agrarian Management
- Agrarian Marketing
- Agricultural Quality Management

Educational content
Depending on the area specialisation, colleges of agriculture and forestry convey the content of the following subject areas: Human Sciences and Language; Natural Sciences; Management and Law; Arts and Culture; Physical Exercise and Sport; Agriculture and Forestry; Biochemical and Technological Basics; Production and Technology; Garden and Landscape Design; Horticulture; Technical Sciences and Computer Science; Technology, Forestry Production and Nature Management; Forestry Engineering; Food, Technology and Laboratory.

Within the individual area specialisations in agriculture and forestry, individual locations offer specific focuses which lead to further job-related specialisations (such as Environmental Technology, Agrarian Marketing, Agrarian Management, Information and Environmental Management, Product Marketing and Regional Tourism, Nutrition and Business Management, Health and Product Management, Business and Production Management, Project and Regional Management).

The curricula of the colleges of agriculture and forestry provide for mandatory work placements of a total of 18 or 22 weeks.

Career opportunities for graduates
Graduates work in the areas of agricultural and forestry production as well as horticultural production, landscape design, wine and fruit production, the food industry and nutrition, tourism and the catering industry as well as agricultural machinery technology at administrative, management and marketing level and in agricultural and forestry advice and consulting services.

Pursuit of regulated professions on a self-employed basis:
Relevant occupations with proof of professional practice: gardener, flower arranger, agricultural machinery engineer.

Due to the liberalisation of the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act, access to nearly all master crafts-person examinations and professional diploma examinations is possible provided the general conditions for exercising a craft or trade and for completion of practical periods, if appropriate, are satisfied. (waiving of entrepreneurial examination).

Specific features
Graduates of five-year colleges of agriculture and forestry and of three-year add-on courses are awarded the professional title Ingenieur/Ingenieurin following completion of at least three years of relevant professional practice.
The diploma project is a separate project which must be carried out by pupils in the final two semesters as part of the matriculation and diploma exam outside regular classes and has to deal with a topic related to agriculture, forestry or another relevant area. The diploma project is carried out in cooperation with a non-school partner. Apart from tasks and analyses relevant to the sector, environmental issues, aspects related to business administration, and marketing are also included. Another part of the diploma project is a summary written in a modern foreign language.

Another element of the diploma project is its documentation and presentation, which have to be as professional as possible and include the use of state-of-the-art technologies as media for visualisation. In the diploma project, candidates must furnish proof of their cross-curricular problem-solving ability and methodological skills by using working methods analogous to the profession and, where possible, involving businesses from the respective area specialisations.

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<th>Locations</th>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
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Source: BMBF Zahlenspiegel 2013, school year 2012/2013
Qualifications

Final examination
Upon passing the final examination at schools for intermediate vocational education (3 to 4 years), graduates boast professional qualifications entitling them to immediately exercise the respective occupations and giving them access to regulated professional activities.

Matriculation and diploma exam
Graduates of colleges for higher vocational education (5 years) acquire a double qualification: The matriculation and diploma certificate opens up access to higher learning and also to regulated professional activities, thus providing immediate entitlement to jobs at executive level.

The project/final work carried out for the final examination or the diploma project carried out for the matriculation and diploma examination gives students the possibility to demonstrate all the practice-oriented knowledge and skills they have acquired.

In the school year 2015/2016, a competence-oriented form of the matriculation and diploma examination will be introduced which, as well as the diploma projects, will comprise a standardised form of written exams in German, modern foreign languages and applied mathematics for all candidates. This means that foreign languages will be certified at Level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the second modern foreign languages at Level B1, which will also be noted in the end-of-year report. With the two innovations, the diploma project and partial standardisation, the final qualification of colleges for higher vocational education will become even more competitive internationally.

Diploma examination
The diploma examination is the final exam of training programmes at post-secondary VET courses and post-secondary colleges for social work as well as part of the final exam at colleges for higher vocational education (the matriculation and diploma examination).

EU recognition
The new Directive 2013/55/EU amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications entered into force on 18 January 2014 and has to be implemented into national law by member states by 18 January 2016. Due to Annexes II and III having been deleted, the recognition of professional qualifications is noticeably simplified, mobility enhanced, and regulations on the recognition of professional qualifications are written more concisely and consequently their transparency improved.

Now as before there are levels a, b, c, d and e. The final qualification obtained at schools for intermediate vocational education corresponds to level b, the final qualification from colleges for higher vocational education to level c, where according to the new Directive (Article 11 point (c)(iii)) a note must be included for level c on the matriculation and diploma certificate of a college for higher vocational education.

According to Article 13(3), the host Member State shall accept the certificate by which the home Member State certifies that regulated education and training or vocational training referred to in point (c)(ii) of Article 11 is equivalent to the level provided for in point (c)(i) of Article 11.

According to Article 13 of the new Directive, Austrian qualifications from colleges for higher vocational education shall also be accepted in those Member States where training on level e (post-secondary course of at least four years’ duration) is foreseen for the respective profession. This is an improvement for holders of qualifications from colleges for higher vocational education who, according to the previous legal situation (Article 13(3) of Directive 2005/36/EC), have only been entitled to recognition if the host Member State requires a qualification certifying successful completion of higher or university education of four years’ duration, but not for a training course of a longer duration than four years.

As previously, in the event of substantial differences, the host Member State is able to impose compensation measures (an adaptation period or aptitude test).

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)

The structures of education systems vary between countries and can therefore be compared only with difficulty in many cases.

ISCED is a statistical instrument and increases the international comparability of qualifications. ISCED helps educational researchers and educational policy-makers compare, analyse and enhance the education systems in the OECD area (www.oecd.org) with currently 34 member states. As ISCED levels have been specified from pre-primary education to university, they help experts and partners in other countries understand better and more quickly which educational level is achieved upon completion of a particular programme.

To be able to take account of current developments in education systems, especially by creating the European Qualifications Framework in particular in the OECD countries, the ISCED classification was redesigned:

The adapted system ISCED2011 now brings a positive and far-reaching change for Austria regarding the presentation of colleges for higher vocational education. According to the available new criteria, the 4th and 5th years correspond to Level 5; these programmes are also termed short-cycle tertiary education. This level covers all post-secondary qualifications that teach graduates
professional knowledge, skills and competences typically in a practice-oriented way. One particular characteristic is that they are for specific occupations. Such programmes can also be defined as the first part of a Bachelor’s programme. Therefore competences acquired at colleges for higher vocational education are in direct comparison with academic programmes (such as a short-cycle degree in the UK), which will enhance permeability and mobility.

| ISCED 304 | Part-time vocational schools for apprentices, schools for intermediate vocational education |
| ISCED 550 | Colleges for higher vocational education |
| ISCED 550 | Add-on courses, schools and colleges for people in employment |
| ISCED 550 | Post-secondary VET courses, post-secondary VET colleges, master craftsperson schools, industrial master colleges |

Certificates and diplomas
The final certificate (from the school for intermediate vocational education) and the matriculation and diploma certificate (from the college for higher vocational education) show not only the examination areas and related assessments but also the timetable with the allocation of hours per subject. In addition, these documents include information on connected qualifications. Furthermore, graduates of schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education can take advantage of Europass Certificate Supplements at www.zeugnisinfo.at, which provide additional information about the acquired skills, competences and activity areas.

Professional qualifications
Vocational Training Act
The Vocational Training Act (VTA) provides the statutory framework for the training of apprentices. In addition, the VTA includes some provisions governing the fields of schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education as well as their special forms and school pilot projects. One provision, for example, stipulates that successful completion of a school for intermediate vocational education or college for higher vocational education of at least three years’ duration ensures minimum professional skills in terms of:
- professional qualification,
- labour legislation including collective bargaining agreements,
- social security legislation.
This means that the certificate awarded to graduates of VET schools or colleges also
- gives them access to professional activities requiring successful completion of an apprenticeship-leave exam in a related apprenticeship trade,
- is evidence that they have fulfilled recruitment requirements for specific payment levels in the public sector,
- ensures that they are classified adequately into particular wage and salary levels.

In this context, the term “certificate” comprises
- the final certificate of a school for intermediate vocational education of at least three years’ duration,
- the matriculation and diploma certificate awarded by a college for higher vocational education,
- the diploma certificate issued by a post-secondary VET course.

Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act
The Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act is the legal basis for the commercial pursuit of activities conducted on an independent, regular basis with the aim of obtaining revenue or another economic benefit. With the 2002 Amendment to the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act, a unified list of regulated trades was created – these are all trades (crafts and other regulated trades) that are linked to a certificate of competence. Hence the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy is obliged to issue an ordinance for every regulated trade to stipulate which evidence can be considered as fulfilling access requirements for the respective trade.

A final certificate awarded by a school for intermediate vocational education or a matriculation and diploma certificate from a college for higher vocational education can be considered such evidence – the successful completion of these schools can therefore provide direct access to different regulated crafts and trades. For some regulated trades, completion of the entrance examination or of specified programmes as well as evidence of relevant professional experience are also required.

At www.gewerbeordnung.at it is possible to find the access requirements for the pursuit of a regulated trade.

The professional title Ingenieur/Ingenieurin
The professional title Ingenieur/Ingenieurin can be awarded to graduates of colleges for engineering and colleges of agriculture and forestry.

The title is conferred by the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy or the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. The legal bases are the 2006 Ingenieur Act and relevant ordinances.

Graduates must fulfil the following requirements:
- the matriculation and diploma exam according to the curriculum of Austrian colleges for engineering and crafts or colleges of agriculture and forestry,
• at least three years of relevant professional practice that requires specialist knowledge in those subjects where the matriculation and diploma exams can be taken,
• a written application for the awarding of the professional title Ingenieur/Ingenieurin.

Entrepreneurial examination
For the pursuit of a trade or a regulated craft or trade on a self-employed basis, candidates must prove knowledge and skills related to business administration and legal issues. This proof is furnished by successful completion of the entrepreneurial examination or of a pathway leading to the waiving of the entrepreneurial examination. The Entrepreneurial Examination Ordinance regulates the topics related to the entrepreneurial examination and the waiving of the examination. A range of institutions in the VET sector teach the knowledge and skills relevant for the entrepreneurial examination to the required extent of 160 periods of instruction. These include all types of colleges for higher vocational education and the majority of schools for intermediate vocational education. This leads to the waiving of the entrepreneurial exam for these graduates.

Other certificates
Pupils in the VET school sector can acquire many other relevant (external) certificates in line with their specialisation or in addition, which are beneficial for their future career. Foreign language certificates are named as an example here. Students whose mother tongue is not English, French, Italian, Spanish or Russian can, for example, prove their language skills by taking internationally renowned foreign language certificates which help them to be successful later at an intermediate professional level in a foreign-language environment.

These international certificates in foreign languages aim to impart qualifications that are recognised in the graduates’ future professional life by industrial and business enterprises or for higher studies or are helpful for related job applications.

These exams are prepared entirely by the respective institutions themselves and administered exclusively in examination centres by examiners with relevant qualifications who are officially appointed.

Preparation for language exams is an additional service offered by many schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education, which students may take advantage of on a voluntary basis.
Initial teacher education and training

Initial training of VET school teachers varies widely, due to the different ranges of subjects offered in the VET school sector. Basically, three types of teachers can be distinguished in these schools:

- Teachers of general education subjects
- Teachers of occupation-related theory
- Teachers of occupation-related practice

**Teachers of occupation-related theory**
are graduates of a subject-related university-based programme and have several years of relevant professional practice in the business sphere.

**Teachers of occupation-related practice**
are graduates of a subject-related VET programme and have several years of relevant professional practice in the business sphere.

**Teachers of general education subjects**
are graduates of a university-based teacher training programme. They are obliged to undergo one year of teaching practice before joining a school.

Teachers at part-time vocational schools and teachers of occupation-related practice as well as classes of occupation-related theory at schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education need to acquire a teaching diploma at a university college of teacher education.

Practice orientation constitutes a key element of the VET school sector – this is underlined by the fact that all teachers in this sector – with the exception of teachers of general education subjects – are obliged to furnish proof of completion of several years of professional practice in the world of business.

With the academic year 2016/2017, a new organisation of teacher training programmes will enter into force in line with the Bologna structure – bachelor’s programme comprising a total of 240 ECTS and master’s programme comprising a total of 60 ECTS, with the latter optional for teachers of occupation-related practice and for teachers of occupation-related theory with a subject-oriented tertiary qualification.

In-service and continuing education and training of teachers

In-service education and training of teachers:
In line with the principle of professionalisation, it is indispensable for all teachers to keep their level of occupation-related knowledge and skills as well as teaching methods up to date. This is of particular importance in the VET school sector due to the continually decreasing half-life of subject-specific knowledge.

Continuing education and training of teachers:
Teachers have the possibility to acquire additional qualifications that go beyond their formal qualifications obtained at university. Continuing education and training programmes are certified and often connected with new qualifications.

Due to the diversified nature of the VET school sector, nationwide coordination of in-service and continuing education and training for teachers is very important. In addition, a high degree of flexibility needs to be ensured by responding quickly to demand.

University colleges of teacher education
are tertiary education establishments providing initial, in-service and continuing education and training for teachers. In every Austrian province there is one federal university college of teacher education, and in Burgenland a foundation has been set up under the name Private Burgenland University College of Teacher Education. In addition, there are a university for agricultural and environmental policy and private university colleges of teacher education run by the church.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs is in charge of university colleges of teacher education. Due to the autonomy of higher learning establishments, the inner structures of the individual institutions and, as a result, the allocation of tasks to departments / institutes differ enormously.

As far as the organisation of in-service and continuing education and training activities is concerned, these may be provided for a particular school (in-house training), a region or province, or several (or all) provinces, depending on the target group. As far as content is concerned, these activities can be provided for one or several specific subjects, (subject) areas or types of schools.

**Main fields of in-service and continuing education and training of teachers**
The main fields are subject-specific scientific theory, subject-specific didactics, general pedagogy and personal development. From the wide range of themes, the following should be highlighted:

- Teaching of key qualifications
  Teaching related to this theme is of key importance within the framework of programmes.

- Personal development, communication, social competence
  Particularly at school level, the teaching of knowledge builds on interpersonal processes. Therefore, themes related to personal development play a major part.
School, teaching and quality development
University colleges of teacher education support schools in their activities related to school development, particularly regarding the QIBB (VET Quality Initiative) focus, which is implemented in all school types and in all fields of VET. Additionally, attention is paid to educational standards and the further development of evidence-based school and teaching development.

Courses for newly recruited teachers with a teaching diploma
Newly recruited teachers are familiarised with the particular features of the VET school sector and the connected specifics of the subject which is to be taught.

Education and training for newly recruited teachers without a teaching diploma
Before joining a school, teachers of occupation-related theory with a subject-specific university qualification are obliged to complete a pedagogical course at university colleges of education within the framework of in-service and continuing education and training programmes for teachers. The course for new teachers at schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education is also offered in the form of online modules. Vocational school teachers and teachers of occupation-related practice also complete teacher training programmes at university colleges of teacher education. See: “Initial teacher training”.

School management and leadership
The programmes for managers aim to impart qualifications related to quality assurance, location-related school and teaching development, and responsibility for outcomes. In view of the school heads’ important management position, special courses are offered for this group.

Competence orientation
University colleges of teacher education support schools in their implementation of competence orientation, which is to become a major component of lesson planning, teaching in practice, and performance assessment.

Standardised, competence-oriented matriculation and diploma examination

In-service and continuing education and training of teachers in the business sphere
In numerous subjects, the latest technological developments can only be acquired and learned in “real businesses”. Therefore, university colleges of teacher education also organise on-the-job training for teachers in the business sphere, i.e. the teachers participate actively in the production process or in business management.

Language diversity, multilingualism, interculturality and internationalisation

Foreign languages and international certificates

In view of the importance of foreign languages, targeted conversation and special-purpose courses for English and sometimes French and Italian are offered not just to foreign language teachers for their own subject, but also to all other teachers. Particular attention is paid to teachers who have English/French/Italian as their teaching language (CLIL). Foreign language teachers are trained to become examiners so they can also award international certificates to pupils.

Electronic media in the classroom
Programmes are prepared to promote the pedagogical, didactic application of electronic media in the classroom. Special attention is paid to teaching methods that use and rely on state-of-the-art information and communication technologies, such as e-learning, e-didactics, blended learning.

Further development of inclusive education
As well as the further development of inclusive education, inclusive/integrative VET continues to be a focus.

Individualisation, support for the gifted and talented
Courses are offered to enhance teaching, diagnostic and support competence to encourage individualisation and differentiation as well as the gifted and talented.

Environment
Topics related to the environment are given particular emphasis in programme planning. They include learning for sustainable development and environmental economics.

Political education/democratic education
This priority aims to prepare young people for life in society and the political sphere.

Other activities of university colleges of teacher education

Educational fact research and VET research
This includes implementation of research projects with the objective of academically analysing problems that are of importance for the profession in everyday school routine and initial, in-service and continuing education and training of teachers. The findings of these studies are used to work out appropriate solutions and develop them in line with methodology for in-service and continuing teacher training.

Other services
- Support for working groups of teachers
- Project centres, partnerships with institutes of in-service teacher training abroad
- EU projects
- Coaching, counselling, support in organisational development and educational processes, pedagogical support and guidance concepts such as for learning design, learning assistance, mentoring, peer learning
Adult education and training in Austria covers a large number of educational establishments with different objectives and educational programmes. The spectrum of education and training ranges from general education, basic education, and the acquisition of qualifications in “second-chance education”, vocational education and training (VET) programmes, on to management courses and personal development programmes, to higher education and university-based programmes.

Large number of educational establishments and wide educational spectrum

At the federal level, general adult education is within the sphere of competence of the specialist unit in the Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs, but other ministries are also responsible for specific agendas of adult education and training. At the level of associations, first and foremost the Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions (KEBÖ) needs to be mentioned, which comprises the ten largest continuing education and training (CET) associations. University-based and non-university-based research institutions are another category. Finally, a large number of NGOs and registered societies are active in non-profit and commercial adult education.

The St. Wolfgang Federal Institute for Adult Education (BIFEB), a service provided by the Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs, sees itself as a competence centre for professionalisation, quality development and expert discourse. BIFEB is an innovative partner in national and international networks and projects and, at the same time, a seminar centre for all actors in adult education and training; its range of services covers courses and workshops on to CVET university courses.

Funding of adult education

The Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs supports associations and institutions of adult education and training. The prerequisites and criteria for awarding funds are laid down in the Federal Financing Act on the Funding of Adult Education and Public Libraries from Federal Funds (or 1973 Adult Education Funding Act for short). Performance agreements are concluded with the individual KEBÖ associations.

For funding the supported measures, educational programmes and development projects, funds of the European Social Fund (ESF) are also used. The European Social Fund is a structural fund of the European Union. In the adult education and training sector, it provides funds for projects aiming at the lasting integration of adults at a disadvantage into society, education and the labour market, the reduction of barriers and the creation of equal opportunities, as well as professionalisation and quality development. Support from ESF funds is co-financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs.

A comprehensive overview of adult education and training in Austria can be found at the website www.erwachsenenbildung.at.

Objectives and priorities

The main objective of adult education and training is to enhance access to lifelong education measures for everyone. Essential for participation and CET success is the development and implementation of programmes appropriate to adults and the target group as well as high-quality educational counselling and career guidance.

Adult education and training serves both personal development as well as CVET and, in this way, contributes to creating equal opportunities, reducing educational disadvantages and, overall, to social development.

Therefore it focuses on the following priority areas:

- offering possibilities of lifelong learning, with particular focus on groups who are at a disadvantage,
- enhancing access to adult education for everyone,
- improving the permeability of the education system, from basic education through to university education,
- improving the quality and professionalisation of adult education and training,
- safeguarding the basic structures of adult education and training.

Educational programmes

Basic education and acquisition of qualifications by adults

To facilitate entry to educational processes and open up access to and participation in secondary general education and vocational training programmes, support is provided for basic education and the acquisition of qualifications by adults. In this context the Adult Education Initiative was developed and implemented in 2012 (www.initiative-erwachsenenbildung.at).

Adult Education Initiative

The Adult Education Initiative enables adults who lack basic skills and/or have not acquired a compulsory school qualification to resume and complete compulsory schooling free of charge. The support scheme was developed jointly by the federal government and provincial governments, its legal basis is an agreement according to Article 15a of the Austrian Federal Constitution (B-FG). Its main objectives are:

- equal opportunities and the reduction of educational disadvantages,
- reducing the number of people without a sufficient basic education,
- increasing the number of people with basic educational qualifications,
• raising the qualification level of adults,
• improving the permeability of the education system.

The new Act on the Final Examination for Compulsory Schooling (since August 2012) calls for innovative forms of implementation which are appropriate to adults and competence-oriented, cross-curricular programmes which are tailored to the target group and take their life situation and particular potential into account.

The exams and certificates

Berufsreifeprüfung and Studienberechtigungsprüfung

The Berufsreifeprüfung provides holders with unrestricted access to studies at universities, higher education establishments, Fachhochschulen, post-secondary VET colleges and post-secondary VET courses and requires candidates to have an initial VET qualification.

The Studienberechtigungsprüfung provides access to the education and training pathway for which it was taken specifically. Therefore, holders of this certificate are restricted in the extent to which they can change the study programme they have selected.

Preparatory courses for candidates of the Berufsreifeprüfung and Studienberechtigungsprüfung exams are mainly offered at adult learning establishments.

Access to higher education

In the area of the Berufsreifeprüfung, the standardised matriculation and diploma examination will apply from April 2016. As preparation, disseminators are being trained in the subjects German, English and mathematics jointly with the adult education associations concerned and the Federal Institute of Educational Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School Sector (BIFIE). The curricula are being revised, field tests conducted, and the logistical requirements established at the exam venues. In addition, project support is provided by the European Social Fund to increase participation rates of previously underrepresented, educationally disadvantaged groups of people.

Educational counselling and career guidance

Provider-independent educational counselling system

Jointly with all provinces, an efficient, nationwide and provider-independent educational counselling system has been set up in Austria with networks which serve as first point of contact for all people interested in education.

Network and lasting integration

The aim is to make the know-how of educational counsellors increasingly accessible and enhance their self-image. Specific measures in this field include the joint platform www.bib-infonet.at, supra-regional networking meetings, a newsletter, expert workshops, and the establishment of the Educational Counselling Advisory Panel (Beirat Bildungsberatung).

Virtual guide to education

The portal www.erwachsenenbildung.at is also a major contact point and hub in educational counselling and guidance:

The course support database (www.kursfoerderung.at) is a nationwide database for individual support in CET. The bib-atlas (www.bib-atlas.at) provides an overview of the large variety of information, counselling and guidance offers for education and careers. eduArd (EDUcation Austria Resource Directory, www.eduard.bildung.at), the Austria-wide search service for adult education and training measures, makes the search for CET offers easier. With BiB Wiki – the “wiki for educational counselling” – a forward-looking instrument has been available since 2007.
Professionalisation and quality development

Federal Institute for Adult Education
The St. Wolfgang Federal Institute for Adult Education (BIFEB) is committed to the principles of lifelong learning (LLL) and equal access to education for everyone. Close national and international cooperation with partners in networks, projects and research institutions ensures the professionalisation of CET and the setting of new quality standards in lifelong learning issues.

Cooperative system of adult education
The “cooperative system” of the Austrian adult learning sector is a joint initiative of KEBÖ associations and BIFEB which aims at the professionalisation and quality development of adult education. Within the framework of the “cooperative system”, partners have agreed to jointly shape the business fields of the Austrian Academy of Continuing Education, the bases of adult education and education management at BIFEB and promote part-time and in-service CET measures of adult educators. The Austrian Academy of Continuing Education (WBA, http://wba.or.at) examines and recognises the competences of adult educators based on predefined standards. WBA awards a two-tier occupational qualification with a certificate and diploma and supports permeability between adult education and university-based initial and continuing training. With its binding education and training standards, WBA ensures quality assurance and transparency and thus makes a valuable contribution to the professionalisation and quality development of adult education.

Ö-CERT
The quality framework for the adult education sector in Austria/Ö-CERT is a nationwide scheme to recognise quality-ensuring measures of adult education providers in Austria and was launched in December 2011. Ö-CERT targets all providers that boast different, often regionally developed quality labels. Ö-CERT was developed to create more transparency both for clients and learners as well as for public bodies regarding the quality of adult education providers and also to establish uniform quality standards. To be awarded Ö-CERT, applying institutions have to furnish proof of a valid quality management system or quality assurance process listed on the Ö-CERT website. In addition, specific basic requirements (regarding the organisation, programmes, quality assurance, compliance with democratic and ethical principles) are checked (cf. http://oe-cert.at). The development of Ö-CERT was a joint effort of the Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs (BMBF), provincial governments, as well as representatives of the adult learning sector and academic sphere. The legal basis of Ö-CERT is an agreement according to Article 15a of the B-VG.

Public relations / development and research

Portal www.erwachsenenbildung.at
The adult learning portal offers information and support on CET for the interested public and is also a platform for all actors in adult education. The portal currently comprises five sections with thousands of sub-pages and thematic databases to date. In 2013 approximately 59,000 visitors a month were counted. Some 220 news items and 180 dates of events have been published. Around 3,100 people have subscribed to the newsletter, which comes out at least every two weeks.

MAGAZIN.erwachsenenbildung.at
In 2007 a nationwide, provider-independent specialist medium for research, practice and discourse on adult learning was launched in cooperation with BIFEB. With the MAGAZIN, the adult education sector has a modern, open-access publication which combines quality of content with smooth and inexpensive distribution. The MAGAZIN is published three times a year and covers important topics related to adult education; it can be downloaded free of charge from www.erwachsenenbildung.at/magazin or also ordered in printed form at cost price. Its articles and complete issues are downloaded up to 90,000 times a year (as at: 2013).

Material on adult education
Since 2006, the series of publications “Material on adult education“, which was launched in 2000, has come out in a new layout. Academically founded works and specific studies related to adult education are published in this series of publications and made available to the interested public. The individual issues can be ordered in printed form free of charge and are also available for download at the portal www.erwachsenenbildung.at.

Austrian State Prize for Adult Education
Since 2008 the Education Ministry has awarded the Austrian State Prize for Adult Education, which was conceived in 1956, in a new form: The State Prize is now conferred in up to four categories (“Adult educator”, “Innovation”, “Thematic focus” and “Science and research”). The decision for the respective prize winners and winning projects is made by an independent jury of experts on adult learning with the involvement of the public, the prizes are awarded in a ceremony by the Federal Minister.

Due to changing thematic priorities, the distinction of good practice, the openness for innovation and the bigger picture as well as the high level of awareness and importance, the State Prize for Adult Education fulfils an important function in the entire adult learning community.

The EU and international affairs
Work on fundamental themes of adult education and experience exchange with experts at EU and international levels, participation in working groups, projects and
surveys, the preparation and coordination of statements and reports, as well as participation in consultations, events and expert conferences are also among the tasks of the departmental unit (cf. chapter 11).

Implementation of projects of the European Commission
Topics of relevance to education are continually introduced by the EU. One important example in this context is the so-called LLL process, which was initiated by the European Commission and has been discussed intensively at all levels by the adult education sector. In connection with the comprehensive activities of the European Commission related to lifelong learning (LLL), the document LLL:2020 – Strategie zum lebensbegleitenden Lernen in Österreich (Lifelong Learning Strategy in Austria) was drawn up by an interministerial working group and adopted by the Austrian Federal Government in July 2011. As well as the ministries concerned with educational issues, social partner institutions and academic expert opinions were also taken into consideration. Ten action lines formulate political objectives and strategic projects by 2020 based on a vision, the current state, objectives and measures, with the progress of the work being reported on an annual basis.

European and National Qualifications Framework
In September 2006 the European Parliament and the Council published a Recommendation on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) with the goal of relating the different educational and qualification systems of the European countries to one another in a transparent manner. The national states were called on by the EU to develop a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) based on the EQF which comprises the entire national state’s education system, which means qualifications acquired in different ways (formally, non-formally, informally) and at different levels. Austria has decided to comply with this request, with implementation still ongoing. Current educational issues, which are important including in connection with the development of the NQF, such as learning outcome orientation, competence identification, validation and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, represent a particular challenge and are being discussed in the adult learning sector at all levels nationally and internationally and in working groups in which the departmental unit is also represented.

Agenda for Adult Learning
Major impetus for the further development of adult learning in the overall European context is given by the European Agenda for Adult Learning. It is the follow-up to the Adult Learning Action Plan, which ran from 2007 until 2011. The Department for Adult Education of BMBF has taken on the function of the national coordination point for the implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning. In this connection, projects including ones co-financed by the EU (EACEA projects) are implemented and coordinated.

The EACEA – Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency – works on behalf of the European Commission and is responsible for the management of programmes such as Erasmus+ (European educational programme for lifelong learning) and EURYDICE. EURYDICE collects, prepares and publishes information and analyses on European education systems and policies and, since 2013, has consisted of 40 national offices seated in all 36 countries which take part in the EU’s Lifelong Learning Programme. EURYDICE includes the database EURYPEDIA, which is the most comprehensive collection of descriptions of education systems in Europe. Reports and descriptions related to the departmental unit are regularly drawn up and updated on behalf of EURYDICE and EURYPEDIA.

OECD
OECD provides important foundations and analyses for adult education, in which Austria takes part regularly. Participation in the Thematic Review of Adult Education (Country Review Austria 2002-2004) definitely had repercussions on the adult learning landscape in this country. On the initiative of OECD, reports are regularly drawn up on the topic of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning/RNFIL, in which Austria also takes part, as it does in the PIAAC study (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies). It was published in October 2013 and has furnished data about CET participation and measurable competences in a similar way to PISA.

UNESCO
Austria’s participation in activities of international organisations also has positive effects on the further development of adult learning. Thus, for example, a delegation of representatives of BMBF, the social partners and KEBÖ took part in the Sixth UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) in Brazil in 2009. UIL (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning) is responsible for various agendas of adult education and has organised and run events such as the International Conference and all activities connected with it. In preparation for the GRALE (Global Report on Adult Learning and Education) a national country report on adult education was drawn up. The Department takes part in online consultations, such as concerning the revision of the UNESCO Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education (Nairobi 1976). Specific topics such as the recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning/RVA are also analysed from a global perspective by UNESCO/UIIL and dealt with in consultations of the member states.
11 Physical education and sport

The importance of physical exercise for the development of young people in a physical, cognitive, emotional and social respect is taken into account by teaching the compulsory subject Physical Education and Sport in all school types (except for part-time vocational school in the dual training system).

Physical Education and Sport at primary school level

The class-teacher principle applies at Austrian primary school. This means that Physical Education and Sport is taught for the entire class (boys and girls jointly) by primary school teachers.

This creates the opportunity for flexibility regarding the time allocated for physical education in the syllabus, with the aim of offering children physical exercise on a daily basis. In the first four years of schooling, primary school provides elementary education jointly for all pupils, taking into account the social integration (physical and/or mental) of children with disabilities. The law also provides for the additional employment of a qualified teacher for children with special educational needs (also in Physical Education and Sport).

Physical Education and Sport at lower and upper secondary level

From the 5th year onwards, Physical Education and Sport is taught by female (for girls) and male subject teachers (for boys), essentially separated by gender. There is the option for teachers of both sexes to organise joint sport classes for girls and boys in appropriate pedagogical circumstances (such as swimming, winter sports).

Where special educational needs have been determined for a child, it is incumbent on the school conference to decide if and to what extent the respective child needs to be instructed according to the syllabus of another school type (special needs school).

It is possible to hold PE lessons with children from different classes or grades; in addition, there is the option of allowing for special focuses on sport and pupils can make their choices across the school year.

Additional provision of Physical Education and Sport

In some school forms (including part-time vocational schools run as boarding schools), Physical Education and Sport is offered as an optional subject. Where a sufficient number of pupils enrol in the optional PE class, the class will be held and the pupils who have registered are obliged to attend it and will be graded.

The compulsory subject Physical Education and Sport can also be offered as an elective session, which aims to deepen, supplement or extend the learning content of the compulsory subject – including ball games, jazz dance as well as climbing or rowing. Registration for elective sessions is voluntary. The pupils who register for such sessions are obliged to attend them but will not be graded.

Schools with a focus on sport

School autonomy implies that every school is entitled to develop its own profile and set a focus on Physical Education and Sport. This decision makes it necessary, as compared to the regular form, to allow for additional physical exercise or even exercise-oriented subjects and projects.

To promote individuals with special motor skills, schools with a focus on sport were set up in Austria in 1962. These schools aim to employ teachers with sport-oriented qualifications that go beyond the regular teaching diploma. Students have to take an aptitude test to prove their motor skills and undergo a mandatory medical examination.

General secondary schools with a focus on sport and new secondary school with a focus on sport (general sport focus)

At present there are 107 general secondary schools with a focus on sport and new secondary schools with a focus on sport in Austria. The main characteristic of this school form is an additional 3 to 4 exercise-oriented lessons a week in the subject Physical Exercise and Sport compared to a regular general secondary school. This is supplemented by elective sessions, participation in a higher number of competitions and a higher number of school events (winter and summer sport weeks). General secondary schools with a focus on sport and new secondary schools with a focus on sport aim to promote students who are talented athletes.

Due to the varied training (basic motor skills, basic sport disciplines, recreational sport), the school sets the course towards competitive sport and forms an ideal basis for health promotion and lifelong sporting activities.

General secondary schools/new secondary schools with a focus on skiing

With the objective of promoting competitive skiing in particular, general secondary schools with a focus on skiing and new secondary schools with a focus on skiing have been established. They aim to enhance the technical skills required for ski racing based on the acquired basic skills, which enables pupils to compete in ski racing (via an association of the Austrian Ski Federation). The demands of high performance ski training require targeted development of basic motor skills (wide variation and increasing strain). At the same time and in direct connection with sports practice, pupils are taught basic knowledge about the kinematics in skiing as well as the theory of ski training.

As not all students will become top athletes, it is also necessary for instruction to focus on other aspects of skiing, such as later professional fields (ski instructor, trainer). Physical Education and Sport is taught for 12 lessons a week between years 5 and 8.
Schools and colleges with a focus on skiing
Skiing is the only sport in Austria for which there are special forms in the school system. State certified trainers provide sport education to students. In addition to regular school instruction, specific lessons are offered for pupils to make up for the teaching content they have missed due to sport training or competitions. A special programme to promote elite sport is offered by the sport schools in Stams, Schladming, Bad Hofgastein and Waidhofen/Ybbs. Special cooperation with the Austrian Ski Federation enables best-possible coordination for the students’ admission to the top teams and their participation in training courses and competitions. One major feature of this school form is the objective of providing students with final school qualifications while they reach an as high as possible sport performance level at the same time.

Sportgymnasium-type new secondary school with a focus on sport
This school form is characterised by broad practical sport training (moderate priority) and the close integration of the subject Sport Theory. The number of lessons in Physical Education and Sport is 7 to 8 hours a week in each grade. Elements of this training are to set the path to youth-oriented competitions, participation in competitions of the professional associations, an increased offer of elective sessions, and winter and summer sport weeks. The reorganisation of the matriculation exam and the new syllabus of Sport Theory have enhanced the quality of school-based training. The complex matter of holistic sport education is ensured by including Sport Theory as a compulsory subject in the matriculation exam, holding physical exercise-related preliminary exams, introducing team teaching and cross-curricular forms of teaching.

Schools for competitive athletes
Upper-cycle traditional secondary schools and schools of business for competitive athletes have been established as school pilot projects to open up the possibility for top young athletes to obtain a school qualification or take the matriculation examination. With an additional school year and flexible school organisation it becomes possible to take part in intensive training and cope with school demands at the same time.

Training is organised and financed by training centres and/or the respective professional associations. The subject Sport Theory is compulsory and forms part of the matriculation examination. The requirement profile for admission to a school for competitive athletes comprises a sport-related qualification (top performance, international successes), school prerequisites (certificate, learning reserves) and a positive medical report.

The Austrian federal sport academies
The educational objective of the federal sport academies is to impart high-quality teaching competence in sport and physical exercise (competitive sport, recreational sport and health-promoting sport). As an intermediate school for teacher and educator training, the federal sport academies can also provide training in sport, games and exercise for people who do not meet the requirements for the higher education sector. Graduates at the instructor, teacher, trainer and qualified coach level are

- internationally qualified people who are able to coach internationally competitive athletes of all age groups,
- people who are committed to the objectives of health promotion and risk prevention who are available for health-related and recreational sport (sport associations, sport clubs, municipalities and companies),
- qualified teachers available for public schools for the subject Physical Education and Sport.

The training for qualified sport teachers imparts comprehensive content on Sport Theory, Sport Methodology and Sport Practice in 6 semesters. Attendees of the training for sport teachers can take the Berufsfreiprüfprüfung examination.

The training for sport teachers qualifies participants for areas including working as teachers of the subject Physical Education and Sport, as sport teachers in associations, clubs, municipalities, companies, etc. Following completion of the training and qualification as exercise instructors in a sport association and an aptitude test, participants are qualified, after taking part in a programme of at least 150 hours, to prepare people for training in youth sport and popular sport. Training programmes for state instructors are held in all types of sport whose associations are full members of the Austrian Federal Sport Organisation. In addition, training programmes are offered jointly with public institutions such as the army, law enforcement agencies and others to provide further qualifications to people who train in this field.

Following completion of instructor training people can acquire further qualifications. In cooperation with relevant sport institutions – sport associations, universities, Institute for Sport Medicine and Science (IMSB Austria), Austrian Federal Network for Sport Psychology (ÖBS), National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), etc. – and experienced trainers, students learn about the latest scientific evidence on the structuring of basic, upgrade, follow-up and high-performance training.

The target group of training programmes for qualified coaches is people who already have a state coach qualification and can prove several years of experience as coaches in competitive sport. The programmes last one semester and aim to teach participants about the requirements of high-performance sport. The state training programmes for teachers in one type of sport have a long tradition in Austria. State certified tennis coaches, ski instructors and ski guides, mountain and ski guides, snowboard instructors, equestrian vaulting instructors, instructors for combined driving are international figureheads of Austria. Instructors in one type of sport are qualified experts who are trained to offer their instruction services on the free market, with a focus on the tourism sector.
**School sport competitions**

School competitions constitute a fixed part of physical education in Austria. They aim to supplement – or even change – sport activities outside school and emerge organically from classes and sport cooperation between schools and associations. One objective is to create **varied options to compare the performance of gifted and enthusiastic students**. In addition, school competitions are an option for students who have not yet found their way to sport activities in order to motivate them for non-school-based sport, including in sport associations. Participation by teachers and students is voluntary.

**Major features of school sport competitions (mission statement)**

**No exclusivity**

Competitions are a pedagogical principle of physical education which, as well as other teaching principles, have their place in the subject Physical Education and Sport. The competitions offered supplement and extend instruction based on the syllabus of Physical Education and Sport.

**No victory at all cost**

Every human endeavour demands to be compared with others, to compete and possibly to foster individualism. The containment of competition forms an indispensable basis for a thriving democratic society. Therefore the idea of fair play constitutes an inherent pedagogical principle of school sport competitions and in this way fulfils a very essential task of social learning.

**Careful selection and alignment**

School competitions must be planned so that they are useful elements of learning and challenges set to enable students to prove their sporting skills and demonstrate their character. The competitions need to match the participants’ age groups and the rules must be adapted to their skills and perception where necessary. Today, cooperation with the professional associations in the creation of accompanying measures jointly with the business sphere forms an integral part of Austrian school sport activities.

**Emphasis on team spirit**

It is on purpose that school competitions differ from competitions that are held by sport associations in that they always emphasise the team philosophy in individual sport as well. In teams, the performance of everyone and the principle of teamwork play a role. Therefore the following principle applies here: A school team comprises schoolchildren from one school (school management).

**Participation is voluntary**

The schoolchildren’s participation in school sport competitions is voluntary. Pedagogical support for the competitors ensures that they benefit from the experiences gained in school sport competitions.

**Cross-curricular organisation**

It is only natural to involve schoolchildren in all subjects in the organisation of a school sport event. Different organisational areas such as the evaluation of results, the supporting programme or reports offer the possibility for many subjects of co-designing school sport competitions in a practice-oriented way.

**Encounter – enthusiasm – success**

School sport competitions aim to enrich school life and create additional possibilities to come together. They contribute to health and social education and stimulate schoolchildren to take part in non-school-based sport, whether actively or in an organisational role for sport: The principles guiding school sport events should be everything that is justifiable in sport, appropriate from the perspective of pedagogy, beneficial for health, and financially and organisationally feasible.

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QIBB, the VET Quality Initiative (www.qibb.at), is an initiative of the General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sports (or: GD VET) of the Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs (BMBF) to implement systematic quality management (QM) in the Austrian VET school sector. The objectives pursued with QIBB are the assurance and further development of school and teaching quality as well as the quality of administrative services at the executive levels of schools, provincial governments and the federal government.

Development activities on the QIBB concept started in 2004. Since the school year 2006/07 QIBB has been implemented at nearly all locations of the VET school sector in Austria: at part-time vocational schools; at schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts; at schools of business and colleges of business administration; at schools and colleges of social and services industries; at colleges of agriculture and forestry; and at nursery teacher training colleges and colleges of social pedagogy.

Part of the national strategy to implement the EQAVET Recommendation

The implementation of QIBB is in line with the developments of European VET policy. QIBB is part of the national strategy to implement the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), which was adopted in the context of the Copenhagen process in 2009. QIBB corresponds to the model of the European reference framework as regards objectives, guiding principles, priorities and structure.

Quality development at the levels of the schools, provincial governments and the federal government

QIBB comprises all institutional levels of the school system. According to the QIBB model, schools, school supervision (provincial level) and the GD VET of BMBF (federal level), which is responsible for the VET school sector, regularly evaluate and continuously improve the activities that are required to carry out their tasks. The goal is to enable and organise successful learning. Therefore the horizon for reflection comprises pedagogical action (initiating, supporting and facilitating school-based education and training processes) and administrative action (creating, securing and further developing the framework conditions necessary for teaching and learning).

Quality control cycle and quality management instruments

Quality development is implemented in QIBB as a target-driven continuous improvement process based on the model of the four-phase quality control cycle according to Deming (plan – do – check – act). The process is controlled, supported and structured by applying specific QM instruments.

As part of QIBB, the following QM instruments are applied to organise processes and projects in the school and administrative sector in a systematic, target-driven and transparent manner:

- Mission statement: long-term target orientation, core messages regarding mission and self-conception
- Quality matrix (Q-matrix): long- and medium-term objectives, measures, outcomes, indicators and evaluation methods in table format
- Quality focuses: nationwide and province-wide as well as school-specific quality focuses (such as the individualisation of teaching)
- Definition of key processes
- Work programme and school programme including development and implementation plan: the objectives and measures for the current working period
- Review and objective-setting discussions between managers to reflect and agree on development and implementation objectives
- Evaluation: individual feedback, system feedback, QIBB evaluation platform (internet) and peer review in QIBB
- Quality report: school, provincial and federal quality reports
- Follow-up tool: participatory shaping of change processes
- Personnel development: in-service and continuing education and training for managers, teachers and staff (QUALI-QIBB, qualification in and for QIBB)

Guiding principles

The structure and core elements of QIBB correspond to the following guiding principles:

- Outcome orientation
- Transparencv
- Participation
- Systematic approach
- Application of recognised QM instruments and methods
- Economical use of time and financial resources
- Ethics in relation to evaluation objectives, evaluation measures and the handling of data
- Gender equality
Evaluation: individual feedback and system feedback
Evaluation carried out as part of QIBB is mainly in the form of self-evaluation. On the one hand, the work includes the individual feedback, which serves to reflect on and further develop the teachers’ and managers’ professional activities. On the other hand, the work covers system feedback, which serves to optimise teaching and administrative processes at organisation and system level. The organisation and implementation of the evaluation is supported technically by an online platform which provides evaluation instruments (questionnaires, survey grids, guidelines) and tools to draw up standardised data evaluations.

Peer review in QIBB
An external evaluation procedure to support school development at the school location:

The peer review in QIBB (www.peer-review-in-qibb.at) is a service which has been offered for the VET school sector since 2009 and supports quality development and school development at the school location. The main feature of the peer review process is that a team of external experts (peers) is invited by the school to evaluate the quality areas that have been specified by the school. Peers are not members of the evaluated school but are familiar with the practical area “VET school” and have relevant expertise. When the peer review process is completed, the school gets oral feedback and a written report from the peers. The decision to implement a peer review is made by the school management (voluntary participation!).

Quality report and agreement on objectives
In QIBB, every establishment submits a quality report to the respective higher management level (school, provincial and federal quality reports). The report comprises a review taking into account the evaluation results and a development and implementation plan with strategic and operational objectives and measures. The agreement on future objectives and priorities of an establishment is made in the form of a discussion between the managers of the two management levels which are responsible in the respective case (such as regional school inspector and school principal) – the review and objective-setting discussion. The quality report forms one of the bases of these discussions.

Management and organisational culture
The implementation of QIBB is a cooperative endeavour of all managers of the VET school sector. As well as the subject-related competence, the willingness to learn and commitment of a large number of people, one major prerequisite for the success of QIBB is the joint conviction that quality management not only implies that specific management methods are applied but should also be understood as a management and organisational culture, which can only emerge if everyone plays or can play an active part in the quality process.

Use of the QIBB platform | all VET schools | active surveys

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Entrepreneurship education (EE) is a priority for the General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sports (GD VET) of the Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs. It is supported by numerous measures, which are implemented in cooperation with other ministries and institutions.

Entrepreneurship education aims to generate enthusiasm among pupils so that they believe in their own ideas and motivate them to work on these ideas and put them into practice.

Entrepreneurship education – education in entrepreneurial thinking and acting in a wider sense comprises all educational measures to encourage entrepreneurial attitudes and skills, it therefore refers to the development of specific values, attitudes and personal qualifications that can lead to graduates founding their own business and are also essential for employment. In a narrower sense, entrepreneurship education means teaching specialist knowledge, abilities and skills required for successful business start-ups and management.

The topics related to entrepreneurship education are taught in most schools of the VET sector as a cross-sectional theme in many different subjects of the respective curriculum; in addition, the special focus Entrepreneurship and Management is offered at schools of business and colleges of business administration.

The entrepreneurial examination is a prerequisite in Austria for exercising a craft or trade on a self-employed basis. The entrepreneurial examination is waived upon completion of specific school-based educational pathways, such as part-time vocational schools with a business focus, schools of business and colleges of business administration, colleges for engineering, schools and colleges of management and services industries, schools and colleges of tourism, some specialist colleges, higher education establishments and universities (as laid down in Federal Law Gazette II no. 210/1999 § 8).

The teaching principle of entrepreneurship education
The curricula of part-time vocational schools, the curriculum of schools of business and colleges of business administration, the curricula of colleges of engineering and of tourism and fashion set forth a specific educational principle: “Education in entrepreneurial thinking and acting”. This means that an entrepreneurial approach must be promoted by teachers in all school subjects. EE is gradually becoming an integral element of all the curricula of the VET school sector as part of competence-oriented teaching.

Business projects
Depending on the school form chosen, students of colleges for higher vocational education prepare diploma projects in a team or individually which solve a specific task from the fields of business or technology. This is a detailed, academically founded work where students apply the knowledge they have acquired on the basis of a practice-oriented assignment. These compulsory diploma projects must be documented and presented by students and are integrated into the final exam or into the matriculation and diploma exam as an exam subject.

EE-certified schools
In analogy to the “Quality Label Practice Firm” there are also certified EE schools; this quality certificate is awarded to schools which excel in the field of entrepreneurship education. This is an OENORM certification: By early 2014, 20 schools had been certified, which equals about 20% of all schools of business and colleges of business administration.

Promotion of participation by students in competitions
Ideas’ competition and business plan competition, EuroSkills, Innovative Youth, etc.

Development of a competence passport (profile for teachers of entrepreneurship), which is available for schools and teachers and can be used as a self-test and as a test element.

Initial and in-service training for teachers
A specific post-secondary teacher training programme on Entrepreneurship and Management which aims at in-service teacher training for teachers of all school types (five one-week seminars) is offered by university colleges of teacher education. A large number of seminars on this topic with different focuses are also offered.

Specific school textbooks and workbooks on the topics of entrepreneurship and case studies from business administration support teachers in their work.

A media package for classroom use has been developed in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Economy and is the result of accompanying research conducted at the Schumpeter College of Business Administration. The related teaching material for entrepreneurship education has been made available to all schools (for students aged 14-19) free of charge.

Entrepreneur’s Skills Certificate/Junior Company
The Entrepreneur’s Skills Certificate of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber imparts fundamental business knowledge to students of secondary academic schools and adults. In combination with a Junior Company scheme, students can also acquire the Entrepreneurial Skills Pass (ESP). Junior Companies are set up and operated for one year, the students create products or provide services to earn money on the real market.
Entrepreneurship for Engineers

Since 2012 the federal working group Entrepreneurship for Engineers (HTL) has encouraged a structural and nationwide implementation of entrepreneurial thinking. Entrepreneurship for Engineers pursues the following objectives:

- combining the technical or technological know-how of students (their ability to create, design and build products) with economic requirements, thus strengthening their subject-related competence,
- widening the diversity of methods and focus on methods applied by successful entrepreneurs in terms of creativity, innovation as well as strategic development and project implementation (methodological competence),
- teaching thoughts and attitudes such as orientation towards opportunities, customers, solutions, benefits and service (personal and social competence).

The following focuses are pursued to reach the objectives of entrepreneurship education at schools and colleges for engineering and crafts:

- strengthening entrepreneurial thinking by setting up and operating Junior Companies,
- teaching the creation and elements of a business model and business plan,
- development of methodological know-how (methods for innovation, creativity, assessment, strategy development) and enhancing understanding of innovation management,
- initiating cross-curricular and practice-oriented projects for various age groups – participation in competitions (such as Innovative Youth, Invent a Chip, Young Austrian Engineers CAD Contest, and similar).

EESI competence centre

To encourage entrepreneurial thinking even more, BMBF has set up the EESI competence centre, the task of which consists in further improving not only entrepreneurship specialist training but also the students’ and teachers’ positive attitudes towards entrepreneurial activity; the centre cooperates with the EESI disseminators in the provinces. National and international experience exchange is encouraged and symposiums and days for entrepreneurs as well as school-specific in-service teacher training events and expert conferences organised.

Entrepreneurship at the college of business administration

Entrepreneurship education is implemented most comprehensively in the colleges of business administration. One of the four curriculum clusters is Entrepreneurship – Business and Management, which signifies the development of practice-oriented business competence at a high level.

Another area specialisation that is laid down in the curriculum as a special in-depth area is Entrepreneurship and Management. Entrepreneurship and Management is offered by more than one third of the college locations. The Schumpeter College of Business Administration in Vienna’s 13th district offers the area specialisation Entrepreneurship and Management in combination with targeted promotion for gifted students (the so-called “fast-track scheme”).

Post-secondary VET courses provided in colleges of business administration with the area specialisation Entrepreneurship and Management offer a post-secondary 4-semester specialist training course to graduates of other school types.

EE is established extensively as a teaching principle in the curricula of schools of business and also in the Business Competence cluster.

Development and implementation of educational standards for Entrepreneurship, Business and Management: These educational standards were developed in the area of schools of business and colleges of business administration. They are in line with the cluster objective of the 2014 curriculum.

Practice firms

Practice firms as training locations for entrepreneurial thinking and acting: Students work 3-4 hours a week for one year in the practice firm. They apply the learning content from other subjects and in this way learn to think and act like an entrepreneur. Practice firms have real partner firms in the world of business. This close partnership aims to encourage experience exchanges to simulate company practice.

A practice firm is the model of a real company, enabling the operational procedures of an actual company to be reproduced to varying degrees of complexity, with the aim of making them transparent for learning processes. Just as real companies have business contacts with other companies within the business world, practice firms also have external contacts, enabling students to discover their partners’ business culture in Austria and abroad.

The practice firm as a place and method of learning is a compulsory part of the curriculum at all Austrian schools of business and colleges of business administration; in addition, it is recommended to integrate the concept into the business training of all VET schools and colleges. In 1993 the idea of practice firms was laid down in Austrian school curricula for the first time in Europe.

The practice firm is considered the method for action-oriented teaching, with individualisation and competence orientation at the centre.

Practice firms are also run in other schools of the VET sector: at part-time vocational schools, at schools and colleges of agriculture and forestry, at schools and colleges for engineering and crafts, at schools and colleges of tourism and, above all, at schools and colleges of management and services industries. Currently around
1,000 practice firms are being operated in Austria, some of them in the adult learning sector. Most of them are run in year 4 of colleges of business administration and in year 3 of schools of business, with the emphasis so far on the goods and services sectors.

ONR 42000 – OENORM rule
In 2002 a nationwide competition for external certification termed Quality Label Practice Firm was introduced; every year, some 30% of practice firms at all school types are certified. Since 2005, ONR 42000 (an OENORM rule) has been applied as yet another evaluation instrument of practice firms.

Departments in the company
All business situations relevant to specific sectors are covered by the practice firm, from purchasing through to output and sales. The associated business administrative tasks must be carried out according to business usage and legal requirements. However, neither the goods or services offered nor the money implied in transactions actually exist. Like in real life, each practice firm is organised in departments dealing with business management, human resources, secretarial services, marketing, sales, controlling, accounts, logistics, etc. Students rotate jobs in the various departments, where they carry out the specific tasks.

The teaching method in practice firms is different in that teachers are managing directors or counsellors, plan the company’s strategic and pedagogical objectives and support the staff (students) in the implementation of the practice firm’s operational objectives.

Pedagogical and company objectives
Practice firm modules aim at teaching internal procedures and relationships between businesses in a cross-curricular, task- and problem-oriented, pupil-centred way which corresponds with real-life practice. In particular, the activities of the business partners stimulate the students’ learning processes, so that they are highly motivated.

Competence acquisition
The acquisition of key skills (e.g. teamwork, networked thinking, linguistic abilities) gives students occupational mobility and flexibility to allow for international career opportunities.

As well as their international contacts, simulation is another strength of practice firms. Even wrong decisions, which could put their own company at risk in real business life, have no serious economic consequences here, but are part of the students’ personal experiences and constitute a major factor in learning and personal development processes.

Cooperation with the economy
Cooperation ventures with businesses – the real partners in the background – are another very important element for practice firms in terms of know-how and sponsorship. Over 70% of practice firms have partners in real business, who offer their support, allow visits to their premises and make their employees’ skills available.

ARGE ÜFA
The working group on practice firms in the business sphere (ARGE ÜFA) comprises experts from the provinces. It is an important driving force behind the further development of the practice firm; it works together with ACT – the Austrian Center for Training Firms and academic support is provided by the Business Education department of Graz University.

ACT – the Austrian Center for Training Firms
ACT (the Austrian Center for Training Firms) was established in 1993 on the initiative of the General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sports (GD VET) at BMBF as part of curricular reforms in schools of business and colleges of business administration:

ACT is the central office for Austrian practice firms, the link between national and international networks of practice firms and, as an innovation centre, an institution for further developing the concept of practice firms.

ACT represents the Austrian practice firms in the international umbrella organisation Europen/PEN international.

ACT provides Austrian practice firms with the online services (www.act.at) which the practice firm market does not offer but which are necessary for realistic business activities by simulating public authorities and supports national and international transactions through a variety of services:

bank, company register, tax office, social insurance, foreign trade office, court, the authority in charge of trades and businesses, customs, transport, shopping mall, foreign language service, tenders.

According to the curriculum of colleges of business administration, in the semester preceding practice firm work students are to make themselves familiar with the services of the Austrian Center for Training Firms.

ACT also offers support in the initial and continuing education of practice firm trainers and managers. As a BMBF project, ACT forms part of the activities of the General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sports and works according to the education and training concepts of this field. The ACT staff are made up of experienced practice firm trainers and experts from the sphere of business.
Towards making the European Union the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, vocational education and training (VET) is the basis for the personal developments of each individual to be able to meet the increasing requirements of the labour market. European cooperation in the field of education lays the foundations for the development of society and the economy.

The schools and colleges in the VET sector enable young people to acquire the competences and qualifications which are a prerequisite for tackling these challenges. High-quality education and training can open up career opportunities for graduates also beyond the borders of our country. At the basis of this education and training there are:

- competence-oriented framework curricula with the possibility of choosing between special focuses,
- an open offer of foreign languages, the integration of foreign languages as working languages into specialist areas and bilingual (initial) VET programmes,
- innovative teaching methods,
- the opportunity to acquire international certificates (such as for foreign languages, IT),
- information about the content of the training, about the qualifications and competences acquired.

What are the objectives of international cooperation?
Modern communication technologies provide access to information independent of time and place. Electronic networks and forums make it easy to exchange information. International encounters at a personal level offer even more benefits, however. They make it possible for:

- the quality of the Austrian (initial) VET system to be presented at an international level,
- the (initial) VET systems in various other countries to be discussed and reflected on,
- the experiences and models of good practice in different countries to be learnt from,
- the Austrian VET system to be further developed,
- new (initial) VET programmes to be developed with partners in other countries.
- VET policy to be developed on an international scale.

What are the benefits of international cooperation?
For young people and adults involved in training, these international contacts mean:

- getting to know training and the world of work in other countries,
- experiencing other cultures and economic areas by interacting with people,
- applying their foreign language skills confidently and improving them,
- developing their own personality.

International cooperation of VET schools and colleges extends from Europe to the Middle East, across the USA and Latin America to China and South and Southeast Asia. The experience exchange with experts from other countries, work on joint projects and participation in programmes and studies of international organisations open up opportunities for a variety of new forms of cooperation.

Cooperation within the European Union
Erasmus+ is the EU programme for education, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020. Erasmus+ follows all previous EU-funded programmes in the fields of education, training and youth and groups them under one umbrella: Lifelong Learning (Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius, Grundtvig), Youth in Action and five international cooperation programmes (Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Alfa, Edulink and the programme for cooperation with industrialised countries). In addition, Erasmus+ also comprises funding options for sport.

At the heart of the new EU programme there is, in the field of education, the promotion of mobility and transnational cooperation as well as the exchange of best practice.

For this purpose, Erasmus+ provides for three action lines for cooperation activities, which are open for all programme areas and education sectors:

- Action line 1: Learning mobility for individuals
- Action line 2: Strategic partnerships
- Action line 3: Support for political reforms

In the school sector, Erasmus+ specifically addresses kindergartens and schools as well as all institutions and authorities in the field of school-based education and offers the possibility to take part in mobility measures and partnerships, thus contributing actively to the further development of the European and Austrian education areas.

In the mobility action line, education staff as disseminators and a motor of knowledge transfer are coming more into focus. The promotion of mobility of teachers and general staff in (pre-) school education is highlighted.
The previously practised application procedure by individuals is replaced by an institutional application of the respective educational establishment, which means that the institution can apply – in one process – for several mobility measures for teachers, principals and general education staff of schools. Individuals widen their knowledge, skills and competence in job shadowing, teaching assignments or an in-service training measure abroad.

In action line 2, strategic partnerships support positive and long-term cooperation projects between schools, kindergartens and institutions from the school-based sector, including VET. In this strand, previous Comenius school partnerships, Comenius regional partnerships and other project lines are continued. The goal is to further enhance the quality of education. Within these partnerships, the mobility of pupils is also promoted.

As previously, eTwinning facilitates cross-border projects via the internet for European schools and kindergartens. In addition, eTwinning promotes national and international networks of teachers through European in-service training programmes and conferences.

In the VET sector Erasmus+ invites all actors to take part in mobility and innovation projects, thus contributing actively to the further development of the European and Austrian VET areas. The programme promotes transnational mobility in VET and CET particularly for people in IVET programmes and skilled workers in VET and CET.

In addition, institutions have the option to establish training-related and work-related partnerships with other European institutions.

In the mobility action line, individuals can widen their knowledge, skills and competences in work placements or job-specific CET programmes abroad. In the future, special attention will be paid to ensure that participants can use their acquired competences on the job and can also have them recognised to make the biggest possible contribution to their career development. Support is provided particularly for compulsory work placements at schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education.

In action line 2, Europe- and world-wide strategic partnerships between institutions and interest groups in the VET sector contribute to increasing the quality, attractiveness and innovation in European VET systems and practices.

In sector skills alliances there is the option of developing innovative VET programmes and measures for selected economic sectors (such as textiles/clothing/leather, wholesale and retail, modern manufacturing techniques) to close qualification deficits in these areas.

The National Agency for Lifelong Learning at OeAD GmbH informs and advises on promotion schemes related to Erasmus+ Education. For details see: www.bildung.erasmusplus.at

The Europass initiative
One prerequisite for being able to make a successful impression on the labour market is the professional presentation of one’s knowledge, skills and abilities. The Europass instrument was developed to make these competences visible. In the form of a portfolio of five documents it offers all European citizens the possibility to present their skills and qualifications acquired at school, university or during an organised period of study or training abroad in a clear and standardised format. Currently, a total of 34 European countries take part in the Europass initiative (www.europass.at).

The five Europass documents:
- The Europass Curriculum Vitae (CV) is a uniform document to prepare a CV covering a comprehensive and standardised overview of education/training, non-formally and informally acquired competences, and personal skills.
- The Europass Language Passport offers a clear presentation of language skills and competences based on the grid of the Common European Reference Framework for Languages.
- The Europass Mobility is an instrument for recording organised periods spent in another country participating in the Europass initiative for the purpose of learning or training.
- The Europass Certificate Supplement is issued jointly with the vocational education and training certificate to which it applies and provides an accompanying description of the skills and competences gained in the given programme (www.zeugnisinfo.at).
- The Europass Diploma Supplement contains detailed information about the holder’s higher education diploma.

The European Social Fund (ESF)
BMBF is already taking part in measures of the European Social Fund (ESF) for the third time. The EU funds obtained from this institution make a major contribution to implementing innovative and labour market-relevant projects in the field of education.

In the new ESF programming period 2014-2020 measures in the following areas are implemented:
- Adult education: Here the focus is on educational counselling and career guidance, basic education, measures for people at a disadvantage and also the field of equality of opportunity.
- School: The core area here is the fight against early school leaving and comprises different measures which essentially contribute to improving the situation in this respect. These include the so-called transition level, school-based social work, educational counselling and career guidance and a model project in compulsory schools.
- Equality of opportunity: Here, among other projects, measures are implemented as part of the “women’s VET course” with the objective of raising the share of women in technology programmes.

This guarantees the possibility of re-entry into the world of work for women based on attractive training plus the relevant qualification.
European Qualifications Framework and National Qualifications Framework

Since the year 2000 the Lisbon Strategy has been aiming to ensure competitiveness and social cohesion in Europe. The Recommendation on the establishment of a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in 2008 set an important milestone for comparing education systems and qualifications in Europe. All EU member states and several candidate countries are currently working on the implementation of this Recommendation and are therefore clearly pointing the way towards a European Education Area.

The Recommendation on the establishment of a European Qualifications Framework advised member states to develop national qualifications frameworks on a voluntary basis and link them to the EQF. In addition, they should adopt related measures so that all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents contain a clear reference to the EQF level.

At its core, the EQF is a grid aiming at transparency, comparison and translation that makes the variety of national and sectoral qualifications comparable and understandable across Europe. It aims to portray qualifications of the entire education landscape, from general and vocational education and training, CET, on to tertiary education, to non-formal and informal learning. Learning outcomes form a joint and Europe-wide understandable basis of the description of qualifications, independent of institutions or learning contexts.

The development of the Austrian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and of the EQF referencing report, which was presented before the EQF Advisory Group in June 2012, was under the overall control of GD VET of BMBF with continual involvement of the most important stakeholders and experts. The current work phase mainly aims to set out in concrete terms the referencing procedure and responsibilities and to specify further bases for the NQF. In addition, development work on the three “corridors” is continuing.

In the future, qualification certificates of all qualifications which have been assigned to the NQF will contain a reference to the NQF level. In addition, qualifications assigned to the NQF will be made accessible online in the form of a national qualification register that is linked with the EQF portal. To implement a comprehensive qualifications framework it will be necessary to clarify, in particular, the question of the referencing of qualifications from the non-formal and informal areas and, if appropriate, continue work on instruments and processes for validating informally acquired knowledge, skills and competence. Close cooperation with the Austrian adult education sector is required here.

European credit transfer system for vocational education and training – ECVET

The development and implementation of a credit transfer system for VET aims to ensure better comparability of qualifications and therefore make mobility for learning purposes easier.

The implementation of ECVET in Austria is part of an overall national strategy. Due to the distribution of competence in the Austrian education landscape, partial strategies will be elaborated in working groups and with consideration of the framework conditions (such as sphere of competence, objective, etc.) of the respective education area. The task of overall coordination will be fulfilled by GD VET and the GD for International Affairs of BMBF with shared responsibilities.

As Austria understands it, ECVET complements the EQF in that it offers a system of transfer of learning outcomes of VET and CET based on a structured description and documentation. ECVET – in analogy to the ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) – is the credit transfer system for VET and CET with which learning outcomes can be transferred in the academic tertiary sector.

With the systematic description of qualifications by using learning outcomes and any credits, ECVET is expected to contribute to reaching the following objectives in Austria:

- further development of learning outcome orientation and, connected with this, support of the paradigm change from input to output control,
- more efficient implementation of mobility stays for learning purposes in Austria and abroad and quality improvement of mobility stages and work placements in VET,
- enhanced permeability within the national education system at the major interfaces of the Austrian qualification landscape by enhanced mutual recognition of learning outcomes that have already been acquired,
- improved recognition of formally, non-formally and informally acquired learning outcomes to ensure an “optimisation” of learning periods,
- enhanced employability in the Austrian and European labour market by improving documentation of acquired competences.

Austrian institutions have also participated in many pilot projects about ECVET both as a coordinator and as a partner; some of the projects are considered as models internationally and have won national and international prizes.

International agreements on education and training

The multifaceted cross-border cooperative efforts of schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education also include cooperation with universities of applied sciences and universities in other countries. These agreements reduce the duration of study of Austrian graduates in relevant area specialisations at these institutions. Related agreements have been concluded with Kingston University and the University of Central Lancashire in the U.K. and in Germany with FHS Fresenius in Idstein, FHS Mittweida, and Leipzig University, among other institutions.
Cooperation with international examination boards is provided, for example, by
- CEBS (the Centre for Professionally-Oriented Languages) to provide access to international foreign language certificates, e.g. in English, French, Italian and Spanish, to pupils at VET schools.

Cooperation with neighbouring countries
As well as cooperation ventures within the framework of the practice firm network, cooperation takes the form of different regional cross-border education and training models, such as:
- Slovakia
  Cooperation of Austrian teachers at the College of Business Administration in Bratislava where German is also a language of instruction.
- Czech Republic
  Joint training of Austrian and Czech students at the Retz Intercultural School of Hotel and Catering Industries and College of Business Administration. In Gmünd there is a two-semester preparation course for pupils with the mother tongue Czech for entry to the college of business administration or the school of business.
- Hungary
  Joint training of Austrian and Hungarian pupils at the Frauenkirchen College of Business Administration

In regions near the border, many school partnerships have also been concluded.

EU candidate countries
Cooperation with its eastern and southern neighbouring regions is one of the EU’s major concerns. These regions include the countries of Eastern and Southeast Europe as well as the southern Mediterranean in particular, the priorities of which include their VET sectors’ reorientation and further development. For the regions aiming at stabilising their political and socio-economic framework conditions, an adequate range of VET programmes forms the basis for improved employment opportunities, democratic decision-making processes, a functioning economy and thus stronger social cohesion. BMBF encourages these efforts because economic and political stability in the European Union’s vicinity is also of great importance from an Austrian viewpoint.

BMBF supports VET projects in cooperation with the association KulturKontakt Austria, particularly in Southeast Europe. In many countries, Austrian cooperation initiatives are managed on site by officers for educational cooperation appointed by BMBF. They manage the k-education project offices in ten countries and carry out bilateral and multilateral projects about key themes of the school reform and modernisation of education systems.

Austrian expertise supports the reforms in the target countries by means of experience exchanges, cooperation and well-aimed further training measures with local decision-makers and experts, for example with:
- establishment of schools and support in the re-orientation of initial VET programmes in the tourism and catering industry by developing curricula, teaching materials and in-service teacher training measures,
- cooperation networks that have been initiated and supported by Austria and projects of schools of business, colleges of business administration, and schools and colleges of tourism (ECONet, AL-BIZ, tour.reg, BINET, SEN; Entrepreneurship Education),
- reorientation of agricultural schools in Albania and Moldova into competence centres for agriculturally oriented VET in the respective region.

Austrian VET colleges have been set up in Shkoder/Albania (with the College for Engineering specialising in information technologies) and in Istanbul/Turkey (with the College of Business Administration at St. Georgs Kolleg).

International recognition
The OECD gives a very good assessment of the Austrian VET system in Education at a Glance, the annual overview of education systems in the 34 OECD countries and a number of partner countries. Here more than 150 indicators enable the international comparison related to educational participation and careers, funding of education and the organisation of schools.

In the Country Note on Austria it says: “Vocational education remains an important pillar of the Austrian education system: 76% of students were enrolled in upper secondary education participating in pre-vocational or vocational programs, the second highest percentage in the OECD.”

This means that VET schools and colleges are still attractive in Austria. With 9.7% Austria boasts the lowest rate of young people aged 15 to 29 years who are not employed or in training. The objectives of the Austrian VET sector of providing high-quality and differentiated programmes in all areas, ensuring university entrance qualifications with the colleges and nevertheless reaching the majority of young people are thus recognised internationally.

This is proven not only by the interest of many countries in Austrian VET (such as Spain, Egypt, Taiwan) but also the successes of Austrian pupils in international competitions: In all fields – technology, business, tourism – young Austrian talents score highly in a worldwide comparison and acquire key skills and important contacts for their future career in this way. Therefore VET also promotes top performances and individual and team successes. Austria is among the most successful teams especially in the skills competitions EuroSkills and WorldSkills.
Academy of Continuing Education
*Weiterbildungskademie – WBA*
Examines and recognises competences of adult educators based on defined standards. WBA awards a two-tier occupational qualification with a certificate and diploma and supports quality assurance and transparency by laying down binding VET and CET standards. WBA is influenced by the cooperative system of Austrian adult learning.

Add-on courses (ISCED 5)
*Aufbaulehrgränge*
For graduates of BMS or a preparatory course; they lead to the matriculation and diploma examination of the corresponding colleges for higher vocational education.

Admission requirement and entrance qualifications for BMS and BHS
*Aufnahmebedingung für BMS und BHS*
The admission requirement for graduates of the lower cycle of *AHS* and new secondary school is successful completion of years 8 (or 9); for general secondary school graduates, successful completion of year 8 and good performance in the subjects German, mathematics and a modern foreign language.

Adult education (adult learning) – ALE
*Erwachsenenbildung – EB*
Adult education is essentially understood as educational programmes for adults, with the spectrum ranging from general education, basic education and the acquisition of qualifications in second-chance education, on to vocational training and personal development measures, as well as higher education and university-based programmes.
ALE programmes are offered in many different educational establishments and in the occupational field itself, participants can acquire both formal and non-formal qualifications. BMBF is responsible for general adult education and vocational adult training, but other ministries also fulfill specific related tasks.
Adult education is often also termed the third pillar of the education system and therefore constitutes an important area of lifelong learning, which however covers all educational sectors. The main objective of adult education and training is to enhance access to lifelong education measures for everyone. Essential for participation and CET success are the implementation of programmes appropriate to adults and the target group as well as high-quality educational counselling and career guidance. Adult education and training serves both personal development as well as CVET and, in this way, contributes to creating equal opportunities, reducing educational disadvantages and, overall, to social development.

Adult Education Initiative
*Initiative Erwachsenenbildung*
Enables adults who lack basic skills and/or have not acquired a compulsory school qualification to resume and complete compulsory schooling free of charge. The support scheme was developed jointly by the Federal Government and provincial governments, its legal basis is an agreement according to Article 15a of the Austrian Federal Constitution (*B-VG*).
- Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut der Wirtschaftskammer Österreich – WIFI (Economic Promotion Institute of the Austrian Economic Chamber, www.wifi.at)

Autonomy
Autonomie
Schools can choose between special focuses of the curriculum, develop their own school profile, and respond to economic and regional requirements (the total number of weekly lessons may differ).

Berufsreifeprüfung (BRP)
Provides general higher education entrance qualifications for graduates of the initial vocational training system (e.g. apprenticeship, BMS) by taking specific examinations externally. Preparatory courses for the BRP are offered, among other places, at adult education institutions, where up to three out of four partial exams can be taken if candidates have attended related courses there, at least one partial exam has to be taken at upper secondary college in front of a school-specific exam committee. Since 2011 the partial BRP exams in German, English and mathematics have had to be conducted with competence orientation. From April 2016 the standardised matriculation and diploma exam will also apply for the BRP.

BHS – Colleges for higher vocational education (ISCED 3/5)

BHS – Berufsbildende höhere Schulen
For high-level initial VET as well as a well-founded general education (duration: 5 years); are completed with the matriculation and diploma examination (EU recognition). Acquisition of general higher education entrance qualifications and specific professional qualifications, depending on the programme type, for jobs at the executive level (double qualification).

BMBF – Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs
Bundesministerium für Bildung und Frauen
Among other functions, this is the supreme administrative authority for all school-based education and training pathways; it comprises the entire primary and secondary state education system from compulsory school to completion of upper secondary level and university colleges of teacher education. These pathways also include adult education and all issues connected with lifelong learning.
In the sphere of women’s affairs, the focus is on promoting various equality measures which enable women to lead a self-determined life. Other priorities are protection against violence, ensuring there are institutions to provide advice for women and girls, and legal support for people affected by discrimination.

BMS – Schools for intermediate vocational education (ISCED 3)
BMS – Berufsbildende mittlere Schulen
For initial VET and general education (duration: 1 to 4 years); the 3- to 4-year programmes are completed with a final examination.

BS – Part-time vocational schools (ISCED 3)
BS – Berufsschulen
Part-time school attendance as a mandatory part of the dual system during the apprenticeship; different organisation forms exist.

CET master’s degree
Weiterbildungsmaster
CET master’s degree programmes follow an internationally established concept and require relevant professional experience for admission. In Austria they usually do not entitle holders to study at PhD level.

Compulsory schooling
Schulpflicht
Duration: 9 years; applies to all children from the age of 6 who live permanently in Austria, irrespective of their nationality.

Compulsory schools
Allgemein bildende Pflichtschulen
Comprise primary school (years 1-4), general secondary school, the lower cycle of academic secondary school and new secondary school (years 5-8) and special needs school (years 1-8, for children with special educational needs) and pre-vocational school (year 9).

Compulsory school qualification
Pflichtschulabschluss
Successful completion of the 9th year of schooling, which is the compulsory school period. No specific final certificate exists for this, however. See: Compulsory schooling. As part of the Adult Education Initiative, since 2012 adults who have not completed compulsory schooling have been able to continue and complete their educational career free of charge even after completion of compulsory schooling.

COOL Cooperative Open Learning
COOL Cooperatives offenes Lernen
Some schools in the VET sector offer forms of cooperative open learning which aim to teach students to work in an increasingly independent and responsible way.

Cooperative system of Austrian adult education
Kooperatives System der österreichischen Erwachsenenbildung
Organises the Austrian Academy of Continuing Education (WBA) and is a joint initiative of KEBÖ associations and the Federal Institute for Adult Education (BIFEB), which is supported by BMBF.

Diploma examination
Diplomprüfung
Final examination at a post-secondary VET course as well as part of the final examination at a college for higher vocational education (the matriculation and diploma examination).
Dual system  
*Duales System*  
Training of apprentices at two separate and complementary places: at a company (apprenticeship contract) and at part-time vocational school (duration: 2 to 4 years, usually 3 years); apprenticeship-leave examination.

Educational counselling and career guidance  
*Bildungsberatung*  
Students at BMS and BHS can use the services of specially trained teachers who provide educational counselling and career guidance and assist them. In the adult education sector, an efficient, nationwide and provider-independent educational counselling system has been set up in Austria with networks which serve as first point of contact for all people interested in education and in which qualified educational counsellors work.

Educational standards  
*Bildungsstandards*  
On the basis of competence models, educational standards specify specialist and multi-disciplinary skills and competences which are important for future school-based education and for vocational education and training. Educational standards enable learning outcomes to be represented and compared optimally at the national and European level.

Entrepreneurial examination  
*Unternehmerprüfung*  
In Austria, the state entrepreneurial examination, which forms part of the master craftsperson examination or the entrance examination for proof of professional competence, is a prerequisite for self-employment. The state entrepreneurial examination is waived upon completion of specific school-based educational pathways, such as all BHS and most BMS, business-oriented vocational schools, some specialist colleges, higher education establishments and universities (as laid down in Federal Law Gazette II no. 210/1999 § 8).

Entrepreneurship education  
Comprises all educational activities to encourage entrepreneurial attitudes and skills, in particular teaching of specialist knowledge, abilities and competence required for successful start-ups and business management. Related content is taught in many different subjects and area specialisations in the VET school system.

EU recognition  
*EU-Anerkennung*  
At the EU level, the high educational level of colleges of higher vocational education is taken into account in Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications. The education and training programmes provided by BHSs, including their special forms for people in employment, come under the diploma level stipulated in the Directive. As expressly laid down in the Directive, this diploma provides access to a regulated profession in another member state where access is contingent upon possession of a diploma certifying successful completion of higher or university education of up to four years’ duration. The Directive provides access to professions but does not regulate equivalence of academic degrees.

The new Directive 2013/55/EU amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications entered into force on 18 January 2014 and has to be implemented into national law by member states by 18 January 2016. The recognition of professional qualifications is noticeably simplified, mobility enhanced and regulations on the recognition of professional qualifications are written more concisely and consequently their transparency improved.

**Europass**  
In the form of a portfolio of five documents it offers all European citizens the possibility to present their skills and qualifications acquired at school, university, or during an organised period of study or training abroad in a clear and standardised format.

External examination (committee)  
*Externistenprüfungskommission*  
Educational qualifications can also be acquired without prior attendance of a school (or a higher education institution). In this case, these qualifications are proven before committees for external examinations, which are instituted by the school authorities (or universities/higher education institutions).

**Fachhochschule programmes or Fachhochschulen or FH**  
*Fachhochschul-Studienangebote*  
Provide practical, professional and academically founded training for specific occupational fields (duration: a minimum of 6 semesters; ISCED 6). Access requirements: higher education entrance qualifications or relevant professional experience; acquisition of academic degree (to which the abbreviation FH is added).

**Fachschulen**  
(see: BMS – Schools for intermediate vocational education)

**Federal Institute for Adult Education**  
*Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung – BIFEB*  
Service provided by BMBF, competence centre for the professionalisation, quality development and specialist discourse in adult education, partner in national and international networks and projects as well as seminar centre for all people active in the adult education sector (www.bifeb.at).

**Federal sport academies (ISCED 3)**  
*Bundessportakademien*  
Education and training institution for teachers and educators in the field of competitive, health-promoting and recreational sport: instructors, trainers, qualified coaches.

**Final examination**  
*Abschlussprüfung*  
At 3- to 4-year schools for intermediate vocational education, leading to professional qualifications for immediate exercise of the respective occupations and entry into regulated professions.
General higher education entrance qualification
*Universitätsreife, Hochschulzugang*
Also called: general university entrance qualification; granted upon successful completion of the matriculation examination, the matriculation and diploma examination and *Berufsfreiheitsprüfung* and enables graduates to study at universities, higher education institutions, post-secondary VET colleges, *Fachhochschulen* and post-secondary VET courses. Additional examinations or aptitude tests may be required and particular subject-specific knowledge can be recognised depending on the type of completed schools and intended study.

General secondary schools
*Hauptschulen*
4-year programmes (years 5-8; ISCED 2) after primary school; provide general education and prepare for initial vocational education and training as well as for intermediate and upper secondary schools and colleges.

*Höhere Lehramtsstätte* (see *BHS*)

In-depth area / training focus selected autonomously by schools
*Schulautonome Vertiefung / Ausbildungsschwerpunkt*
Occupation-related focus in the selected programme at *BHS*, from the third year of training.

Industrial master colleges (ISCED 5)
*Werkmeisterschulen*
Expand theoretical specialist training for those who have completed initial vocational education and training in the field of engineering and crafts (duration: 4 semesters); final examination before a committee; in particular, industrial master colleges lead to the entitlement to train apprentices and, after 4 years of work in the respective craft, to become self-employed.

Integrative / inclusive vocational education and training
*Integrative Berufsausbildung*
is offered both as an apprenticeship training scheme with a longer training period and as a VET programme imparting partial qualifications in order to provide access to the labour market to people who cannot acquire an apprenticeship diploma.

In-service and continuing training of teachers
*Lehrer/innenfort- und -weiterbildung*
provided by university colleges of teacher education; in addition to the individual responsibility of every teacher to train themselves.

Mandatory work placement
*Pflichtpraktikum*
Compulsory period of work placement relevant to the training objective to be completed in the school holidays; duration: 4 to 32 weeks. There are also mandatory work placements during the school year and voluntary work placements.

Master craftsperson schools (ISCED 5)
*Meisterschulen*
For people who have completed initial vocational training: special forms of the schools for engineering, arts and crafts for subject-specific CET.

Matriculation and diploma exam
*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*
Final examination at *BHS*: double qualification with general higher education entrance and professional qualifications giving immediate entitlement to jobs on the executive level.

Matriculation examination
*Reifeprüfung*
Final examination at *AHS* and part of the final examination at *BHS*, acquisition of general higher education entrance qualifications.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
*Nationaler Qualifikationsrahmen (NQR)*
Facilitates the referencing of national certificates and qualifications to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), including non-formal and informal qualifications. Referencing is achieved by describing individual national qualification levels with an approach that builds on learning outcomes and is oriented towards the requirements of the Austrian labour market (eight reference levels).

New secondary school
*Neue Mittelschule*
New secondary school (ISCED 2) is a comprehensive school for 10- to 14-year-olds. It offers a wide range of learning programmes under one roof and promotes different talents and interests. In principle the curriculum of the lower cycle of *AHS* applies; students obtain individual support and tailored instruction.

Ö-CERT
Ö-CERT – quality framework for the adult education sector in Austria – is a nationwide scheme to recognise quality-assuring measures of adult learning providers in Austria and was launched in 2011.

Post-secondary VET courses (ISCED 5)
*Kollegs*
For holders of the matriculation certificate, matriculation and diploma certificate, *Berufsfreiheitsprüfung* certificate or the general higher education entrance qualification (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*); provide theoretical, subject-related knowledge and practical skills and competence equivalent to at a *BHS*; final diploma examination; 4 to 6 semesters of vocational training.

Practice firm
*Übungsfirma*
Model of a real business at a school or college within the framework of lessons to illustrate internal procedures, external business relations and other economic cultures; depending on the school type, training firms are recommended for – or form a compulsory part of – business-related training at *BMS* and *BHS*.

Pre-vocational schools
*Polytechnische Schulen*
year 9 of compulsory schooling for those who do not transfer to other upper secondary programmes immediately after year 8; not compulsory; often used to bridge the time to apprenticeship training; ISCED 3.
Preparatory courses
Vorbereitungslehrgänge
Pathway for apprenticeship graduates and for adults preparing for add-on courses and colleges for people in employment.

QIBB
The VET Quality Initiative is an initiative of the General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sports at BMBF to implement a comprehensive quality management system in the Austrian VET school sector. QIBB is an expression of the common endeavour of all schools and colleges in the Austrian VET system to continuously safeguard and systematically develop the quality of their educational work; it is oriented towards the specific requirements of VET schools and colleges and not only covers the level of individual schools but all system levels (including educational administration and school supervision).

Recognition of specialist subject knowledge acquired at BHS
Anerkennung fachensächlicher BHS-Kenntnisse
It is prescribed by law that the knowledge of BHS graduates be recognised if they continue their studies at Austrian Fachhochschulen and universities. Relevant consultation with tertiary education institutions ensures that students do not have to repeat existing knowledge unnecessarily, thus enabling earlier entry into the world of work.

Regional Education Board
Landesschulrat / Stadtschulrat für Wien
Federal school authority in every federal province, commissioned with various tasks, particularly with the implementation of legislation and school supervision.

Regulated and non-regulated professions
Reglementierte und Nicht reglementierte Berufe
Regulated professions: regulation of access to and practice of a profession by legislative requirements (in Austria through the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act, for example). Non-regulated professions: no regulation by legislation.

Schools and colleges for people in employment
Schulen für Berufstätige
Many BMS, BHS and post-secondary VET courses also run courses in modular form for people in employment (evening classes).

Specialist / subject-related activity
Fachliche Tätigkeit
Activity to acquire experience and knowledge required for self-employment in the relevant trade.

Studienberechtigungsprüfung – SBP
For people without the matriculation certificate; provides only access to the study programme for which it was taken specifically; holders do not acquire general HE entrance qualifications. Preparatory courses for the Studienberechtigungsprüfung are offered, among other places, at adult learning institutions, where up to four out of five exams can be taken if candidates have attended related courses there; they have to take at least one exam at the educational establishment where they want to study (university, HE institution, Fachhochschule, post-secondary VET course, university college of teacher education). Since 2010 autonomy for the SBP exam has rested with the HE institutions.

Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act
Gewerbeordnung
Federal legislation; specifies under which circumstances people are entitled to start their own business (requirements to exercise self-employed professions).

University colleges of teacher education
Pädagogische Hochschulen
Tertiary education establishments for initial, in-service and continuing teacher training in each federal province. There are also a separate university for agricultural and environmental policy and private university colleges of teacher education run by the church.

VET schools
Berufsbildende Schulen
Comprise part-time vocational schools for apprentices, BMS, BHS, add-on courses, post-secondary VET courses, and school-based programmes for people in employment.

Vocational Training Act
Berufsausbildungsgesetz:
The statutory framework for the company-based training of apprentices. Some provisions of the Vocational Training Act also refer to BMS and BHS.
16 Key data

Distribution of all pupils by school types, year 10, school year 2012/2013

Source: Statistik Austria, Bildungsdokumentation; BMBF Zahlenspiegel 2013

Successfully passed matriculation and diploma examinations in 2012

Source: Statistik Austria, Schulstatistik 2013
Transfers from the 4th grades of general secondary school, new secondary school or the lower cycle of academic secondary school, school year 2012/2013

Legend by the example of BMS: 20.6% of the 4th grade of general secondary school, 16.2% of the 4th grade of new secondary school and 1.4% of the 4th grade of the lower cycle of academic secondary school transferred to a BMS in the following year 2012/2013.

Source: Statistik Austria, Bildungsdokumentation; BMBF Zahlenspiegel 2013

Pupils overall by school types, school year 2012/2013

Source: Statistik Austria, Bildungsdokumentation 2013
Development of pupil figures, upper secondary level

Source: Statistik Austria, Schulstatistik 2013

Educational attainment of population, 15-34 years, highest completed qualification 2012

Source: Statistik Austria, Bildungsstandregister 2012

Legend:
- HS = general secondary school
- NMS = new secondary school
- PTS = prevocational school
- BS = part-time vocational school
- BMS = school for intermediate vocational education
- BHS = college for higher vocational education
- BAKIP/BASOP = kindergarten teacher training college and college of social pedagogy
- AHS = academic secondary school
- Kolleg = post-secondary VET course

Sources:
- www.statistik.gv.at
- www.bmbf.gv.at > Bildung Schulen > Bildungswesen in Österreich > Grunddaten des österreichischen Schulwesens
EU benchmarks

Early school leavers and training dropouts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU target for 2020</th>
<th>Ø EU-28</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>EU ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>max. 10%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>8th (of 28)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** By 2020 the EU average should be no more than 10%. This figure is the share of 18- to 24-year-olds who have not acquired any upper secondary qualification and are currently not in training.

Participation of adults in lifelong learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU target for 2020</th>
<th>Ø EU-28</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>EU ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>minimum 15%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>6th (of 28)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** By 2020 the EU average should be at least 15%. This figure is the share of the 25- to 64-year-old population who took part in formal or non-formal education programmes in the 4 weeks preceding the survey.

Employability – employment rate of graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU target for 2020</th>
<th>Ø EU-28</th>
<th>Austria</th>
<th>EU ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>minimum 82%</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
<td>2nd (of 28)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** By 2020 the EU average should be at least 82%. This figure is the share of employed people among 20- to 34-year-old graduates (ISCED Levels 3 to 6) who have left the education or training system in the three years preceding the reference year.

_Employability – employment rate of graduates 2020_ 83.3% (EU-28) 91.2% (Austria) 2nd (of 28)

Source: Statistik Austria, Europäische Kommission, OECD. Daten 2012. BMBF Zahlenspiegel 2013

Educational attainment of young people (20- to 24-year-olds)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ø EU-28</th>
<th>Austria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>79.0%</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
<td>87.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** This indicator aims to measure the share of people among 20- to 24-year-olds who have attained a qualification of at least ISCED Level 3 (apprenticeship or completion of a school for intermediate vocational education of two or more years).

Source: Statistik Austria 2014

Austrian school grading system

Excellent (1) – best mark
Good (2)
Satisfactory (3)
Sufficient (4)
Fail (5) – not sufficient

Duration of instruction

of one school year: September to June (approx. 40 weeks)
of one lesson (teaching unit): 45 / 50 minutes
Classes per week (school for intermediate vocational education and college for higher vocational education): 30-38 lessons
Classes per week (part-time vocational school, by block): 42-45 lessons
Further Links

Adult education and training
www.erwachsenenbildung.at

Adult Education Initiative
www.initiative-erwachsenenbildung.at

Educational standards
www.bildungsstandards.berufsbildendeschulen.at

Electronically assisted learning
www.eeducation.at

Europass and certificate supplements in DE/EN
www.europass.at

Federal Ministry of Education and Women’s Affairs
www.bmbf.gv.at

Kindergarten teacher training colleges and colleges of social pedagogy
www.bakip-basop.at

Physical education and sport
www.bewegung.ac.at

Platform of VET schools and colleges
www.berufsbildendeschulen.at

Schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts
www.htl.at

Schools and colleges of social and services industries
www.hum.at

Schools of business and colleges of business administration
www.hak.cc

Search for schools and colleges
www.abc.berufsbildendeschulen.at

The Austrian education system with short info in DE/EN
www.bildungssystem.at

VET Quality Initiative
www.qibb.at

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