

VET schools and colleges in Austria

Information brochure

Vienna, 2021

Impressum

Media owner and publisher:

Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research

Directorate I/B (VET Schools and Colleges and Adult Education)

Minoritenplatz 5, 1010 Vienna

Tel.: +43 1 531 20-0

Photo credit: BMBWF/Lusser

Printed by: Digitales Druckzentrum Renngasse

Vienna January 2021

Copyright and liability:

Any reprint of excerpts is only permitted with citation of the source, any other rights are only permitted with the written consent of the media owner.

It should be noted that, despite thorough editing, no responsibility is taken for any of the information provided in this publication and that no liability will be accepted by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research. Any and all legal arguments represent the non-binding opinion of the authors and can in no way prejudice the jurisdiction of the independent courts.

Contents

Preface	5
The Austria education system	6
VET schools and colleges in Austria	7
Vocational education and training and adult education at the BMBWF	7
Key pedagogical projects.....	13
Part-time vocational schools and prevocational schools	20
Part-time vocational schools	20
Prevocational schools.....	26
Schools and colleges of engineering, arts and crafts.....	28
Schools and colleges of business administration	35
College of business administration	36
School of business administration	39
Schools and colleges for social and services industries	43
Schools and colleges of management and services industries	43
Schools and colleges of tourism	45
Schools and colleges of fashion.....	47
Colleges of art and design	49
Colleges of product management and presentation	51
Schools of social occupations	53
Schools of social care occupations	55
Colleges of agriculture and forestry	57
Teacher training colleges for early childhood education	61
Colleges of social pedagogy	67
Adult education	69
Qualifications, certificates and diplomas	78

International vocational education and training	85
Entrepreneurship education and business education.....	92
Teaching in the VET sector / initial, in-service and continuing training of teaching staff	100
Links	106
Key figures of VET	107
Abbreviations	111

Preface



Heinz Faßmann

The VET school sector in Austria has a very long tradition: back in 1758 the imperial and royal academy of arts k. u. k. Real- und Zeichnungsakademie was founded in Habsburgergasse in Vienna with 11 students. This school was involved in textile production.

Today – more than 250 years later – Austrian VET schools and colleges, with a total of approx. 310,000 students, make up as much as 75% of the age cohort of upper secondary level. Of these, around 24,500 students graduate each year with the matriculation and diploma certificate, giving them not only general access to higher education but also the opportunity to enter the labour market immediately.

VET schools and colleges have become a significant economic factor in Austria and are more wide-ranging than in hardly any other country: What is important here is the systemic diversity of vocational education and training in Austria, which ranges from dual training in part-time vocational schools and companies onto schools of intermediate vocational education and colleges of higher vocational education. In close connection with an offensive labour market policy, they ensure diverse vocational education and training based on high acceptance and innovativeness and also good employment opportunities and low youth unemployment.

14-year-old students can choose between a wide range of education and training pathways, which help them develop their personal skills and aptitudes and also find alternatives in training when the first educational priority is not an option. In this way, young people lay the foundation for a successful start to working life, and have the best career opportunities internationally. In this respect, the VET school sector in Austria is also seen in a particularly positive light internationally – as shown in the recently published OECD Report 2020.

This brochure describes the individual school types within the VET system and presents further VET topics and the comprehensive field of adult education.

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Heinz Faßmann

Federal Minister for Education, Science and Research

The Austria education system

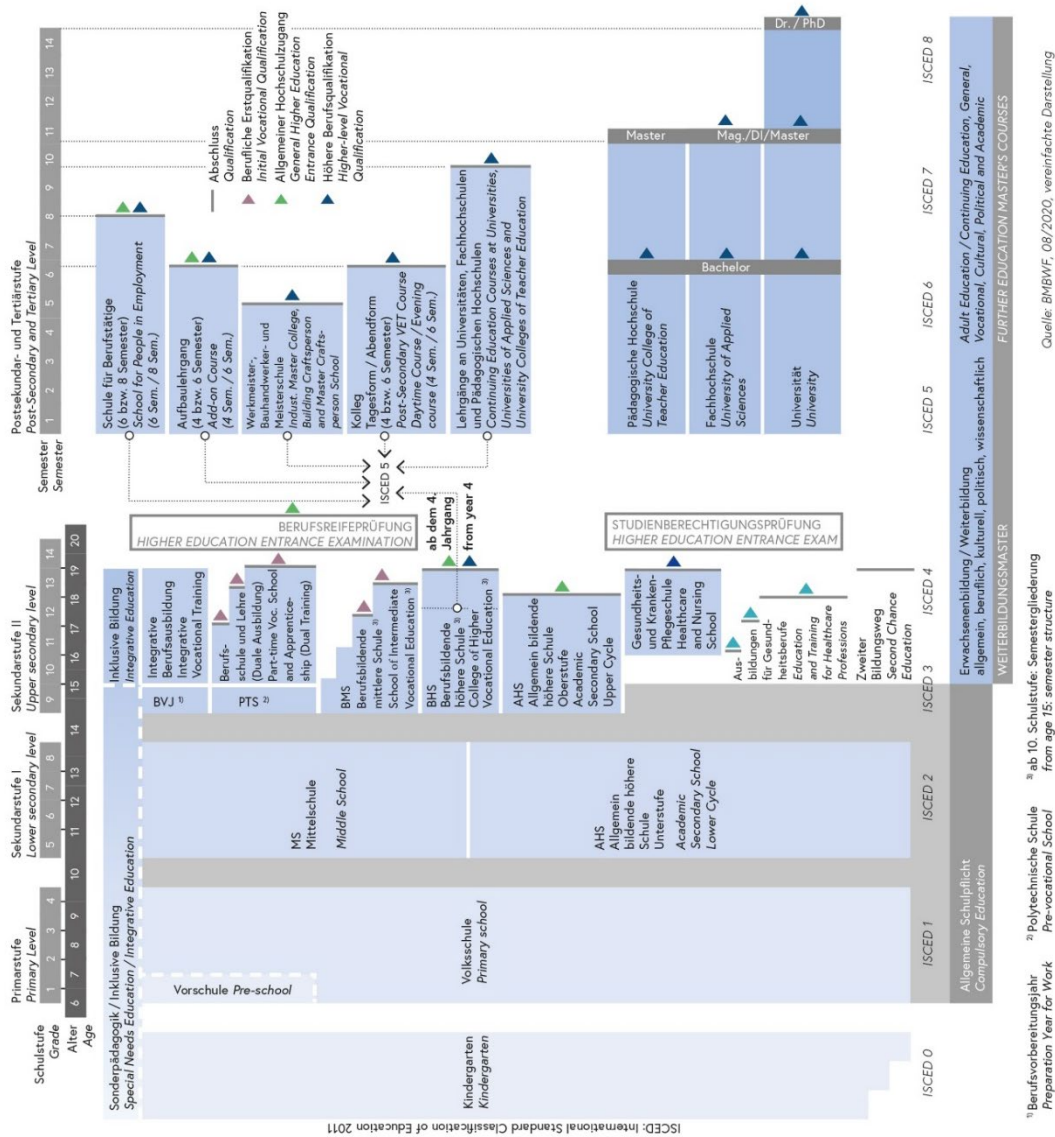


Diagram: The Austrian education system (simplified chart), BMBWF 8/2020.

VET schools and colleges in Austria

Vocational education and training and adult education at the BMBWF

Directorate I/B¹ **VET Schools and Colleges and Adult Education** in the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) fulfils the **tasks of school administration** for vocational education and training and adult education institutions which fall within the sphere of competence of the BMBWF under statutory provisions. Legislation is implemented by the federal school authorities, i.e. the education directorates at provincial level and by the BMBWF itself for some schools².

The Directorate **VET Schools and Colleges and Adult Education** is responsible for the **following areas of school-based education** for the school types listed below³ (upper secondary level) and for **adult education**:

Pedagogical matters and subject- and occupation-specific issues (e.g. curriculum development), governance of pedagogical content, school development, international relations, fundamental themes of vocational training, etc.

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 and prevocational schools⁴
- Schools and colleges of engineering, arts and crafts
- Schools and colleges of business administration
- Schools and colleges of management and services industries

¹ The Directorate-General I of the BMBWF is divided into two groups: Directorate I/A General Education and Directorate I/B VET Schools and Colleges and Adult Education.

² School supervision is the responsibility of the BMBWF for specific schools and colleges of engineering and crafts, colleges of higher vocational education for agriculture and forestry, the federal school of forestry and a college of social pedagogy.

³ Except for teacher training colleges for early childhood education, colleges of social pedagogy; federal sport academies; these are assigned to the General Education Directorate.

⁴ Pursuant to the School Organisation Act (SchOG), prevocational schools belong to the general education schools.

- Schools and colleges of tourism
- Schools and colleges of fashion
- Colleges of art and design
- Colleges of product management and presentation
- Schools of social occupations
- Colleges of agriculture and forestry
- Federal school of forestry
- Federal sport academies
- Teacher training colleges for early childhood education
- 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), colleges of higher vocational education and schools of intermediate vocational education can be organised in different forms with courses of differing length (1-5 years):

Schools of 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; previous professional qualification

Colleges of higher vocational education:

- 5 years: full-time school from the 9th school year; IVET qualification

Add-on course:

- 2-3 years: full-time school after completion of the school of intermediate vocational education; the educational objective of the college of higher vocational education

Post-secondary VET course:

- 4 semesters: full-time school after the matriculation certificate; the educational objective of the college of 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. As a rule, 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 middle school. There are also 8-year primary schools. Here it is no longer necessary to attend academic secondary school (lower cycle) or middle school after completion of year 8. 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. **Over 70% 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 training duration.

Schools of intermediate vocational education and colleges of higher vocational education are characterised by a balanced provision of general education, occupation-related theory

and occupation-related practice (including work placements) and by a variety of specific training opportunities and training focuses or area specialisations of varying duration.

Colleges of higher vocational education are very popular. Their students graduate with the matriculation and diploma certificate and ensure a **high qualification level** thanks to the acquisition of professional qualifications (employability), general access to higher education (ability to study) and the recognition of these courses at European level⁵.

Framework conditions

Relevant basic legislation is embodied in the School Organisation Act (SchOG), the School Education Act (SchUG) and the School Education Act for People in Employment, Post-Secondary VET Courses and Preparatory Courses (SchuG-BKV). These can be changed by Parliament acting with a simple majority following a consultation process. The curricula of the various types of schools are decreed by an ordinance of the Federal Minister of Education, Science and Research.

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 of intermediate vocational education (including the federal school of forestry) and of colleges of higher vocational education, whereas the respective provincial government bears the costs of part-time vocational schools and of schools of agriculture and forestry. The Federal Government also meets the salaries of teachers of federal schools and colleges including those at private schools with public-law status.⁶ 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.

⁵ See the chapter "Qualifications, certificates and diplomas".

⁶ This applies to denominational private schools with public-law status; in the case of non-denominational private schools with public-law status, a subsidy for personnel expenses is only possible under certain conditions and in accordance with the available funds.

Involvement of other ministries

Certain areas of the VET sector fall within the remit of other ministries, such as the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (including company-based training, accreditation of vocational qualifications), the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (including schools for healthcare and nursing), and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism (including the construction, maintenance and phasing-out of colleges of agriculture and forestry and the federal school of forestry⁷).

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. The curricula in the respective area specialisations or training focuses are therefore adapted to the **requirements of the economy** and the 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 projects**. All teachers of occupation-related and practice-oriented subjects boast practical experience in the private sector.

⁷ The federal school of forestry falls within the competence of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism and of the BMBWF and lasts two years. After successful completion of the course, graduates obtain the right to work as forest wardens and work, for example, in larger forestry operations.

Educational counselling

At schools of intermediate vocational education and colleges of higher vocational education, educational counselling is provided by specially trained teachers, who are available for information and guidance, preparation for decision-making, assistance and individual advice to students.

Educational counsellors work with feeder schools, school counsellors at lower-cycle academic secondary and middle school as well as with other advisory services for pupils in their final year (Public Employment Service Austria, the Austrian Students' Union at university level, etc.).

The examination and certificate termed Berufsreifeprüfung

Whereas the Berufsreifeprüfung (or BRP) **does not lead to the acquisition of any professional qualifications**, it provides the **general higher education entrance qualification in Austria** to graduates of the dual system (apprenticeship-leave examination), graduates of schools of 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 or master craftsperson examination pursuant to the Vocational Training Act for Agriculture and Forestry, people who have passed the master craftsperson examination or proof of competence examination pursuant to the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act, as well as to people with other qualifications pursuant to § 1(1) of the Vocational Training Act.

Prior school attendance is not required for admission to the Berufsreifeprüfung examinations. Independent of the Berufsreifeprüfung examination, examinations of schools of intermediate vocational education and colleges of higher vocational education can be taken as **external examinations**. This also applies to the matriculation and diploma examination of colleges of higher vocational education, the diploma examination of post-secondary VET courses and the final examination of schools of intermediate vocational education.

Vocational training research

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 is held every two years.

The priority topics of the conference are **current** (socio-economic) **developments** where **research projects are required**. The results are documented in **conference proceedings**

published by the BMBWF and in this way, they are also made accessible to a wider circle of stakeholders and researchers.

Key pedagogical projects

Matriculation and diploma examination and certificate⁸

With the introduction of the partly standardised, competence-oriented matriculation and diploma examination in the school year 2015/2016, standardised basic competences, the same framework conditions for all students as well as objectification have been created.

The matriculation and diploma examination comprises three cornerstones with seven examination sections:

- a final thesis⁹ including its presentation and discussion
- 3 or 4 standardised and non-standardised written exams with options (depending on the school type) and possible oral compensation examinations,
- 2 or 3 oral (non-standardised) partial exams with various options (depending on the school type).

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

Competence-oriented teaching

Competences are seen as a benchmark for the success of learning processes – knowledge learned by heart is becoming less important in our digitised, job-oriented 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 comprises a **network of connected aspects** such as applicable knowledge, abilities, understanding, know-how, acting, experience and

⁸ See the chapter "Qualifications, certificates and diplomas".

⁹ Diploma thesis at colleges of higher vocational education, final thesis at schools of intermediate vocational education.

motivation, and is therefore the requirement for overcoming specific (problem) situations and solving specific tasks.

Due to the paradigm shift from subject- to competence-oriented teaching, students 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 for the planning and design of lessons and for determining and assessing performance. 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 schoolwork.

With systematic project management and project groups comprising representatives of educational administration, university colleges of teacher education, business and schools, **measures** have been and are being regularly developed and implemented for competence-oriented teaching design.

- The starting point is the **educational standards** in VET: they provide teaching staff with an instrument to orient their work even more towards competences. Educational standards in VET describe the final qualifications acquired at schools of intermediate vocational education (year 11) and of colleges of higher vocational education (year 13), focus on the core process of teaching and instruction and describe, based on competence models, cross-curricular and multi-disciplinary core competences which students (are to) achieve by the end of the training.
- **Competence- and learning outcome-oriented curricula as a framework for teaching:** 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** are 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 refer to classification systems such as ISCED and 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. They

follow the approach of learning outcome orientation and also contain social and personal competences. In addition, the learning outcomes as specified in the curricula form the basis for allocation to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

- Competence grids/minimum requirements as an instrument for feedback on performance that is conducive to learning: They
 - support annual planning as well as the elaboration of a performance assessment concept at the beginning of the school year,
 - enable a quick overview of the current learning progress (diagnostics) during the school year, provide a basis for feedback discussions between teachers, students and guardians and thus serve to determine individual support measures,
 - form a sound basis for performance assessment at the end of the school year.
- **BMBWF Training Programme** – Competence-oriented teaching: This training programme has been and is provided in the subjects that cannot be allocated to the standardised, competence-oriented matriculation and diploma examination. 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 new upper level: objectives at a glance

The new upper level has two major objectives: increased individualisation and competence orientation. To this end, the enshrinement of needs-based support measures and the distribution of the school year's curriculum over two semesters per school year promotes the gradual and continuous achievement of all students – from the gifted to those with learning difficulties – and thus ensures the sustainable availability of skills. The reorientation of teaching at the upper level strengthens the students' personal responsibility for their learning success and promotes the careful use of learning and life time (e.g. by avoiding repeating school years).

The system of the new upper level aims to increase the motivation of the students by recognising positive achievements, and keeping them even if they repeat years – thus, among other things, the demand for individualisation of teaching is met and an efficient organisation of the personal school career is made possible. This increases the young people's chances of obtaining a positive school-leaving certificate. The number of repeaters and the drop-out rate are reduced with the new system of the upper level without minimising the level of education required in the upper secondary sector.

Work is currently underway on possible content adaptations for the further development of the upper level.

Training obligation up to the age of 18

The measures within the scope of the training obligation are intended to provide young people with a qualification that increases their chances of sustainable and comprehensive participation in economic and social life and meets the increasing qualification requirements of the economy.

The training obligation applies to all young people who have completed compulsory schooling until they reach the age of 18 years. During this period, the legal guardians are obliged to ensure that young people take part in an education and training measure or in a programme that prepares them for such a measure. Targeted advice and support is provided by coordination centres in the individual provinces.

The training obligation can be fulfilled in particular by:

- Attendance at secondary schools (colleges of higher vocational education, schools of intermediate vocational education, academic secondary schools).
- Completion of an apprenticeship programme pursuant to the Vocational Training Act or the Vocational Training Act for Agriculture and Forestry.
- A training programme according to healthcare legislation regulations.
- Attendance of courses preparing for external school examinations or for individual training courses (e.g. courses preparing for the final compulsory school examination or for initial vocational education and training measures).
- Participation in labour market policy measures.
- Participation in a measure for young people in need of assistance under the Disabled Persons Employment Act (Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz) which increases their personal performance and facilitates their integration into the labour market.
- An employment envisaged within the framework of a perspective or assistance plan.

If young people complete an at least two-year school of intermediate vocational education, an apprenticeship training programme, a healthcare training programme of at least 2,500

hours or a partial qualification within the framework of an apprenticeship by the age of 18, the training obligation ends with the completion of the corresponding training.

The education system makes an important contribution to the implementation of the training obligation through numerous measures in the field of the prevention of early school leaving and dropping out from education and training as well as through a high-quality and varied range of training opportunities.

Cooperative open learning

COOL (cooperative open learning) is a pedagogical **concept for the development of schools and 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 and refined** at the respective **school location**.

The focus is on the **attitude of the actors involved in school life**: 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 and colleges of business administration, the **COOL impetus centre** was set up by the BMBWF as early as in 2001 and COOL innovation schools were established as practice laboratories, which support the COOL schools and further develop the concept.

Directorate I/B (VET Schools and Colleges and Adult Education) at the BMBWF is responsible for the strategic and content-related implementation of COOL. As many as over 1,200 teachers in Austria, mainly in the VET sector, are already implementing the COOL concept. They are active in over 60 certified partner, impetus and innovation schools and organise themselves in numerous events and partnerships. The COOL community has grown beyond Austrian borders. COOL partners and a COOL network can already be found in Germany, for instance.

CEBS

The Centre for Professionally-Oriented Languages (CEBS) of Directorate I/B (VET Schools and Colleges and Adult Education) supports teachers in implementing modern and up-to-date **foreign language didactics** (Common European Framework of Reference, 21st century skills, education standards, CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning, multilingual teaching, etc.). The biennial nationwide **language contest** gives students 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 students and support them individually. Online language forums offer foreign language teachers the opportunity to follow lectures by international speakers.

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.

Language-conscious specialist instruction

Since 2016, a working group under the direction of the Austrian Language Competence Centre ÖSZ has been developing language-sensitive methods and strategies to provide teachers with the tools that students need to acquire the (subject-related) language skills of their educational language in all subjects.

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations

The 17 political objectives of the United Nations (UN), which are intended to ensure sustainable development at the economic, social and ecological levels worldwide, have already been an **indispensable component of action** in colleges of higher vocational education and schools of intermediate vocational education for some time. A large number of activities based on the SDGs are implemented by the respective locations each year. This is particularly visible in the context of initiatives related to entrepreneurship education¹⁰.

21st century skills

The more networked, complex and collaborative the world becomes, the more necessary it becomes to pursue questions, problems, tasks and challenges using an interdisciplinary approach and, due to the rapidly changing labour market, to design curricula in such a way that they allow a flexible response to changes. Accordingly, curriculum design should focus on the four dimensions of education in the 21st century (**knowledge including cross-sectional topics, competences, character, meta-learning**).

- **Knowledge** is central to general education and vocational training. As well as traditional knowledge (languages, mathematics, etc.), modern knowledge (entrepreneurship,

¹⁰ See the chapter "Entrepreneurship education and business education".

robotics, well-being, mindfulness, etc.) should be emphasised. These knowledge components should be seen as interdisciplinary.

- **Cross-sectional topics** run through many modern and traditional subjects. Specifically, these are global competence (cultural perspectives, critical questioning of one's own cultural tendencies, understanding and acceptance of other points of view), information competence (handling and applying information), systems thinking (critical examination of individual parameters, holistic view and differentiation, etc.), design thinking (understanding – observing – defining a view – finding ideas – developing prototypes – testing), environmental awareness and digital competence.
- **Skills (abilities)** are decisive for the development of competence. **Creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration** are 21st century skills and are required to apply the built-up knowledge. Higher thinking skills are acquired through research, discussions, adopting different points of view, etc. The active role of the students and growing through challenges are central. It is important that these skills are inseparably linked to the dimension of knowledge.
- **Character formation** entails the acquisition and strengthening of virtues and values (beliefs and ideals), puts students in a position to make wise decisions for a fulfilling life and a prospering society. Central to this are courage, optimism, flexibility, solution orientation and self-motivation.
- **Meta-learning** is necessary to be adequately prepared for a world that demands versatility, adaptability, reflectiveness, self-direction and self-determination. In this way, the students recognise opportunities for improvement and act in a self-referential manner.

Part-time vocational schools and prevocational schools

Part-time vocational schools

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 system is termed "dual VET system" (or "dual system" for short), as educational tasks are split between two providers: **Company or supra-company institution and part-time vocational school.**

The Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs is responsible for the **training regulation** (the contents of company-based training), while the BMBWF is in charge of the **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 over **200 recognised apprenticeship occupations**, which can be summarised under the following groups:

- Construction
- Office, administration, organisation
- Chemical industries
- Printing, photographic, graphic and paper industries
- Electrical engineering and electronics
- Hotel, restaurant and catering (horeca)
- Health and body care

- Commerce and trade
- Wood, glass and ceramics industries
- Information and communication technologies
- Food, beverage and tobacco industries
- Metal technology and mechanical engineering
- Fashion, textiles, 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 apprenticeship occupations** can be observed especially in the services sector.

The **apprenticeship-leave examination** can be 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 specific to that occupation in a professional manner. The apprenticeship-leave examination is divided into a **practical and a theoretical section** and consists of a **written and an oral part**. If the student has fulfilled the 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 examination**. Successful completion of this voluntary area-specific examination means that the partial examination for the corresponding specialist area does not have to be taken as part of the overall **Berufsreifeprüfung** examination (also termed Berufsmatura in German, see below).

Following successful completion of the apprenticeship-leave examination, graduates have the following **continuing education and training (CET)** options, among others: taking the master craftsperson examination for a craft, with parts of the examination waived; taking a proof of competence 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 Berufsreifeprüfung examination or Studienberechtigungsprüfung examination as a prerequisite for taking up studies at universities, universities of applied sciences, post-secondary VET courses and university colleges of teacher education.

An outline curriculum

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 education directorates to lay down both the number of lessons and the syllabi of the individual subjects for the individual school years within the given framework by issuing additional curriculum provisions where this is not specified by the curricula.

The syllabus of every subject includes:

- educational and teaching tasks, which specify the learning outcomes, competences and skills the students should be taught and the knowledge they should have;
- the scope of teaching contents;
- the teaching principles as guidelines for the teachers' work.

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 complement **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 as a result of company-based training. Based on practical experiences, the students at part-time vocational schools are able to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes independently and are encouraged to take part in CVET measures.

To enable young people to apply their knowledge and skills in different situations, cross-curricular teaching is being promoted. In the higher grades in particular, **project-oriented teaching** is used to make the connections between the individual subject areas and subjects understandable.

Holistic education implies that **personal development** is seen as very important in the curriculum of part-time vocational schools, with particular emphasis 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 **curriculum** should include the following compulsory subjects: German and communication, one job-related foreign language, political education, business studies, and the technical theory and practical subjects required for the respective apprenticeship occupation (including religious education in the provinces of Tyrol and Vorarlberg).

Optional subjects are: one modern foreign language, German, applied mathematics and religious education (except in Tyrol and Vorarlberg), with possible optional exercises being physical education and sport as well as applied computer science. However, the education directorates can define further (occupationally relevant) optional subjects and exercises for the individual apprenticeship occupations.

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

- **all year round:** i.e. at least one full school day or at least two half school days a week
- **in course form:** i.e. for at least eight weeks continuously
- **seasonally:** i.e. in block form at a particular time of year

The variety of organisation forms is due to consultation between the business sphere and those responsible for school and takes account of the individual economic and regional sectors' needs.

Teaching staff at part-time vocational schools

At part-time vocational school, a distinction is made between teachers of Subject Groups I, II and III. Teachers of Groups I and II teach general education and business-related subjects (Group I) or occupation-related theory (Group II). The year 2007 saw the introduction of training programmes for part-time vocational school teachers 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 examination of a specialist college of higher vocational education or successful completion of a matriculation examination or a Berufsreifeprüfung examination and a relevant VET programme;
- b) for Group III (occupation-related practice): successful completion of a specialist master craftsman examination or an equivalent relevant qualification, and
- c) in all cases: at least three years of relevant professional practice.

The provincial governments have sovereignty over vocational school teachers and initially employ the prospective teachers as contract teachers.

Characteristics of the dual training system

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 already 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 **high demand** by the business community for young people who complete an apprenticeship successfully; these **skilled workers** account for a **considerable proportion of self-employed people in 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 examination sections of the master craftsman examination.

Individual vocational training

Individual 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**. This can provide significant impetus for the

integration of this group of people into working life. Individual vocational training is offered both as an apprenticeship training scheme with an extended apprenticeship period and as a VET programme, that provides a partial qualification. Thanks to the possibility of **customised training**, individual abilities, skills and needs can be addressed in a targeted manner both at the company, in special independent training establishments as well as at part-time vocational schools. After completion of the apprenticeship-leave examination, apprenticeship training with an extended apprenticeship period leads to the same entitlements as a "regular apprenticeship". A training programme with a partial qualification is completed with a final examination and provides skills and knowledge that can be used in economic life and thus enable entry into the labour market.

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

Cooperation and partnership between all stakeholders in the VET sector independent of the place of learning is one of the key factors that ensure 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, but also industrial enterprises are increasingly making use of 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 are an **important impetus** 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 examination during their apprenticeship period in free-of-charge courses, with the possibility of already completing three partial exams before their apprenticeship-leave examination. One of the partial examinations must be passed before the apprenticeship-leave examination in order to remain in the support scheme afterwards. The costs for the preparatory measures are borne by the Federal Government.

Prevocational schools

One-year prevocational school offers 14- to 15-year-olds comprehensive career guidance, ensures a preparatory pre-professional/basic education and opens up the path to more than 200 apprenticeship occupations as well as various further education pathways.

Prevocational school supports young people in the last year of compulsory schooling (9th school year) in their decision for further education pathways or entry into working life via dual vocational training (apprenticeship). The individual interests, inclinations, talents and abilities of the students are at the centre of this transition process. At the beginning of the school year, in an orientation period for their upcoming career and education choices, the interests of the young people are awakened and strengthened by a wide range of information and initial practical experience.

As well as consolidating and deepening the learning content of general education subjects, a sound and comprehensive pre-professional/basic education is offered in subject areas that correspond to the key occupational fields of the economy. Following the orientation period, the young people decide on one of the following specialist areas:

In the technology cluster:

- Metal
- Electro
- Construction
- Wood

In the services Cluster:

- Commerce, trade office
- Tourism
- Health, beauty and social affairs

The individual talents and learning motivation are encouraged by practice- and action-oriented learning.

The establishment of an autonomous specialist area such as mechatronics, information technology, etc. offers schools the additional opportunity to take regional circumstances and the needs of businesses in the immediate vicinity into account.

Practice-oriented instruction ensures the students are prepared as best as possible for the challenges of their professional future and helps them develop their talents and abilities as a springboard for a successful career.

Schools and colleges of engineering, arts and crafts

Schools and colleges of engineering, arts and crafts primarily offer programmes in the **initial vocational education and training (IVET) sector** and introduce students from the very beginning to the theory and practice of the respective specialist area. These include the following:

- the **5-year colleges of engineering** (years 9-13), which offer post-secondary forms of teaching and learning in the final year and are completed with a matriculation and diploma examination;
- the **4-year and 3.5-year schools of 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 **4-semester post-secondary VET courses** (years 13-14), which require the university/higher education entrance qualification and are completed with a diploma examination.

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

- the **5-semester or 7-semester add-on courses for people in employment**, which lead to the same educational objective as the respective 5-year colleges of higher vocational education, are designed in modular form and are completed with the matriculation and diploma examination. In individual cases, a so-called **preparatory course** must be completed before entering the add-on course;
- the **6-semester post-secondary VET courses for people in employment** (evening courses), which, like the 4-semester post-secondary VET courses, require a university/higher education entrance qualification and are completed with a diploma examination;
- the **7-semester schools of 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 craftsperson schools and master craftsperson schools**, which are concluded with a final examination and serve to extend the specialist training and thus provide higher vocational qualifications.

Autonomous freedom of design

Due to decentralisation, **school autonomy** enables freedom of design - 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 training focuses as foreseen by the curriculum and the development of special 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 their individual talents and interests. Furthermore, optional educational programmes, such as optional subjects, may be specified within the scope of school autonomy to provide important additional qualifications for practice.

Area specialisations

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

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

construction engineering; interior architecture and timber technologies; electrical engineering; electronics and technical computer science; biomedical and health engineering; computer science; information technology; building technology; mechanical engineering; aircraft engineering; mechatronics; plastics technology; metallic materials technology; metallurgy and environmental technology; media; media engineering and print management; chemical engineering; food technology; industrial engineering; art and design; graphic and communications design; technology in medicine; life science and sport.

Specialisations within an area are possible due to **training focuses** or **special focuses** selected autonomously by the schools.

Educational objectives

Schools and colleges of engineering, arts and crafts provide **top-quality subject-specific and methodical competence** for advanced studies and in-depth general and conceptual knowledge required for independent participation in continuing education and training, as well as the **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, personal and social qualifications** that safeguard the graduates' employability and enable them to participate successfully in the process of lifelong learning through self-study or study programmes at establishments of higher learning.

Schools and colleges of 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.

Specifically, these schools and colleges serve the following objectives and purpose:

- **schools of 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 also lead towards extending and deepening the acquired general education;
- **colleges of engineering, arts and crafts**, including add-on courses for people in employment, 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 the university/higher education entrance qualification.

Educational content

In order to meet general educational objectives, all curricula include a **common curriculum architecture** that 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 imparted in a fundamental and job-oriented manner according to the requirements of the subject area. Taking into account the entitlements based on the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act according to the curricula, the schools and colleges of engineering, arts and crafts impart **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 conducted in collaboration with businesses constitute additional elements of specialist training.

Mandatory work placements are of differing length: in the 5-year colleges of higher vocational education they last for 8 weeks; in schools of intermediate vocational education they generally last for 4 weeks; in schools of intermediate vocational education with company-based practice, an additional work placement of 12 weeks is mandatory in the final school year.

Final examination

Upon passing the final examination at **schools of intermediate vocational education** in engineering, arts and crafts and **schools of intermediate vocational education for people in employment**, graduates boast professional qualifications entitling them to immediately exercise the relevant occupations and giving them access to regulated professional activities. The final examination also entitles graduates - if necessary after completion of a preparatory course - to enter a (related) add-on course. Final examinations are also foreseen for **master craftsperson schools, industrial master colleges and building craftsperson schools**.

Matriculation and diploma examination and certificate

Graduates of **colleges of higher vocational education** and **add-on courses (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 students must work on a topic from the specialist area comprehensively and

independently. 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 important subject-related experience in real projects but also often to make the first contacts for subsequent employment.

Diploma examination and certificate

Post-secondary VET courses (for people in employment) are completed with the **diploma examination**. As students at post-secondary VET courses have already acquired the university/higher education entrance qualification, the diploma examination comprises the subject-specific partial exams of the matriculation and diploma examination and 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), **computer science** (e.g. the ECDL; CISCO or Microsoft network technology), **economy and business** (e.g. SAP, EBCL) and **quality assurance**.

Recognition of specialist knowledge and skills

For studying at **universities of applied sciences and universities**, graduates of colleges of 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 was already the case in previous mutual recognition directives, at the EU level the high educational level of colleges of engineering is taken into account in **Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications**.

Pursuit of a self-employed activity: Graduates of colleges can engage in a **self-employed professional activity** in a non-regulated craft or trade immediately after the matriculation and diploma examination, graduates of schools can do so immediately after completing their final examination. For regulated trades, job-specific relevant work experience of differing duration and successful completion of a proof of competence examination are required. Graduates of both school types are granted exemption from the **entrepreneurial examination** required for self-employment.

Professional title Ingenieur/Ingenieurin

Following at least three years of subject-related practice, graduates of colleges of engineering and crafts can apply for and be awarded the **professional title Ingenieur/Ingenieurin** from one of the certification bodies authorised by the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs.

A prerequisite for being awarded the professional title Ingenieur/Ingenieurin is that the respective college of engineering or the respective area specialisation is listed in the **Ingenieur Ordinance** (pursuant to §3 of the 2017 Ingenieur Act as amended), that the **practice was subject-related** and an expert talk is held.

The holders of this professional title who have been qualified within the scope of this certification procedure are classified on Level 6 of the National Qualifications Framework NQF¹¹; this ensures that the high quality of Ingenieur-related competence boasts a better position in the international environment.

Quality

In line with their responsibility towards stakeholders, schools and colleges of engineering, arts and crafts have implemented the **quality management system QIBB¹²**, which builds on state-of-the-art, recognised principles of quality management and is oriented towards the European quality framework CQAF (Common Quality Assurance Framework). The cornerstones of QIBB are medium- and short-term plans based on **school and work programmes, evaluations, quality reports** and the agreement on **development and implementation objectives** within the framework of **management and performance reviews**.

Mission statement

QIBB of the engineering, arts and crafts school sector builds on the joint **mission statement of colleges of engineering (HTL)**, valid nationwide, 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 educational programmes”, “practice

¹¹ The NQF is based on the European Qualifications Framework EQF provided by the EU, which enables better international comparability based on an eight-level scale.

¹² SQA (School Quality in General Education) and QIBB (Quality in Vocational Education and Training) are the quality management systems of the BMBWF in the areas of general education and VET schools and colleges respectively.

orientation”, “quality”, “environment for learning and working”, “personnel” and “internationalism”. The core messages in brief:

The Austrian schools and colleges of engineering, arts and crafts

- offer their students **well-founded engineering or crafts-specific education and training** and **comprehensive general education** as well as **personal development**;
- 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;
- consider themselves committed to the highest standards in terms of **quality** and their continuous further development in their educational work;
- offer their students **support and encouragement** in a motivating environment for learning and working;
- consider the skills, **experience and commitment** of their staff as key essentials for successfully implementing their educational mission;
- deliver their educational work with a strong **focus on international aspects** and create mobility, cosmopolitanism and intercultural understanding.

Schools and colleges of business administration

Schools and colleges of occupations in the business sector are run at 118 locations throughout Austria and are characterised by relatively equal standards of education and training in the core area of their 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 the teaching of values and a sense of responsibility.

Education and training programmes

- **Colleges of business administration**, which are completed with a matriculation and diploma examination after five years of school attendance, provide comprehensive general education and advanced business-oriented education and training in an integrated form.
- Similar to colleges of business administration, **schools of business administration** provide 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.
- **Add-on courses** are open to graduates of schools of business administration and lead to the matriculation and diploma examination in six semesters.
- **Post-secondary VET courses** can be attended by holders of a matriculation certificate acquired at an academic secondary school or of a matriculation and diploma certificate of a non-business-oriented VET school as an additional post-secondary qualification. They last for four semesters and are completed with a diploma examination.
- 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 phases) and independent learning of a part of the syllabus (individual phases).

Curricular autonomy facilitates the selection of training focuses as foreseen by the curriculum and the development of special focuses chosen autonomously by the school. In addition, schools can define optional educational programmes such as optional subjects.

Mandatory work placement

Both at the school of business administration (150 hours) and in the add-on course (150 hours) as well as at the college of business administration (300 hours), students have to complete a **mandatory work placement** at a company, most appropriately before the final year.

Other certificates

Every year, students acquire over 6,000 external certificates, e.g:

- language certificates: e.g. FCE, CAE, BEC (English); TELC (English, Spanish, French), DFP, DELF, DALF (French); DELE (Spanish), PLIDA (Italian), ÖSD - for students with German as their second language
- IT certificates: ECDL and ECDL Advanced; SAP, digi.check HAK (Austria-wide learning assessment for digital competences), Digital Business Award, CISCO Certificate, OCG Web Management; industry certificates: MOS (Microsoft Office Specialist) and MTA (Microsoft Technology Associate)
- business certificates: e.g. European Business Baccalaureate Diploma - EBBD, Entrepreneurial Skills Pass, Financial Skills Certificate, ERP certificates (e.g. SAP, BMD), accounting diploma, junior certificates.

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 students as active and responsible entrepreneurs, employees and consumers in order to help shape the economy and society.

- In-depth specialist training programmes are offered in the form of **training focuses**, which schools can select or even create themselves based on school autonomy-related provisions. The **curriculum** - geared to learning outcomes - is structured in **clusters**: personality and educational career; languages and communication; entrepreneurship - business and management; society and culture; mathematics and natural sciences.

Business-related training, the **cluster entrepreneurship - business and management**, comprises the subjects business administration (**main subject**), corporate accounting, business informatics, office management and applied computer science, economics, law, business training, project management, practice enterprise, case studies as well as a training focus.

- In these subjects, students are taught **occupation-related theoretical and practical knowledge and skills** as well as **management skills** by using state-of-the-art information and communication technologies that they can apply directly in the business sphere.
- In their final year at the college, students prepare a business-related **diploma project** of pre-academic character commissioned by companies or business partners. Students gain practical experiences in the mandatory work placement and the work in the practice enterprise.
- They 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 sphere.

The integration of general as well as vocational education and training (**double qualification**) enables **graduates of colleges of business administration** to engage in business-oriented activities at executive level in all sectors of the economy and

administration and gives them access to tertiary educational establishments (universities, universities of applied sciences, etc.).

Training focuses:

- Information and communication technology - e-business
- Management, controlling and accounting
- Financial and risk management
- Controlling, business practice and taxes
- Entrepreneurship and management
- International economics
- Communication management and marketing
- Logistics management
- Quality management and integrated management systems
- Ecologically oriented corporate management
- Management for (school-autonomous business area)

Special training programmes

The college of business administration and the post-secondary VET course (also for people in employment) **Digital Business** (DigBizHAK) combine a very profound specialisation in IT with the recognised business education of the college of business administration.

The college of business administration **Business and Law** (JusHAK) provides a solid economic-legal basis for career and studies and closes the gap between graduates of the college of business administration and lawyers. In addition, many professions increasingly require basic legal knowledge. Start-ups, business successions and SMEs require sound legal and business knowledge and a high level of IT competence.

The college of business administration **European and International Business** (EuropaHAK) is designed to meet the increased demand on the labour market for skilled workers who have sound foreign language skills in several foreign languages, intercultural competence, knowledge and know-how about foreign markets, and knowledge in handling orders with foreign partners, especially since, in addition to large international companies, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are increasingly acting on a global scale.

The college of business administration **Industrial Business** (IndustrialBusinessHAK) combines business and technical know-how at a high level and trains graduates with management skills specifically for industrial enterprises.

The college of business administration, the college of business administration for people in employment and the post-secondary VET course (also for people in employment) **Communication and Media Informatics** (MediaHAK) offer profound knowledge in the areas of organisational and communication structures and public relations as well as in dealing with new media and their strategic use.

School of business administration

The school of business administration is characterised by especially **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 resolution competence, etc.) that are decisive for tackling professional challenges successfully.

The curriculum of the **school of business administration** also combines the subjects taught 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 administration therefore sees itself as a place where students **train the competences required for practice, develop their entrepreneurial spirit** and, in this way, **recognise their opportunities in the labour market**, seize them and make a successful start to their professional future. The school of business administration is distinguished by the following outstanding features:

- 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 enterprises with involvement of business partners and with the work placement,
- the option of a combined all-day form with learning supervision,
- adaptation of the school organisation to the intentions laid down in the curriculum.

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

- The operation of **practice enterprises** as places where entrepreneurial thinking and acting is trained: The practice enterprise is where competence- and practice-oriented teaching is in line with the business-oriented educational objective. References to practice enterprises are included in all subjects.
- All students prepare and work on a business-related **final thesis**, usually in teams, in which project management methods are applied. This work required here ranges from finding topics and planning, organisation and implementation, to documentation and presentation. These projects and final theses are carried out on behalf of companies or business partners.
- **Mandatory work placement:** The curriculum of the school of business administration requires students to complete a mandatory work placement and keep a practice portfolio (which is noted in the final certificate).

Career opportunities

Dependent employment: Graduates of schools and colleges of business administration are qualified to engage in commercial and administrative activities at intermediate and executive level in all sectors of the economy 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 administration 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.

Pursuit of a self-employed activity: Graduates of colleges of business administration can engage in a **self-employed professional activity** in a non-regulated craft or trade immediately after the matriculation and diploma examination, graduates of schools of

business administration can do so immediately after completing their final examination. For regulated trades, job-specific relevant work experience of differing duration and successful completion of a proof of competence examination are required.

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

Specific features

Schools and colleges of business administration are characterised by the following 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 and colleges of business administration aim to teach uniformly defined core competences in business and general educational fields.
- **Practice-oriented training due to the work at practice enterprises:** A practice enterprise ¹³ is a virtual enterprise that is active on the national and international practice enterprise market and deals with all business situations that also come up in a real company. Students rotate jobs in the various departments. Practice enterprises are fit for the new challenges: networking, modern sales, innovative services and social media marketing are implemented in the **smart practice enterprise**. In this process, the smart practice enterprise not only focuses on **digitisation** but also on **sustainability** and **social sensitivity**. This is in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Cooperative open learning:** At many locations, forms of cooperative open learning are offered, which means that students are increasingly working independently and on their own responsibility.
- **Diversification due to training focuses:** Training focuses are extension areas that 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.

¹³ See the chapter "Entrepreneurship education and business education".

- **School and college of business administration for competitive athletes:**

Complementing the general educational objective of the school and college of business administration, the objective of the school and college of business administration for competitive athletes is to coordinate school and sport education in such a way that the school model, which focuses on vocational training and competitive sport, meets the psychological and physiological requirements of competitive sport.

Schools and colleges for social and services industries

Schools and colleges of management and services industries

Training opportunities

School of intermediate vocational education: 3 years, and 1 and 2 years

College of higher vocational education: 5 years

Post-secondary VET course: 4 semesters

Add-on course: 3 years

Educational objectives

As well as sound general education, schools and colleges of management and services industries (the colleges of higher vocational education, add-on courses, post-secondary VET courses, schools of intermediate vocational education) provide intensive vocational training in occupation-related practice, occupation-related theory and business-oriented subjects. They teach knowledge and skills which qualify graduates to immediately exercise **occupations in the business sphere** (particularly in the advanced-level services sector and in service design), **administration** - including in the social, health and cultural fields - and in the **hotel, restaurant and catering (horeca) sector and food industry**.

The major educational objectives include: professional and social competence, personal growth and development, capacity for professional mobility and flexibility, creativity, ability to criticise and take criticism, personal responsibility, social commitment, teamwork, cooperation skills and communicative skills in German and foreign languages as well as the permanent willingness to take part in continuing education and training.

The five-year colleges and the three-year add-on courses (access for graduates of schools of intermediate vocational education) additionally provide the university entrance qualification. Post-secondary VET courses are completed with a diploma examination; the access requirement is the certificate acquired after the matriculation, Studienberechtigungsprüfung or Berufsreifeprüfung examination.

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 (horeca) services; physical education and sport; as well as the in-depth area selected autonomously by the school.

The curricula of the colleges and of the schools of intermediate vocational education additionally provide for **mandatory work placements** of a total of 12 or 4 weeks, post-secondary VET courses and add-on courses of 8 weeks.

Special attention is paid to job-related instruction, as well as the ability to solve organisational problems in a company with consideration of economic, ecological and social aspects using state-of-the-art technical aids, to work in a team and to lead employees.

Career opportunities

The graduates take up careers in fields of activity of various branches of the business sphere, tourism and the catering industries, in administration – also in the field of health and social services – at the administrative and commercial levels, as a manager of industrial kitchens and canteens, dietician, specialist for cooking and service, purchaser for the hotel and restaurant industry, hotel clerk, office assistant, account manager, etc.

Pursuit of regulated professions on a self-employed basis

Relevant occupations with proof of professional practice: hotel, restaurant and catering industry.

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 programmes

At individual locations there are one- and two-year schools of management and services industries aiming at pre-professional training, a school of intermediate vocational education and an add-on course for people with impaired hearing, area specialisations in the fields of

cultural and congress management, environment and economy, social management, as well as communication and media design.

Specific features

Depending on the school location, additional qualifications such as "Junior sommelier/sommelière Austria", "Cheese connoisseur Austria", "Junior barkeeper Austria" and other occupation-related practical certificates, a practice enterprise, a junior company and language certificates are offered.

Completion of the occupation-related practical subjects by means of an occupation-related practical final examination or preliminary examination for the matriculation and diploma examination. The diploma projects/final theses are partly carried out in cooperation with external clients.

Schools and colleges of tourism

Training opportunities

School of intermediate vocational education: 3 years

College of higher vocational education: 5 years

Post-secondary VET course: 4 semesters

Add-on course: 3 years

Educational objectives

In addition to sound general education, schools and colleges of tourism (colleges of higher vocational education, add-on courses, post-secondary VET courses, schools of intermediate vocational education) provide intensive vocational training in occupation-related practice, tourism sector-specific and business-oriented subjects. They teach knowledge and skills, which qualify graduates to immediately exercise a **profession in the business sphere, particularly in the tourism and leisure industry.**

The major educational objectives include: professional and social competence, personal growth and development, capacity for professional mobility and flexibility, creativity, ability to criticise and take criticism, personal responsibility, social commitment, teamwork,

cooperation skills and communicative skills in German and foreign languages as well as the permanent willingness to take part in continuing education and training.

The five-year colleges and the three-year add-on courses (access for graduates of schools of intermediate vocational education) additionally provide the university entrance qualification. Post-secondary VET courses are completed with a diploma examination; the access requirement is the certificate acquired after the matriculation, Studienberechtigungsprüfung or Berufsreifeprüfung examination.

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 (horeca) services; work placement and applied project management; physical education and sport; sports animation; as well as the in-depth area selected autonomously by the school.

The curricula of colleges of higher vocational education, of schools of intermediate vocational education and add-on courses additionally provide for **mandatory work placements** of a total of 32, 24 and 16 weeks respectively, post-secondary VET courses for 12 weeks.

Special attention is paid to job-related instruction and foreign language training as well as to the ability to solve organisational problems in a company with consideration of economic, ecological and social aspects using state-of-the-art technical aids, to work in a team and to lead employees.

Career opportunities

Graduates take up careers in fields of activity of various branches of the tourism and leisure industry and administration on the administrative and commercial levels, e.g. as hotel/catering assistant, restaurant specialist, cook, travel agency assistant, product developer in the tourism sector, purchaser for the hotel and restaurant industry, hotel clerk, office assistant, customer advisor.

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 programmes

At individual locations, there are schools of tourism, schools of the hospitality industry, ski training (colleges of higher vocational education and schools of intermediate vocational education) and foreign-language training opportunities.

Specific features

Depending on the school location, additional qualifications such as "Junior sommelier/sommelière Austria", "Cheese connoisseur Austria", "Junior barkeeper Austria" and other occupation-related practical certificates, a practice enterprise, a junior company and language certificates are offered.

Completion of the occupation-related practical subjects by means of an occupation-related practical final examination or preliminary examination for the matriculation and diploma examination. The diploma projects/final theses are partly carried out in cooperation with external clients.

Schools and colleges of fashion

Training opportunities

School of intermediate vocational education: 3 years

College of higher vocational education: 5 years

Post-secondary VET course: 4 semesters

Add-on course: 3 years

Educational objectives

In addition to sound general education, schools and colleges of fashion (colleges of higher vocational education, add-on courses, post-secondary VET courses, schools of intermediate vocational education) provide intensive vocational training in occupation-related practice, occupation-related theory and business-oriented subjects. They teach knowledge and skills, which qualify graduates to immediately exercise a **profession in the business sphere, particularly in the fashion and textile industry.**

The major educational objectives include: professional and social competence, personal growth and development, capacity for professional mobility and flexibility, creativity, ability to criticise and take criticism, personal responsibility, social commitment, teamwork, cooperation skills and communicative skills in German and foreign languages as well as the permanent willingness to take part in continuing education and training.

The five-year colleges and the three-year add-on courses (access for graduates of schools of intermediate vocational education) additionally provide the university entrance qualification. Post-secondary VET courses are completed with a diploma examination; the admission requirement is the certificate acquired after the matriculation, Studienberechtigungsprüfung or Berufsreifeprüfung examination.

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; corporate management; as well as the in-depth area selected autonomously by the school.

Another focus is on training the ability to solve organisational problems in the company with consideration of economic, ecological and social aspects using state-of-the-art technical aids, to work in a team and to lead employees. Schools and colleges of fashion qualify graduates to support processes from the idea to the product and to implement them in a professional context with imagination, creativity and the willingness to innovate.

All the curricula of the schools and colleges of fashion additionally provide for mandatory work placements of 4 weeks in total.

Career opportunities

Graduates are employed in fields of activity in various branches of the fashion and textile industry, as well as in administration on a commercial and administrative level, e.g. as a designer for women's clothing, clothing manufacturer, production manager, fashion designer, purchaser, office worker, customer advisor, team assistant

Pursuit of regulated professions on a self-employed basis

Relevant occupations with proof of professional practice: tailor, women clothing; lingerie tailor. 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 programmes

College of fashion design and product design, as well as master craftsperson schools for tailors of women clothing, and tailors of men's clothing.

Specific features

REFA certificate as part of the training; depending on the school location, language certificates, practice enterprise or junior company are offered.

The written examination or final examination includes occupation-related practical parts. The diploma projects/final theses partly include a prototype and/or are carried out in cooperation with external clients.

Colleges of art and design

Training opportunities

College of higher vocational education: 5 years

Post-secondary VET course: 4 semesters or 6 semesters (part-time)

Educational objectives

As well as sound general education, colleges of art and design (colleges of higher vocational education, post-secondary VET courses) provide intensive vocational training in occupation-related practice, occupation-related theory and business-oriented subjects. They impart knowledge and skills that qualify graduates to immediately exercise a **profession in the business sector, especially in design and artistic fields** and in the **creative industries** as well as in administration at the executive and executive commercial and administrative levels.

Other major objectives include: personal development, capacity for professional mobility and flexibility, creativity, ability to criticise and take criticism, social commitment, teamwork, cooperation skills, and communicative skills in German and foreign languages as well as the permanent willingness to take part in continuing education and training.

The five-year colleges of higher vocational education also provide the university entrance qualification. Post-secondary VET courses are completed with a diploma examination; the admission requirement is the certificate acquired after the matriculation, Studienberechtigungsprüfung or Berufsreifeprüfung examination.

Educational content

The colleges of art and design teach content in the subject areas of religion, language and communication, science and mathematics, business and society, art and design as well as the special focus selected autonomously by the school (product design object, product design textile, visual design, object image media).

Special attention is paid to the training in the occupation-related theoretical and practical field (especially in media visualisation methods, studio for spatial design, and studio for two-dimensional design) as well as working with different materials (e.g: textile, wood, metal, ceramics).

Another focus is on training the ability to solve organisational problems in the company with consideration of economic, ecological and social aspects using state-of-the-art technical aids, to work in a team and to lead employees.

The colleges of art and design impart those competences that are necessary to grasp and implement design processes and organisational procedures (including dependencies on idea, concept, creative process, presentation of works).

The curricula of the colleges of higher vocational education additionally provide for **mandatory work placements** of 4 weeks in total.

Career opportunities

The graduates are entrepreneurs or employees with a high degree of personal responsibility working in various branches of the business sphere, especially in design and artistic fields and in the creative industries, as well as in administration at middle and executive commercial and administrative levels, e.g: team assistant, designer, graphic designer, art dealer, gallery owner, office worker.

Pursuit of regulated professions on a self-employed basis

Due to the liberalisation of the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act, access to almost all master craftsperson and proof of competence examinations is possible if the general requirements for exercising a craft or trade are met. The entrepreneurial examination is waived.

Additional VET programmes

The post-secondary VET course of art and design can optionally be run as a day form either in four semesters or as a form for people in employment in six semesters. Graduation with a diploma examination. One offer comprises occupation-related theoretical and practical training at the college of art and design with an area specialisation in jewellery design. Access requirements are the certificate acquired after the matriculation, Studienberechtigungsprüfung or Berufsreifeprüfung examination.

Specific features

The written examination includes occupation-related practical parts. The diploma projects partly include a prototype and/or are carried out in cooperation with external clients.

Colleges of product management and presentation

Training opportunities

College of higher vocational education: 5 years

Educational objectives

Intensive five-year vocational training in general education, occupation-related theory, occupation-related practice and business-oriented subjects. Teaching of knowledge and skills qualifying graduates to immediately exercise a profession at executive level in the business sphere, especially in the areas of product management and presentation, as well as to take up an academic study.

The major educational objectives include: professional and social competence, personal growth and development, capacity for professional mobility and flexibility, ability to criticise and take criticism, personal responsibility, social and ecological involvement, creativity, innovation, teamwork, problem-solving orientation, communicative skills in the language of instruction and foreign languages, the permanent willingness to take part in continuing education and training. The five-year colleges of higher vocational education also provide the university entrance qualification.

Educational content

In addition to profound general education, the colleges of product management and presentation provide training in business-oriented, occupation-related theoretical and practical subjects, such as media workshop, materials science and analysis, presentation, product design, or product management and project studio.

Another focus is on training the ability to solve organisational problems in the company with consideration of economic, ecological and social aspects using state-of-the-art technical aids, to work in a team and to lead employees.

The colleges of product management and presentation qualify graduates to support processes from the idea to the product and to implement them in a professional context with imagination, creativity and the willingness to innovate.

The curricula of the colleges of higher vocational education additionally provide for **mandatory work placements** of 4 weeks in total.

Career opportunities

The graduates are employees or entrepreneurs in the trades sector, with a special focus on product management and presentation, at middle or executive commercial and administrative level.

Pursuit of regulated professions on a self-employed basis

Due to the liberalisation of the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act, access to almost all master craftsman and proof of competence examinations is possible if the general requirements for exercising a craft or trade are met. The entrepreneurial examination is waived.

Specific features

The diploma projects partly include a prototype and/or are carried out in cooperation with external clients.

Schools of social occupations

Training opportunities

School of intermediate vocational education: 3 years

Educational objectives

The three-year schools of social occupations offer intensive VET in general education subjects, occupation-related theory, occupation-related practice, life skills and vocational and artistic subjects. They impart knowledge and skills which qualify graduates to immediately exercise professions in the **social and business field** as well as **preparation** for activities and **programmes in the social and healthcare sectors**.

There are also special forms for people in employment. Provincial laws regulate admission to related occupations upon acquisition of the certificate.

Educational content

The three-year schools of social occupations teach content in the subject areas of religion, general education and language, social fields of action and methodology, healthcare and lifestyle, economic principles and connections, and specialist practice.

The major educational objectives include: professional, social and action competence, a responsible attitude in dealing with people, social commitment, personal growth and development, personal responsibility, creativity, teamwork, ability to criticise and take criticism, capacity for professional mobility and flexibility, communicative skills in the language of instruction and in the foreign language as well as the permanent willingness to take part in continuing education and training.

The curricula of the school of social occupations also provide for **specialist practice** (during the academic year) of 12 weeks, which is completed in institutions of the field of social occupations.

Career opportunities

The graduates take up careers in fields of activity in social institutions and various branches of the business sphere and administration at the middle commercial and administrative level, e.g. as an operational service provider, office worker, secretary, clerk/civil servant, team assistant, etc. This training is also regarded as basic training for social care and healthcare professions.

Pursuit of regulated professions on a self-employed basis

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 programmes

At some locations there are two-year schools of social career guidance (school of social services) and/or of pre-professional education.

Schools of social care occupations

Training opportunities

Degree at school level: 2 years

Degree at diploma level: 3 years

Form for people in employment: 6-9 semesters or 4-6 semesters

Educational objectives

The schools of social care occupations impart skills required for modern-day assistance, help, support and care of elderly people, people in case of illness and disability as well as in emergency and crises. In a modular training programme, **social workers are trained with a focus on work with the elderly, work with families, and work with the disabled and assisting the disabled.**

Access requirements for these schools are completion of an upper or intermediate school or a VET programme and a minimum age of 17 years (day form) or 19 years (form for people in employment). The programmes last 2 or 4 years.

The Healthcare and Nursing Act and provincial legislation regulate the related professional qualifications. Provincial laws regulate admission to related occupations upon acquisition of the certificate.

Educational content

The schools of social care occupations teach contents in the subject areas of religion/ethics, language and communication, basic education in human sciences, gerontology, health and illness, home, nutrition and diet, management and organisation, mental hygiene and supervision as well as the training focuses work with the elderly, work with families, work with the disabled and assisting the disabled.

The major educational objectives include: professional, social and action competences, a responsible attitude in dealing with people, social commitment, personal development, ability to criticise and take criticism and teamwork, creativity, communicative skills in the language of instruction and in the foreign language.

Specific focus on work with the elderly and specific focus on work with the disabled (with care assistance included¹⁴): professional qualification pursuant to the Healthcare and Nursing Act and provincial legislation; VET programme.

Specific focus on work with families (with care assistance included): qualification only possible at diploma level, professional qualification pursuant to the Healthcare and Nursing Act and provincial legislation; VET programme

Specific focus on assisting the disabled (including a module on basic care): professional qualification pursuant to the Healthcare and Nursing Act, VET programme

The curricula of the schools of social care occupations additionally provide for **mandatory work placements** of at least 1200 hours in total.

Career opportunities

Employee or entrepreneur in fields of activity in various branches of business and administration as well as in social institutions e.g. caregiver for the elderly, caregiver for the disabled, family helper, care assistant.

Specific features

These schools are run as Statutschulen (these are private schools, which do not correspond to any public [legally regulated] school type).

¹⁴ Healthcare and Nursing Act Amendment of the Federal Ministry of Health (from 1 September 2016)

Colleges of agriculture and forestry

Educational objectives

Colleges of agriculture and forestry provide sound general education and intensive vocational education and training in occupation-related theory, occupation-related practice and business subjects that qualify 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 forestry as well as the requirements of nature, business, and scientific and technical progress, particularly of the digital world**. The graduates should be open-minded about the concerns of people in rural areas and display quality awareness. By involving them in cross-curricular projects and case studies, the graduates are taught the knowledge and skills, which ensure **implementation in professional practice**.

The major **educational objectives** include: technical and methodological competence, personal and social skills, entrepreneurial thinking and acting, capacity for professional mobility and flexibility, ability to criticise and take criticism, personal responsibility, social commitment, creativity, teamwork, cooperation skills, communicative skills in German and at least one foreign language, learning competence and the willingness to take part in lifelong learning.

Autonomous freedom of design

Curriculum provisions selected autonomously by schools allow special school focuses to be set to deepen and broaden the subject-related qualification profile. In addition, schools have the possibility to develop elective modules within an alternative occupation-related theoretical compulsory subject; these modules allow for additional individual specialisation. Optional subjects and optional exercises offered autonomously by schools widen their range of programmes and provide for the voluntary acquisition of additional qualifications.

Area specialisations

Colleges of agriculture and forestry comprise ten area specialisations, which allow for a differentiated orientation and specialisation in the field of agriculture and forestry.

Forestry; horticulture; gardening and landscaping; agricultural engineering; agriculture; agriculture and nutrition; information technology in agriculture¹⁵; food and biotechnology; environmental and resource management; viticulture and pomology

Special school focuses

They allow for further specialisation and/or subject-specific consolidation within certain area specialisations.

Agrarian management; information and environmental management; agricultural, environmental and energy technology; food technology; eco-social product management; production management/regional management; product marketing and regional tourism; resource management and renewable energy; corporate management; nutrition ecology.

Educational content

Colleges of agriculture and forestry teach contents of the following curriculum areas: "society and law", "language and communication", "natural and formal sciences", "economics and corporate management, personal and social skills", "physical education and sport" and - depending on the area specialisation - "agriculture", "viticulture and pomology, technology", "gardening and landscaping", "horticulture", "agricultural engineering", "forestry and natural space management", "agriculture and nutrition", "food and biotechnology", "environmental and resource management" and "information technology in agriculture".

The curricula of the colleges of agriculture and forestry provide for **mandatory work placements** of between 18 and 22 weeks and those of the three-year add-on courses for placements of between 4 and 8 weeks.

¹⁵ The transitional curriculum "Agriculture and Digitisation", which was launched in the 2019/2020 school year, will be listed as a new area specialisation "Information Technology in Agriculture" from the 2021/2022 school year.

Matriculation and diploma certificate

The **colleges of agriculture and forestry** and the **three-year add-on courses** are completed with a **double qualification**: The matriculation and diploma certificate opens up access to the sector of universities/universities of applied sciences/higher education institutions and qualifies graduates to immediately exercise advanced-level professions in agriculture, forestry or related fields.

The **diploma project** as a central part of the matriculation and diploma examination constitutes an independent pre-academic work on an agricultural or forestry or other relevant topic in **cooperation with a non-school partner**. In addition to questions and analyses relevant to the area specialisation, scientific and business management aspects are dealt with. The results of the diploma project must be summarised in the form of an abstract in German and one modern foreign language, presented, and discussed before an examination board. The use of work methods analogous to those used in the profession provides evidence of cross-curricular problem-solving and methodological competence and constitutes a first step towards starting a career.

Other certificates

Due to the acquisition of **certificates of relevance for specific occupations**, practice-oriented, competence-based teaching also leads to **additional qualifications** for students. There is the possibility of obtaining certificates in the fields of **foreign languages, information technology, business, quality management, hotel, restaurant and catering (horeca)** and in **agriculture and forestry**.

Career opportunities

Graduates are employed in the fields of agriculture and forestry, horticultural production, gardening and landscaping, viticulture and pomology, the food and biotechnology industry, the food economics, tourism and the horeca industry, agricultural engineering, environmental management, waste and recycling management at administrative, management and marketing level as well as in nutritional and environmental consulting and agricultural and forestry consulting.

Pursuit of regulated professions on a self-employed basis

It is possible to exercise relevant professions on a self-employed basis with proof of professional practice. Due to the liberalisation of the Trade, Commerce and Industry

Regulation Act, access to nearly all master craftsperson 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. The entrepreneurial examination is waived.

Professional title Ingenieur/Ingenieurin

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 and after holding an expert talk. The holders of this professional title who have been qualified within the scope of this certification procedure are classified on Level 6 of the National Qualifications Framework NQF¹⁶; this ensures that the high quality of Ingenieur-related competence boasts a better position in the international environment.

¹⁶ The NQF is based on the European Qualifications Framework EQF provided by the EU, which enables better international comparability based on an eight-level scale.

Teacher training colleges for early childhood education

Teacher training colleges for early childhood education provide general education and vocational training; they are run at 33 school locations across Austria and are offered in two school forms (in 5-year forms or as post-secondary VET courses).

General educational objective

Teacher training colleges for early childhood education have the task of imparting sound general education (this applies to the 5-year form) and those attitudes and skills which are necessary for professional pedagogical work in the field of early childhood education and day-care (after completion of the additional training as a day-care pedagogue) and (this applies to the 5-year form) at the same time lead to the university entrance qualification. Graduates should develop the following personality traits and possess the general and specific competences relevant for the respective occupation as listed below

Personality traits:

- value awareness (understanding ethical, religious and social values as the basis of a general value system),
- sensitivity and openness for philosophical/existential and religious questions, especially those of the child,
- a sense of responsibility, the willingness to take personal responsibility and the ability to criticise and take criticism,
- sensitivity for cultural and gender-specific aspects of education and socialisation,
- the willingness for innovation, flexibility and mobility,
- the willingness to acquire knowledge independently as well as to take part in in-service and continuing training,
- the ability and willingness to reflect on one's own actions and their circumstances.

General competences relevant for the occupation:

- basic philosophical/ethical/religious competence,

- language skills,
- social competence, in particular empathy, the ability to deal with one's own and other people's emotions and the ability to deal with conflict,
- communicative skills (presentation, teamwork, cooperation with institutional pedagogy establishments, public relations),
- leadership skills (leading discussions, moderating groups, project management) and
- creative competence.

Special competences for requirements on the job:

- implement knowledge of important pedagogical, psychological and sociological explanation options - especially for the development in (early) childhood and its framework conditions - in educational work appropriate to the situation,
- competence to strengthen the philosophical/ethical/religious ideas specific to children as an independent variable of human development in the search for meaning,
- ability to plan, carry out and evaluate the educational work related to individuals, age groups and tasks (e.g. measures related to intercultural learning; gender-sensitive pedagogy; special support for children with special educational needs and their integration; health management in the sense of preventive healthcare and education for a healthy lifestyle),
- competence to initiate and responsibly maintain educational partnerships appropriate to the situation in their professional work,
- special knowledge of the principles of professional legislation, especially in the areas of safety, liability, hygiene, equipment, first aid and traffic education,
- competences in business organisation and in the management of institutional childcare facilities, taking into account ecological and economic connections, including state-of-the-art technical aids and quality management (quality development and assurance),
- competence to reflect on and apply the extensive and networked (pedagogical) knowledge in connection with the experiences in the professional activity field and in the personal life situation (e.g. focus on "early language support")

The 5-year college

leads to the professional qualification and the higher education entrance qualification (final examination: matriculation and diploma examination).

Admission requirement: successful completion of the first eight years of compulsory schooling and passing of an **aptitude examination**.

Typical content of these educational establishments (in addition to general education subjects, which also include occupation-specific aspects): pedagogy (including educational psychology, educational sociology, philosophy); inclusive pedagogy; didactics; German (including speech training, children's and youth literature); practice; music education; instrumental lessons; rhythmic/musical education; art education; handicrafts and textile crafts; movement education - physical education and sport; information management and media; seminar: organisation, management and law; seminar on nutrition with practical exercises.

Day-care pedagogues (educators at day-care facilities) complete additional courses on: pedagogy/day-care, didactics of day-care education, day-care practice: assisted learning: German, modern foreign language, mathematics.

The 4-semester post-secondary VET course

It can also be run on a part-time basis for 5 to 6 semesters for people in employment and leads to the professional qualification (final examination: diploma examination). Building on the matriculation certificate, the occupation-specific subjects are comparable in scope and content to those in the 5-year college.

Admission requirement: Matriculation examination or Studienberechtigungsprüfung or Berufsreifeprüfung as well as passing of an **aptitude examination**.

After completion of the basic training, it is possible to attend a **course in inclusive early childhood education** at some locations.

The 4-semester course in inclusive early childhood education

has the task of training kindergarten teachers for special pedagogical work with small children (early childhood promotion). It can also be run as a course for people in employment (5 to 6 semesters). The training is completed with a diploma examination.

Admission requirement: Successful completion of the training as a kindergarten teacher.

Typical content of these educational establishments: pedagogy, psychology, sociology, law, medical basics and therapeutic concepts, integrative didactics, working methods for interdisciplinary early childhood promotion, methods and didactic implementation, occupational field practice, occupational field studies, movement education and artistic-creative working methods, reviews of work placements, supervision practice, communication practice, interdisciplinary case discussions.

School of intermediate vocational education for pedagogical assistance occupations

Schools of intermediate vocational education for pedagogical assistance occupations provide general education and vocational training; this new programme has been offered (since the 2019/2020 school year) at 5 school locations across Austria and is completed with the final examination of a 3-year school of intermediate vocational education.

General educational objective

It has the task of providing general education and those attitudes and skills necessary for the fulfilment of assistance in the educational and teaching tasks in kindergartens as early childhood educational establishments for children from the first year of life until they enter school. This means that, overall, professional attitude, specialist knowledge and competences are conveyed.

Personality traits:

- deal with the question of the meaning of life, with ethical and social values and with the religious dimension of life,
- act in a socially responsible, respectful and appreciative manner,
- deal sensitively with cultural, gender- and diversity-related aspects of education and teaching,
- participate in cultural work and cultural life,
- deal with conflicts in a solution-oriented and self-controlled manner and avoid violence.

General competences relevant for the occupation:

- apply a wide range of forms of communication,

- introduce basic reflection skills, assess own performance and act accordingly,
- act self-critically and cooperatively within the team,
- use own performance and support the performance of the assisted children (and young people),
- communicate in everyday and professional life, both verbally and in writing, in the language of instruction in a manner appropriate to the situation,
- have an overview of political processes and be sensitive to democratic processes, to peaceful coexistence, taking into account interculturality and diversity, as well as to the environment and ecological balance.

Special competences for requirements on the job:

- implement knowledge of the principles of professional legislation, especially in the areas of safety, liability, hygiene, equipment, first aid, traffic education and (sexual) violence, appropriate to the situation,
- deal sensitively with movement- and health-related aspects of education and teaching,
- deal consciously with the area of conflict between normalisation and the individual development of learners,
- recognise the need for development and in-service training as well as the need to keep learning independently while working,
- apply a diverse repertoire of methods, which includes different working, social and presentation forms, in a manner appropriate to the situation,
- support educational partnerships appropriate to the situation in a responsible manner,
- competence to initiate and responsibly maintain educational partnerships appropriate to the situation in their professional work,
- special knowledge of the principles of professional legislation, especially in the areas of safety, liability, hygiene, equipment, first aid and traffic education,
- competences in business organisation and in the management of institutional childcare facilities, taking into account ecological and economic connections, including state-of-the-art technical aids and quality management (quality development and assurance),
- competence to reflect on and apply the extensive and networked (pedagogical) knowledge in connection with the experiences in the professional activity field and in the personal life situation (e.g. focus on "early language support")

Add-on course

A 3-year **add-on course** enables graduates to qualify as a group-leading pedagogue. The **admission requirements** are successful completion of the first eight years of compulsory schooling and passing of an **aptitude examination**.

Typical content of these educational establishments (in addition to general education subjects, which also include occupation-specific aspects): pedagogy (including developmental psychology, inclusive pedagogy); didactics, practice and infant care; home and safety management; expression, creation and movement; seminar on creative design, music education, voice formation and elocution exercises; instrumental lessons; rhythmic/musical education; movement education, physical education and sport; assistance in day-care; language acquisition and early language education; communication practice and group dynamics; seminar on an intercultural project.

Colleges of social pedagogy

Colleges of social pedagogy provide general education and vocational training; they are run at 13 school locations across Austria and are offered in two school forms (in 5-year forms or as post-secondary VET courses).

General educational objective

The colleges of social pedagogy have the task of training students for educational and training tasks in day-care facilities, homes and day-care centres as well as other socio-pedagogical establishments for children and young people and also for extracurricular youth work and (this applies to the 5-year college) at the same time leading them to the university entrance qualification. The graduates boast the general and specific competences of relevance for the occupation as listed below:

General knowledge and skills

comprise pedagogical-didactic education as a prerequisite for the socio-pedagogical occupational field; sound skills and competences for the socio-pedagogical tasks:

- planning, implementation and evaluation of
 - education and teaching work related to individuals, age and tasks,
 - intercultural learning measures,
 - special (subject-related) and general assisted and remedial learning (in the sense of planning supportive measures in education and teaching work),
 - special support and assistance measures for children and young people with special educational needs and their integration,
- cooperation with specialists in remedial education (doctor, psychologist, therapist) as well as with representatives of other institutional pedagogy establishments,
- educational partnership (e.g. advice for parents and guardians),
- working in a team, controlling group processes, leading discussions, advisory skills and conflict management,
- major contents about society and culture as well as natural sciences.

Special knowledge and skills:

- pedagogical, psychological and sociological competence for the educational and teaching work in the socio-pedagogical occupational field,
- well-founded professional and methodological knowledge in the artistic-creative field (music education, instrumental lessons, rhythmic/musical education, art education, handicrafts, movement education — physical education and sport),
- traffic education for children and young people,
- knowledge of hygiene measures in day-care facilities, homes and other socio-pedagogical establishments as well as targeted remedial measures in the health and home economics field,
- implementation of emergency first aid measures,
- knowledge of the legal basics relevant to the profession and the ability to draft simple petitions to courts and authorities,
- basic knowledge and skills in accounting.

Adult education

Adult education in Austria comprises a wide range of educational establishments with different objectives and programmes on offer. The spectrum of programmes 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 courses and university-based programmes.

At the **federal level**, general adult education falls within the sphere of competence of the BMBWF in a relevant specialist unit but other ministries are also responsible for specific tasks of adult education. 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 **research establishments** are another category here. 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 of the BMBWF, 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. The spectrum of offers ranges from courses and workshops on to university CET programmes.

Funding of adult education

The BMBWF supports associations and institutions of adult education. 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.

To finance the supported measures and educational programmes, resources 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 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. **ESF funding** is co-financed by the BMBWF¹⁷.

Objectives and priorities

The main concern of the adult education sector is to improve access to **lifelong learning for all**. The development and implementation of programmes appropriate to adults and the target group as well as high-quality educational counselling and career guidance are essential for participation and CET success.

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

Areas of specialisation:

- 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-based education,
- improving the quality and professionalisation of adult education,
- safeguarding the basic structures of adult education.

Educational programmes

Basic education and acquisition of qualifications: Adult Education Initiative

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. In this context, the Adult Education

¹⁷ See also the chapter “International vocational education and training”.

Initiative was developed and implemented in 2012. It enables adults who lack basic skills and/or have not acquired a compulsory school qualification to resume and complete their education/training free of charge after the end of general compulsory schooling. The Federal Government and the provincial governments developed the support scheme jointly; its legal basis is an agreement according to Article 15a of the Austrian Federal Constitution (B-VG). 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,
- reaching target groups not used to learning,
- transfer of tried-and-tested learning schemes.

The **Act on the Final Examination for compulsory schooling** encourages innovative forms of implementation, which are appropriate to adults as well as 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, universities of applied sciences, post-secondary VET colleges and post-secondary VET courses in Austria and requires candidates to have an initial VET (IVET) qualification.

The ***Studienberechtigungsprüfung*** only provides access to the specific education and training pathway for which it was taken. Therefore, holders of this certificate have restricted access 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.

Educational counselling and 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.

The aim is to make the expertise of educational counsellors increasingly accessible and enhance their self-image. Specific measures in this field include joint platforms, 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 wide range of guidance, counselling and information services related to learning and careers. This Austria-wide search service for educational offers in adult education makes it easier to find CET programmes.

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 for 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. The 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, the 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 Ö-CERT is a nationwide scheme to recognise quality-assuring measures of adult learning providers in Austria. Ö-CERT is aimed at all providers which have been awarded various, often regionally developed quality labels. Ö-CERT was developed to create more transparency for learners and 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, fulfilment of specific basic requirements (regarding the organisation, available programmes, quality assurance, and compliance with democratic and ethical principles) is examined. The development of Ö-CERT was a joint effort of the BMBWF, provincial governments as well as representatives of the adult learning sector and the 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 guidance on CET for the interested public and is a platform for networking. The portal currently consists of five sections with thousands of sub-pages and databases on different topics, the following figures from 2019 show the importance of the portal in the adult education community:

- 1.4 million visitors
- 6,200 social media followers
- 200,000 downloads
- 6,000 registered participants
- 2,300 newsletter subscribers

The journal *Magazin erwachsenenbildung.at*

As early as in 2007 a provider-independent, nationwide 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 200,000 times a year.

Material on adult education

Academically founded works and specific studies related to adult education are published in this series of publications (German title: "Materialien zur Erwachsenenbildung") and made available to the interested public. The individual issues can be ordered in printed form free of charge and are available for download.

Austrian State Prize for Adult Education

The BMBWF awards the Austrian State Prize for Adult Education, which was launched in 1956, in up to four different 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.

Due to changing thematic priorities, the distinction of good practice, the openness for innovation and the bigger picture as well as its **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.

Implementation of European Commission projects

The EU continually introduces topics of relevance to education. 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 Federal Government. As well as the ministries concerned with educational issues, social partner institutions and academic expert opinions were also taken into consideration. Ten action lines formulated political objectives and strategic projects based on a vision, the current state, the objectives and measures, with the progress of 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 objective 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)** that is based on the EQF and 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 complied with this request by adopting the NQF Act (in 2016) and since 2019 has allocated, as well as formal qualifications, also non-formally acquired qualifications to the NQF qualification levels.

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 provided by the **European Agenda for Adult Learning**. It is the follow-up to the *Adult Learning Action Plan*. The Department for Adult Education of the BMBWF 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 consists 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.

UNESCO

Austria's participation in activities of **international organisations** also has positive effects on the further development of adult learning. Thus, for example, Austrian representatives took part in the **7th UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA)** in South Korea in December 2017. **UIL** (*UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning*) is responsible for various tasks in 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/RAV are also analysed from a global perspective by UNESCO/UIL and dealt with in consultations of the member states.

The OECD

The 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 2009) definitely had repercussions on the adult learning landscape in this country.

On the initiative of the 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.

Qualifications, certificates and diplomas

Qualifications

Final examination

Upon passing the final examination at schools of 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 certificate

Graduates of colleges of higher vocational education (5 years) and of 5-7 semester add-on courses acquire a double qualification: the matriculation and diploma certificate opens up access to the higher education sector (the university entrance qualification) and also to regulated professional activities, thus providing immediate entitlement to jobs at executive level.

The final thesis 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-relevant knowledge and skills they have acquired.

Since the school year 2015/2016, in addition to the diploma thesis, the **competence-oriented form of the matriculation and diploma examination** has provided for standardised written examinations for all candidates in German, a modern foreign language and applied mathematics as well as non-standardised subject-specific examinations. This means that, regarding foreign languages, English is certified at Level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the second modern foreign languages at Level B1, which is also noted in the end-of-year reports. With these two innovations - the diploma project and partial standardisation of the matriculation examination - the qualifications provided by colleges of higher vocational education have become even more competitive internationally.

Diploma examination and certificate

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

EU recognition

The **Directive 2013/55/EU** amending Directive 2005/36/EC **on the recognition of professional qualifications** entered into force on 18 January 2014 and had 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 of intermediate vocational education** corresponds to level b, the **final qualification from colleges of higher vocational education** to level c, where according to the new Directive (Article 11 point (c)(ii)) a note must be included for level c on the matriculation and diploma certificate of a college of 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 of higher vocational education** shall also be accepted in those Member States where **training on the level of a post-secondary course of at least four years' duration** is foreseen **for the respective profession**. This is an improvement for students with qualifications from colleges of 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 tool for the **international comparison of educational qualifications**. ISCED helps educational researchers and educational policy-makers compare, analyse and enhance the education systems in the OECD area with currently 34 member states. As ISCED levels are specified from pre-primary education to university, they help other countries understand better and more quickly which educational level is achieved upon completion of a particular programme.

The adapted system **ISCED 2011** has brought about a positive and far-reaching change for Austria regarding the presentation of colleges of higher vocational education. According to the available criteria, **years 4 and 5 of these colleges correspond to Level 5** - this level is 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 their **occupation-specific orientation**. Such programmes can be defined as the first part of a bachelor's programme. Therefore competences acquired at colleges of 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 3: part-time vocational schools, schools of intermediate vocational education
- ISCED 5: colleges of higher vocational education
- ISCED 5: add-on courses, schools and colleges for people in employment
- ISCED 5: post-secondary VET courses, post-secondary VET colleges, master craftsperson schools, industrial master colleges

In the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the second relevant reference model for qualifications in Europe, all forms of colleges of higher vocational education have been classified at Level 5 and schools of intermediate vocational education at Level 4 (see www.qualifikationsregister.at).

Certificates

The **final certificate** (from the school of intermediate vocational education) and the **matriculation and diploma certificate** (from the college of higher vocational education) not only show the examination areas and related assessments but also the timetable with the allocation of total number of hours per week and subject. In addition, these documents include information on connected qualifications.

Furthermore, graduates of schools of intermediate vocational education and colleges of higher vocational education can present Europass certificate supplements, which provide a more detailed overview of the acquired skills, competences and activity areas.

Professional qualifications

Vocational Training Act (Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG)

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 of intermediate vocational education and colleges of higher vocational education as well as their special forms and school pilot projects. One provision, for example, stipulates that **successful completion** of a school of intermediate vocational education of at least three years' duration or a college of higher vocational education ensures **minimum professional skills** in terms of

- the professional qualification,
- labour legislation including collective bargaining agreements,
- social security legislation.

This means that the certificate awarded to graduates of schools of intermediate vocational education and colleges of higher vocational education 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 of intermediate vocational education of at least three years’ duration,
- the matriculation and diploma certificate awarded by a college of higher vocational education,
- the diploma certificate issued by a post-secondary VET course.

Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act (Gewerbeordnung, GewO)

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. Consequently, the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs 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 of intermediate vocational education, a matriculation and diploma certificate from a college of higher vocational education or a diploma certificate from a post-secondary VET course can, by way of example, 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 proof of competence examination or of specified programmes as well as evidence of relevant professional experience are also required.

Professional title

The professional title Ingenieur/Ingenieurin can be awarded to graduates of colleges of engineering and crafts and colleges of agriculture and forestry. The title is conferred by the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism respectively. The legal bases are the 2017 Ingenieur Act and relevant ordinances.

Graduates must meet the following **requirements** and undergo a certification procedure:

- completion of the matriculation and diploma exam according to the curriculum of Austrian colleges of 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,
- certification in the form of an expert talk (certification board).

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 above-mentioned facts are regulated in the Entrepreneurial Examination Ordinance.

Ranges 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 colleges of higher vocational education** and the **majority of schools of intermediate vocational education**. This leads to the **waiving** of the entrepreneurial exam for these graduates.

Other certificates

In line with their specialisation or in addition to it, students in the VET school sector can acquire **many other relevant (external) certificates**, 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 of intermediate vocational education and colleges of higher vocational education, which students may take advantage of **on a voluntary basis**.

International vocational education and training

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 development of each individual to be able to meet the increasing requirements of the labour market.** European cooperation in the field of education lays the foundation 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 to 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 (CLIL) 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 co-shaped on an international scale.

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 cooperation forms.

European educational programme Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport. The education sector is divided into four sectors: **school education** (= general education), **vocational education and training**, **higher education** and **adult education**. **34 programme countries** participate in Erasmus+. In addition to the 27 EU member states, these are the United Kingdom (at least for a transitional period until the end of 2020), Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey.

Erasmus+ offers the opportunity to study, teach, complete practical placements/internships in another European country or cooperate across borders. The programme improves the subject-specific, linguistic, social and intercultural competences of teachers and learners. In addition, increased awareness of a common Europe and its diversity is created. Erasmus+ complements and supports national education policy priorities and focuses. The internationalisation of the education system, the promotion of the European dimension and mobility in the education sector have had a broad impact in Austria that would not be conceivable without the EU educational programmes.

The programme is divided into three Key Actions:

- Key Action 1: **Mobility** of students, pupils in vocational education and training, apprentices and teachers for learning purposes, educational and general school and higher education staff; voluntary activities and youth exchanges.
- Key Action 2: **Strategic Partnerships** - alliances between schools, VET, CVET, higher and adult education institutions, youth organisations and enterprises. Within these partnerships, the mobility of pupils from general education schools is also promoted.
- Key Action 3: **Support for policy reform** - including activities to implement transparency and recognition instruments, support for EU-wide networks.

Outlook for Erasmus+ (2021 to 2027)

The **next Erasmus+ programme generation for the period 2021 to 2027** is currently being negotiated. Erasmus+ will remain unchanged in its basic structure. An increase in budgetary resources (depending on the negotiations on the next multiannual EU financial framework 2021 to 2027) is envisaged. In addition to traditional student mobility, the focus is to be placed on increasing the **mobility of pupils** and opening up **worldwide exchange beyond Europe for vocational training**. Overall, the programme will be targeted more towards **people from disadvantaged backgrounds** and smaller education and higher education institutions without significant financial or administrative capacity and will be easier to administer. Erasmus+ will also focus on partnerships of excellence: with the **European Higher Education** initiative, **Centres of Professional Excellence** and **joint master's degrees**.

In the field of **school education** (general education), Erasmus+ supports cross-border cooperation between kindergartens, schools and other institutions related to the school sector. In addition, the programme supports teaching and learning stays of staff in early childhood education and care and of school staff and of pupils in other European countries. These stays abroad by individuals must always create added value for the sending institution.

- **Erasmus+ for pupils:** Erasmus+ currently supports these stays abroad exclusively within the framework of Strategic Partnerships between schools. In the new programme

generation, there should also be the possibility of individual and group mobility of young people under Key Action 1.

- **Erasmus+ for educators, teachers, school leaders and other school staff:** Funding is available for teaching assignments, professional development and job shadowing in other European countries.
- **Erasmus+ for kindergartens, schools and other institutions related to the school sector:** Erasmus+ promotes cross-border cooperation between schools, kindergartens, authorities and other organisations related to the school sector. The programme differentiates between two possibilities:
 - Strategic Partnerships: Cross-border cooperation projects between schools, kindergartens and other institutions relevant for (pre-)school education,
 - eTwinning: The online platform 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 field of **vocational education and training**, Erasmus+ supports cross-border cooperation between institutions that improve vocational education and training (VET) in Europe. In addition to the modernisation and internationalisation of the participating organisations, the programme strengthens the competitiveness of entire sectors. Every year, thousands of students in initial vocational education and training (IVET), apprentices and vocational education and training professionals go to other European countries to learn or teach through Erasmus+. In the new programme generation, mobility opportunities in VET are to be extended beyond Europe.

- **Erasmus+ for pupils in IVET and apprentices:** Pupils from VET institutions and apprentices are eligible for an internship abroad. Those who complete their internship abroad within one year of completing their training can also participate.
- **Erasmus+ for VET professionals:** Teachers at VET schools, trainers and other VET professionals may take part in in-service training or teach in enterprises and VET institutions in programme countries. Teaching assignments and CVET in the form of internships, job shadowing or on-site courses are possible.
- **Erasmus+ for VET and other institutions:** Erasmus+ promotes cross-border cooperation between VET institutions and other organisations related to the VET sector. The programme differentiates between two possibilities:

- **Strategic Partnerships:** Cooperation of at least three institutions from different countries with the aim of improving the quality of vocational education and training,
- **Sector Skills Alliances:** Cooperation between education and training providers and the world of work to create new sector-specific or cross-sectoral curricula and to develop new methods in initial and continuing VET.

One initiative of excellence in vocational education and training, which is currently being piloted and will become part of the future Erasmus+ programme, is the "Centres of Professional Excellence". In these regionally organised transnational centres, enterprises, schools, public institutions and higher education institutions (HEI) can work together on a common theme, for example the development of high-quality initial, in-service and continuing training with a practice-oriented approach and a focus on mobility experiences. The **National Agency Erasmus+ Education** at the Austrian agency for international mobility and cooperation in education, science and research OeAD-GmbH provides information and advice on the funding opportunities within the EU programme.

Europass

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**. The Europass initiative involves all EU members and the candidate countries.

The five Europass documents:

- The **Europass Curriculum Vitae (CV)** is a format to prepare a CV that includes a comprehensive and standardised overview of formal qualifications, 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 a document to record learning and professional experience gained in another country participating in the Europass initiative.
- The **Europass Certificate Supplements** provide a description of competences and qualifications acquired in the course of a VET programme to go along with the final VET certificate.
- The **Europass Diploma Supplement** contains detailed information about the acquired higher education diploma.

The European Social Fund

The BMBWF has been participating in the measures of the European Social Fund (ESF) for several years. The EU funds obtained from this institution make a major contribution to implementing innovative and labour market-relevant projects in the education sector. In the ESF programming period 2014 to 2020, measures in the following areas have been implemented:

In the area of **adult education**, the focus is on educational counselling and career guidance, basic education, measures for people at a disadvantage and the field of equal opportunities. In concrete terms, the following measures have been and are being implemented:

- **Target group-oriented CET of provider-neutral educational counselling services:** through regional project networks with the aim of enabling educationally disadvantaged people to access lifelong learning.
- **Expansion of basic education programmes in the Adult Education Initiative:** The aim is to enable young people and adults to acquire basic skills and educational qualifications even after the end of the school-based education phase.
- **Qualification measures for staff in basic education:** The aim is to promote initial and in-service measures for these people, to improve the quality of the courses on offer and to support innovative developments for professionalisation.
- **Qualification measures to implement the new compulsory school-leaving certificate scheme in adult education:** The aim is to support the implementation of the new scheme of the compulsory school-leaving certificate (PSA) in adult education in a quality-assured and modern format.
- **Improvement of the permeability of the education system and of access to higher education:** Professionalisation measures for the compulsory school-leaving certificate in adult education (ePSA) with the aim of supporting the implementation of the cross-

curricular ePSA scheme with examination competence for adult education institutions in a quality-assured and modern format.

- **Further development of educational offers in the field of basic education and specific educational programmes for educationally disadvantaged women:** There is support for development projects that increase the participation of low-skilled or educationally disadvantaged people in basic education and improve equal opportunities.
- **Further development of the recognition and certification system of the Austrian Academy of Continuing Education:** Accreditation of existing CET programmes; adaptation of the system to European requirements; quality assurance of this system.
- **Expansion of basic education programmes and of programmes to enable women to acquire the compulsory school-leaving certificate in the Adult Education Initiative:** The target group is women aged 15 and over with basic educational needs, regardless of their origin, first language or any school qualifications they may have.

In basic education, the educational programmes promote the acquisition of language skills in German and another language, numeracy skills, learning skills and the use of information and communication technologies or they prepare students specifically for taking the compulsory school-leaving examinations.

In the area of **school-based education**, the main focus is on "combating early school leaving", which comprises a variety of measures that contribute significantly to improving the situation in this area; specifically, the following measures are being implemented:

- **Transitional stage** (schools and colleges for business administration, schools and colleges of engineering and crafts): a course during the year for young people in the 9th year; specific support measures to reduce deficits in key basic skills to prevent early school leaving.
- **Promotion of German as the language of instruction in schools and colleges of business administration:** this special promotion of German as the language of instruction focuses on schools with a percentage of at least 50% of students with a first language other than German.
- **Competence-oriented independent learning in schools and colleges for business administration:** learning support, learning counselling and support in case of deficits in all subjects taught in schools for pupils with a migration background, with the aim of passing exams in the subjects taught and remaining in the school system.

Entrepreneurship education and business education

Entrepreneurship education is the development of own ideas and learning the skills to put these ideas into practice and thereby generating added value for society. Entrepreneurship education (EE) is one of the overarching themes enshrined in the curricula and is therefore included in connection with the guiding principle of education for sustainable development. The pioneers of entrepreneurship education are schools of intermediate vocational education and colleges of higher vocational education, especially schools and colleges for business administration. In addition, entrepreneurship education is enshrined as an overarching theme in the new generation of curricula at primary and lower secondary level.

Entrepreneurship education - education in entrepreneurial thinking and acting - in a wider sense comprises all educational measures that **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 dependent employment.

Children and young people learn to develop and implement ideas, create value and analyse the value chain, see themselves as part of the economy and society and recognise their role in the business cycle. They also learn to estimate prices and distinguish price from value. They become implementers of ideas and designers. They recognise their strengths and learn how to use them for their goals. They train optimism, self-motivation and learn how to treat themselves and others attentively. They learn to communicate empathically and to empathise with the people they meet. They start their first own project playfully and, in this process, learn how to handle risks. They use their own potential and learn to recognise social problems and to deal with the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN (SDGs).

The teaching principle of entrepreneurship education

The curricula of part-time vocational schools, the curricula of schools and colleges of business administration, the curricula of colleges of engineering, arts and crafts and of colleges of tourism and fashion set forth a specific **teaching principle**: "Education in entrepreneurial thinking and acting". It says:

Entrepreneurship education - enabling the individual to take the initiative and think and act independently as an entrepreneur, employee and as a consumer, to act actively and responsibly and thus help shape the economy and society.

This means that teachers **in all school subjects** must promote entrepreneurial thinking and related attitudes. Entrepreneurship education has been or is being enshrined in **all** VET school curricula.

Entrepreneurship education is implemented most comprehensively in **schools and colleges for 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. The training focus entrepreneurship and management is enshrined in the curriculum as a special in-depth area and is offered at one third of the locations. The **educational standards for entrepreneurship** were also developed in the area of schools and colleges for business administration. They correspond to the cluster objective of the curriculum.

Business projects

Depending on the school form chosen, students of colleges of 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 young people apply the knowledge they have acquired based on a practice-oriented assignment. These mandatory 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**.

EESI competence centre

In Austria, a number of entrepreneurship education activities are carried out in good cooperation with the school authorities; these EE activities have picked up considerable momentum in recent years.

The EESI impetus centre is the service centre for entrepreneurship education in the Austrian school system. The EESI team certifies schools as "entrepreneurship schools" and thus makes a significant contribution to school development, carries out in-service training and

other activities - from debating clubs to a wide range of competitions (ideas and business plan competition, state championships on entrepreneurship, EuroSkills, etc.).

Certification as an **entrepreneurship school** (ONR 42001), which has been possible since 2011, aims to confirm to the school location that it has implemented entrepreneurship activities in a **holistic, goal-oriented and long-term** manner in everyday school life. Sustainable entrepreneurship education is only possible if it is integrated into the school development process and is supported and experienced by all those involved in the school sector. In this process, learning and teaching should be planned and designed in an “entrepreneurial” way.

National Action Plan for Entrepreneurship Education

The National Action Plan for Entrepreneurship Education is a cooperation project between the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) and the BMBWF, in the framework of which other ministries as well as social partners, the Federation of Austrian Industries, universities, initiatives, etc. agree to work on a **common vision for entrepreneurship education** in Austria and to jointly strive to achieve this vision.

This should lead to the following results, among others:

- The potential of young people and teaching staff is recognised and promoted in a goal-oriented manner; the system of the school is open to entrepreneurship education and the performance assessment is potential-oriented. 100 % of the young people have the confidence to implement ideas.
- Entrepreneurship education is enshrined in all educational institutions, and there is free scope and there are open workshops in which entrepreneurial ideas are implemented. Each student has implemented one idea that is tested on the market. Schools are part of a network with entrepreneurs and supporters.

Entrepreneurial Skills Pass/Junior Company

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

Entrepreneurship for Engineers

The nationwide working group Entrepreneurship Education in Engineering supports a structural and area-wide implementation of entrepreneurial thinking in the area of schools and colleges of engineering, arts and crafts.

Entrepreneurship Education in Engineering has the following goals:

- combine the technical or technological competence of students (their ability to create, design and build products) with economic and social aspects of a product innovation or market launch (subject-related competence),
- widen the diversity of methods and focus on methods characterising successful entrepreneurs in terms of creativity, innovation as well as strategic development and project implementation (methodological competence),
- impart approaches and attitudes such as orientation towards opportunities, customers, solutions, benefits and service (personal and social competence),
- certification of schools by the International Society for Engineering Pedagogy (IGIP Austria) in cooperation with Graz University of Technology,
- certification of students who have proven their entrepreneurship competence.

The following focuses are pursued to reach the objectives of entrepreneurship education at schools and colleges of 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,
- developing methodological know-how (methods for innovation, creativity, assessment, strategy development) and enhanced understanding of innovation management,
- initiating cross-curricular and practice-oriented projects for various age groups – participation in competitions (such as Jugend Innovativ (Innovative Youth), Invent a Chip, Young Austrian Engineers CAD Contest, and similar).

Practice enterprises

Practice enterprises as **training locations and places where entrepreneurial thinking and acting is trained**: Students work in the practice enterprise for 3 to 4 hours a week for one year. They apply in practice what they have learned in other subjects and, in this way, learn to think and act like entrepreneurs. Practice enterprises have **real partner enterprises** in

the business sphere. This close partnership aims to encourage experience exchanges to simulate company practice.

The practice enterprise is the **model of a real company**. This model enables 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 in the real market economy, practice enterprises also have **external contacts**. These enable young people to discover the **business culture** of their partners at home and abroad.

The practice enterprise as a **place and method of learning** forms a mandatory part of the curriculum at all schools and colleges of business administration and colleges of agriculture and forestry; in addition, it is recommended to integrate the concept into the business-related training of the entire VET sector. It was in **1993** that, for the first time in Europe, practice enterprises were made **mandatory** in the **curricula of schools and colleges for business administration in Austria**.

Practice enterprises are also run in **other schools of the VET sector**: in part-time vocational schools, schools and colleges of agriculture and forestry, schools and colleges of engineering and crafts, schools and colleges of tourism and, above all, in schools and colleges of management and services industries. Currently **850 practice enterprises** are being operated in Austria, some of them in the adult learning sector.

Most of the practice enterprises are run in year 4 of colleges of business administration and year 3 of schools of business administration. The main focus of practice enterprises is on the trade and services sectors.

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

In a practice enterprise, all the **sector-specific business cases** which may occur in practice, from procurement through the provision of services to sales, are covered. 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 enterprise is organised in **departments** dealing with business management, human resources, secretarial services, marketing, sales, controlling,

accounts, logistics, etc. Young people rotate jobs in the various departments, where they carry out the specific tasks.

Pedagogical and operational objectives

Teachers teach differently in the practice enterprise, they plan the **strategic and pedagogical objectives** of the enterprise and support - usually in the position of managers - the employees in the implementation of the operational objectives of the practice enterprise.

The aim of the classes in the practice enterprise is to impart knowledge about internal company processes and the connections between businesses in a cross-curricular, action- and problem-oriented as well as student-centred way which corresponds with real-life practice. Above all, the activities launched by the business partners set in motion **learning processes** among the students and create a high level of **motivation**.

The acquisition of **key skills** (e.g. ability to work in a team, networked thinking, and language skills) enables students to be professionally mobile and flexible in the international work and professional environment. As well as **international contacts**, simulation is another strength of the practice enterprise; even wrong decisions, which could put their own company at risk in real business life, have no serious economic consequences here, but as part of the students' **personal experiences** constitute an essential factor in **learning** and **personal development processes**.

Practice enterprise working group

The working group of practice enterprises in schools and colleges for business administration is a major **driving force behind the further development** of the practice enterprise; the Business Education Department of Graz University provides academic support; it works together with ACT – the Austrian Center for Training Firms. Similarly, the working group of practice enterprises in schools and colleges of social and services industries supports the practice enterprise teachers in their field.

ACT – the Austrian Center for Training Firms

The Austrian Center for Training Firms was **founded in 1993** on the occasion of the reform of the curricula for schools and colleges for business administration as the control centre of the **Austrian practice enterprise market**, as a link between the national and international practice enterprise network, and as an innovation centre and institution for further developing the practice enterprise concept. ACT represents the Austrian practice enterprises in the international umbrella organisation **PEN Worldwide**.

ACT provides Austrian practice enterprises with the **public bodies, authorities and other services online which are necessary for realistic business transactions** (www.act.at) and which are not offered by the practice enterprise market itself and supports national and international business 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, transports, shopping mall, foreign language service, export guarantee, tenders.

According to the curriculum of colleges of business administration, students are to make themselves familiar with the services of the Austrian Center for Training Firms in the semester **preceding** practice enterprise work. A specific **training area** has been set up for this purpose. ACT also offers support in the initial and continuing education of practice enterprise teaching staff to become practice enterprise managers.

The following annual figures aim to illustrate the importance of work in practice enterprises¹⁸:

Service, authority	annually	Notes:
ACT Bank	199,000 transactions 175,000 transfers 1,000 applications	Cash payments, overdraft facilities, etc.
ACT Social Insurance	9,000 electronic data transfer (ELDA) notifications	Monthly contribution base notifications; registration

¹⁸ Data collection in April 2020 for the years 2018 and 2019 (average).

Service, authority	annually	Notes:
	450 ELDA employers	and deregistration of employees
ACT Court	150 orders for payment procedure	
ACT Transports	6,300 national transports 200 international transports	6 different types of transport
ACT Tax Office	11,500 site views of tax account 6,150 taxes and duties paid on time 220 repayment requests	
ACT Ads	150 ads	1-4 weeks each
ACT Orders	800 tenders	

Teaching in the VET sector / initial, in-service and continuing training of teaching staff

The 14 **university colleges of teacher education** in Austria are responsible for the high-quality initial, in-service and continuing training of teachers and for the underlying research activities for example in the areas of profession research, teaching and learning research, pedagogy, subject-specific didactics, school and teaching development.

Tasks of university colleges of teacher education

The tasks of the university colleges of teacher education are defined in § 8 of the Higher Education Act (Hochschulgesetz or HG):

- initial, in-service and continuing training of teachers with a focus on the pedagogical profession and its professional fields within the framework of teaching and research according to international standards by means of programmes on education, subject-specific academic knowledge, subject-specific didactics, and pedagogical-didactic training.
- Research in all pedagogical professional fields in order to gain academic knowledge for the further development of teaching.
- Participation within the framework of their academic and occupational field-related teaching and research in school development and in the quality development of educational institutions.
- Teaching of the ability to exercise pedagogical professions responsibly through appropriate school-based and professional practice as well as through academic and occupational field-related research and teaching.

Organisation of university colleges of teacher education

University colleges of teacher education are funded by the public sector. There are nine public university colleges of teacher education, which are federal institutions. Eight university colleges of teacher education in the individual provinces are under the

supervision of the BMBWF and the University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy is under the supervision of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism.

In addition, there are five recognised private university colleges of teacher education under the responsibility of a legal entity other than the Federal Government. The University College of Teacher Education Burgenland is run by a foundation especially established for this purpose and the other four by a diocese of the Catholic Church.

Governance of university colleges of teacher education

The university colleges of teacher education are governed by the target, performance and resource plan, which is concluded between the responsible federal ministry and the university college of teacher education for a period of three years. In addition, the University College of Teacher Education Development Plan defines the positioning of the university colleges of teacher education as a higher education sector in the entire Austrian higher education system and its quality-oriented (further) development from 2021 to 2026.

Initial training and qualifications of teaching staff

The training and qualifications of teaching staff in the VET school sector vary widely, which is due to the differentiated ranges of subjects taught there. Basically there are three types of teaching staff at the schools of intermediate vocational education and colleges of higher vocational education (BMHS for short):

- Teachers of general education subjects - Teacher training secondary level general education
- Teachers of occupation-related theory - Teacher training secondary level VET
- Teachers of occupation-related practice - Teacher training secondary level VET

In addition, teacher training secondary level VET for teachers at part-time vocational schools covers both the general education subjects and those of occupation-related theory and practice.

Teaching staff of general education subjects at the BMHS

Teacher training (bachelor and master degree) for these teachers is carried out within the framework of courses on secondary level general education in cooperation between university colleges of teacher education and universities.

A one-year induction period is scheduled when students enter the teaching profession.

Teaching staff of occupation-related theory at the BMHS

Before entering the teaching profession, the teachers have completed a university-level subject-related degree programme and several years of relevant professional experience in the business sphere. In the first few years, while working as teachers, they complete the bachelor's degree course "Studies supplementing relevant studies".

In order to qualify for teaching business subjects, a teacher must have a degree in Business Education. This is polyvalent in structure, which means that after completing their training, students are qualified both for teaching activities and for a wide range of tasks in company practice. In Austria, it is currently possible to study Business Education at four universities. The prerequisites for teaching activities are a degree in Business Education (diploma or master's degree) as well as at least two years of relevant professional experience after completing a business degree.

Teaching staff of occupation-related practice at the BMHS

These teachers are graduates of a subject-related VET programme and have several years of relevant professional experience in the business sphere. In the first few years, while working as teachers, they complete the bachelor's degree course "Dual VET as well as engineering and crafts".

Teaching staff at part-time vocational schools

Teachers at part-time vocational schools have completed subject-specific training and several years of professional experience and complete their teacher training at university colleges of teacher education for the following package of subjects:

- General education and business subjects
- Occupation-related theory

- Occupation-related practice

In the first years of service, while working as teachers, they complete the bachelor's degree course "Dual VET as well as engineering and crafts".

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

With the academic year 2016/2017, a new organisation of teacher training programmes at the secondary level of VET entered into force which is in line with the Bologna structure - the bachelor's programme comprising a total of 240 ECTS credits and the master's programme comprising a total of 60 ECTS, with the latter optional for teachers at part-time vocational schools, for teachers of occupation-related practice and for teachers of occupation-related theory with a subject-specific tertiary qualification.

In-service and continuing training of teachers

In line with the principle of professionalisation, it is indispensable for all teachers to keep their level of occupation-related knowledge 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 in the different occupational fields.

Teachers can acquire further qualifications in addition to those already acquired in teacher training. Continuing training programmes are certified and often connected with new qualifications.

Organisation of in-service and continuing training activities

As far as programmes of in-service and continuing training are 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.

School-centred in-service and continuing training will play a very important role in the coming years. When implementing the new school autonomy, it is essential to assist and support the school or cluster managers in their school and teaching development. Nevertheless, the focus in the VET sector will continue to be on the subject-related content of in-service and continuing training.

The great diversity of the vocational education and training school system makes it necessary to coordinate in-service and continuing training on a nationwide basis. The planning and coordination of these programmes is carried out in close cooperation between the university colleges of teacher education and the BMBWF specialist unit. The involvement of the schools or school authorities through the university colleges of teacher education is ensured in advance. This approach ensures nationwide programmes are set up in line with demand and enables a rapid response to current requirements.

Focal points of the in-service and continuing training for teachers

- **School development consulting:** Schools bear responsibility for the quality of their work and the quality of the results. School development consultants support quality development and quality assurance processes in schools. They advise school managements, cluster managements, specialist teams, coordination or steering groups, entire bodies in processes of school quality management and contribute their professional consulting know-how for designing sustainable development and change projects in all types of schools.
- **Digital education:** Digitisation already covers almost all areas of life. It is the biggest change in business, work and communication. It brings about radical changes in our co-existence. This poses great challenges for the education system in particular, from the subject-related content to the way it is taught. It becomes apparent that the focus is less on learning individual facts and more on an understanding of large structures, interrelationships, critical faculty, and interpretation.
- **Competence orientation of teaching:** University colleges of teacher education support schools in their implementation of competence orientation, which constitutes an integral part of lesson planning, teaching practice and performance assessment.
- **New curricula with different subject focuses depending on the type of school.**
- **Inclusion/integration:** In addition to the further development of inclusive education, vocational training in accordance with § 8b section 1 and § 8b section 2 of the Vocational Training Act (BAG) is also a focal point, especially the sensitisation of teachers to deal with students with disabilities or learning difficulties.

- **Intercultural education:** The social, cultural and linguistic diversity in our globalised society leads to an increasing heterogeneity of life plans and family realities. This is reflected in our classrooms. Intercultural education enables both teachers and learners to deal respectfully with diversity in a multicultural society.

Links

Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research: www.bmbwf.gv.at

VET schools and colleges: www.berufsbildendeschulen.at

VET Research Conference: www.berufsbildungsforschungs-konferenz.at

Educational standards: www.bildungsstandards.berufsbildendeschulen.at

CEBS: www.cebs.at

COOL: www.cooltrainers.at

Digital education: eeducation.at

Diploma theses: www.diplomarbeiten-bbs.at

Erasmus+: www.bildung.erasmusplus.at

Adult education: www.erwachsenenbildung.at; www.initiative-erwachsenenbildung.at; oe-cert.at

Europass: www.europass.at

Junior Company, Entrepreneurial Skills Pass: www.junior.cc/entrepreneurial-skills-pass

Work placement, internship: www.praktika-bbs.at/

Matriculation and diploma examination and certificate: www.srdp.at

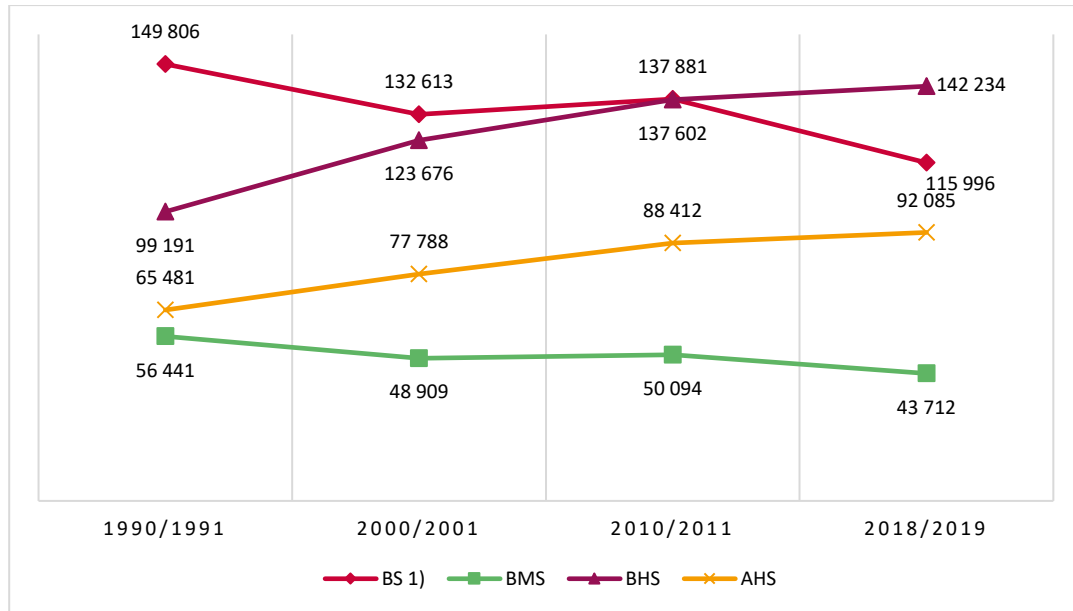
Search for schools: www.abc.berufsbildendeschulen.at

Practice enterprises: www.act.at

EUROPASS Certificate Supplements: www.zeugnisinfo.at

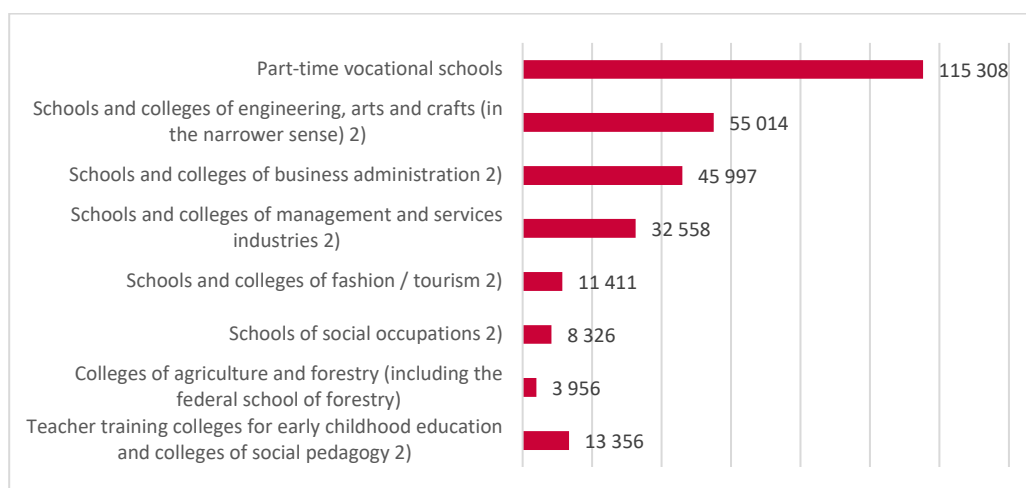
Key figures of VET

Diagram 1: Development of student figures, upper secondary level



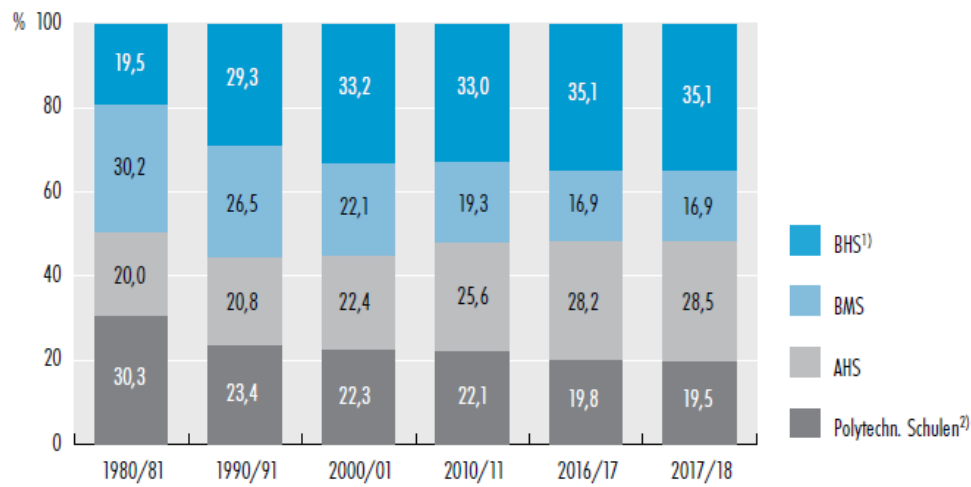
Source: Statistics Austria, 11/2019. – 1) Part-time vocational schools

Diagram 2: Share of students in selected types of VET schools and colleges¹⁾, 2018/2019



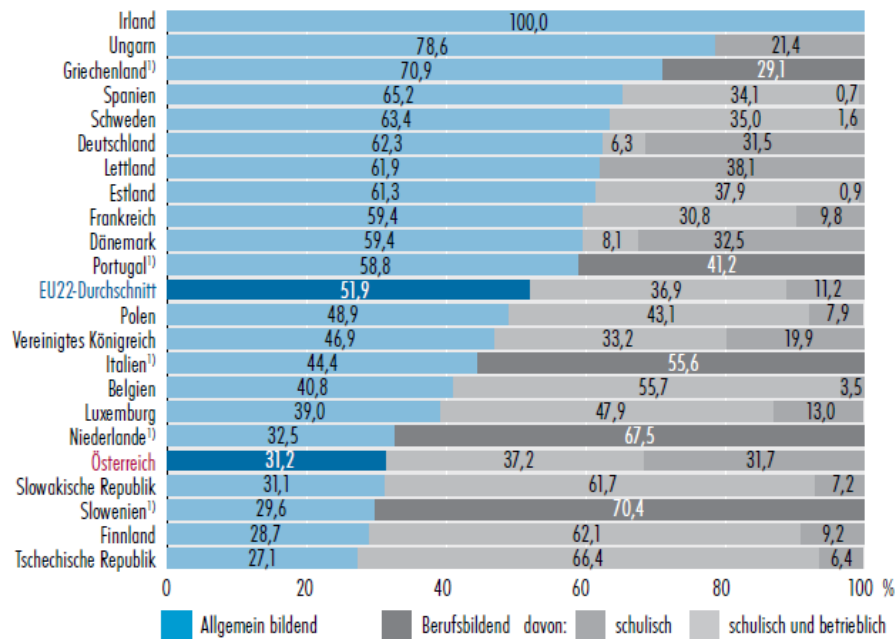
Source: Educational documentation. – 1) Excluding schools of agriculture and forestry and part-time vocational schools in agriculture and forestry. 2) Including Statutschulen (these are private schools, which do not correspond to any public [legally regulated] school type).

Diagram 3: Students in year 9 by school type, 2017/2018



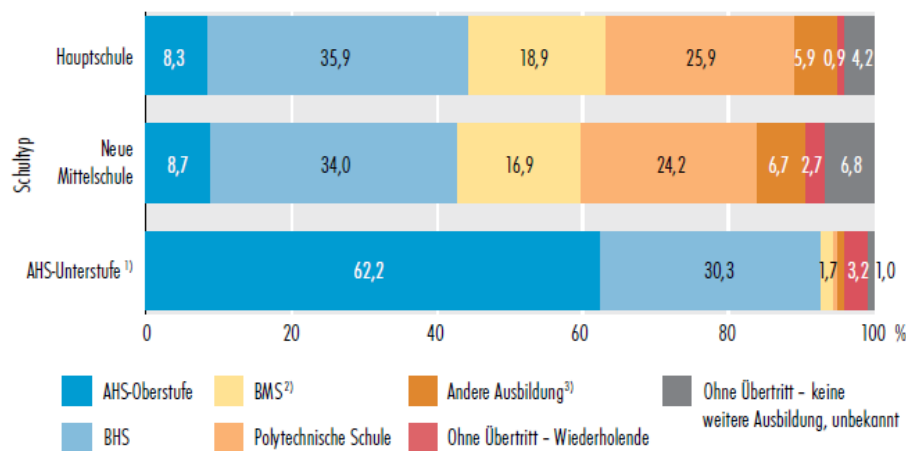
Source: Statistics Austria, School Statistics 2017/ 2018. – 1) Including teacher training colleges in upper secondary education. – 2) Including general education Statutschulen (these are private schools which do not correspond to any public [legally regulated] school type) and special needs schools.

Diagram 4: Orientation of education programmes at upper secondary level in a national comparison, 2018



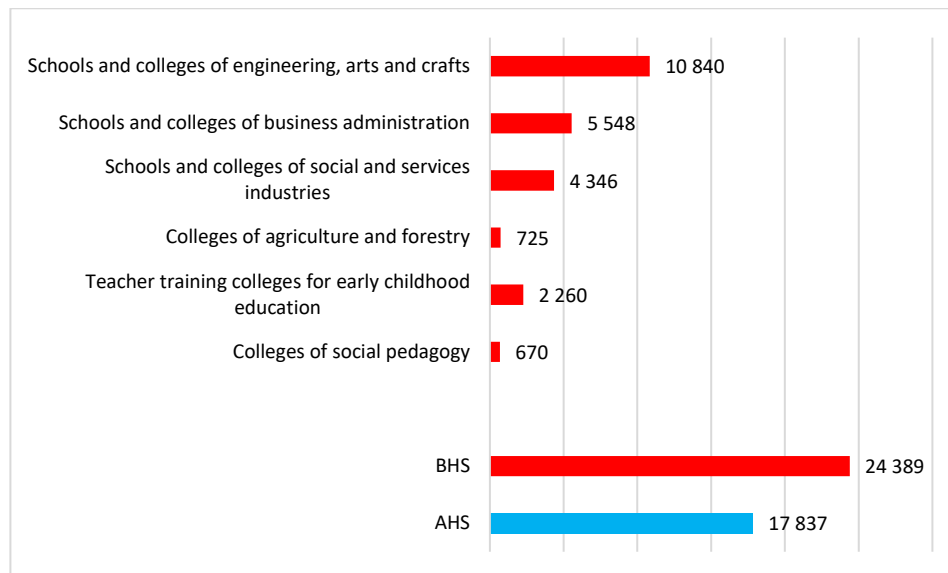
Source: OECD, Education at a Glance 2018 (reporting year 2016). – 1) No information on the distinction between school versus school and company.

Diagram 5: Transfer rates from lower to upper secondary education, 2017/2018



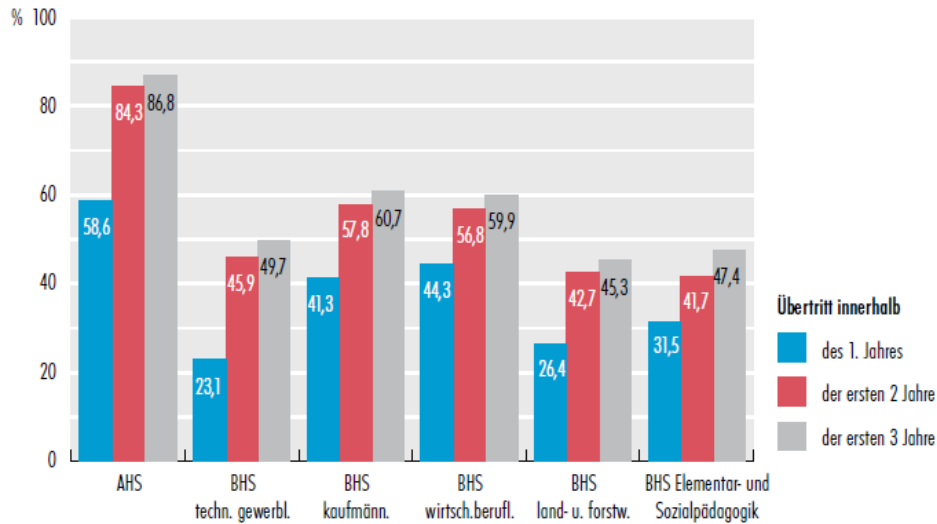
Source: Statistics Austria, School Statistics 2017/ 2018. – 1) Including the pilot project “new secondary school” at locations of the academic secondary school lower cycle. – 2) Including other VET Statutschulen (these are private schools which do not correspond to any public [legally regulated] school type). – 3) Mainly part-time vocational schools.

Diagram 6: Matriculation and diploma examinations passed, 2018 academic year



Source: Statistics Austria, School Statistics. 11/2019. Matriculation and diploma examinations passed, taken between 01.10.2017 and 30.09.2018; including special forms such as post-secondary VET courses, add-on courses and schools for people in employment.

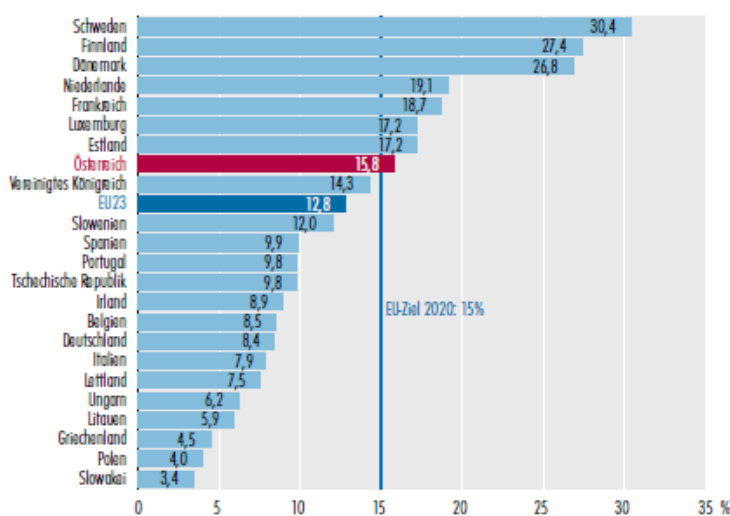
Diagram 7: Cumulative transfer rates from the matriculation certificate or the matriculation and diploma certificate to the higher education system by school type, 2017/2018



Source: Statistics Austria, educational career statistics. Analysis of the matriculation examinations taken from 2011/2012 to 2016/2017 for which enrolment data were available up to the academic year 2017/2018

Diagram 8: Participation of the population aged 25 to 64 years, 2017

4 Beteiligung der 25- bis 64-Jährigen am lebenslangen Lernen im internationalen Vergleich



Q: Eurostat 2017. Besuch von Kursen, Schulen od. Hochschulen in den letzten vier Wochen vor d. Befragung.

Source: Facts and figures about education 2017/18. Statistics Austria, Vienna 2019, page 71

Abbreviations

BBS	VET schools and colleges
BMS	Schools of intermediate vocational education
BHS	Colleges of higher vocational education
BMHS	Schools of intermediate vocational education and colleges of higher vocational education
BMBWF	Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research ¹⁹
AHS	Academic secondary schools
PH	University colleges of teacher education
HAK	Colleges of business administration
HAS	Schools of business administration
HTL	Schools and colleges of engineering, arts and crafts
BAfEP	Teacher training colleges for early childhood education
BASOP	Colleges of social pedagogy
HUM	Schools and colleges of social and services industries
HLA	VET colleges

¹⁹ In this brochure, the various federal ministries are not abbreviated with the exception of the BMBWF.

