Apprenticeship system

Dual Vocational Education and Training in Austria
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Preface

Apprenticeship training is a traditional and at the same time very modern form of dual vocational education and training (VET). The combination of company-based training, integrated into the economic and professional reality, and education in a vocational school, where subject-specific theory and practice as well as general education are taught, has also become an example of “best practice” internationally to prepare young people for a successful career. Austria, together with some other countries in Europe, is a pioneer in this area.

On average, about 40 percent of the 15 year olds in Austria opt for dual VET, currently approximately 30,000 companies train about 100,000 apprentices. The graduates of apprenticeship training are qualified to practice the professional activities particular to their profession independently and autonomously. They contribute decisively to the economic development and competitiveness of Austrian companies.

A modern VET system must respond quickly and flexibly to new demands of the economy. This holds particularly true of technological developments, which result for example from digitalisation of labour and production processes. Therefore, the Austrian government will continue to develop apprenticeships by regularly updating and modernising existing job profiles as well as by introducing new ones. To support training companies in their manifold challenges while educating young people in a dynamic environment different supporting measures are in place. Support of training alliances, i.e. if one training company cannot cover all contents of an apprenticeship profile, has developed particularly well in recent years. In addition, apprentices – but also trainers – are supported as soon as they acquire new, additional qualifications for example such as new environmentally friendly applications, job-related foreign languages and much more.

Apprenticeship training grants access to many further educational programmes. Graduates can progress to qualify, for instance, as master craftsperson or, following additional exams, acquire access to tertiary level training in a related field. By completing the (vocational) matriculation examination (Berufsreifeprüfung) they can also obtain general access to university education. The Federal Government therefore pursues the goal of increasing the attractiveness of the dual VET system, highlighting its importance for companies, young people and young adults, and specifically promoting it through new measures, e.g. innovative forms of training or support of non-traditional target groups.

This brochure provides a comprehensive overview of apprenticeship training in Austria.

I hope you will find it useful and interesting. Have an enjoyable read.
1 The Austrian education system

After completing 8th grade, pupils can choose between two paths in Austria: a vocational training or a general education track (see chart below).

Note: ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education
### 1.1 Initial vocational education and training

Initial vocational education and training (IVET) starts at secondary level II and is a high priority in Austria. After completing the compulsory schooling period and one year in a Pre-vocational school, about 35% of the pupils are trained in a legally recognised apprenticeship occupation, another 40% opt for a school-based VET programme. This means that some 75% of Austrian pupils follow a vocational education and training path.

Figure 2: Distribution of young people in school level 10 (school year 2016/2017);
Source: Statistics Austria and ibw 2017

Initial vocational and education training (IVET) qualifications can be obtained by attending dual VET programmes (apprenticeship and part-time vocational school) or full-time VET schools. There are four types of full-time VET schools:

- schools for intermediate vocational education (e.g. schools of engineering, arts and crafts; business schools; schools of management and services industries) and
- colleges for higher vocational education (e.g. colleges of engineering, arts and crafts; colleges of business administration; colleges of management and services industries; colleges of tourism) as well as
- healthcare schools and
- schools in the area of agriculture and forestry
2 Apprenticeship: Dual vocational training

Graduates of an apprenticeship programme acquire a full vocational qualification of a high standard at medium level. The training in an apprenticeship occupation is open to all young people who have completed nine years of compulsory schooling. No specific school qualification is required for starting apprenticeship training.

2.1 Training in the company and at a part-time vocational school

There are significant differences between dual VET and VET in full-time schools:

- In the apprenticeship training system there are two places of learning: the training company and a part-time vocational school.
- The apprentice is in a training relationship with his or her training company and at the same time he or she is a student at a part-time vocational school.
- The company-based part of dual VET makes up the major part of the apprenticeship period (80%).
- Professional experts assess the apprenticeship-leave exam, of which the focus lies on the competences required for the respective profession.

Figure 3: Distribution of training time in the company and the vocational school; Source BMDW
3 Why companies train apprentices

Companies view apprenticeship training as a valuable investment in the future. It enables them to meet their future need for qualified skilled labour as best as possible, since already during their training, apprentices contribute significantly to the daily work routine of the training company.

Currently approximately 29,000 companies are open to young people as training sites. By voluntarily providing apprenticeship training, companies show that they accept social responsibility and make an important contribution to reducing youth unemployment while at the same time securing their future need for qualified skilled labour.

However, the conclusion of an apprenticeship training contract does not necessarily lead to an employment contract between the apprenticeship graduate and the training company. Fully trained skilled workers can switch to other companies can recruit workers trained at other training sites.

To sum up, Austrian companies are not obliged to train apprentices, the need for future specialists can be seen as the main motivating factor behind the decision to train. Hence, there is a high employer commitment in the Austrian dual system. Therefore, companies that invest in apprenticeship training do not only act in their own interest but also contribute to the benefit of all economic sectors and professional branches, which have a demand for qualified apprenticeship graduates.
4 Apprenticeship occupations

In Austria there are currently 203 apprenticeship occupations in trade, commerce and industry sectors and 15 in agriculture and forestry (as at July 2018). They are set up as individual, group, special-focus or modular apprenticeships and are regulated by federal legislation.

All legally recognised apprenticeships in trade, commerce and in industry sectors are set out in the list of apprenticeship occupations (Lehrberufsliste), which also specifies the apprenticeship periods and relationships to other apprenticeship occupations including credits awarded for already completed apprenticeship periods.

The legal basis is the Vocational Training Act (Berufsausbildungsgesetz or BAG). In addition, the Minister of Economy issues a nationwide training regulation (Ausbildungsordnung) for each apprenticeship occupation, which is legally binding for the training provided by training companies.

Different laws regulate the apprenticeships in agriculture and forestry. The principles of training in these occupations are laid down in the Vocational Training Act for Agriculture and Forestry (Land- und forstwirtschaftliches Berufsausbildungsgesetz or LFBAG). Based on this act, the provinces (Länder) draw up specific training regulations for each occupation.

Training regulations stipulate the job profile (Berufsbild) specific to the respective apprenticeship occupation. This job profile is the curriculum for the training company. It contains – broken down by apprenticeship years – the professional competences, which the apprentice has to obtain in company-based training. Moreover, regulations also contain the competence profile or profile of learning outcomes (Berufsprofil), i.e. a description of what graduates know and are able to do after completing their training. The curriculum of the part-time vocational school is based on the training regulation. In many occupations, supportive training guidelines, material and manuals supplement the training regulation.
4.1 Duration of apprenticeship trainings

The period of apprenticeship training is between two and four years (cf Table 1). The apprenticeship period can be reduced for people who have already completed job-specific training periods in related apprenticeships or have acquired relevant school qualifications.

Credits may also be obtained for relevant training periods completed abroad. Qualifications, which lead to a reduction of the apprenticeship period:

- the upper secondary school-leaving certificate from academic secondary school (AHS),
- the final certificate from a VET college (BHS),
- the final certificate from a VET school (BMS) of at least three years’ duration
- another apprenticeship already completed with the apprenticeship diploma.
Table 1: Apprenticeship occupations in Austria (last update July 2018)
Last update: July 2018
Sources: Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs - list of apprenticeship occupations; Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apprenticeship Occupations in Austria</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship occupations in trade, commerce and in industry sectors</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship periods:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modular apprenticeships with a duration of three, three and a half as well as four years</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeships with a duration of two years</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apprenticeships with a duration of three years</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeships with a duration of three and a half years</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeships with a duration of four years</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship occupation in agriculture and forestry, all with a duration of three years</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Company-based training

5.1 Characteristics of company-based training

Company-based training is characterised by the following features:

- It takes place under real-life working conditions. The apprentice acquires the required knowledge and skills laid down in the job profile (Berufsbild) for the respective apprenticeship occupation. Therefore, the apprentice is able to take up a qualified professional activity as a skilled worker immediately upon completion of the training.
- Most of the training is provided as part of real-life productive activities; this reduces costs and increases the apprentice’s motivation to learn.
- Companies which cannot impart the full job profile (because they lack, for instance, the required machinery), need to enter into a training alliance (cf. chapter 5.4) if they want to train an apprentice. In the construction business, supra-company training centres (so-called “training construction sites”, Bauakademien) are set up as a regular third learning site (besides the training company and the VET school).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts: Strengths of company-based training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hands-On learning for practical purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning by carrying out productive activities and using state-of-the-art technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Immediate experience in the development of process and / or product innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acquisition of soft skills (e.g. communication skills, the ability to work in teams, etc.) under real-life working conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning in a training alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Taking up a qualified activity immediately after completion of apprenticeship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Accreditation of training company

A company that wants to train apprentices is obliged to submit an application to the Apprenticeship Office (Lehrlingsstelle) in the province in which the company is based. In each of the nine Austrian provinces one Apprenticeship Office is established. It is located at the site of the
regional Economic Chamber but operates on behalf of the Ministry of Economy. In cooperation with the Chamber of Labour, the Apprenticeship Office is obliged by law to examine whether the company applying for accreditation as a training company meets the required prerequisites (cf. chapter 5.2.1). In case it does, the company receives a declaration (Feststellungsbescheid) certifying that it is entitled to recruit apprentices.

5.2.1 Prerequisites for accreditation

Fulfilment of legal conditions
Pursuant to the Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act (Gewerbeordnung) the company must be entitled to carry out the activities in which the apprentice is to be trained. Apprentices cannot only be trained by companies in trade, commerce and industry, but also by members of the liberal professions, such as pharmacists, architects, lawyers, civil engineers, etc., and by associations, administrative offices and other legal entities.

Fulfilment of corporate conditions
The company needs to be equipped and managed in a way that the apprentice can acquire all learning outcomes included in the competence profile (Berufsprofil). Companies that cannot fully impart the required knowledge and skills but want to train apprentices can do so within the framework of a training alliance (cf. chapter 5.4). In addition, a sufficient number of professionally and pedagogically qualified trainers must be available in the company (cf. chapter 5.3). The size of the company is not a decisive factor for apprenticeship training, every company (including one-person companies) can train apprentices if it fulfils the prerequisites mentioned above.

Facts: Number of training companies

At the end of December 2017 there were 28,962 training companies. 63.2% of all apprentices were trained in small and medium enterprises – SMEs (up to 250 employees).
5.3 IVET or apprenticeship trainers

In each training company there must be an IVET or apprenticeship trainer (Ausbilder/in). Either the company owner or an entitled employee can act as a trainer. In any case, the trainer has to be in the possession of a trainer qualification. For the acquisition of this qualification, it is necessary to have a VET qualification. Moreover, candidates have to prove pedagogical skills as well as knowledge related to relevant laws and regulations.

The trainer qualification can be acquired by sitting an IVET trainer examination (which is regulated by law) or by attending a forty-hour IVET trainer course. Some qualifications, however, (e.g. master craftsperson qualification) are equivalent to the IVET trainer examination. Most of the trainers educate their apprentices on a part-time basis alongside their regular work. There are, however, also full-time trainers and full-time training managers, in particular in larger companies.

Facts: IVET trainer qualification

- VET qualification
- vocational pedagogical competences
- legal knowledge

5.4 Training alliance

Within the framework of a training alliance (Ausbildungsverbund) also those companies can train apprentices which cannot fully impart the knowledge and skills laid down for the apprenticeship occupation.

For such instances, the Vocational Training Act (Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG) provides for a compulsory training alliance: It is permissible to provide training if complementary training measures are conducted in another company or in a suitable educational institution. However, the majority of the learning outcomes central to an apprenticeship occupation must be acquired in the “home” company.

In the training contract the training alliance, the alliance partner(s) as well as the learning outcomes acquired outside the “home” company must be agreed on.
It is also possible to enter into training alliances on a voluntary basis, if training companies aim to impart special competences to apprentices – possibly going beyond the competence profile (e.g. specific computer programmes, foreign language skills, particular soft skills, etc.).

In some provinces institutionalised training alliances have been set up (such as the Upper Austrian Corporate Training Alliance – FAV OÖ), which provide information and support to companies about possible partner enterprises and educational institutions and take on coordination of different training alliance measures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts: Forms of training alliances</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compulsory training alliance</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>In case a company cannot fully impart the knowledge and skills laid down for the apprenticeship occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voluntary training alliance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of additional knowledge and skills which go beyond the competence profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational options</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unilateral sending (usually against payment) of apprentices to (an)other company(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mutual exchange of apprentices between two or more companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attendance of programmes or courses at IVET institutions against payment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The financial support for training alliances increased by more than 16% between 2016 and 2017.
6 Education at part-time vocational school

The second learning site within dual VET programmes is the vocational school. Around 20% of the learning time is spent in the school (hence “part-time” vocational school). Its main aim is to support and extend the practical training in companies and foster general education. Therefore, apprentices attend a vocational school specific to their apprenticeship occupation. In some cases, however, there are classes for a group of related apprenticeships with overlapping training content.

Around two-thirds of the curriculum, which is designed based on the job profile of the training regulation, cover occupation-specific instruction, including practical training in workshops and laboratories. One-third is dedicated to general education (including German and one foreign language).

The attendance of a vocational school is obligatory for all apprentices. The structure of how this attendance is organised is based on the needs of the companies in a province. It can be:

- all year round, i.e. at least on one full school-day or two half school-days a week
- in seminars, i.e. for at least eight weeks or for at least four weeks, if the respective school level corresponds to half a year of apprenticeship,
- seasonally, i.e. in block at a particular time of the year (e.g. in the construction business apprentices attend vocational school during the winter months, when due to the weather conditions working outside is often not possible)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts: Part-time vocational school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>occupation-specific theoretical training supplementing company-based training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complementary occupation-specific practical training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deepening and complementing general education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject-related foreign language training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1 Vocational school teachers

Vocational school teachers have broad practical experience in the respective occupational field. They complete their pedagogical training extra occupational at a university of education (Pädagogische Hochschule, PH). Since the academic year 2016/17, training for teachers at a part-time vocational school is offered in the Bachelor programme “Secondary Vocational Education and Training – Dual Training and Technology and Commerce” (total of 240 ECTS credits). Graduates are awarded the academic degree Bachelor of Education (Bed). In addition, VET teachers can also attend a Master degree qualification “Vocational Secondary Education – Dual Vocational Education and Technology and Commerce” amounting to 60 ECTS credits.

In simplified terms, the following three groups of part-time vocational school teachers prevail:

- Teachers of general education and teachers of business administration (Group I)
- Teachers of occupation-specific theory (Group II)
- Teachers of occupation-specific practice (Group III)

For group I and group II, a matriculation (Matura) and diploma examination of a relevant vocational secondary school or the (vocational) matriculation examination (Berufsreifeprüfung) as well as a relevant subject related training is required for admission to study for teaching at vocational schools. For group III a relevant master examination or equivalent relevant qualification is necessary.

Furthermore, in addition to the personal suitability, a relevant professional practice of a minimum of three years for admission to study is required.
7 Apprenticeship-leave examination

The apprenticeship-leave exam aims to establish whether the candidate has acquired the learning outcomes required for the respective apprenticeship occupation and is able to fulfil the activities particular to the occupation in an appropriate manner. Most apprenticeship qualifications correspond to Level 4 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The apprenticeship-leave exam consists of a practical and a theoretical part. The theoretical part is waived if the exam candidate can prove successful completion of the part-time vocational school.

Admittance to the apprenticeship-leave exam for:
- apprentices as well as
- people who have completed the stipulated apprenticeship period with credits being awarded for school-based education or who are not obliged to complete any apprenticeship period after having completed such an education.

According to the Vocational Training Act apprentices who have completed the full training period (or parts of it if they have been awarded credits for prior qualifications) can sit the apprenticeship-leave exam. In addition, the Vocational Training Act also opens access to the apprenticeship leave exam to people who have not gone through any apprenticeship training. They must, however, be over 18 years of age and furnish evidence that they have acquired the knowledge and skills required for the respective apprenticeship occupation in an informal or non-formal way (e.g. by exercising a relevant semi-skilled or other practical activity of appropriate length or by attending a relevant course).

Also the completion of at least half of the legal apprenticeship period stipulated for the respective apprenticeship occupation is accepted as evidence if there is no other possibility of entering into an apprenticeship contract for the remaining apprenticeship period (e.g. if the training company goes bankrupt).

The 2011 amendment to the Vocational Training Act has broadened access to the apprenticeship final exam by extension of the possibilities for the validation of informal or non-formal qualifications. Apprenticeship Offices can determine that the practical apprenticeship-leave examination is taken in two parts. The first part comprises identification of the exam candidate’s already acquired qualifications while in the second part he/she is required to prove any missing
qualifications. This provision applies if exam candidates are 22 years or older and have, as part of higher qualification schemes, completed educational measures that have been rated as compatible by the Regional Advisory Board on Apprenticeship (cf. chapter 12.2).

Facts

**Quality-Management-Apprenticeship (QML) - Apprenticeship-leave examination statistics**

As part of the Quality-Management-Apprenticeship (Qualitätsmanagement in der Lehrlingsausbildung, QML), specific regional data is collected and evaluated in order to identify sectors or apprentice professions with high drop-out rates. The basis for this data are all persons who completed their apprenticeship contract regularly in the evaluation year and who have not concluded another apprenticeship contract by the end of the following year.

The aim of QML is that a higher proportion of young people finishes apprenticeship and has a positive final apprenticeship exam without lowering the level of examinations.

**Evaluation for 2016/2017**

In 2016, 37,835 apprentices completed their apprenticeship. 16% of all have dropped out of their apprenticeship and have not taken any final apprenticeship exam until the end of the following year 2017. Of the remaining persons, 90.8% had successfully passed the apprenticeship-leave exam by the end of the following year.

For further information on QML please visit [www.wko.at -> Bildung und Lehre -> Lehrlingsausbildung -> Daten zum QML](http://www.wko.at -> Bildung und Lehre -> Lehrlingsausbildung -> Daten zum QML)

**The Apprenticeship Leave Exam Clearing Office**

The aim of the Clearing Office is to ensure an Austrian-wide standard of the apprenticeship leave exams in each apprenticeship occupation. For that reason, the Clearing Office (together with vocational experts) develops examination tasks and also standardises tasks drawn up by experts outside the Clearing Office. The exams that are “cleared” are marked with a quality seal and are available to all Apprenticeship Offices that administer the exam process.
At the same time, the Clearing Office also offers support to examiners by providing specific guidelines and assisting materials (e.g. on how to develop competence-oriented exams). In addition, it has developed an examiner qualification and a corresponding preparatory course.

Further Information:

www.qualitaet-lehre.at/duale-berufsbildung/qualitaetssicherung-in-der-lehre/lap-clearingstelle/ (in German only)
8 Ways towards an apprenticeship post

It is not always easy for young people to select the suitable apprenticeship occupation from approximately 200 possibilities. Several services and initiatives have been set up to support, e.g.:

- The career guidance tool *Berufsinformationscomputer BIC* ([www.bic.at](http://www.bic.at)) of the Economic Chambers of Austria is a digital communication and information forum, which provides comprehensive information to support young people in their decision-making process. They can determine their individual interest profile on the basis of which various training and educational options are proposed.

- If a young person cannot find a training company, the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS), which is also responsible for the assignment of training posts, will provide support and vocational guidance.

- General information about apprenticeship and help while searching for available apprenticeship posts are also provided by the Apprenticeship Offices of the Economic Chambers in the individual provinces. The addresses of the Apprenticeship Offices in the provinces can be found in the Annex (page 55).

- Together with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, the AMS has set up an online apprenticeship exchange ([www.ams.at/lehrstellen](http://www.ams.at/lehrstellen)), which enables young people to search for potential training companies efficiently.
9 Apprenticeship contract

The apprenticeship contract is the basis for vocational training in the dual system. Both the training company and the apprentice enter into the contract, it must be concluded in writing. In case of underaged apprentices, a legal representative must also sign the apprenticeship contract. A standardised template is provided by the Apprenticeship Offices of the Economic Chambers.

9.1 Recording of the apprenticeship contract

The apprenticeship contract must be submitted as fast as possible, at least within three weeks after the beginning of the training, to the Apprenticeship Office for documentation purposes. The Apprenticeship Office will then check the apprenticeship contract if all legal regulations are met. In addition, it awards credits for occupation-specific training periods, i.e. if an apprentice can prove relevant prior qualifications (e.g. from a VET school), the training period is reduced. The recording of the apprenticeship contract is a prerequisite for the apprentice’s later admission to the apprenticeship-leave exam.

The apprenticeship contract must include the following:

- the name of the apprenticeship occupation in which training is conducted
- the apprenticeship period
- the beginning and end of training
- details regarding the authorised persons to train apprentices and, if applicable, the name of the IVET trainer(s) (and training manager) responsible for the apprentice
- other personal data of the apprentice
- a note concerning compulsory attendance of part-time vocational school
- any periods of training held within the framework of a training alliance with other companies or educational institutions
- the amount of the apprenticeship remuneration
- date of conclusion of the apprenticeship contract
10 Financing of apprenticeship training

The respective training enterprise bears the costs of company-based training, whereas the costs of school-based education (part-time vocational school) are financed by public funds. This means that the largest part of costs of dual VET is borne by companies.

The apprenticeship remuneration (*Lehrlingsentschädigung*) constitutes the major part of the costs for apprenticeship training. Its amount is determined for each individual apprenticeship occupation in collective bargaining agreements. In the exceptional case that no such agreement exists, the remuneration is agreed upon individually and stipulated in the apprenticeship contract. The remuneration increases with every apprenticeship year until, in the final year, it totals an approximate average of 80% of the corresponding skilled qualified employee wage. This must be seen, however, against the fact that in the course of their training, apprentices contribute to the training companies’ productivity through their productive work and that their share in productive work increases with every apprenticeship year.

Benefitted contribution rules for social insurance are in place for apprentices since early 2016:

- **Health insurance contribution**: The health insurance contribution accrues from the first until the last year of apprenticeship. The contribution rate is 3.35% throughout the entire apprenticeship. The apprentice has to carry 1.67% and the employer 1.68% (contribution rate of skilled employees amount to 7.65% in total).
- **Accident insurance contribution**: For apprentices, no accident insurance contribution needs to be paid. Nevertheless, the apprentice is accident insured.
- **Pension insurance contribution**: The contribution rate for the pension insurance is 22.80% during the entire apprenticeship period, whereas the apprentice bears 10.25% and the employer 12.55%. Hence, the pension insurance contribution of an apprentice already starts with the first day of the apprenticeship.
- **Unemployment insurance contribution**: The unemployment insurance contribution accrues from the first to the last year of apprenticeship. The contribution rate is 2.40% during the entire apprenticeship period (1.20% for each employee and employer) - compared to 6% contribution rate of skilled employees.

In addition, a large number of subsidisation options exist for apprenticeship training (cf. chapter 11).
The costs for equipping part-time vocational schools with machinery, equipment and teaching material are borne by the federal provinces. The federal government and the respective province share costs for the teaching staff equally.

Table 2: Comparison of public expenditures on initial vocational training per apprentice or student (2015/2016); Source: ibw Apprenticeship Overview 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IVET Option</th>
<th>Annual detailed costs per person per training place</th>
<th>Total annual public expenditures per person per training place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship (dual VET)</td>
<td></td>
<td>€ 6.276,-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part-time vocational school</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€ 4.816,-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Company-based apprenticeship funding (cf. 11.1)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€ 1.460,-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supra-company apprenticeship training (cf. 17)</td>
<td></td>
<td>€ 16.130,-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part-time vocational school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€ 4.816,-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Costs for Public Employment Service:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€ 10.344,-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding of Federal Provinces (9,78%):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>€ 970,-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education</td>
<td>€ 10.129,-</td>
<td>€ 10.219,-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11 Subsidisation options

As mentioned above, the major part of the costs for apprenticeship training is borne by the companies. However, several public subsidisation options exist which should help decrease the financial burden and motivate training companies to engage in training. The different options of the company-based apprenticeship funding are regulated in two guidelines:

- Guideline acc. § 19c para. 1 digit 1-7 Vocational Training Act and
- Guideline acc. § 19c para. 1 digit 8 Vocational Training Act.

Public subsidisations are available for training companies and apprentices.

11.1 Funding for training companies

Basic subsidy (Basisförderung)

The training company can apply for a basic subsidy at the end of every apprenticeship year. The aim of the basic subsidy is to cover the costs that arise for (remuneration, social security contribution) companies during their apprentices’ schooling periods. The amount of the subsidy depends on the year of training and on the remuneration paid: For apprentices who are in their first year of training companies receive three gross apprenticeship remunerations (pursuant to the respective collective agreement); for apprentices in their 2nd year they receive two, and for those in their 3rd and 4th year one. In case the apprenticeship period is 3.5 years, companies receive half of the remuneration in the last (half) year of training.

In case of credits awarded for apprenticeship periods and in case of reductions of apprenticeship periods, the basic subsidy will be calculated on a pro-rated basis.

Quality-oriented subsidisation options

- training measures that go beyond the job-profile (obligatory or voluntary training alliance measures, job-specific additional competences for apprentices, preparatory courses for the apprenticeship-leave examination)
- measures for apprentices with learning difficulties (e.g. remedial courses in German and mathematics)
- internships abroad including related language courses for apprentices
- promotion of boarding school costs during a visit of a vocational school
- professional development measures of IVET trainers
- contribution to apprentices who passed the apprenticeship-leave exam “with distinction” or “good pass”
Project funding

- projects to support equal access for women and men to the different apprenticeships
- projects to support integration into the dual system as well as supra-regional placement to an apprenticeship post
- projects to support quality management and innovation in company-based training

In addition, in order to increase participation in apprenticeship training and raise the chance of a successful completion (i.e. reduce/prevent dropouts) advisory, mentoring and support services are promoted. These include e.g.:

- coaching and counselling for apprentices as well as training companies
- the provision of training guides for apprenticeships ensuring the quality of the apprenticeship-leave exam by setting up the Clearing Office (cf. chapter 7)

Further Information (information available in German only)

- Company based apprenticeship funding: [www.lehre-foerdern.at](http://www.lehre-foerdern.at)
- Guidelines for the company based funding: [www.bmdw.gv.at -> Berufsausbildung -> Lehrlings- und Berufsausbildung -> Lehre fördern](http://www.bmdw.gv.at)
- Quality-oriented subsidisation options: [www.qualitaet-lehre.at](http://www.qualitaet-lehre.at)
- Coaching and counselling for apprentices and training companies (Lehre-statt-Leere): [www.lehre-statt-leere.at](http://www.lehre-statt-leere.at)
- Project promotions: [www.projektoerderung-lehre.at](http://www.projektoerderung-lehre.at)
11.2 Subsidisation by Public Employment Service (AMS)

Subsidies are available for the following:

- young women in apprenticeship occupations with a low share of women
- adolescents disadvantaged in the labour market
- young people with special subsidisation needs and
- people who are 18 years or older at the beginning of the apprenticeship and whose difficulties finding employment on account of their lack of qualifications can be solved by means of an apprenticeship (these also include holders of the certificate of secondary education from academic secondary school).

Further Information (in German only):

www.ams.at -> Service für Unternehmen -> Förderungen

11.3 Financing

Basic subsidisation and quality-related funding are financed by the Austrian insolvency remuneration fund (one part of the revenues of the fund is reserved for subsidisation of apprenticeship posts). The subsidies of the Public Employment Service are financed from the labour market policy budget.
12 Competences

The success and further development of the dual system builds on the partnership of many institutions and establishments at various levels.

12.1 Federal level

Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW)
The company-based part of apprenticeship training is within the sphere of competence of the Ministry of Economy. The legal basis for this part of training is laid down in the Vocational Training Act (Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG). Besides BAG, there are training and examination regulations (Ausbildungs- und Prüfungsordnungen) for each apprenticeship occupation. These regulations are issued by the Ministry of Economy based on expert opinions submitted by the Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship (Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat, BBAB).

Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship (BBAB)
This board is set up by the Ministry of Economy upon the proposal of social partners (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, Federal Chamber of Labour). Part-time vocational school teachers are co-opted as advisory members. BBAB submits statements and concepts to the Ministry of Economy, which need to be considered when adopting or amending regulations. Furthermore, the BBAB compiles reports (e.g. on modernisations of apprenticeships) on behalf of BMDW.

Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research (BMBWF)
Provisions concerning the organisation of part-time vocational schools and the cornerstones for the framework curricula are laid down in the Federal School Organisation Act (Schulorganisationsgesetz, SchOG). The Ministry for Education issues framework curricula for part-time vocational schools for each apprenticeship occupation. Half of the salaries of teachers of part-time vocational schools are financed from federal funds, the other half by provinces.
12.2 Provincial level

Apprenticeship Offices (Lehrlingsstellen)
The Apprenticeship Offices, which are located in the Economic Chambers in the individual province, act as vocational training authority of first instance. They examine (jointly with representatives of the regional Chambers of Labour) the training companies’ suitability to provide apprenticeship training in subject-specific and staff-related aspects (cf. chapter 5.2) and are responsible for examining and recording apprenticeship contracts (cf. chapter 9). It is their task to provide wide-ranging counselling to apprentices and training companies in all matters concerning apprenticeship. They are supported by offices for the protection of apprentices and young people, which are located at the regional Chambers of Labour. Based on a proposal from the Regional Advisory Board on Apprenticeship (Landesberufsausbildungsbeirat) the heads of Apprenticeship Offices appoint the chairpersons of the apprenticeship-leave examination boards. The apprenticeship-leave exams and subsidisation schemes for training companies are managed by the Apprenticeship Offices as well.

Federal provinces
The federal provinces are responsible for constructing and equipping part-time vocational schools. In addition, they finance half of the salaries of teachers of part-time vocational schools.

Provincial governors and Provincial administrative courts
At the regional level, provincial governors assisted by the respective provincial government offices are responsible for apprenticeship training and act as a supervisory authority. They decide among others on the cancellation of registered apprenticeship training contracts and appoint the members of their respective regional advisory board on apprenticeship (LBAB). The provincial administrative courts decide as second instance on appeals in apprenticeship training matters, such as the withdrawal of the training company accreditation.

Regional Advisory Boards on Apprenticeship (LBAB)
In every province, one Regional Advisory Board on Apprenticeship with representatives of the social partners and the aim of providing counselling services in all issues related to VET on the regional level is established. It is responsible for preparing expert opinions, proposals and suggestions directly related to the apprenticeship training system in the respective province. On its proposal, chairpersons of apprenticeship-leave examination boards are appointed.
Regional Educational Directorates (Bildungsdirektionen)

The regional educational directorates are responsible for the quality assurance and adherence to the tasks within their area of responsibility as well as the implementation of the federal framework curricula.

12.3 Local level

Training companies

Training companies, i.e. the company owner and the IVET trainer(s), are responsible for implementing their training in such a way that by the end of it all learning outcomes are met.

Part-time vocational school

The part-time vocational schools are in direct contact with the training companies. This is one of the most important prerequisites for a successful apprenticeship training.

Figure 4: Overview of institutions involved in apprenticeship training and their responsibilities; Source BMDW
13 Requirements on modern competence profiles

The knowledge and skills required for an apprenticeship occupation are specified in the training regulation. They correspond to the requirements of the labour market in the respective field. Priority is given to the ability to exercise an occupation: Training in an apprenticeship aims to qualify graduates to take up their chosen occupation immediately upon completion of training. Training regulations thus lay down the minimum requirements for the training content to be imparted in the training company. At the same time, a consistent training level for the individual apprenticeship occupation is ensured.

When specifying and formulating the training content, i.e. the individual elements of the competence profile, it must be considered that qualification and skills requirements are subject to regular changes. Therefore, the individual items of the competence profile are not laid down statically, but rather dynamically, so that curricula can be adjusted easily to new developments.

Training regulations emphasise the provision of key skills: i.e. independence, individual responsibility, teamwork, etc. are promoted significantly by company-based training. Environmentally-friendly and quality-oriented work forms an integral part of every modern training regulation, also European integration is increasingly taken into account. This aims to increase the Austrian skilled workforce’s willingness to be mobile and at the same time to strengthen the Austrian companies’ competitiveness. Furthermore, all new job-profiles take into account the increasing significance of digitisation in all professional fields.
14 New regulation of occupations

The continuous modernisation of training regulations (i.e. of qualifications acquired in the dual VET track) is of great importance to ensure that requirements on modern competence profiles are met.

Initiatives for the introduction of new or the modernisation of existing regulations are, in general, launched by the economic sectors concerned as well as the responsible ministries and the social partners. But also international developments and education programmes play a key role in this respect.

In any case, the professional and practical requirements of the economic sector are always given priority. The content of training regulations is prepared by the Ministry of Economy based on reports and expert opinions drawn up by the Federal Vocational Training Advisory Board. Both players may be supported by further studies and evaluations carried out by VET research institutes.

14.1 Introducing a new apprenticeship occupation

When a new apprenticeship occupation is created/introduced or an existing one is modernised/updated, the following working steps are carried out:

1. Preparation
   - the Ministry of Economy, social partners or the business sector take the initiative for creating or modernising an apprenticeship
   - clarification of the basic framework by the Ministry of Economy and the social partners
   - consideration of European and international developments as well as solutions introduced in other countries

2. Elaboration of a training regulation and a framework curriculum
   - drafting a training regulation under guidance of education research institutes with experts of the affected industries
   - involvement and statement of the Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship
   - drafting a framework curriculum which corresponds to the training regulation by an expert group under the leadership of the Ministry of Education
   - preparing both drafts to a nationwide review and consultation process
3. Issuing of regulations
- involvement of all stakeholders in a consultation and review process
- evaluation of opinions and comments
- publication of the new training regulation by the Ministry of Economy and of framework curricula by the Ministry of Education

4. Follow-up measures
- creation of supportive materials for training companies: these materials (mostly financed by the Ministry of Economy) are usually drawn up by VET research and development institutes with the support of sectoral organisations and employees’ representations
- provision of information to training companies by Apprenticeship Offices
- training of apprenticeship trainers and of teachers in part-time vocational schools
- training of examiners of apprenticeship-leave examinations
- accompanying evaluation (e.g. development of the number of apprentices in the new apprenticeship occupation after a certain period)

Facts: Development of competence profiles

The current federal government’s aim is to update and revise all training regulations, in particular with a view to digitalisation. This should safeguard the attractiveness of the dual VET track for young people as well as for training companies.

Furthermore, all job descriptions will be revised in a competence-oriented manner with regard to digitisation and new technical, economic and social developments.

14.2 Apprenticeship as a broad vocational training

In general, there are different structures / forms of apprenticeship training in Austria, which depend primarily on the business sector and how many similar teaching professions there are. Attention is also paid to the horizontal permeability. Although the training of an apprenticeship focuses on the imparting of skills and competences of a specific profession, the possible transfers of individual or several contents of one job profile to another broaden vocational training opportunities. These horizontal offsetting options are defined in the relationships between apprenticeships and other vocational training opportunities.
15 Modularisation of apprenticeship training

The 2006 amendment to the Vocational Training Act (BAG) created the possibility of modularising apprenticeships. The aim is to broaden the range of training opportunities while at the same time ensuring common basic knowledge and skills in a career field. In this sense, the modularisation is an important tool to react timely and flexibly to technical, economic and social developments.

In modular apprenticeships, training is structured in three modules:

**Basic module**
The basic module aims to impart the knowledge and skills required for carrying out basic activities of the modular apprenticeship. The basic module has a minimum duration of two years. In justified exceptional cases it can also be only one year long.

**Main module**
The main module comprises the knowledge and skills required for exercising the chosen specialisation (e.g. ventilation technology in the modular apprenticeship “Installation and Building Technology”). It has a minimum duration of one year. The duration of the basic and main module must be at least three years. If the basic module – as mentioned above – only takes one year, the main module must have a minimum duration of two years.

**Special module**
The special module aims to impart the knowledge and skills for special services, products or their production. It covers a training period of half a year or a full year.

It is possible to combine different modules within this system: Every apprentice in a modular scheme is obliged to complete the basic module and select a main module. In addition, the apprentice can be trained in another main module or one or more special modules. The overall training period must not exceed the maximum apprenticeship period of four years. The combination of modules has to be selected when concluding the apprenticeship contract – hence at the beginning of the apprenticeship period. Still, it is possible to change between the modules, this will lead to a change in the apprenticeship contract however.
15.1 Benefits of modularisation

The option of combining different modules offers the benefit for companies and apprentices that training can be designed more flexibly.

But it is not only in the training design that there is increased flexibility. When introducing new training content, wider scope for action is also created by this modular system. Rather than modernising an entire apprenticeship or adapting it to urgent skills requirements of the economy, modular apprenticeships also allow individual modules to be exchanged or updated. This makes it possible to respond to changing sectoral requirements faster.

Thanks to modularisation it is no longer absolutely necessary to introduce a completely new apprenticeship occupation. Instead it is possible to add new training content to existing ones through modules.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts: Examples of modernisations of occupational profiles by modularisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Since 2015, training in the field of electro mobility has been possible since the special module &quot;High Voltage Technology&quot; was introduced in the apprenticeship for automotive engineering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In the field of mechatronics, the special modules &quot;Robotics&quot; and &quot;Programmable logic control technology (PLC technology)&quot; were set up in 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In the course of the modernisation of the dual VET programmes in 2017, a new combination of the main module &quot;Sawing Technology&quot; with the special module &quot;Design and Construction&quot; was created in the existing modular apprenticeship for woodworking technology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16 Apprenticeship and Matura (Berufsreifeprüfung)

The Berufsreifeprüfung is an exam that provides general access to higher education (HE) for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools. It was introduced in 1997.

In autumn 2008 the programme “Lehre und Matura” was launched. Its aim is to fund the parallel attainment of a VET qualification within the dual track and the HE entrance qualification. Thanks to this programme, apprentices can attend preparatory courses for the Berufsreifeprüfung and sit the exams free of charge parallel to their apprenticeship training.

The Berufsreifeprüfung (within the “Lehre and Matura” programme is also referred to as Berufsmatura) consists of four partial exams:

- German
- mathematics
- modern foreign language
- specialist area exam (corresponding to the apprentice’s occupational area).

Within the “Lehre and Matura” programme, up to three partial exams (German, mathematics and modern foreign language) can already be taken during apprenticeship training. The last one can only be taken after the apprenticeship-leave exam by people aged 19 or older. At least one exam must be taken during apprenticeship and the others within five years after its completion, if apprentices/skilled workers want to complete the Berufsmatura exam free of charge. In four-year apprenticeships it is possible to sit the partial exam on the specialist area within the framework of the apprenticeship-leave exam.

An introductory phase consisting of a potential assessment, basic courses in German and mathematics as well as a counselling session prepares apprentices for entry into the “Lehre and Matura” programme.

In every federal province a coordination point responsible for the organisation of and enrolment into the preparatory courses is set up. Access to these courses is possible in all apprenticeships from the first year onwards. The courses can be attended outside working hours or during work-
ing hours with the company’s consent. With the apprentice’s approval, the apprenticeship period can be prolonged by a maximum of 18 months for this purpose. But prolongation of the apprenticeship period is not mandatory.

**Note:** It is still possible to take the Berufsfreiheprüfung exams after apprenticeship training. In this case, however, the attendance of the preparatory courses entails costs. Moreover, exam fees have to be paid. Yet, a variety of grants is available for this “second chance option”.

Since the introduction of the “Lehre and Matura” programme in 2008, participant rates in the preparatory courses have more than quadrupled. By the end of May 2018, 9,703 participants were registered (cf. figure 6).

**Figure 6:** Participants in the “Apprenticeship and Matura” programme (absolute 2008-2018); Source BMBWF  

Further Information:  
www.lehremitmatura.at (in German only)
16.1 Matura graduates in apprenticeship training

Apprenticeship training is also an interesting option for holders of the higher education (HE) entrance qualification (Reifeprüfung or Matura) - in particular for those who have completed a general education school at upper secondary level (cf. chapter 1).

For Matura graduates the following principles apply:

**Shortened apprenticeship period:** With the agreement of the teaching company, the apprenticeship can be reduced by one year for Matura graduates. For graduates of higher-level VET schools (that also end with the HE entrance qualification, cf. chapter 1), there may be more significant credits (even until replacement of the entire apprenticeship period), depending on the degree of overlapping contents.

**Apprenticeship remuneration for shortened apprenticeship:** The apprenticeship remuneration is adjusted to the shorter duration of the apprenticeship period. For apprentices over the age of 18, some collective agreements provide an increased remuneration for apprentices. An increased apprentice remuneration can also result from the promotion guidelines (cf. chapter 11).

**Funding:** The apprenticeship subsidy of the AMS includes a subsidy if the higher apprenticeship remuneration for over 18-year-olds or the unskilled worker’s salary (provided for in the relevant collective agreement) is paid. Alternatively, according to §19c (1) Z1-7 Vocational Training Act, the company-based apprenticeship subsidisation also provides a possibility of promoting apprenticeship training for adults if the payment is (above the amount of the relevant apprenticeship remuneration) at least as high as the salary for unskilled worker’s according to the applicable collective agreement.
17 Supra-company apprenticeship training

In order to counteract youth unemployment, the Federal Government, based on proposal by the social partners, warranted a training guarantee for young people. Supra-company training (ÜBA) institutions offer adolescents without an in-company apprenticeship post the possibility of an apprenticeship with a recognized final apprenticeship-leave exam until a “regular” apprenticeship post in a training company is found. The apprentice of a supra-company apprenticeship training is educated and trained in the same contents of the corresponding job profile like a “regular” apprentice in a training company. Beside this, the placement of an apprentice of a supra-company apprenticeship training to a training company is an important task.

Prerequisites for eligibility for supra-company apprenticeship training
Supra-company apprenticeship training addresses young people who
- have completed compulsory schooling,
- are registered with Public Employment Service (AMS), and
- cannot find a suitable apprenticeship post despite intense efforts or have dropped out from a company-based apprenticeship training relationship.

Institutions providing supra-company apprenticeship training
Apprenticeship training is provided by a training facility, which must be organised and equipped in a way that an apprentice can reach the learning outcomes specified by the competence profile. IVET institutions, which are not run by authorised apprenticeship trainers or as part of a school are obliged to apply for accreditation from the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs. AMS can commission IVET facilities with providing supra-company apprenticeship training. In this case, it is not necessary to obtain authorisation from the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs.

Equivalence of supra-company and company-based apprenticeship training
Training provided in a supra-company training facility is equivalent to apprenticeship training in a company, therefore the trainees are considered apprentices. Instead of an apprenticeship contract, a training (IVET) agreement (Ausbildungsvertrag) is concluded. The training agreement can have a limited duration of one year. This is the case if the aim is to place the apprentice into the “regular” form of company-based training after this period. It is also possible, however, to complete the entire apprenticeship period in a supra-company apprenticeship programme.
When changing from an IVET institution to a company or vice versa, the training period apprentices have already completed in the same occupation is recognised. Supra-company training is also completed with the apprenticeship-leave examination.

**Facts: Trainees in a supra-company apprenticeship training**

At the end of 2017 9,101 persons were trained in a supra-company apprenticeship training program. This corresponds to approx. 8.5% of all apprentices.

For employing an apprentice from a supra-company training programme during the training period the company will receive a bonus of 1,000 Euros per apprentice.
18 Vocational training according to § 8b Vocational Training Act ("Inclusive Training")

Based on comprehensive preparatory work by the social partners, the legislator introduced the “Vocational training according to § 8b Vocational Training Act IVET scheme” (formerly: inclusive initial vocational education and training) in 2003, a flexible model for people who are disadvantaged in the labour market, i.e.:

- individuals with special educational needs;
- people without a qualification from secondary level I;
- people with disabilities
- people of whom it must be assumed, within the framework of a careers guidance measure or due to an unsuccessful placement attempt in an apprenticeship post, that it will, in the foreseeable future, not be possible to find any apprenticeship vacancy for them for reasons exclusively related to the individuals themselves.

Inclusive VET, which can be completed in both, in a company and in a training institution (i.e. within ÜBA, cf. chapter 17), can be offered in two forms:

1. **Prolongation of the apprenticeship period:** In this form of training the apprenticeship qualification can be obtained within a period longer than the regular training period (by one year, in exceptional cases by up to two years).
2. **Partial qualification:** In this form of inclusive VET the training focuses on parts of the competence profile of a certain occupation, i.e. not the entire qualification is obtained but a bundle of competences.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prolongation of apprenticeship period</th>
<th>Partial qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
<td>Teaching of the entire competence profile of an apprenticeship</td>
<td>Imparting parts of the in-company curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>The regular apprenticeship period is prolonged by one, in exceptional cases by two years</td>
<td>One to three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attendance of part-time vocational school</strong></td>
<td>Compulsory attendance of part-time vocational school</td>
<td>Depending on the training objectives specified in the training agreement (concluded at the beginning of the training), people are either entitled or obliged to attend part-time vocational school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final examination</strong></td>
<td>Apprenticeship-leave exam</td>
<td>Individual final exam possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IVET pursuant to paragraph 8b of the Vocational Training Act ("Inclusive VET") is coordinated and supported by the Vocational Training Assistance (Berufsausbildungsassistenz, BAS). BAS has the task of specifying the objectives of training (in cooperation with the training company, the apprentices and his/her legal guardian), of supporting all actors involved and of mediating if the persons entrusted with them encounter difficulties.

**Facts: Inclusive VET**

Since its establishment in 2003, there has been a steady increase in the number of adolescents trained in either form of this type of VET provision (cf. Fig. 7). In total, at the end of December 2017, 7,702 apprentices were in this program. Around 61% of them were trained in companies and 39% in training institutions.
Figure 7: Apprentices in an IVET programme pursuant to § 8b (in absolute numbers 2007 - 2017); Source: Apprentice statistics of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber 2017; Vienna 2018
19 Facts & figures

In all sectors, new and modernised competence profiles ensure that the attractiveness of apprenticeship training for young people is enhanced and the companies’ willingness to train is maintained.

At the end of 2017 106,613 apprentices were in a training relationship in Austria. 97,512 apprentices (or 91%) were trained in companies; the others in supra-company training facilities.

The main reason for the decreasing number of apprentices in the previous years (cf. figure 8 below) is the demographic change. Since 2007 the number of 15-year old people has been decreasing by nearly 15%. In the same period, the number of apprentices dropped by 25%. The economic crisis of 2009 and the resulting uncertain economic forecasts also had negative effects on the number of apprentices. Still, the companies do see their engagement in apprenticeship training as an investment in future human resources.

Since 2016, the number of new apprentices has been increasing again. At the end of 2017, the number of first-year trainees was 33,721, which corresponds to a plus of 3.1% in comparison to 2016.

Figure 8: Development of training companies and apprentices in Austria as of 31st December each year; Source: Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO), Apprenticeship Statistics 2018
New economic trends and technological developments translate into the demand for well-educated apprentices of the business environment. Therefore a continuous modernisation of the apprenticeship qualifications (introducing new occupations and updating existing ones) is necessary (cf. chapter 14).

Digitalisation is a key challenge for apprenticeship training. In the last five years, the demand for apprentices has more than doubled in the occupational fields of computer science, electronic data processing (EDP) and communication technology (cf. table 4). As a result, existing job profiles are being evaluated with regard to digitisation and new training opportunities, such as e-commerce merchants, have been introduced.
Table 4: Number of apprentices in occupational fields in 2017; Source: Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO), Apprenticeship Statistics 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational fields/sectors</th>
<th>Absolute Value 2017</th>
<th>Growth total 2013 - 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holders</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery / Vehicles / Metal</td>
<td>22.192</td>
<td>1.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office / Commercial / Finance</td>
<td>7.793</td>
<td>14.855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction / Architecture / Building-technology</td>
<td>11.549</td>
<td>872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical engineering / Electronics</td>
<td>9.699</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism / Hospitality / Hotel industry</td>
<td>4.828</td>
<td>4.432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood / Paper / Glass / Ceramics</td>
<td>4.954</td>
<td>515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body care / Beauty</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>4.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science / EDP / Communication Technology</td>
<td>3.410</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health / Medicine / Nursing</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>2.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and stimulants / Nutrition</td>
<td>1.191</td>
<td>1.263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport / Traffic / Warehousing</td>
<td>1.445</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law / Security / Administration</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>1.402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry / Plastic</td>
<td>1.239</td>
<td>609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and forestry / Animals / Plants</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>780</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media / Printing / Design</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion / Textile / Leather</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>245</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment / Energy / Raw materials</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure industry / Sports</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>137</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art / Crafts</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture / Language / Society</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71.452</td>
<td>35.161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19.1 Formal qualification structure of the economically active population

Apprenticeship training is a highly valued VET pathway. For 37% of the Austrian workforce an apprenticeship diploma is the highest educational attainment (cf. figure 10). Among men this share is 45%, among women about 27%.

Figure 10: Distribution of employed persons in Austria in 2017 according to the highest educational attainment; Source: Statistics Austria: Microcensus Labor Force Survey, Vienna 2018

Moreover, apprenticeship is by far the most important qualification of self-employed people in Austria. Nearly 35% of all self-employed persons in Austria hold an apprenticeship certificate as the highest completed qualification (cf. Fig. 11).

Figure 11: Self-employed persons according to the highest educational attainment Microcensus-2017; Source: ibw and öibf "Report on the situation of youth employment and apprenticeship 2016-2017", Vienna 2018
19.2 Occupational status

The apprenticeship graduates’ occupational status and professional activities show that they are a very important group of the skilled labour force of the Austrian economy. The highest share of apprenticeship graduates can be identified in the occupational group “craft and related trade workers” (70.7%). Among “managers and senior official”, the share of people with an apprenticeship diploma as their highest qualification is 22.4%. In the occupational group “technicians and associate professionals” nearly 30% are apprenticeship graduates.

Viewed in reverse, 91.9% of employed apprenticeship graduates were employed on a skill level, which is at least appropriate to their training. Only 8.1% of the workforce with an apprenticeship qualification as the highest completed training carried out elementary tasks, that is, tasks not corresponding to their attained qualification.
19.2.1 Success on the labour market

In 2017, the unemployment rate of apprenticeship graduates amounted to 4.7% and is clearly below the average of all people registered as job-seekers (5.3%, cf. figure 13).

Figure 13: Unemployment rate by highest educational attainment (2017);
Source: ibw and öibf "Report on the situation of youth employment and apprenticeship 2016-2017", Vienna 2018
20 The most popular apprenticeship occupations

There is a wide spectrum of apprenticeship occupations in Austria, ranging from those, which are rich in tradition to modern high-tech occupations. When young people are choosing a career, however, it is obvious that the many different options are used only to a limited extent. As shown by the Apprenticeship Statistics of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO), almost 45% of all female apprentices and some 35% of all male apprentices are trained in three very popular apprenticeships respectively (cf. tables 5 and 6).

To help both girls and boys to learn atypical professions, a number of supportive measures are funded, e.g. projects that aim at the development of a gender-friendly working environment in companies and at breaking up traditional gender-specific role models in their career orientation. Other activities focus on general information events (e.g. Girls’ Day, Boys’ Day etc.).

Table 5: The ten popular apprenticeship occupations among young women;
Source: Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO), Apprenticeship Statistics 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Retail trade overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Office assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hairdresser and wigmaker (stylist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pharmaceutical trade assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Restaurant specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Administrative assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Hotel and restaurant trade assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Metal technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Confectioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum „TOP-10“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of female apprentices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6: The ten popular apprenticeship occupations among young women;
Source: Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO), Apprenticeship Statistics 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Apprenticeship occupation</th>
<th>Apprentices</th>
<th>Share of male apprentices in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Metal technology</td>
<td>9,807</td>
<td>13,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Electrical engineering</td>
<td>8,383</td>
<td>11,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Motor vehicle engineering</td>
<td>6,820</td>
<td>9,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Retail trade overall</td>
<td>5,019</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Installation and building technology</td>
<td>3,845</td>
<td>5,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Bricklayer</td>
<td>2,820</td>
<td>3,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Joinery</td>
<td>2,750</td>
<td>3,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>2,595</td>
<td>3,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Mechatronics</td>
<td>2,292</td>
<td>3,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Carpentry</td>
<td>1,594</td>
<td>2,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sum „TOP-10“</strong></td>
<td><strong>45,925</strong></td>
<td><strong>64,3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of male apprentices</td>
<td>71,452</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
21 State-honoured training companies

The Minister of Economy awards the prize “State-honoured training company” to training companies for special achievements in apprenticeship training.

Criteria for awarding the state prize include:

- success in apprenticeship-leave exams and in provincial and national competitions;
- dedicated involvement in the field of career guidance;
- cooperation ventures entered into by the training company;
- and its in-house and external CET programmes for apprentices and trainers.

Applications for this award must be submitted to the Regional Advisory Board on Apprenticeship that is set up at the Apprenticeship Office of the respective province.

Further Information:

A list of all training companies with state awards can be found at www.ausbilder.at -> Duale Berufsausbildung -> Qualitätssicherung in der Lehre -> Auszeichnungen
(in German only)
22 State price „Best training companies – Fit for Future“

Every two years, the state prize “Best training companies – Fit for future” is conferred by the Ministry of Economy in the categories small, medium-sized and large enterprises.

The objective of the state prize is to improve quality, innovation and sustainability in apprenticeship training.

Specifically the state prize aims to
- set a clear signal for quality in apprenticeship,
- acknowledge the excellent work of the Austrian economy in the field of youth training,
- help to motivate new companies to become training companies,
- raise awareness among parents and adolescents of the excellent training conditions provided by Austrian companies and the wide spectrum of apprenticeship occupations.

More Information about the state prize at www.ibw.at/fitforfuture (in German only)
Apprenticeship training in a European and international context

Competitiveness in the international economy requires skilled workers with tailormade and future-oriented qualifications. In the European Union it is increasingly recognised that apprenticeship training makes a key contribution in this respect. Not least due to high youth unemployment rates in many EU member states, the Austrian apprenticeship training system is considered a best-practice model. However, such forms of training with comparably high commitment of companies and social partners in system governance can only be found in a few countries in Europe.

The policy measures taken by the Ministry of Economy aim to preserve and further develop the specific strengths of Austria:

- securing the value of the apprenticeship training system;
- ensuring mobility and transparency as well as recognising vocational qualifications acquired by Austrian citizens abroad; this goal is intended to be achieved, in particular, by the recent classification of apprenticeship-leave certificates at Level 4 in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) respectively;
- participating in the European-wide exchange of apprentices, young qualified workers and trainers;
- additionally fostering more permeability to higher VET and general education programmes, also with the help of ECVET principles (ECVET - recommendation by the European Union regarding a VET credit system);
- intensifying research on vocational education, training and qualifications, especially directed towards appropriate and future-oriented occupational profiles;
- promoting close cooperation between the various regions in Europe with the aim of providing sufficient training possibilities and an adequate training infrastructure;
- including the European dimension in IVET, thereby fostering the ability to communicate and understand different ways of life.
23.1 Bilateral cooperation - training agreements (as of July 2018)

Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany have signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of VET and the mutual recognition of occupational certificates and qualifications. Based on this agreement, approx. 270 Austrian VET qualifications (apprenticeship-leave exams and school-based certificates) correspond to some 350 German final certificates and apprenticeship diplomas. An equivalence of 26 Austrian master craftsperson examinations with as many German qualifications has also been achieved.

Besides Germany, Austria has also concluded a bilateral agreement with Hungary regarding the recognition of occupational certificates and qualifications. So far, mutual recognition has been agreed upon for 23 qualifications. Due to a restructuring of the Hungarian VET system in the year 2006, another 33 occupations in Austria and Hungary have been held equal. But the procedure required for an official and legally binding equivalence between Austria and Hungary is still ongoing.

An agreement between the autonomous province of Bolzano (Italy) and Austria on the mutual recognition of apprenticeship-leave examinations is in force too. It applies to 130 apprenticeship-leave exams and 32 master craftsperson certificates.

23.2 International cooperation - VET-transfer projects

The dual system is internationally regarded as a "best practice" model and states from all over the world are interested in this system. Therefore, the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) has developed bilateral VET-transfer projects together with Austrian and international cooperation partners.

The role of BMDW in bilateral VET-transfer projects

- leading department for bilateral agreements or work programmes in the field of VET in the context of mixed economic commissions
- in all bilateral VET-transfer projects, BMDW acts as a knowledge provider and counterpart at official level
- bilateral VET transfer projects are supported in the framework of the programme of BMDW and the economic chamber "go international", which supports all Austrian Businesses to enter new markets abroad.
All bilateral transfer projects require the participation of Austrian companies with subsidiaries in the respective partner country. Transfer projects with Slovakia, Serbia and among others China are currently ongoing.

In addition, BMDW is also involved in the overarching educational cooperation for the establishment of the "Western Balkans Alliance for Work-Based Learning" as a joint work platform of the chambers of commerce (Wirtschaftskammernetzwerk) and education authorities (ERI SEE) of the Western Balkans with an office in Trieste (CIFF network). The aim of this platform is to develop opportunities to increase the labour market relevance of VET, foster labour mobility in the region and develop common occupational profiles in the region. The expert conference on dual education in the Western Balkan countries as part of the Berlin Process held in Vienna in 2016 started this initiative.

Further Information:

To support bilateral VET-transfer projects, the online information portal www.apprenticeship-toolbox.eu was set up by five European countries with a dual system (Denmark, Germany, Liechtenstein, Austria and Switzerland).
## 24 Annex

### 24.1 Contact information of the Apprenticeship Offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship office of the economic chamber of Burgenland Robert-Graf-Platz 1 7000 Eisenstadt</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province</td>
<td>Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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T: +43 (0) 662 8888-431  
Support-service: Dr. Axel Lohinger  
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| Faberstraße 18  
5027 Salzburg                                                        |                                                                                                                                                     |
| Apprenticeship office of the economic chamber of Styria                | Head: Dr. Gottfried Krainer  
E: gottfried.krainer@wkstmk.at  
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8010 Graz                                                              |                                                                                                                                                     |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Apprenticeship office of the economic chamber of Tyrol | Head: Dr. Johannes Huber  
E: johannes.huber@wktirol.at  
T: +43 (0) 5 90 905-7300  
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Support-service: Michaela Sattler  
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E: jenny.christoph@wkv.at  
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Apprentices and master-craftsmen office: Brigitte Sohm  
W: http://wko.at/vlbg/pruefung  
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T: +43 (0) 1 51450–2460 |
24.2 Further Information


- Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft (ibw) and Österreichisches Institut für Bildungsforschung (öibf): Hintergrundanalyse zur betrieblichen Lehrstellenförderung (Synthesebericht) [Background analysis on the funding of apprenticeship training in companies (synthesis report)]; Wien 2016; Download: https://www.bmdw.gv.at/Nationale%20Marktstrategien/Seiten/default.aspx


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<th>Page</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Apprentices in an IVET programme pursuant to § 8b (in absolute numbers 2007 - 2017)</td>
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<td>Self-employed persons according to the highest educational attainment Microcensus-2017</td>
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