
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN EUROPE

AUSTRIA

SYSTEM DESCRIPTION



VET IN EUROPE 2023

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CHAPTER 1.

Summary of main elements and distinctive features of VET

Summary of main elements

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

Upper secondary level

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

- different types of 1- or 2-year pre-VET (*Polytechnische Schule*, PTS, ISCED 341; *berufsbildende mittlere Schule*, BMS, ISCED 351): learners acquire general education and basic vocational skills preparing them for further school-based VET and apprenticeships;
- 3- to 4-year school-based VET (BMS, ISCED 354, EQF 4) combine general education and respective occupational competences and qualifications to perform medium-level jobs. Those who complete an add-on VET course (lasting 2 to 3 years) or take the higher education entrance exam (*Berufsreifeprüfung*, BRP) also obtain general access to higher education studies;
- 5-year school-based VET (*berufsbildende höhere Schule*, BHS, ISCED 354-554, EQF 5) offer high-quality occupation-related training while strengthening learners' general education. They lead to double qualifications for senior positions in business and general access to higher education at the same time (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*);
- apprenticeships (ISCED 354, EQF 4) last 2 to 4 years and are offered in some 230 occupations to learners having completed compulsory education. They lead to qualifications at medium level. Graduates can progress to qualify as master craftsperson or, with relevant work experience and/or additional exams, access tertiary level training in a related field. By completing the *Berufsreifeprüfung* or an add-on VET course, they can obtain general access to higher education;
- VET programmes in the healthcare sector last 1 to 3 years and are offered at ISCED 351 and 353. Three-year nursing programmes are offered at ISCED 454 and provide access to tertiary-level training in related fields. These programmes expire at the end of 2026 and are currently being replaced by degree programmes at universities of applied sciences (FH).

Tertiary level

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

Universities of applied sciences (FH) provide practice-oriented bachelor (ISCED 665, EQF 6) and master programmes (ISCED 767, EQF 7) in different fields. Some are based on the dual principle, where theory and practice in enterprises alternate. Many are open to people in employment.

Adult learning/continuing VET

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

Distinctive features

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

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

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

The number of apprentices (within the dual VET-track) being trained is driven by company demand. The training is based on a training contract between the company and the apprentice and learners need to follow a respective school-based programme. Early leaving rates from education and training have been comparatively low (8.4% in 2022) and there has been a [training obligation since 2017](#): all young people must participate in mainstream school-based programmes, apprenticeships or other recognised training until the age of 18.

CHAPTER 2.

Main challenges and policy responses

Despite its wide recognition, VET faces several challenges:

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

CHAPTER 3.

External factors influencing VET

3.1 Demographics

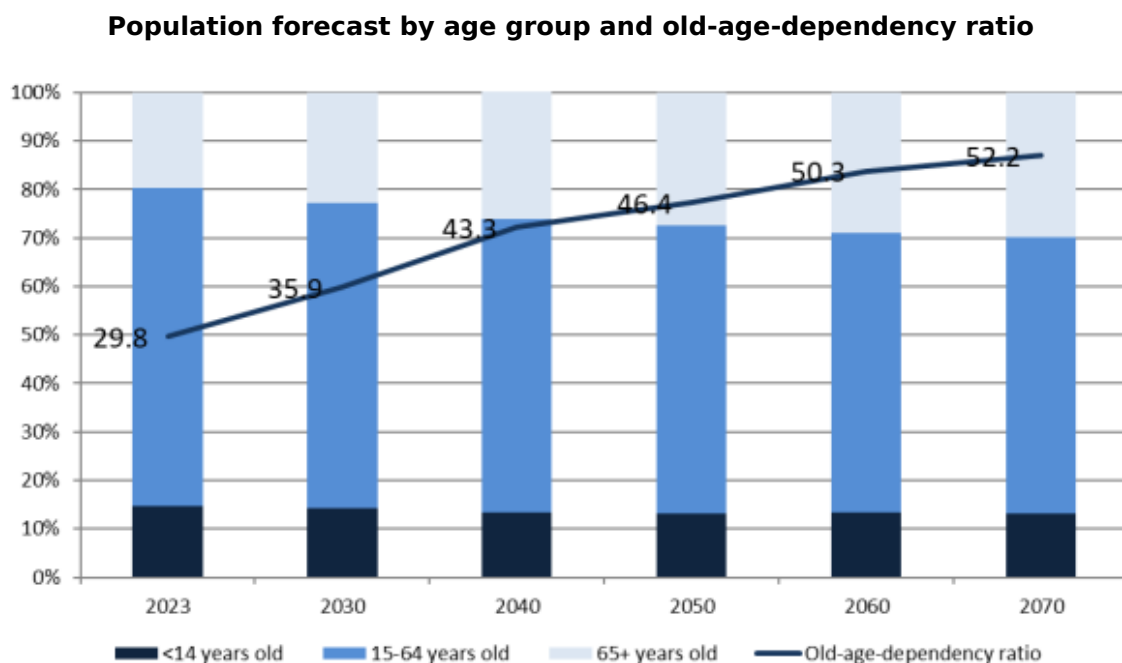
Population in 2022: 8 978 929 (1).

The continuous increase in the size of the population since the mid-1980s is mainly due to the growing influx of foreign nationals, rising particularly sharply in recent years. Overall, 19.0% of the Austrian population are foreign nationals (2).

It increased since 2019 by 2.8% mainly due to migration (3). According to the projection of Statistics Austria, based on assumptions on fertility, mortality and migration, the population will continue to grow to over 9.1 million people by the end of 2023, to 9.4 million by the year 2030 and to over 9.6 million people by 2040 (+6% compared to 2023) (4).

The demographic development reveals that the population is ageing, as in many other EU countries. In 2023 only 19.6% of the Austrian population were aged 65 years or older; the share of this population segment in the population overall is expected to increase to 29.8% by 2070.

The old-age-dependency ratio (5) is expected to increase, from 30% in 2023 to 52% in 2070. This means there will be fewer than two people in employment for every pensioner.



Source: Eurostat, tps00001 and proj_23ndbi [extracted 12.6.2023].

The demographic structure and dynamics in Austria - mainly driven by migration and an aging society - will have an impact on available resources as well as on the demand for education (6).

Because of migration, support structures (such as classes in German) have been created for the acquisition of German as a foreign language (language of instruction) and measures have been taken to make it possible for migrants to complete VET programmes: these include transition courses and cooperation between the Austrian economic chambers and social enterprises to place and support young refugees in apprenticeships (7).

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

3.2 Economics

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the Austrian Economy and with total of 366 500 enterprises they represent 99.7% of all enterprises. In 2021, SMEs employed 2.1 million people (67% of all employees) and trained 53 000 apprentices (62% of all apprentices). This means that SMEs provide work to around two-thirds of the entire workforce.

88% of SMEs are micro-enterprises with fewer than ten employees. 10% are small enterprises employing between 10 and 49 people, around 2% are medium-sized enterprises with 50 to 249 employees. The share of large enterprises in the total number of Austrian companies is only 0.3%, but they employ roughly one third of all employees. Especially for SMEs - and particularly for micro and small enterprises - VET that is properly differentiated and adjusted to current and future requirements is very important because these companies, as a rule, do not have their own in-house human resource development and research departments.

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

The [most important manufacturing sectors \(by turnover 2022\)](#) and [export sectors](#) of the Austrian economy with the dominance of SMEs are:

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

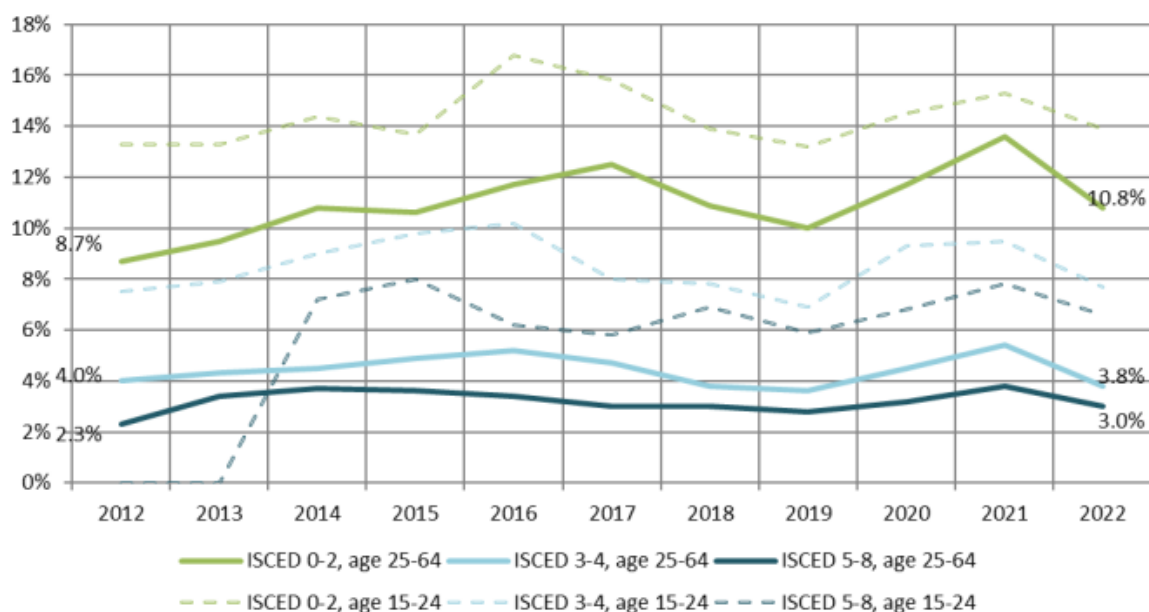
In terms of [foreign trade](#), in addition to the machinery industry, the most promising sectors include energy, environmental technology, construction and infrastructure, food, technology, creative industries, education and the service sector.

3.3 Labour market

In Austria around 200 professions are regulated (8); they require a specific professional qualification when accessing or exercising them. Certificates/diplomas are generally very important to enter the labour market, although for most jobs they are not a formal requirement.

Total unemployment (2022): 4.2% (5.4% in EU-27); it fell by -0.4% percentage points (pp) compared to 2018 (9).

Unemployment rate (aged 15-24 and 25-64) by education attainment level in 2012-22



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series; low reliability for ISCED 5-8, age 15-24.
 ISCED 0-2 = less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.
 ISCED 3-4 = upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education.
 ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.
 Source: Eurostat, Ifsa_urgaed [extracted 12.10.2023].

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

In 2022 the unemployment rate of persons (aged 25-64) without an upper secondary qualification was 10.8%, more than twice as high as persons with at least upper secondary education (3.8%) and almost four times higher than people with tertiary education background (3.0%). Younger people (aged 15-24) with no or lower formal qualifications are especially affected by significantly higher unemployment risks and rates.

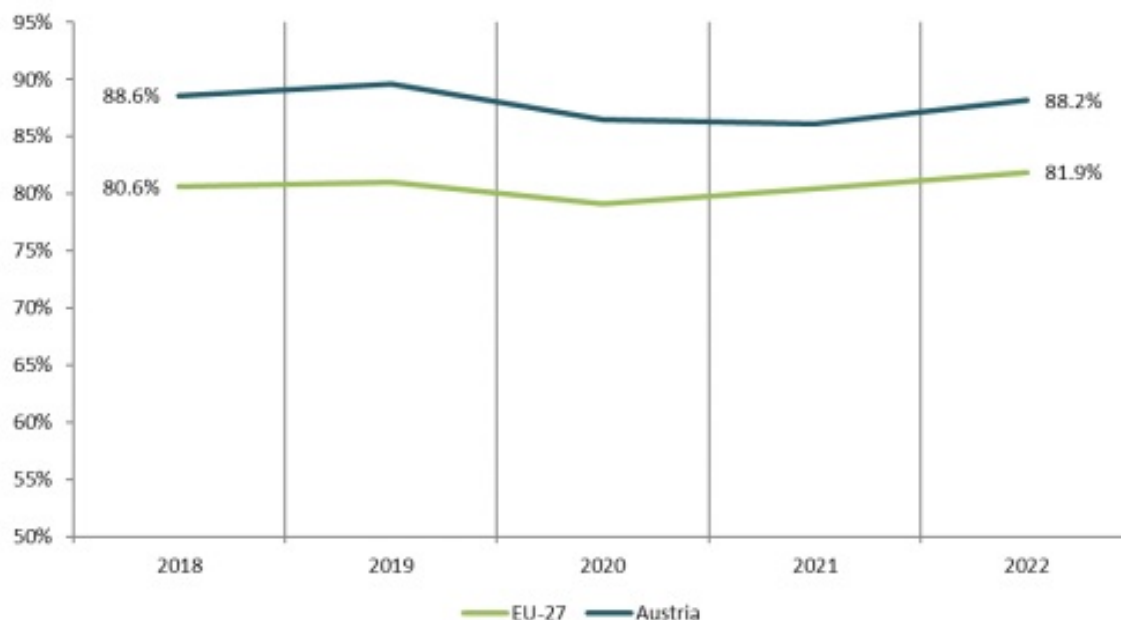
In 2021, Austria had the fourth lowest unemployment rate (15.3%) in an EU-27 comparison (23.0%) among young people (15 to 24-year-olds). This is particularly due to the varied VET programmes offered at the upper secondary level.

The employment rate of 20 to 34-year-old VET graduates at ISCED levels 3 and 4 decreased slightly from 88.6% in 2018 to 88.2% in 2022; it is 6.3 percentage points above the EU 27-average (81.9% in 2022) (10). This high level is due to the wide range of vocational programmes at upper secondary level, which make it possible for graduates to enter the labour market

directly (11).

The employment rate of 20 to 34-year-old VET graduates at ISCED levels 3 and 4 is higher compared to that for all 20 to 34-year-old graduates, which remained almost stable over the last few years and was at 84.6% in 2022 (12).

Employment rate of VET graduates (20 to 34 years old, ISCED levels 3 and 4)



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011; breaks in time series.

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

Source: Eurostat, edat_ifse_24 [extracted 12.6.2023].

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- [1] Statistik Austria (2023). [Bevölkerung nach Staatsangehörigkeit/Geburtsland](#) [Population by citizenship and country of birth]. [accessed 16.10.2023]
 - [3] Statistik Austria (2023). [Bevölkerung nach Staatsangehörigkeit/Geburtsland](#) [Population by citizenship and country of birth]. [accessed 16.10.2023]
 - [5] Old-age-dependency ratio is defined as the ratio between the number of persons aged 65 and more over the number of working-age persons (15-64). The value is expressed per 100 persons of working age (15-64).
 - [7] See WKO. [Geflüchtete Personen beschäftigen](#) [Employing refugees] [accessed 16.10.2023]
 - [8] See European Commission. [Regulated professions database](#).
 - [9] Source: Eurostat, une_rt_a [extracted 12.6.2023]
 - [10] Eurostat table edat_ifse_24 [extracted 12.6.2023]
 - [12] NB: Breaks in time series. Eurostat table edat_ifse_24 [extracted 12.6.2023]

CHAPTER 4.

Education attainment

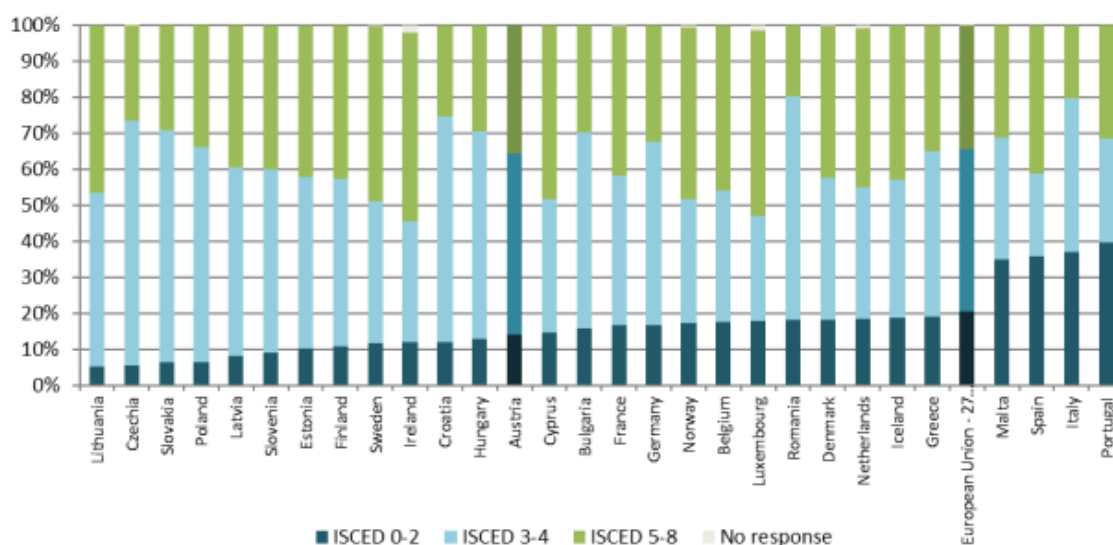
4.1 Share of high, medium and low level qualifications

In 2022 more than half of 25 to 64-year-olds (50.4%) acquired a qualification in an education programme at ISCED level 3 or 4, i.e. an apprenticeship diploma or a qualification from a school for intermediate vocational education or a general secondary school. This also reflects the importance of the upper secondary sector within the Austrian education system.

More than one third of the population (35.6%) of 25 to 64 years old completed a tertiary education programme, including also 'short programmes' (ISCED 5) below the bachelor degree, such as the qualification obtained at a 5-year school-based VET programme or at an industrial master college. But many programmes aiming at vocational further and higher qualifications (such as the engineer qualification, the financial accountant qualification, qualifications obtained in the police force) are offered outside the formal education system and are not included in ISCED.

The share of the population with no or low-level qualifications (ISCED 0-2) is significantly lower (14.1%) compared to the EU-27 average (20.5%), and the share of the medium-qualified (50.4% at levels 3-4) significantly higher (EU-27: 45.2%). The shares of the high-qualified (ISCED 5-8) are almost balanced (AT: 35.6%, EU-27: 34.2%).

Population (aged 25 to 64) by highest education level attained in 2022



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

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

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

ISCED 5-8 = tertiary education.

Source: Eurostat, Ifsa_pgaed [extracted 12.6.2023].

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

4.3 VET learners by level

In Austria nearly 70% of all upper secondary education VET learners (ISCED level 3) are enrolled in vocational programmes compared to 48.3% in the EU-27 average (2021).

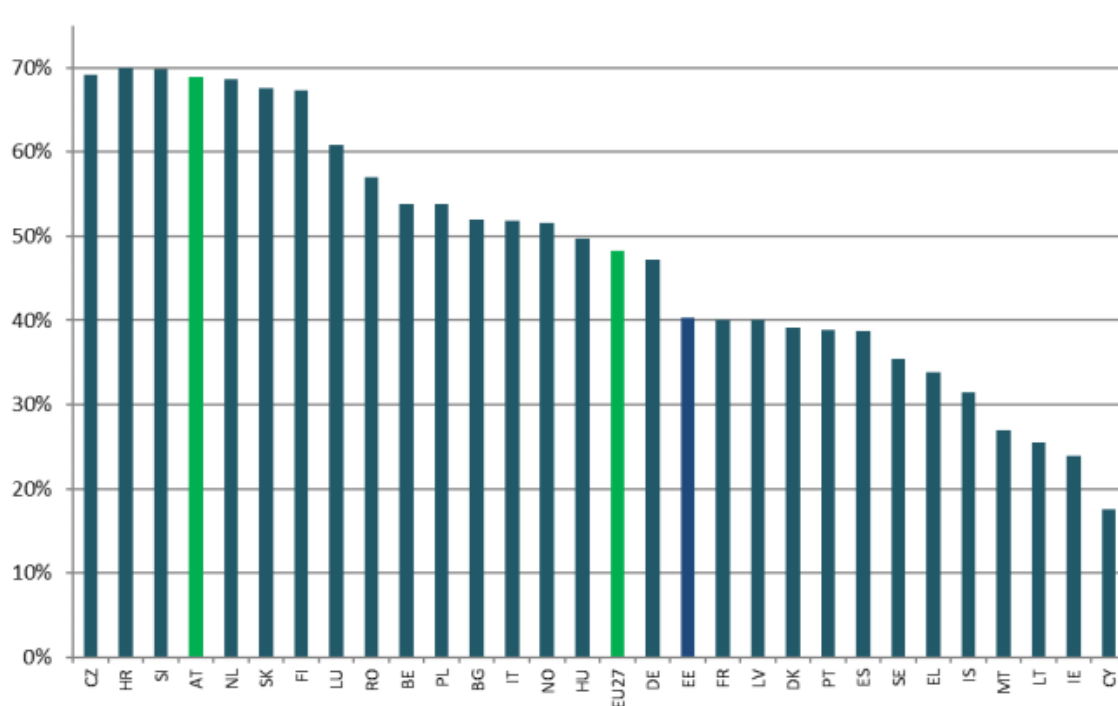
This is primarily due to the high attractiveness and inflow of approximately 40% - a relative constant rate since the mid-1990s - of an age cohort to the apprenticeship training in Austria.

Share of learners in VET by level in 2021

lower secondary	upper secondary	post-secondary
not applicable	68.9%	100%

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs01, educ_uoe_enrs04 and educ_uoe_enrs07 [extracted 12.6.2023].

Share of initial VET learners from total learners at upper secondary level (ISCED level 3), 2021



NB: Data based on ISCED 2011.

Source: Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrs04 [extracted 1.11.2023].

4.4 Female share

In 2021, around 75% of learners in the 10th grade (after completing compulsory education) are in VET programmes. There are more male learners in these programmes (80% choose a VET programme) than female ones (70%) (13).

Education choices of females and males in IVET differ:

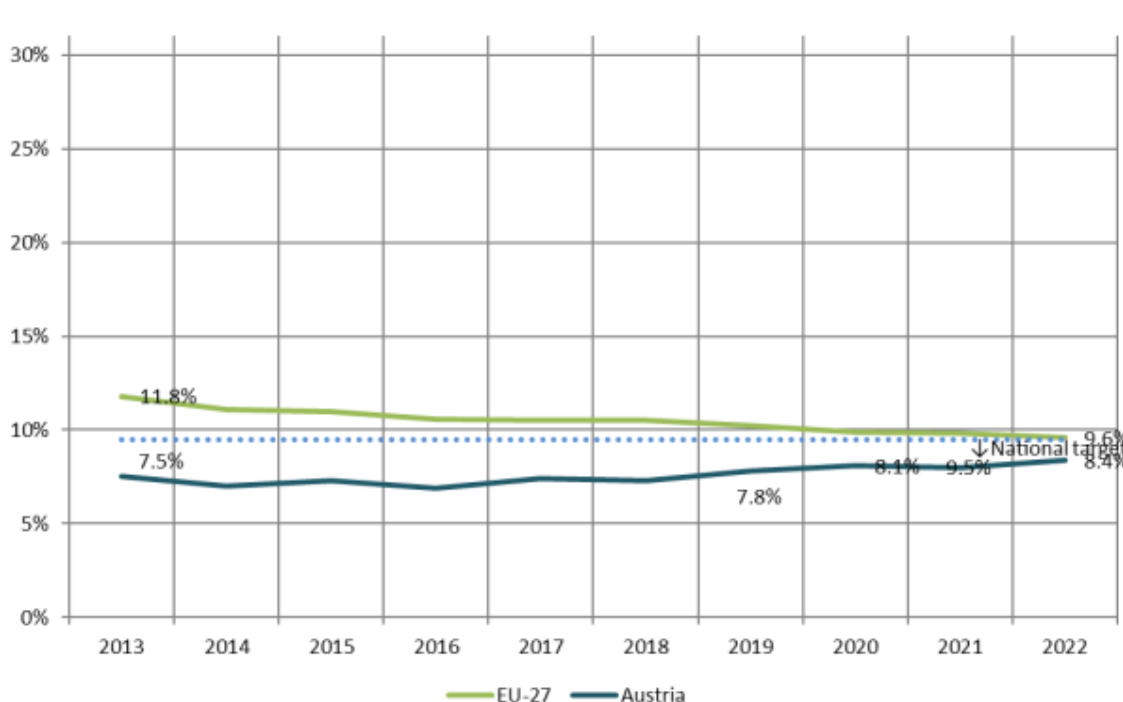
- young males are traditionally overrepresented in apprenticeship training (67.5% of all apprentices are male) with the main focus on technical trades and crafts. They also favour technical branches in school-based VET;
- young females generally prefer school-based VET with commercial, economic, social, healthcare and pedagogical programme orientation.

4.5 Early leavers from education and training

In Austria the share of early leavers from education and training - 18 to 24-year-olds, who have not graduated from upper secondary level and are currently not in education and training - has slightly increased from 7.5% in 2013 to 8.4% in 2022. The national target of 9.5% in 2022 has already been passed and is clearly below the EU-27 average (9.6%) with the European benchmark of less than 10% for 2022. This relatively favourable figure in comparison to the EU-27 is attributed to the wide and differentiated range of education and training programmes after

compulsory schooling, especially apprenticeship training and the VET school sector.

Early leavers from education and training in 2013-22



NB: Share of the population aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training.

Source: Eurostat, edat_ifse_14 [extracted 12.6.2023] and European Commission, <https://ec.europa.eu/info/2018-european-semester-national-reform-progra...> [accessed 14.11.2018].

For more information visit [Cedefop project page on tackling early leaving](#) and our interactive toolkits: [Cedefop VET toolkit for tackling early leaving](#) and [Cedefop VET toolkit for empowering NEETs](#).

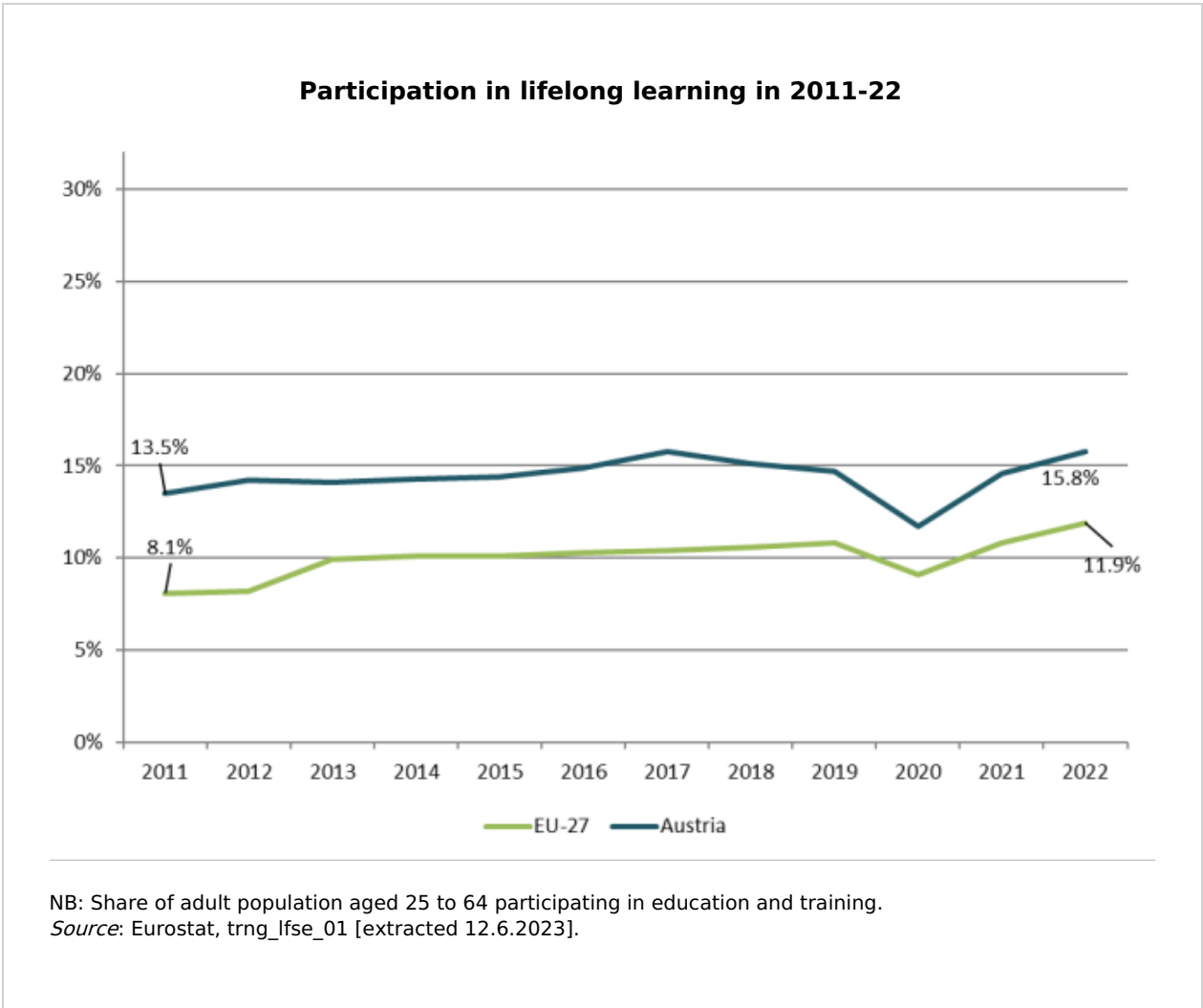
4.6 Participation in lifelong learning

Austria has already achieved, even exceeded, the EU benchmark for lifelong learning of 15%, reaching 15.8% in 2017. However, after a slight decline until 2019, participation plummeted massively to 11.7% in 2020 and is thus again well below the EU benchmark. The reason for this slump is the COVID-19 pandemic, which has left deep scars in continuing education. At 15.8%, the 2017 level was reached again in 2022, significantly exceeding the pre-corona level. The Austrian government in 2011 [upgraded the national target for adults aged 25 to 64 to take part in lifelong learning to 20% by 2020](#) which, however, has not yet been achieved.

[LLL participation](#) is generally higher among women (17.2% in 2022) than men (14.4%) and is now well above the EU-27 average again (11.9%) after the decline in 2020.

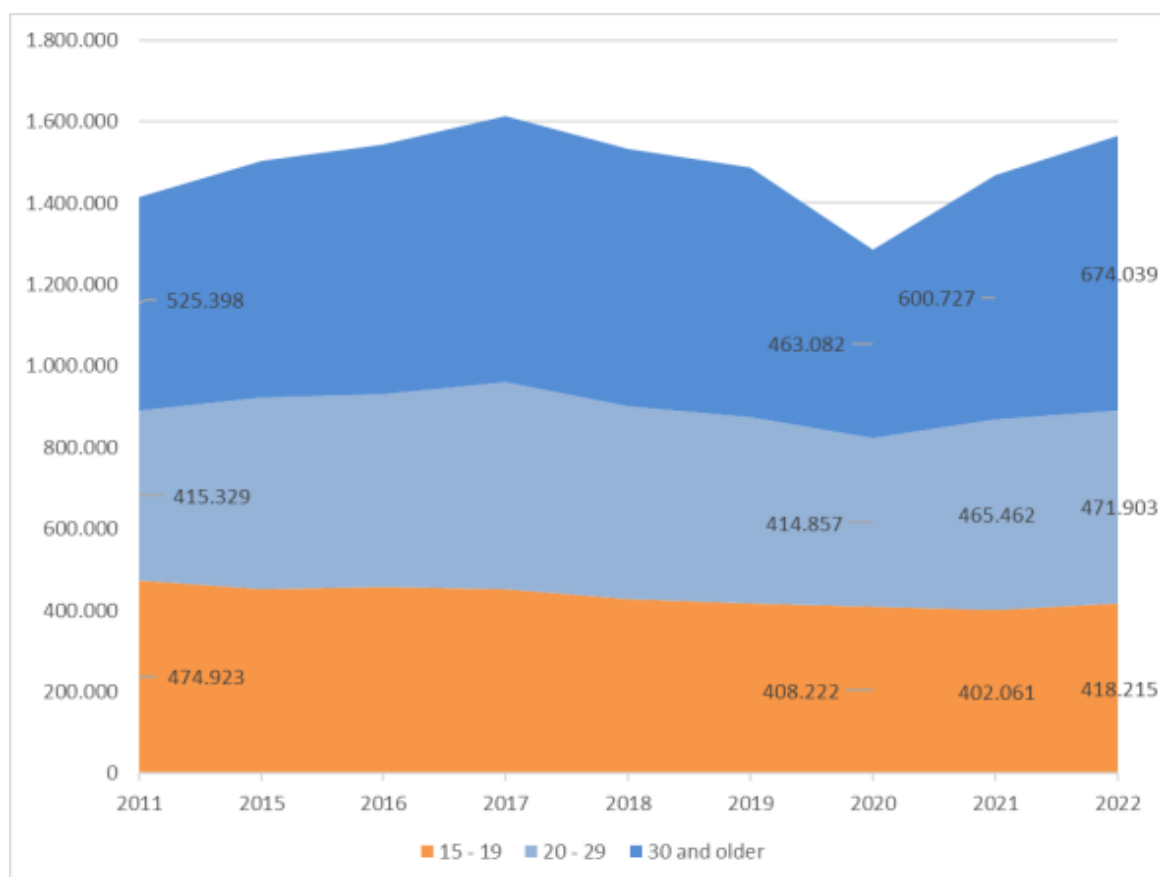
Especially in an aging society, lifelong learning (LLL) will become imperative to keeping pace with the (future) requirements of the economy. Encouraging participation of older employees in

further and higher qualification programmes is essential.



4.7 VET learners by age

Adults in education and training by age group



NB: a change was made to the survey in 2021, resulting in a break in the time series. The 2021 and 2022 values cannot therefore be directly compared with the previous year's values.

Source: National data (Statistics Austria, Micro Census - Labour force survey).

According to the labour force survey, around 418 000 people between 15 and 19 were in education and training (IVET + CVET) in 2022, most of them in formal education and training programmes (86.4%). Among the 20 to 29 age group, 472 000 participated in education and training programmes in 2022, 62.1% of them in formal programmes. More than 670 000 people aged 30 or older took part in education and training in 2022. In this age group, the proportion of non-formal education programmes was 83.5%. (14) Due to a change in the survey in 2021, it is no longer possible to differentiate between work-related continuing education and private continuing education in the figures. It is therefore not possible to make a concrete statement about the proportion of adult VET learners.

The significant drop in numbers in 2020 in the age group 30 and older is primarily due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a much greater impact on the non-formal education sector than on the formal education sector, which plays a greater role in younger cohorts.

CHAPTER 5.

VET within education and training system

Structure of the Austrian education system:

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

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

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

education sector. For the unemployed and those threatened by unemployment, programmes are offered as part of active labour market policy.

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

- different types of 1- or 2-year pre-VET (*Polytechnische Schule*, PTS, ISCED 341; *berufsbildende mittlere Schule*, BMS, ISCED 351): learners acquire general education, key competences and basic vocational skills preparing them for further school-based VET, apprenticeships and simple jobs on the labour market;
- 3- to 4-year school-based VET (*berufsbildende mittlere Schule*, BMS, ISCED 354, EQF 4): learners strengthen their general education and acquire the respective occupational competences and qualifications to perform medium-level jobs. Those who complete an add-on VET course or take the *Berufsreifeprüfung* (exam for people whose initial VET does not automatically qualify them for entry into higher education) also obtain general access to higher education studies;
- 5-year school-based VET (*berufsbildende höhere Schule*, BHS, ISCED 354-554, EQF 5): combining theory and practice, these programmes offer high-quality occupation-related training while strengthening learners' general education. They lead to double qualifications for senior positions in business and general access to higher education at the same time (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*);
- apprenticeships (dual track training) (ISCED 354, EQF 4) in some 230 occupations and trades for learners from age 15 onwards, after compulsory education. They lead to qualifications at medium level. Graduates can progress to qualify, for instance, as master craftsperson or, following additional exams, access tertiary level training in a related field. By completing the *Berufsreifeprüfung* or an add-on VET course they can also obtain general access to higher education;
- training for occupations in the health sector: access to programmes preparing for care and medical assistant professions (ISCED 351 and 353) and other occupations in the health sector (ISCED 351) requires completed compulsory education, being of minimum age, and/or a specific qualification. Training to become a specialist and general care nurse (ISCED 454) is currently being upgraded to bachelor level. This process will be completed by 2026, when the last school-based training programmes in this occupational field end.

VET at post-secondary level

The introduction of ISCED-2011 has had the result that VET programmes which had formerly been classified as 'post-secondary, non-tertiary' are now considered as 'tertiary'.

VET at tertiary level

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

- Bachelor and master programmes provided at the universities of applied sciences (FH, ISCED 665/767) are offered both as full-time and also as part-time (with extended overall programme duration). A period of work placement is a mandatory part of the bachelor programme curriculum. The programmes are completed with an academic thesis followed by a final exam. Successful completion of an FH master's programme entitles graduates to access subject-related PhD courses at university.
- Teacher education programmes offered by university colleges (PH, ISCED 665) aim to train compulsory schoolteachers as well as VET school teachers for the type of education selected in a 4-year bachelor programme. These PH programmes focus on imparting knowledge and skills related to teaching and didactics as well as their application in school life. There are practical teacher training phases within the bachelor programme as well as an induction period, a 1-year phase in which graduates teach at a school under the supervision of a mentor.

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

CHAPTER 6.

Apprenticeship

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

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

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

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

Following successful completion of the LAP, graduates have various progression options, such as taking the master craftsperson exam for a skilled craft. Access to tertiary programmes can be acquired by taking the exam called *Berufsreifeprüfung* (BRP) during or after the apprenticeship training. For many, an apprenticeship also forms the basis for a self-employed career. According to the 2019 Labour force survey, around 31% of self-employed persons in Austria have an apprenticeship degree as their highest completed qualification and around 20% of managers in the business sphere have completed an apprenticeship (15).

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

The heterogeneity of people interested in dual VET has also resulted in the establishment of inclusive VET in 2003. Inclusive VET is mainly intended for young people who, at the end of compulsory schooling, have special educational needs and have not graduated from lower secondary level. It can be implemented in two variants, either the training period can be extended by 1 or 2 years, or only selected competences of an apprenticeship are taught (partial

qualifications). People in these inclusive VET programmes are supported by vocational training assistance (*Berufsausbildungsassistenz*). This advises and supports the training companies and young people before and during the training.

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

Learn more about apprenticeships in the national context from [Cedefop's European database on apprenticeship schemes](#).

CHAPTER 7.

VET governance

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 8.

VET financing mechanisms

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

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

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

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

Model calculation: Comparison of the public expenditure for IVET, per learner/apprentice for 1 year (2020 or 2020/21)

Programme	Costs per person/apprenticeship place and year (in EUR)	Total public expenses per person/ apprenticeship place and year (in EUR)
Dual VET (company and VET school)	VET school: 5 170 EUR State subsidies: 2 186 EUR	7 356 EUR
Supra-company training (training in a state-funded workshop and at VET school)	VET school: 5 170 EUR PES: 13 543 EUR Province: 1 027 EUR	19 740 EUR
School-based VET programmes	10 905 EUR	10 905 EUR

Source: Dornmayr (2023). *Lehrlingsausbildung im Überblick 2023. Strukturdaten, Trends und Perspektiven* [Apprenticeship overview 2023. Structural data, trends and perspectives]. Vienna. ibw research report No 217.

CHAPTER 9.

Teachers and trainers

9.1 VET teacher types

VET has the following types of teacher:

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

Teachers

The training of teachers (16) changed when the [Federal Act on the New Teacher Training Scheme](#) came into force in July 2013. Since then, all teachers have been trained as part of tertiary bachelor and master programmes (ISCED 6 and 7) at universities and university colleges of teacher education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

IVET trainers:

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

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

CVET trainers:

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

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

9.2 Continuing professional development of teachers/trainers

CPD for teachers:

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

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

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

CPD for trainers:

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

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

For more information visit Cedefop project page on [Teachers' and Trainers' professional](#)

development and our interactive toolkits for VET practitioners: [Cedefop VET toolkit for tackling early leaving](#) and [Cedefop VET toolkit for empowering NEETs](#). You may also read [Cedefop/ReferNet country reports on Teachers and Trainers in a Changing World](#) and [Cedefop comparative analysis](#).’

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- [16] For detailed information about the training of teachers and trainers in Austria, see Eurydice (2023). [Austria: teachers and education staff](#) and Cedefop (2022). [Teachers and trainers in a changing world](#) [accessed 16.10.2023]

CHAPTER 10.

Shaping VET qualifications

10.1 Anticipating skill needs

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

The most important mechanisms and processes to anticipate qualification requirements include:

- skill needs studies: these are mostly conducted for specific sectors and industries (e.g. timber, IT), but also for regions (such as federal provinces) and education programmes (certain specialisations of colleges for higher vocational education, dual VET, etc.). The main beneficiaries of these studies are stakeholders in these sectoral/regional areas as well as staff responsible for the curriculum and other areas in the VET pathways that are of relevance for the specialisations;
- [JobBarometer](#) of PES Austria: the JobBarometer is an information system on occupational and skills trends. It is mainly based on data obtained from the texts of online job adverts. Forecasts and career prospects complement this service. This tool is aimed at anyone with a personal or professional interest in labour market trends;
- 'New skills' activities: in 2009 a standing committee on new skills was founded at PES Austria. This committee, in which relevant ministries, the social partners and their CET provider establishments are represented, functions as advisory board for PES Austria in questions concerning the design of education offers within active labour market policy and the activities to be undertaken to identify future skills needs. Since the committee's foundation, roundtable discussions have been held in which company experts from various vocational areas (such as HR) and education experts (e.g. representatives of providers) have discussed and exchanged information about current and future skills needs/trends. This should give providers a first-hand picture on skills requirements of the economy to be able to design or adjust their offers adequately. Besides these roundtable (group) discussions, one-to-one/in-depth expert interviews (mainly with key companies of a vocational area) have also been conducted. Other 'New skills' activities have included presentations and information events, to inform learners, employers and CET interested people about skills requirements and trends. Since 2018 the '[New skills' activities](#) have focussed on the subjects '[digitalisation](#)' and '[Industry 4.0](#)' and since 2022, [a particular focus of activities has been on green skills](#).

See also Cedefop's [skills forecast](#) and [European skills index](#).

10.2 Designing qualifications

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

School-based VET

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

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

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

Dual VET (apprenticeship)

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

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

Programmes at universities of applied sciences (UAS)

The initiative to modify existing or introduce new fields of study at UAS frequently comes from the business sphere. For the curriculum, which is prepared by a development team, an application for accreditation needs to be submitted to the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria). An important part of this application is proof that the economy has a demand for graduates and the planned degree programme can expect demand from

potential participants. This proof can be furnished, for example, in the form of needs and acceptance analyses. The accreditation of a degree programme is granted for a maximum of 6 years by the Ministry of Education following a decision by AQ Austria. During that time, it is possible to make necessary adaptations by submitting change applications. Upon expiry of this period, it is necessary to submit an application for reaccreditation, which follows the same rules as the initial accreditation.

Continuing vocational education and training (CVET)

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

More information on national qualifications frameworks and the qualifications types can be found in the [NQF online tool](#).

CHAPTER 11.

Quality assurance

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

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

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

The aims of QMS include, to:

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

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

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

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

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

- safeguarding a uniform quality standard by examining the assignments of the apprenticeship-leaving examination,
- evaluating guidelines and proposed solutions for compliance with the respective

examination regulation, subject-related correctness, practical relevance and didactic quality.

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 12.

Validation of prior learning

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

CHAPTER 13.

Incentives for learners

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

- for learners who have reached full legal age and attend a school or HE institution, family allowance is prolonged and still granted until their 24th birthday; in certain cases, this entitlement can be further prolonged;
- learners for whom family allowance is received may apply to a public transport authority for free transport on the route between their home and school/training company (Schülerfreifahrt); in this case, they need to pay a flat-rate contribution of EUR 19.60 a year. Where no public means of transport is available, they may apply for a school or home commuting grant;
- required school textbooks are provided to learners free of charge;
- the [Schooling Allowances Act](#) (Schülerbeihilfengesetz) provides for the following three types of allowance:
 - school allowance is granted to learners from grade 10 onwards who attend an upper secondary programme and are in need of financial support;
 - boarding school and travel allowance (Heim- und Fahrtenbeihilfe) are offered to learners from grade 9 onwards, in case that they cannot stay in their parents' house because the school location is too far away. Financial need must also be proven. The basic amounts of school allowance and boarding school allowance are EUR 1 608 and EUR 1 964 per year; they can be increased or reduced depending on financial needs. Travel allowance is EUR 150 per year (as of 2023). A further extraordinary allowance may be granted in cases of 'social hardship';
 - special allowance is granted to learners, who have been working for at least 1 year and for the last 6 months before their final exam, where they stop working to prepare for the exam.

In IVET, the following [financial incentives for apprentices](#) are available:

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 14.

Incentives for enterprises to boost their participation in VET provision

Since 2008 a [funding scheme for training companies](#) offering apprenticeship posts is in place. This scheme is not only intended to increase the number of apprenticeship posts offered but also improve the quality of training. Within this funding scheme, there are various types of support:

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

Other benefits cover non-wage labour costs:

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

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

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

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

- **adult learning initiative**: financed by national and ESF means, the aim is to enable young people and adults to acquire basic skills (reading skills, basic skills in German or in another language, mathematical and digital skills) and the compulsory schooling qualification free of charge;
- **apprenticeship training and HE entrance exam**: apprentices can attend preparatory courses for the *Berufsreifeprüfung* (HE entrance examination for graduates of NQF level 4 VET qualifications) and take the four partial exams free of charge.

CHAPTER 15.

Guidance and counselling

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

- all schools of lower and upper secondary level offer counselling and guidance from the fifth school grade through counsellors and career guidance officers. They are available for schoolchildren and parents and provide information about possible education paths, access requirements, as well as the qualifications and entitlements to be acquired. They also give young people a basic overview of CET options. Guidance is conducted by teachers who have the relevant qualifications and who are termed, depending on the school type, school counsellor (*Schülerberater/in*) or education counsellor (*Bildungsberater/in*) and provide their counselling services in addition to their teaching activity. In the final 2 years of lower secondary level, career guidance is a compulsory subject totalling 32 hours a year. The aim of these lessons includes improving the learners' decision-making competence, social skills, determination and perseverance. Short periods of work placement at companies and personal contacts with people from different occupations aim to help learners examine their career aspirations and take independent decisions;
- career guidance plays a particularly important role at prevocational schools as this school type is at the interface between obligatory and further schooling. Career guidance aims to inform learners and parents about regional possibilities in apprenticeship training and, in vocational guidance classes, prepares them for so-called real-life encounters (such as days of practical work experience) as well as important information events and job information fairs;
- in school-based VET programmes at upper secondary level (BMS and BHS) (17) teachers with specialist qualifications also work as career guidance officers. Learners at BMS and BHS have already taken their first decision about their professional career. But, thanks to the good level of general education provided at schools, the entire range of professional development options is also open to them;
- most universities offer both psychological counselling offices and career planning centres, bodies which are within the sphere of responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The psychological student counselling services at universities and university of applied sciences (*Fachhochschule*) offer general course guidance, psychological counselling, psychotherapy, aptitude diagnostics, coaching, and supervision, etc. to holders of the upper secondary school-leaving certificate and HE students. Career planning centres at universities support students on their entry into the world of work by offering one-to-one counselling, information events on topics such as job applications and CVs, as well as individualised career planning. The centres also organise seminars on areas such as presentation techniques, rhetoric and IT, as well as events such as careers fairs and company presentations;
- in the CET sector education counselling and career guidance is becoming increasingly important. This is particularly evident in the establishment of [comprehensive education databases](#), an Austria-wide platform for education counselling, and the merger of institutions to guarantee independent and supra-institutional information and guidance services. Major adult learning establishments, such as the institutions run by the social partners frequently offer their own guidance services. Around 70 career guidance centres (BIZ) of AMS offer comprehensive information about occupations, their contents and requirements, about initial education and training, CET paths, the labour market and employment options across Austria. Apart from information material in the form of

brochures, information leaflets and videos, The Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) also develops information [databases on occupations and on initial and continuing education and training programmes](#) for different target groups. For apprenticeship post seekers, AMS operates the [online apprenticeship post platform](#) jointly with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber.

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

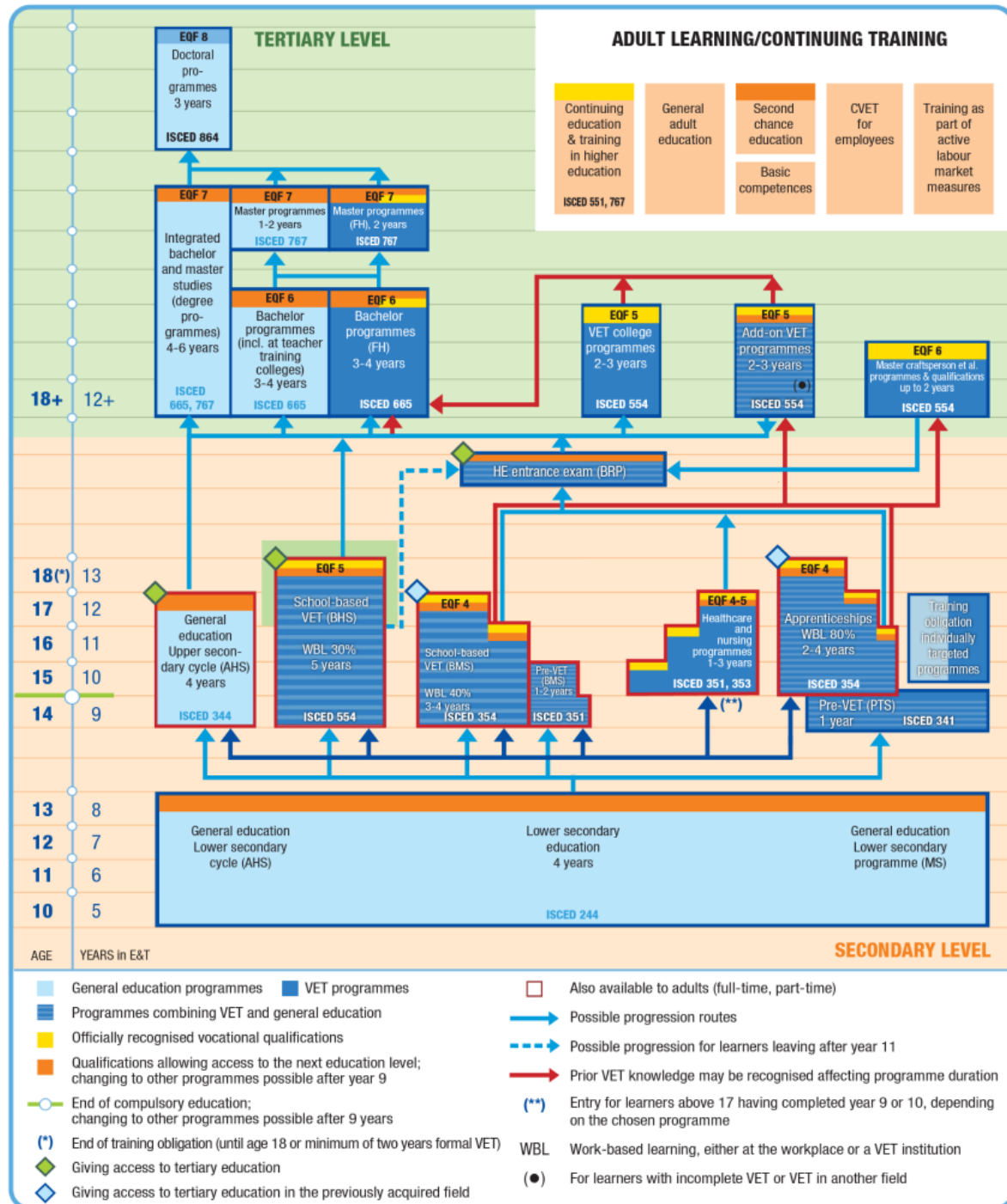
The different chambers offer education counselling and career guidance. The chambers of labour and trade unions provide these services mainly via their joint adult learning institutions: the vocational training institutes (bfi). They publish information material and organise information events. The counselling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

Please see:

- [Guidance and outreach Austria national report](#);
- [Cedefop's inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Austria](#).

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

Vocational education and training system chart



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop, & ibw Austria - Research & Development in VET. (2023). Vocational education and training in Europe – Austria: system description. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2024). Vocational education and training in Europe: VET in Europe database – detailed VET system descriptions [Database]. www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/austria-u3

VET Programme Types

Pre-VET (PTS)			
1 year			
ISCED 341			
Pre-VET programme (Polytechnische Schule, PTS), leading to ISCED 341			
EQF level	Not yet assigned to the NQF	ISCED-P 2011 level	341
Usual entry grade	9	Usual completion grade	9
Usual entry age	14	Usual completion age	15
Length of a programme (years)	1 year		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 The compulsory E & T age is 15. Obligatory schooling covers a period of 9 years (i.e. from 6 years until 15 years). The pre-VET programme is accessible to learners from age 14.	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?		Is it available for adults?	 However, 95.8 % (2021/22) are 14 or 15 years old when they start the pre-VET programme (18) .
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable		

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• 1-year full-time school-based programme; • covers theoretical teaching and practical experiences (e.g. as part of company tours and days of company-based practice in training workshops or companies, or as part of practical work experiences in classes); • career guidance plays a particularly important role because this school type is at the interface between obligatory and further schooling / apprenticeship training.
Main providers	Public schools
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	20%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	The pre-VET programme consists of general-education and subject-specific classes in different specialist areas, offered in the form of: • a mix of theoretical teaching and • practical experiences (e.g. as part of company tours and days of company-based practice in training workshops or companies, or as part of practical work experiences in classes)
Main target groups	Programme is accessible to young people and adults. The main target group are young people who are completing the last year of compulsory schooling. Adults are admitted in principle, but they are an exception. People with migrant background (non-German first language) made up 37.3 % of all learners who followed this pre-VET programme in the school year 2021/22 (19) .
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	For entering this programme learners need to have completed eight school years.
Assessment of learning outcomes	• regular assessments (written, oral exams) during the school year in each subject; • mid-term and end-of-term reports; • if a learner fails a subject (i.e. receives a 'not sufficient' in the end-of-term report, i.e. performance does not meet minimum pass level) he can (voluntarily) repeat the school year to get a positive certificate. In case the learner does not repeat the school year, he has to attend another training programme until the age of 18 (training obligation until 18).
Diplomas/certificates provided	School leaving certificate (<i>Abschlusszeugnis</i>) On successful completion of this programme, learners receive the certificate, which is recognised by VET and labour market authorities as graduates can enter further education programmes or the labour market for carrying out simple tasks.

Examples of qualifications	With a certificate of this pre-VET programme holders can enter the labour market to carry out simple tasks (if they are older than 18 years). Every learner had to choose one specialist area from all areas offered at the respective school location. In principle, there are six specialist areas (metal, electronic engineering, construction, wood, wholesale and retail trade/office, services/tourism), with every school being entitled to offer other specialist areas autonomously while taking the needs of the local economy into account (e.g. mechatronics, healthcare and social affairs).
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates can progress to: • further education programmes at upper secondary level (general education and VET); • CVET programmes (but few graduates of PTS programmes follow this pathway which is accessible to learners who completed compulsory education); • training programmes within the training obligation until 18; • labour market (for carrying out unskilled work, if they are older than 18 years).
Destination of graduates	According to Statistics Austria (2021/22), graduates choose the following options: • dual VET programmes (56.3%); • school-based VET programme - intermediate level (BMS, 8.1%); • school-based VET programme - higher level (BHS, 5.9%); • other programmes (e.g. general education programmes, 1.4%); • class repetition (3.6%); • no further education or unknown (24.5%) (e.g. labour market entry).
Awards through validation of prior learning	
General education subjects	 It offers both general-education and subject-specific classes in different specialist areas.
Key competences	 In line with the curriculum of the PTS, one of the key aims of the programme is to develop and foster key competences in all subjects and through teaching methods (project work, open forms of teaching, etc.).
Application of learning outcomes approach	 With the curriculum introduced in 2020, the learning outcome and competence orientation approach was implemented in this type of school.

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

**Allocation of learners at upper secondary level / 9th school grade
(2021/22):**

16.4%: pre-VET programme,

16.1%: 1 to 4-year school-based VET programmes at intermediate
level,

35.4%: 5-year school-based VET programmes (higher level),

29.5%: general education,

2.6%: special needs school/inclusive education.

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- [19] Statistik Austria (2023). *Bildung in Zahlen 2021/22 - Tabellenband* [Education in numbers 2021/22]. Vienna. [accessed 10.11.2023]

Pre-VET programmes (BMS)

1-2 years

ISCED 351

School-based VET programmes (berufsbildende mittlere Schulen, BMS), leading to ISCED 351.

EQF level	Not yet assigned to the NQF	ISCED-P 2011 level	351
Usual entry grade	9	Usual completion grade	9 to 10
Usual entry age	14	Usual completion age	15 to 16
Length of a programme (years)	From 1 to 2 years		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 The compulsory E & T age is 15. Obligatory schooling covers a period of 9 years (i.e. from 6 years until 15 years). One- to two-year school-based pre-VET programmes are usually attended by 14 to 16-year-old learners.		
Is it initial VET?	 These programmes include general education, basic vocational competences and key competences which prepare learners for more specific VET pathways (at upper secondary schools or in dual training) and for simple tasks on the labour market.		
		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?	 These programmes are financed by the public, school attendance is free of charge for learners. Exception: for schools of private provider organisations (private schools with public status) tuition fees need to be paid to cover infrastructure costs. Since the teachers are publicly funded, the tuition fee amount is usually moderate.		
		Is it available for adults?	
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable		

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	1- to 2-year pre-VET programmes are • full-time and • practice-oriented.
Main providers	Public schools (and a few private schools)
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	20%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• practice-oriented tuition (e.g. in workshops at school, in school kitchens etc.); • practical experiences (e.g. work shadowing, company tours, company-based practical days).
Main target groups	Most of the learners are between 14 and 16 when they attend these schools (20). However, they are also open for adults. In the 2021/22 school year, the share of learners aged 19 and over at BMS as a whole (1-2 year plus 3-4-year programmes) was 17.9%. People with migrant background (non-German first language) made up 28.7% of all school-based VET programmes learners (1 to 2-year programmes plus 3 to 4-year programmes) in the school year 2021/22 (21).
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	The entry requirements are • positive completion of the eighth grade; • a minimum age of 14 years.
Assessment of learning outcomes	• regular assessments (written, oral exams) during the school year in each subject; • mid-term and end-of-term reports.
Diplomas/certificates provided	School leaving certificate (<i>Abschlusszeugnis</i>) The certificates of the 1- to 2-year pre-VET programmes are recognised by VET and labour market authorities, i.e. graduates can enter further education programmes or the labour market for carrying out simple tasks.
Examples of qualifications	These 1- and 2-year school-based VET programmes prepare learners for carrying out simple tasks on the labour market in different areas such as hospitality services, agriculture, nutrition, social activities, etc. The programmes take place in respective VET schools such as Schools of Social Care Professions (<i>Schulen für Sozialbetreuungsberufe</i>).

Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates may progress to: • dual VET programmes; • school-based VET programmes (3- to 4-year programmes and 5-year programmes); • healthcare and nursing programmes (22); • postsecondary/tertiary VET programmes (e.g. healthcare); • CVET programmes; • training programmes within the ‘training obligation until 18’; • labour market.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	
General education subjects	 These programmes include both general-education and subject-specific classes in different specialist areas.
Key competences	 One of the key aims of these programmes is to develop and foster key competences in all subjects and through various teaching methods (project work, open forms of teaching, etc.).
Application of learning outcomes approach	 With the development of the National Qualifications Framework learning outcomes have been made more explicit in the curricula of all VET programmes.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Allocation of learners at upper secondary level / 10th school grade (2021/22): 35.8%: dual VET programmes, 12.6%: 1 to 4-year school-based VET programmes (intermediate level), 27.6%: 5-year school-based VET programmes (higher level), 24.1%: general education. The share of learners in this programme type was 0.2% of the total number of VET learners at upper secondary level in 2021/22. (23)

[20] Based on [school statistics of Statistics Austria](#) [accessed 3.9.2021]

[21] Statistik Austria (2023). [Bildung in Zahlen 2021/22 - Tabellenband](#). [Education in numbers 2021/22]. Vienna. [accessed 10.11.2023]

[22] Directly accessible only after 2-year Pre-VET programme as minimum entry age is 17.

[23] Own calculation based on the school statistics of Statistics Austria: [STATcube query](#), [extracted 10.11.2023]

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

Apprenticeship training leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354 (Lehrlingsausbildung)

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	10	Usual completion grade	11 to 13
Usual entry age	15	Usual completion age	17 to 19
Length of a programme (years)	From 2 to 4 years, usually 3 years (two thirds of apprenticeship professions)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 A prerequisite for taking up apprenticeship training is completion of 9 years of compulsory schooling.	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?	 Attendance at a vocational school for apprentices is free of charge. The training company is obliged to grant leave of absence to the apprentice for attending the programme offered at the vocational school while continuing to pay the apprenticeship income. As compensation the company has the possibility to apply for public subsidies ('basic funding').	Is it available for adults?	 Around 24% start an apprenticeship at age 18 and above (24) .
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	Dual programmes consist of 80% workplace training in a company, 20% training in a vocational school.		

Main providers	Training companies (enterprises, free professions such as lawyers, public institutions and organisations and supra-company training providers on behalf of Public Employment Service Austria).
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	> 80%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	Apprenticeships as dual track training combine: • company-based training (80%); • attendance of VET school for apprentices including workshops at schools (20%).
Main target groups	Apprenticeship training is accessible to young people and adults. Apprenticeship training is also available for learners with special educational needs either by: • prolongation of the apprenticeship period by one or at maximum 2 years; • acquisition of a partial qualification. Young people who are trained in a prolonged apprenticeship period are also obliged to attend a vocational school. The training is completed with the apprenticeship-leaving examination. The acquisition of partial qualifications is restricted to selected competences of an in-company curriculum. There is also an obligation to follow a programme offered at a vocational school, the extent being adjusted to the individual situation of the apprentice. The final examination covers the previously determined competences. The level achieved is determined by professional experts and one member of the vocational training assistance. The partial qualification is accompanied by vocational training assistance; this aims to advise and support the training companies as well as the young people before and during the training. Both forms of training are offered by training companies. (Young) people who do not find an apprenticeship post in a company, can complete apprenticeship training at supra-company training providers (<i>überbetriebliche Berufsausbildung, ÜBA</i>), which offer company-like conditions in workshops on behalf of the Public Employment Service Austria as part of active labour market policy. As for the school part, ÜBA-apprentices attend the regular VET school for apprentices. People with migrant background (non-Austrian citizenship) made up 14.1% of all apprentices in 2021/22 (25) .
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	The only entry requirement to enrol in apprenticeship training is the fulfilment of compulsory schooling (9 school years). About 30% of apprentices have completed their compulsory education by attending a 1-year prevocational school after having completed the 8-year lower secondary general education (26) .

Assessment of learning outcomes	After fulfilling the apprenticeship period, apprentices normally register for the apprenticeship-leaving examination (<i>Lehrabschlussprüfung</i> / LAP). This exam aims to establish whether the candidate has acquired the skills and competences required for the respective apprenticeship occupation and is able to carry out the activities specific to the occupation himself or herself in an appropriate manner. The exam consists of a practical and a theoretical examination. Provided that the apprentice has met the education objectives of the last year of the programme offered at the vocational school, he is only required to do the practical part of the exam. The subjects the exam covers are laid down in the national exam regulation (<i>Prüfungsordnung</i>) for each apprenticeship occupation. If the candidate fails parts of his exam, he can retake these parts.
Diplomas/certificates provided	After passing the apprenticeship-leaving examination (<i>Lehrabschlussprüfung</i> / LAP) the graduate receives the apprenticeship diploma (<i>Lehrabschlussprüfungszeugnis</i> / LAP-Zeugnis). It certifies that the holder has the skills and competences required for the respective apprenticeship occupation and is able to carry out the activities particular to the occupation himself or herself in an appropriate manner. Apprenticeship diplomas are fully recognised by VET and labour authorities and highly appreciated in the labour market and economy. All apprenticeship-leaving exams are assigned to EQF level 4.
Examples of qualifications	In 2023, there were 227 state-recognised apprenticeship occupations, such as brick layer, bank clerk, hotel and catering assistant or dental technician.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	After passing the apprenticeship-leaving examination, graduates can either remain in the labour market or acquire further qualifications: • master craftsperson or aptitude examination; • add-on VET courses (ISCED 554) (<i>Aufbaulehrgänge</i>) with a duration of 3 years that lead to the qualification of a 5-year school-based VET programme (BHS); • general higher entrance exam (<i>Berufsreifeprüfung</i>, BRP), which grants access to higher education programmes.

Destination of graduates

The education-related employment career monitoring (*Erwerbskarrierenmonitoring*, BibEr) of [Statistics Austria](#) done for the [graduation years 2018/19](#), analysed labour market status 18 months after graduation. Results show that graduates are primarily orientated to the labour market entry (compared to other education pathways):

- 74% of the apprenticeship graduates were employed and only 5% continued in (formal) education;
- approximately 9% were registered as jobseekers at the public employment service (AMS) (27) .

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

For many, apprenticeship training is also the basis for a career as an [entrepreneur](#). According to the 2019 Labour Force Survey, around 32% of self-employed persons in Austria have an apprenticeship degree as their highest completed qualification (28) .

Awards through validation of prior learning

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

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

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

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

General education subjects

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

Key competences ✓	The competence-oriented curricula specify the knowledge and skills that learners need to have acquired by the end of their training and which qualify them to act appropriately in different situations at work. As well as subject-related competences, related key competences are also listed which vary according to the specific apprenticeship training (e.g. team work, digital and entrepreneurial skills). At least one foreign language is mandatory in all programmes. Key competences are considered of major importance in the VET sector.
Application of learning outcomes approach ✓	The competence profile (<i>Berufsprofil</i>), which is also part of the training regulation, formulates in a learning outcome-oriented manner the competences apprentices acquire by the end of their training in both learning sites. Although the acquisition of professional competences has always been a key goal of VET, competences have been defined explicitly in the curricula since 2012; this is a result of the development of the national qualifications framework and its orientation towards learning outcomes (29) .
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Allocation of learners at upper secondary level / 10th school grade (2021/22): 35.8%: apprenticeship programmes 12.6%: 1 to 4-year school-based VET programmes (intermediate level) 27.6%: 5-year school-based VET programmes (higher level) 24.1%: general education programme The share of learners in this programme type was 35.2% of the total number of all VET learners at upper secondary level (from 9th to 13th grade) in 2021/22 (30) .

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- [25] Dornmayr, H. (2023). [Lehrlingsausbildung im Überblick 2023. Strukturdaten, Trends und Perspektiven](#) [Apprenticeship overview 2023. Structural data, trends and perspectives]. Vienna. ibw research report No 217. [accessed 16.11.2023]
- [26] Dornmayr, H. (2023). [Lehrlingsausbildung im Überblick 2023. Strukturdaten, Trends und Perspektiven](#) [Apprenticeship overview 2023. Structural data, trends and perspectives]. Vienna. ibw research report No 217. [accessed 16.11.2023]
- [27] The remaining 9 % include, among others, non-active persons and persons doing their military or civilian service. [Statistics Austria. Monitoring of education-related employment behaviour](#). [accessed 10.11.2023]
- [28] Dornmayr, H. (2023). [Lehrlingsausbildung im Überblick 2023. Strukturdaten, Trends und Perspektiven](#) [Apprenticeship overview 2023. Structural data, trends and perspectives]. Vienna. ibw research report No 217. [accessed 16.11.2023]
- [29] Tritscher-Archan, S. (2016). [Vocational education and training in Europe - Austria](#). Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports. [accessed 10.11.2023]
- [30]] Based on [school statistics of Statistics Austria](#), ibw calculation. [extracted 10.11.2023]

EQF 4
School-based VET (BMS)
WBL 40%
3-4 years
ISCED 354

School-based VET programmes offered at intermediate vocational schools (berufsbildende mittlere Schulen, BMS) leading to EQF level 4, ISCED 354.

EQF level	4	ISCED-P 2011 level	354
Usual entry grade	9	Usual completion grade	11 to 12
Usual entry age	14	Usual completion age	17 to 18
Length of a programme (years)	From 3 to 4 years		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 Compulsory E & T age covers a period of 9 years, starting from age 6 until age 15.		
Is it initial VET?			
Is it offered free of charge?	 These programmes are financed by the public, school attendance is free of charge for the learners. Exception: for schools of private provider organisations (private schools with public status) tuition fees need to be paid to cover infrastructure costs. Since the teachers are publicly funded, the amount of tuition fees is usually moderate.		
Is it available for adults?	 These programmes can also be attended by adults. However, most of the learners are between 14 and 17 when they enter these programmes.		

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	3- to 4-year VET programmes at intermediate level are: • offered full-time at VET schools; • practice-oriented tuition (e.g. learning in workshops and labs) in some fields; • obligatory work placements during the summer months, • in technical 3.5-year programmes; (<i>Fachschulen mit Betriebspraktikum</i>): obligatory work placement in the last semester.
Main providers	Most of these intermediate vocational schools are public schools, some are private schools with public status. The following provider e.g. offer these programmes: • schools of engineering, arts and crafts (<i>Technische, gewerbliche und kunstgewerbliche Fachschulen</i>), • schools of agriculture and forestry (<i>Land- und forstwirtschaftliche Fachschulen</i>), • schools of business administration (<i>Handelsschule</i>), • schools of management and services industries (<i>Fachschule für wirtschaftliche Berufe</i>), • schools of tourism (<i>Fachschulen für Tourismus</i>).
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	40%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• learning in workshops and labs • work placements during the summer months and in some fields also during the tuition period
Main target groups	These school-based VET programmes are accessible to young people and adults. For people in employment programmes are organised in the evening. In the 2021/22 school year, the share of learners aged 19 and over at BMS as a whole (1-2 year plus 3-4-year programmes) was 17.9% (31). People with migrant background (non-German first language) made up 28.7% of all BMS learners (1 to 2 years programme plus 3- to 4-year programmes) in school year 2021/22 (32).
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	The entry requirements are: • positive completion of the eight grade; • depending on previous qualifications (e.g. obtained at middle school or the lower cycle of academic secondary school), the desired programme type and places on offer, previous educational performance (i.e. the marks achieved in the main subjects) or an entrance examination are additional selection criteria; • minimum age of 14 years.

Assessment of learning outcomes	• regular assessments (written, oral exams) during the school year in each subject; • early warning, if the performance of learners in a compulsory subject would have to be assessed as 'insufficient' at the end of a semester on the basis of the performance achieved three months before the end of the semester; • mid-term and end-of-term reports; • qualification exam; • if learners fail a subject (e.g. after the first year), they can take an exam at the beginning of the following year. If they fail more than three subjects, they have to repeat the entire class. If learners fail the qualification exam, they can re-do it.
Diplomas/certificates provided	School leaving certificate (<i>Abschlusszeugnis</i>) The school leaving certificates are fully recognised by VET and labour authorities and highly appreciated by labour market and economy.
Examples of qualifications	Examples of qualifications: • cook, • office assistant, • machinery assembler, • vehicle mechanic, • bricklayer.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates have the following progression possibilities: • add-on courses, • Master craftsperson programmes and qualifications, • post-secondary VET courses, • <i>Berufsaufstiegsprüfung</i>: exam for people whose initial VET does not automatically qualify them for entry into higher education, • dual VET programmes, • subject specific CVET options (e.g. master craftsperson examination, aptitude examination, industrial master school etc.).
Destination of graduates	The education-related employment career monitoring (<i>Erwerbskarrierenmonitoring</i>, BibEr) of Statistics Austria, done for the graduation year 2018/19 (33), analysed labour market status 18 months after graduation. Results show that graduates of BMS are as well orientated to the labour market entry as to continuing education (compared to other education pathways): • 42% of the graduates were employed; • 40% continued in (formal) education; • only 6% were registered as jobseekers at the public employment service (AMS) (34).
Awards through validation of prior learning	✗
General education subjects	✓ The curricula and training contents focus on deepening of general education and VET at intermediate qualification level.

Key competences ✓	Key competences play a crucial role in all programme types of the VET sector in Austria (35).
Application of learning outcomes approach ✓	Although the acquisition of professional competences has always been a key goal of VET in Austria, competences have been defined explicitly in the curricula since 2012 - which is a result of the development of the National Qualifications Framework and its orientation towards learning outcomes.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Allocation of learners at upper secondary level / 10th school grade (2021/22) (36): 35.8%: apprenticeships, 12.6%: 1 to 4-year school-based VET programmes (intermediate level), 27.6%: 5-year school-based VET programmes (higher level), 24.1%: general education. The share of learners in this programme type was 12.7% compared to the total number of all VET learners at upper secondary level in 2021/22. (37)

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- [31] Based on [school statistics of Statistics Austria](#), ibw calculation: [accessed 10.11.2023]
- [32] Statistik Austria (2023). [Bildung in Zahlen 2021/22 - Tabellenband](#). [Education in numbers 2021/22]. Vienna.
- [33] The aim of this project is to render the employment career statistically evaluable of all persons living in Austria after their leaving a formal educational institution. Especially the transition from education to the labour market represents an important chapter in the employment biography. The variety of attributes allows for analyses of various aspects of those careers at the start as well as during their further development on the labour market. [Statistics Austria: Monitoring of education-related employment behaviour](#) [accessed 10.11.2023]
- [34] The remaining 11% include, among others, non-active persons and persons doing their military or civilian service. [Statistics Austria: Monitoring of education-related employment behaviour](#). [accessed 10.11.2023]
- [35] See Tritscher-Archan, S., Petanovitsch, A. (2016). [Key competences in vocational education and training - Austria](#). Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series. [accessed 10.11.2023]
- [36] see page 117 of Dornmayr, H. (2023). [Lehrlingsausbildung im Überblick 2023. Strukturdaten, Trends und Perspektiven](#) [Apprenticeship overview 2023. Structural data, trends and perspectives]. Vienna. ibw research report No 217. [accessed 16.11.2023]
- [37]] Ibw calculation based on [school statistics of Statistics Austria](#). [extracted 10.11.2023]

EQF 5
School based (BHS)
WBL 30%
5 years
ISCED 554

School based VET programmes offered at colleges for higher vocational education (berufsbildende höhere Schulen / BHS), leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 354/554.

EQF level	5	ISCED-P 2011 level	ISCED 554 For the first three years of the programmes no interim qualification is offered at this stage, but students can continue their education in different VET programmes with recognition of their already acquired competences at ISCED 354.
Usual entry grade	9	Usual completion grade	13
Usual entry age	14	Usual completion age	19
Length of a programme (years)	5 years		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	 The compulsory E & T age is 15. Obligatory education covers a period of 9 years (i.e. from 6 years until 15 years). These school-based VET programmes are usually attended by learners between 14 and 19.	Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?		Is it continuing VET?	

Is it
offered
free of
charge?



Exception: for schools of private provider organisations (private schools with public status) tuition fees need to be paid to cover infrastructure costs. Since the teachers are publicly funded, the amount of tuition fees is usually moderate.

Is it
available
for adults?



The degree obtained at a college for higher vocational education (*berufsbildende höhere Schulen / BHS*) can, as an alternative to the 5-year day form, also be acquired by way of three other education programmes offered part-time:

- add-on VET courses (ISCED 554, *Aufbaulehrgang*):
- post-secondary VET courses (ISCED 554, *Kollegs*): courses offered at colleges for higher vocational education for people in employment (ISCED 554, BHS for professionals): this programme type, which is organised in the evening, leads to a BHS-qualification. Access requirements are a minimum age of 17 years and active employment.

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

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

5-year VET programmes leading to higher VET and HE entrance qualification:

- are full-time and practice-oriented,
- include learning in workshops and labs, training restaurants, and practice firms,
- are complemented by mandatory work placements of several weeks during the summer months,
- comprise project and diploma assignments as part of the final exam that are often set by companies or carried out with their collaboration.

Main providers

Most [colleges for higher vocational education](#) (*berufsbildende höhere Schulen / BHS*) are public schools, some are private school with public status.

The 5-year school-based VET programmes (BHS) are available in different areas which are offered by different providers, e.g.:

- colleges of engineering, arts and crafts (*Höhere technische, kunstgewerbliche und gewerbliche Lehranstalten*)
- colleges of business administration (*Handelsakademien*)
- colleges of management and service Industries (*Höhere Lehranstalten für wirtschaftliche Berufe*)
- colleges of agriculture and forestry (*Höhere Land- und Forstwirtschaftliche Schulen*)
- colleges for elementary pedagogy (*Bildungsanstalten für Elementarpädagogik*)
- colleges for tourism (*Höhere Lehranstalten für Tourismus*)

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	30%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• learning in workshops and labs, training restaurants, and practice firms • mandatory work placements of several weeks during the summer months • project and diploma assignments as part of final exams that are often set by companies or carried out with their collaboration
Main target groups	5-year VET programmes leading to higher VET and HE entrance qualification are accessible to young people and adults (e.g. for people in employment the programme is offered in the evening). The proportion of learners older than 19 was 10.1% in the 2021/22 school year. People with migrant background (non-German first language) made up 21.7% of all school-based higher VET programmes learners in school year 2021/22.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	The entry requirements are: • positive completion of the eight grade; • depending on previous qualifications (e.g. programmes offered at middle school or at the lower cycle of academic secondary school), the desired programme type and places on offer, previous educational performance (i.e. the marks achieved in the main subjects) or an entrance examination are additional selection criteria; • a minimum age of 14 years.
Assessment of learning outcomes	• regular assessments (written, oral exams) during the school year in each subject; • early warning, if the performance of learners in a compulsory subject would have to be assessed as 'insufficient' at the end of a semester on the basis of the performance achieved three months before the end of the semester; • mid-term and end-of-term reports; • higher education entrance examination (Reife- und Diplomprüfung = Matura); • if learners fail a subject (e.g. after the first year), they can take an exam at the beginning of the following year. If they fail more than three subjects, they have to repeat the entire class. If learners fail the Matura exam, they can re-do (parts of) it.

Diplomas/certificates provided	Graduation with a <i>Reife- und Diplomprüfungszeugnis</i>, i.e. HE entrance qualification and higher VET qualification (= double qualification). The qualification is fully recognised by VET and labour authorities and highly appreciated by labour market and economy. The degree obtained at a college for higher vocational education (<i>berufsbildende höhere Schulen</i>, BHS) can, as an alternative to the 5-year day form, also be acquired by way of three other education programmes: • add-on VET courses (ISCED 554, <i>Aufbaulehrgang</i>): these modular courses usually cover 3 years and lead graduates of intermediate VET tracks (from schools and dual VET) to the BHS qualification. Learners with non-subject-specific VET qualifications have to attend a 1- to 2-semester bridge course (<i>Vorbereitungslehrgang</i>) before entering an add-on VET courses; • post-secondary VET courses (ISCED 554, <i>Kollegs</i>): <i>Kollegs</i> mainly target graduates of general education schools, i.e. people who have not completed an initial VET pathway. A prerequisite for admission to <i>Kollegs</i> is successful completion of the HE entrance examination. <i>Kollegs</i> are provided in a modular 2-year day form or a 3-year evening form and are completed with a qualification examination; • courses offered at colleges for higher vocational education for people in employment (ISCED 554, BHS for professionals): this programme type, which is organised in the evening, leads to a BHS-qualification. Access requirements are a minimum age of 17 years and active employment.
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Examples of qualifications

Examples for qualifications:

- fashion designer
- mechatronics engineer
- construction technician
- bank clerk
- kindergarten teacher
- hotel management assistant

Progression opportunities for learners after graduation

- graduates obtain general access to postsecondary and tertiary education (studies at university, universities of applied sciences (UAS), universities of teacher training).
- they can also enter a range of CVET options.
- they can also directly enter the labour market.

Students who stop after 3 years (ISCED level 354) have different additional possibilities to continue their VET, e.g.:

- apprenticeship training with recognition of already acquired competences and therefore shortened duration of training
- add-on VET courses
- completion of the *Berufsreifeprüfung*

Destination of graduates	The education-related employment career monitoring (Erwerbskarrierenmonitoring, BibEr) of Statistics Austria, done for the graduation year 2018/19, analysed labour market status 18 months after graduation. Results show that graduates of BHS are as well orientated to the labour market entry as to continuing education (compared to other education pathways): • 47.8% of the graduates were employed • 42.2% continued in (formal) education • only 2.2% were registered as jobseekers at the public employment service (AMS) (38)
Awards through validation of prior learning	✓
General education subjects	✓ Programmes provide in-depth general education and high-quality specialist training in different specialist areas
Key competences	✓ Key competences play a crucial role in all programme types of the VET sector in Austria (39) .
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓ With the development of the National Qualifications Framework learning outcomes have been made more explicit in the curricula of all VET programmes.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Allocation of learners at upper secondary level / 10th school grade (2021/22): 35.8%: apprenticeship 12.6%: 1 to 4-year school-based VET programmes (intermediate level) 27.6%: 5-year school-based VET programmes (higher level) 24.1%: general education The share of learners in this programme type was 43.6% of the total number of all VET learners at upper secondary level in 2021/22. (40)

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- [38] The remaining 7.7% include, among others, non-active persons and persons doing their military or civilian service. Statistics Austria. *Monitoring of education-related employment behaviour*.
- [39] See Tritscher-Archan, S., Petanovitsch, A. (2016). [Key competences in vocational education and training - Austria](#). Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series. [accessed 10.11.2023]
- [40]] Based on school statistics of Statistics Austria, *Schüler:innen* [Pupils].lbw calculation. [extracted 10.11.2023]

EQF Nursing assistance level 1: EQF level 4
 Nursing assistance level 2: EQF level 5
 Medical assistance programmes not yet assigned to the NQF

Healthcare and nursing programmes

1-3 years

ISCED 351, 353

Healthcare and nursing programmes leading to ISCED 351 and 353.

EQF level	Nursing assistance level 1: EQF level 4 Nursing assistance level 2: EQF level 5 Medical assistance programmes not yet assigned to the NQF	ISCED-P 2011 level	ISCED 351 (Nursing assistance programmes) ISCED 353 (Medical assistance programmes)
Usual entry grade	12 Nursing assistance programmes: • level 1: 12 • level 2: 12-13 Medical assistance programmes: 12-13	Usual completion grade	12 to 13 Nursing assistance programmes: • level 1: 12-13 • level 2: 13-14 Medical assistance programmes: 12-14
Usual entry age	17 Nursing assistance programmes: • level 1: 17 • level 2: 17 Medical assistance programmes: 17	Usual completion age	17 to 19

Length of a programme (years)

Nursing and medical assistance programmes last from 1 to 3 years.
Nursing assistance programmes:

- nursing assistance programme, level 1: 1600 hours, 1 year (full-time) up to 2 years (part-time);
- short training course for persons who successfully completed studies of human medicine or dental medicine: 680 hours;
- nursing assistance programme, level 2: 3200 hours, 2 years (full-time) up to 3 years (part-time).

Medical assistance programmes:

- disinfection assistance (650 hours): 1 year
- plastering assistance (650 hours): 1 year
- laboratory assistance (1 300 hours): 2 - 2.5 years
- mortuary assistance (650 hours): 1 year
- operating theatre assistance (1 100 hours): 3 years
- Doctor's surgery assistance (650 hours): 1 year
- radiology assistance (1 300 hours): 2 - 2.5 years
- medical assistant (2 500 hours): 2.5 - 3 years
- surgical assistance (4 600 hours): 3 years(41)

Is it part of compulsory education and training?



The programme is not any longer part of compulsory education; however learners are still obliged to follow training until they reach the age of 18 or successfully complete a minimum two years formal VET programme leading to a recognised VET qualification.

Is it part of formal education and training system?



Is it initial VET? 	In both nursing assistance and medical assistance training, programmes are offered as continuing education for people with previous experience or who have already completed vocational training. Especially some medical assistance programmes require prior completion of vocational training.	Is it continuing VET? 	In both nursing assistance and medical assistance training, programmes are offered as continuing education for people with previous experience or who have already completed vocational training. Some medical assistance programmes require prior completion of vocational training.
Is it offered free of charge?	Yes and no • programmes offered in public schools are financed by the public, attendance is free of charge for the learners; • training courses for adults offered by different providers are fee-based with different funding opportunities.	Is it available for adults? 	
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	Theoretical instruction in schools/training courses and work placements in hospitals etc. alternate during the entire training.		
Main providers	Nursing assistance programmes: • public schools for healthcare (mostly at hospitals); • public schools for social professions; • different providers offering training courses for adults (also upskilling programmes). Medical assistance programmes: • public schools for medical assistant professions; • different providers offering training courses for adults.		
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	Nursing assistance programmes: 40% (42) Medical assistance programmes: min. 50% (43)		
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	Theoretical instruction in schools/training courses and work placements in hospitals etc. alternate during the entire training.		
Main target groups	Programmes are open to young people, adults and unemployed (training courses financed by the Public Employment Service).		

Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Entry requirements differ among the specific programmes: Nursing assistance, level 1: • minimum age of 17 years at the start of first practical training • successful completion of compulsory education (ninth school grade) • completed initial vocational training • medical fitness (medical certificate) • trustworthiness (judicial record) • command of the German language (at least level B2) • admission interview and standardised admission procedure (44) minimum age of 17 years at the start of first practical training Nursing assistance, level 2: • successful completion of the tenth school grade or nursing assistant qualifications or completed initial vocational training • medical fitness (medical certificate) • trustworthiness (judicial record) • command of the German language (at least level B2) • admission interview and standardised admission procedure (45) minimum age of 17 (18) years Medical assistance programmes: • successful completion of the compulsory schooling (ninth school grade; partly tenth school grade) or completed initial vocational training • medical fitness (medical certificate) • trustworthiness (judicial record) (46)
Assessment of learning outcomes	Ongoing und regular assessment during the programme.
Diplomas/certificates provided	Nursing assistance, level 1: • final exam before an examination commission / certificate Nursing assistance, level 2: • final exam before an examination commission / certificate Medical assistance programmes: • final exam before an examination commission / certificate The qualifications are fully recognised by VET and labour authorities and highly appreciated by labour market.

Examples of qualifications	Nursing assistance programmes: • level 1 (<i>Pflegeassistent/in</i>) • level 2 (<i>Pflegefachassistent/in</i>) Medical assistance programmes: • disinfection assistance (<i>Desinfektionsassistentenz</i>) • plastering assistance (<i>Gipsassistentenz</i>) • laboratory assistance (<i>Laborassistentenz</i>) • mortuary assistance (<i>Obduktionsassistentenz</i>) • operating theatre assistance (<i>Operationsassistentenz</i>) • Doctor's surgery assistance (<i>Ordinationsassistentenz</i>) • radiology assistance (<i>Röntgenassistentenz</i>) • medical assistance (<i>Medizinische Fachassistentenz</i>) • surgical assistance (<i>Operationstechnische Assistentenz</i>)
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates of nursing and medical assistance programmes can progress to: • the labour market (prerequisite for carrying out the profession is the registration on the healthcare profession register) (47); • further education programmes at upper secondary level (for additional qualifications in specialist areas or higher-status healthcare professions; a variety of fast-track training programmes are available) (48); • CVET programmes. Graduates of level 2 of the nursing assistance programme can additionally take the: • <i>Berufsreifeprüfung (BRP)</i>, enabling them to enter higher education institutions.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	 Competences acquired non-formally or informally must be validated by the principal of the school or the head of the training provider offering nursing/medical assistance programmes by way of procedures accepted by the health ministry (49). For nursing assistance programmes, level 1: the duration of the training course is reduced for persons who successfully completed studies of human medicine or dental medicine: 680 hours (50).
General education subjects	
Key competences	 Key competences play a crucial role in all programme types of the VET sector in Austria (51).

Application of learning outcomes approach	 With the development of the National Qualifications Framework learning outcomes have been made more explicit in the curricula of all schools in the VET sector.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	In 2021/22 11 448 learners were registered in all types of nursing assistance and medical assistance programmes. This is around 3.5% of all VET learners at upper secondary level (52).
[42]	Federal Law Gazette on the training content and qualification profile in nursing assistant qualifications . [accessed 10.11.2023].
[43]	Ministry for Health (2017). Healthcare professions in Austria 2017 ; Ministry for Health (2023). Gesundheitsberufe in Österreich 2023 [Healthcare professions in Austria 2023] [in DE only]. [accessed 10.11.2023]
[44]	Ministry for Health (2017). Healthcare professions in Austria 2017 . / Ministry for Health (2023). Gesundheitsberufe in Österreich 2023 [Healthcare professions in Austria 2023] [in DE only] [accessed 10.11.2023]; BIC. Pflegeassistent*in . [Nursing assistant] Online databank. [accessed 10.11.2023]
[45]	Ministry for Health (2017). Healthcare professions in Austria 2017 . / Ministry for Health (2023). Gesundheitsberufe in Österreich 2023 [Healthcare professions in Austria 2023] [in DE only] [accessed 10.11.2023]. BIC. Pflegeassistent*in [Nursing assistant] Online databank. [accessed 10.11.2023]
[46]	Brochure on healthcare professions: Ministry for Health (2017). Healthcare professions in Austria 2017 . Ministry for Health (2023). Gesundheitsberufe in Österreich 2023 [Healthcare professions in Austria 2023] [in DE only]. [accessed 10.11.2023]
[47]	Ministry for Health (2017). Healthcare professions in Austria 2017 . Ministry for Health (2023). Gesundheitsberufe in Österreich 2023 [Healthcare professions in Austria 2023] [in DE only]. [accessed 10.11.2023]
[48]	For more details see: OEAD. The Austrian education system: education and training programmes in other healthcare professions . [accessed 10.11.2023]
[49]	Federal Law Gazette on the training content and qualification profile in nursing assistant qualifications [accessed 10.11.2023] and Ministry for Health (2017). Healthcare professions in Austria 2017 . / Ministry for Health (2023). Gesundheitsberufe in Österreich 2023 [Healthcare professions in Austria 2023] [in DE only]. [accessed 10.11.2023]
[50]	Ministry for Health (2017). Healthcare professions in Austria 2017 . / Ministry for Health (2023). Gesundheitsberufe in Österreich 2023 [Healthcare professions in Austria 2023] [in DE only]. [accessed 10.11.2023]
[51]	See Tritscher-Archan, S., Petanovitsch, A. (2016). Key competences in vocational education and training - Austria . Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series. [accessed 10.11.2023]
[52]	Own calculation based on Statistics Austria, Training programmes in healthcare and nursing; table of training programmes in the healthcare and nursing sector 2021/22 [[accessed 10.11.2023] and on school statistics of Statistics Austria , ibw calculation. [accessed 10.11.2023]

EQF 5

Add-on VET courses

2-3 years

ISCED 554

Add-on VET courses (in various fields) leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554 (Aufbaulehrgänge)

EQF level	5	ISCED-P 2011 level	554
Usual entry grade	12	Usual completion grade	13/14
Usual entry age	18	Usual completion age	20 to 21
Length of a programme (years)	From 2 to (mostly) 3 years		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?			
			
Is it initial VET?			
			
	To access this programme type, learners need to have an IVET qualification (NQF 4 qualification).		
	This programme type is aimed at adults with an IVET qualification (NQF 4 qualification).		
Is it offered free of charge?			
			
	This programme type is financed by the public, school attendance is free of charge to learners. Exception: for schools of private provider organisations (private schools with public status) tuition fees need to be paid to cover infrastructure costs. Since the teachers are publicly funded, the amount of tuition fees is usually moderate.		
	This programme type is aimed at adults with an IVET qualification (NQF 4 qualification).		

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• practice-oriented • learning in workshops and labs, training restaurants, and practice firms • mandatory work placements (except for programmes for people in employment) • project and diploma assignments as part of the final exam (often set by companies or carried out with their collaboration)
Main providers	This programme type is offered mostly by public schools. There are also some private schools (with public status) offering this programme.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	30%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• learning in workshops and labs, training restaurants, and practice firms • mandatory work placements of several weeks during the summer months • project and diploma assignments as part of final exams that are often set by companies or carried out with their collaboration
Main target groups	This programme type is aimed at adult learners with an NQF 4 VET qualification.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	The entry requirements are: • successful completion of initial VET (school-based or dual VET programme in the respective field); • VET graduates with a non-field related IVET qualification have to attend a bridge course prior to entering an add-on VET courses.
Assessment of learning outcomes	• regular assessments (written, oral exams) during the school year in each subject • mid-term and end-of-term reports • HE entrance examination (Reife- und Diplomprüfung = Matura) If learners fail a subject (e.g. after the first year), they can take an exam at the beginning of the following year. If they fail more than three subjects, they have to repeat the entire class. If learners fail the Matura exam, they can re-do (parts of) it.

Diplomas/certificates provided	<i>Reife- und Diplomprüfungszeugnis</i>, i.e. HE entrance qualification and higher VET qualification This qualification entitles the holder to pursue higher education. At the same time, graduates can directly enter the labour market and perform demanding jobs. The qualification is fully recognised by VET and labour authorities and highly appreciated by labour market and economy. Add-on programmes lead to the same qualification as obtained in 5-year school-based VET programmes (<i>berufsbildende höhere Schulen</i>, BHS).
Examples of qualifications	Add-on VET courses provide in-depth general education and high-quality specialist training in different fields including technology, engineering, business administration, fashion and design, arts and crafts, tourism, agriculture and forestry as well as elementary pedagogy. After successfully completing an add-on programme, graduates can carry out higher-level tasks in the vocational field which the programme was about. Add-on programmes do not lead to specific professions. The qualification opens up a broad range of activities in a specific vocational field.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates: • obtain general access studies at universities, universities of applied science and university colleges of teacher training; • can directly enter the labour market; • can enter a range of CVET options.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✓
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓ Key competences play a crucial role in all programme types of the VET sector in Austria.
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓ With the development of the National Qualifications Framework learning outcomes have been made more explicit in the curricula of all schools in the VET sector.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	The share of learners in this programme type was 2.3% of the total number of all VET learners at upper secondary level in 2021/22. (53)

- [53] The VET college programmes and Add-on VET courses are included in the Austrian school statistics. Own calculation based on the school statistics of Statistik Austria (2023). *Bildung in Zahlen 2021/22 - Tabellenband*. [Education in numbers 2021/22]. Vienna. [accessed 10.11.2023]

EQF 5

VET college programmes

2-3 years

ISCED 554

VET college programmes (in various fields) leading to EQF level 5, ISCED 554 (Kollegs)

EQF level	5	ISCED-P 2011 level	554
Usual entry grade	12	Usual completion grade	13/14
Usual entry age	18	Usual completion age	20 to 21
Length of a programme (years)	From 2 (mostly) to 3 years		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗		
	Is it part of formal education and training system? ✓		
Is it initial VET?	✗		
	Is it continuing VET? ✓ The programmes type is aimed at adults with a higher education entrance qualification.		
Is it offered free of charge?	✓ <i>Kolleg</i> programmes are financed by the public, attendance is free of charge for learners. Exception: for programmes of private provider organisations (private schools with public status) tuition fees need to be paid to cover infrastructure costs. Since the teachers are publicly funded, the amount of tuition fees is usually moderate.		
	Is it available for adults? ✓		

ECVET or other credits Not applicable

Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• practice-oriented • learning in workshops and labs, training restaurants, and practice firms • mandatory work placements (except for programmes for people in employment) • project and diploma assignments as part of the final exam (often set by companies or carried out with their collaboration)
Main providers	Most schools offering this programme type are public schools, some are private schools with public status.
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	30%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• learning in workshops and labs, training restaurants, and practice firms • mandatory work placements of several weeks during the summer months • project and diploma assignments as part of final exams that are often set by companies or carried out with their collaboration
Main target groups	This type of programme is mainly targeted at adults.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	Higher education entrance qualification (<i>Reifeprüfung</i> = Matura)
Assessment of learning outcomes	• regular assessments (written, oral exams) during the school year in each subject • mid-term and end-of-term reports • diploma examination (<i>Diplomprüfung</i>) If learners fail a subject (e.g. after the first year), they can take an exam at the beginning of the following year. If they fail more than three subjects, they have to repeat the entire class. If learners fail the Matura exam, they can re-do (parts of) it.
Diplomas/certificates provided	<i>Diplomprüfungszeugnis</i> In combination with the higher education entrance qualification (<i>Reifeprüfung</i>), graduates of the VET college programmes have the same qualification as graduates from 5-year school-based VET programmes at upper secondary level (<i>berufsbildende höhere Schule, BHS</i>). The qualification is fully recognised by VET and labour authorities and highly appreciated by labour market and economy.

Examples of qualifications	VET college programmes provide high-quality specialist training in different areas including in technology, engineering, the business sphere, fashion and design, arts and crafts, tourism, agriculture and forestry as well as elementary pedagogy. After successfully completing a VET college programme, graduates can carry out higher-level tasks in the vocational field which the programme was about VET college programmes do not lead to specific professions. The qualification (<i>Abschlusszeugnis</i>) opens up a broad range of activities in a specific vocational field.
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates of VET college programmes • obtain general access to studies at universities, universities of applied science and university colleges of teacher training; • can enter a range of CVET options; and • can directly enter the labour market.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	✓
General education subjects	✓
Key competences	✓ Key competences play a crucial role in all programme types of the VET sector in Austria.
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓ With the development of the National Qualifications Framework learning outcomes have been made more explicit in the curricula of all schools in the VET sector.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	The share of learners in this programme type was 2.1% of the total number of all VET learners at upper secondary/post-tertiary level in 2021/22 (54) .

[54] The VET college programmes and Add-on VET courses are included in the Austrian school statistics. Own calculation based on the school statistics of Statistik Austria (2023). [Bildung in Zahlen 2021/22 - Tabellenband](#). [Education in numbers 2021/22]. Vienna. [accessed 10.11.2023]

EQF 6

Master craftsperson et al.
programmes
and qualifications
up to 2 years
ISCED 554

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

EQF level	6	ISCED-P 2011 level	554
Usual entry grade	12	Usual completion grade	13 to 14
Usual entry age	18+	Usual completion age	19 to 20+
Length of a programme (years)	Duration varies among the different specific programmes: • master craftsperson programmes: 1 to 2 years • industrial master programme: mostly 2 years • building craftsperson programme: mostly 2 years		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?	✗	Is it part of formal education and training system?	✓
Is it initial VET?	✗	Is it continuing VET?	✓
Is it offered free of charge?	✗	Is it available for adults?	✓
ECVET or other credits	Not applicable		
Learning forms (e.g. dual, part-time, distance)	• special tuition in theory and practice • instruction by experts from the specific professions/fields • some programmes are full-time, some are part-time		

Main providers	• CET providers of the social partners (e.g. WIFI, bfi) • public schools (offering also school-based VET programmes at upper secondary level)
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	60%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• learning in workshops and labs • focus on learning from real-work situations
Main target groups	These programmes target adults, as a rule with relevant IVET qualifications plus professional practise and the intention of acquiring intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship competences.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	• minimum age of 18 years • successful completion of an initial VET path at upper secondary level, as a rule
Assessment of learning outcomes	• in industrial and building craftsperson programmes: final examination • graduates of master craftsperson programmes can sit the master craftsperson examination offered by the master craftsperson authorities
Diplomas/certificates provided	Final certificate (<i>Abschlusszeugnis</i>) The qualifications are fully recognised by VET and labour authorities and highly appreciated by labour market and economy.
Examples of qualifications	• master craftsperson automotive engineering • industrial master • building craftsperson
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates can • directly enter the labour market (asset for improving in-company career options or changing companies); • set up one's own company or take over a business; • enter a range of CVET options; • on certain conditions obtain access to a bachelor degree programme at a university of applied science; • have access to <i>Berufsreifeprüfung</i> (BRP) which grants access to all study fields at higher education institutions.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	
General education subjects	

Key competences	 Key competences play a crucial role in all programme types of the VET sector in Austria.
Application of learning outcomes approach	 With the development of the national qualifications framework, learning outcomes have been made more explicit in the curricula of all schools in the VET sector.
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	The share of learners in this programme type was 1.2% of the total number of all VET learners at upper secondary and post-tertiary level in 2021/22. (55)

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- [55] The VET college programmes and Add-on VET courses are included in the Austrian school statistics. Own calculation based on the school statistics of Statistik Austria (2023). [Bildung in Zahlen 2021/22 - Tabellenband. \[Education in numbers 2021/22\]](#). Vienna. [accessed 10.11.2023]

EQF 6

Bachelor programmes (FH)

3-4 years

ISCED 665

Bachelor's degree programmes at universities of applied sciences (UAS / Fachhochschulen, FH) leading to EQF level 6, ISCED 665

EQF level	6	ISCED-P 2011 level	665
Usual entry grade	12+	Usual completion grade	14+
Usual entry age	18+	Usual completion age	20+
Length of a programme (years)	usually 3-4 years (6-8 semester)		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?		Is it part of formal education and training system?	

Is it initial VET?	 A bachelor's degree programme is basically seen as initial vocational training. If bachelor's students have already completed relevant training at upper secondary level, the study programme could also be regarded as continuing education. Study programmes offered on a part-time basis are generally also considered to be continuing education. They are often attended by people who are working in the field and are studying for further or higher qualifications. For students from other disciplines, on the other hand, the bachelor's degree programme is initial vocational training.	Is it continuing VET?	Yes and no A bachelor's degree programme is basically seen as initial vocational training. If bachelor's students have already completed relevant training at upper secondary level, the study programme could also be regarded as continuing education. Study programmes offered on a part-time basis are generally also considered to be continuing education. They are often attended by people who are working in the field and are studying for further or higher qualifications. For students from other disciplines, on the other hand, the bachelor's degree programme is initial vocational training.
Is it offered free of charge?	 In principle, study programmes (bachelor and master) at universities of applied sciences are financed by the public sector on the basis of approved and filled study places. This funding is earmarked to cover the costs of research and teaching. To cover additional cost, providers of study programmes are authorised by law to charge tuition fees limited to EUR 363.36 per semester from students (University of Applied Sciences Act).	Is it available for adults?	

ECVET or other credits 180 ECTS ([University of Applied Sciences Act](#))

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

- bachelor's degree programmes are research- and practice-oriented;
- a period of work placement is a mandatory part of the curriculum;
- some are based on the dual principle, where theory and practice in enterprises alternate.

Main providers	Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) (<i>Fachhochschulen</i> , FH)
Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	40%
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• learning in workshops and labs • mandatory work placements • bachelor thesis is often set by companies or carried out with their collaboration
Main target groups	Bachelor's degree programmes target adults with a higher entrance qualification (<i>Matura</i>). However, also graduates of intermediate VET programmes, which do not end with a HE entrance examination, can - under certain conditions (work experience, entrance examination) - enter such programmes at UAS.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	• HE entrance qualification • work experience, if required • entrance examination, if required
Assessment of learning outcomes	• regular assessments during the study year • course certificates and examinations • bachelor thesis A failed course or bachelor exam can be repeated twice. A single repetition of a study year is possible (University of Applied Sciences Act).
Diplomas/certificates provided	A bachelor's degree is given to learners who successfully completed their bachelor thesis and passed the bachelor examination. The bachelor qualification is fully recognised by VET and labour authorities so graduates can follow further studies or enter the labour market.
Examples of qualifications	Qualifications in accordance to the specific study field, e.g. • Bachelor of science in health studies (BSc) • Bachelor of science in engineering (BSc) • Bachelor of arts in business (BA)
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates can further progress to a master programme offered at ISCED level 767.
Destination of graduates	Information not available

Awards through validation of prior learning	✓	Existing learning achievements can be taken into account in the context of studies if they are equivalent in terms of content and scope. Valid evidence must be submitted (examination certificate, study plan, etc.). Recognition is done individually by the respective programme director.
General education subjects	✗	
Key competences	✓	Key competences play a crucial role in all programme types of the VET sector in Austria.
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓	
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners		Information not available 71% of students at universities of applied sciences were studying for a Bachelor's degree in the 2021/22 academic year. (56)

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- [56] The student numbers are recorded by Statistics Austria in the higher education statistics. However, they are not merged with the school statistics, so it is not possible to make a statement about the total proportion of VET learners. Own calculation based on the higher education statistics of Statistik Austria (2023). [Bildung in Zahlen 2021/22 - Tabellenband](#). [Education in numbers 2021/22]. Vienna. [accessed 10.11.2023]

EQF 7

Master programmes (FH)

2 years

ISCED 767

Master's degree programmes at universities of applied sciences (Master-Studiengänge an Fachhochschulen) leading to EQF level 7, ISCED 767

EQF level	7	ISCED-P 2011 level	767
Usual entry grade	12+	Usual completion grade	12+
Usual entry age	22+	Usual completion age	23+
Length of a programme (years)	Usually 2 years		
Is it part of compulsory education and training?			
		Is it part of formal education and training system?	
Is it initial VET?			
		Is it continuing VET?	
Is it offered free of charge?			
	In principle, study programmes (bachelor and master) at universities of applied sciences are financed by the public sector on the basis of approved and filled study places. This funding is earmarked to cover the costs of research and teaching. To cover additional cost, providers of study programmes are authorised by law to charge tuition fees limited to EUR 363.36 per semester from students (University of Applied Sciences Act).		
		Is it available for adults?	

ECVET or other credits Usually 120 ECTS

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

- master's degree programmes are research-oriented;
- some programmes are based on the dual principle, where theory and practice in enterprises alternate.

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

Share of work-based learning provided by schools and companies	20 %
Work-based learning type (workshops at schools, in-company training / apprenticeships)	• learning in workshops and labs • master thesis is often set by companies or carried out with their collaboration
Main target groups	Master's degree programmes are aimed at adults who have already completed a bachelor's degree programme in the same or a similar field of study.
Entry requirements for learners (qualification/education level, age)	As a rule, the entry requirement is the completion of a relevant bachelor's degree.
Assessment of learning outcomes	• regular assessments during the study year • course certificates and examinations • master thesis A failed course or master exam can be repeated twice. A single repetition of a study year is possible (University of Applied Sciences Act).
Diplomas/certificates provided	Master thesis followed by a master examination before an exam commission/diploma The master qualification is fully recognised by VET and labour authorities and highly appreciated by labour market and economy.
Examples of qualifications	Qualifications in accordance to the specific study field, e.g.: • Master in arts in business (MA) • Master in science in engineering (MSc) • Master of arts in arts and design (MA)
Progression opportunities for learners after graduation	Graduates can further progress to doctoral programmes at universities.
Destination of graduates	Information not available
Awards through validation of prior learning	 Existing learning achievements can be taken into account in the context of studies if they are equivalent in terms of content and scope. Valid evidence must be submitted (examination certificate, study plan, etc.). Recognition is done individually by the respective programme director.
General education subjects	

Key competences	✓	Key competences play a crucial role in all programme types of the VET sector in Austria.
Application of learning outcomes approach	✓	
Share of learners in this programme type compared with the total number of VET learners	Information not available	29% of students at universities of applied sciences were studying for a Master's degree in the 2021/22 academic year (57) .

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- [57] The student numbers are recorded by Statistics Austria in the higher education statistics. However, they are not merged with the school statistics, so it is not possible to make a statement about the total proportion of VET learners. Own calculation based on the higher education statistics of Statistik Austria (2023). [Bildung in Zahlen 2021/22 - Tabellenband](#). [Education in numbers 2021/22]. Vienna. [accessed 10.11.2023]
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