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Secondary Technical and Vocational Education

Secondary Technical and Vocational Education

Technical and vocational schools and colleges pave the way for the transition from compulsory education to the world of work.

The flexible and highly practice-oriented Austrian apprenticeship training system is permanently adapted to the needs and requirements of the industry.

Apprentices are to be trained for skilled workers, they have certain rights and duties, enjoy full social security and are entitled to a remuneration: Apprentices are taken seriously and are in turn required to take their job seriously.

The Austrian apprenticeship training is unique throughout the countries of Europe and thanks to their sound training and their good qualifications Austrian skilled workers are highly esteemed all over the world.

Education in part-time vocational schools for apprentices provides for the theoretical background necessary for company-based work while at the same time making up for educational deficits of smaller or highly specialized companies.

Moreover, part-time vocational schools for apprentices are required to provide apprentices with general education in order to pave the way for acquiring further qualifications.

Reforms of the dual system are leading to an increased integration of economic and technological innovations. Moreover, they aim at motivating companies to invest in existing and to create new vacancies for apprentices. And last but not least they also want to foster the young people's willingness to develop new concepts of studying and working.

Secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges enjoy quite some popularity. And even though education and training in these schools and colleges requires quite a lot of hard work on the students' side it seems to be worth the effort for it also provides for a sound education and high-quality vocational training.

By means of not just offering basic vocational training but also more sound and specialized courses, technical and vocational schools and colleges provide for training in various fields and for various occupations.

From skilled work to scientific research - schools and colleges for engineering train for a variety of jobs.

The schools and colleges for occupations in the service industries management have been turned into modern high-quality schools offering future-oriented training.

When our guests feel at home in Austria, when tradition meets with the demands of modern tourists on well-being, it is very likely that graduates of secondary schools for tourism, hotel and catering are pulling the strings.

Apart from imparting sound technical know-how as well as instructing students about the legal framework, secondary schools for occupations in the social services sector also foster the development of the individual student's personality as well as his social skills and his understanding of organizational structures.

Mediating between men and nature - it is a rather demanding job for which students at colleges for agriculture and forestry are trained.

Providing young people working in the agriculture and forestry sector with access to new technologies as well as with management, marketing and sales strategies proves to be of special importance for it opens up new prospects.

Apart from apprenticeship training, colleges for agriculture and forestry are the only institutions which provide for education and training in the field of agriculture and forestry.

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Basic Information

Objectives of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education

Apart from broad general education the technical and vocational education sector provides students with initial technical and vocational training. Technical and vocational schools and colleges may be attended after completion of the 8th year of compulsory schooling.

The main objectives of these schools and colleges are: to develop the individual student's personality, to reach a higher level of occupational mobility and flexibility, to develop the individual student's creativity, to foster critical thinking, teamwork, communication skills and social consciousness.

Moreover and in compliance with the Vocational Training Act and Trade Regulations, the curricula of these schools are designed to provide students with appropriate vocational knowledge, skills and qualifications thereby giving access to legally recognized and non-legally recognized occupations.

The accrediting of vocational qualifications rests with the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and is based on the following legal foundations:

- Vocational Training Act [Berufsausbildungsgesetz] and
- Trade Regulations.

Vocational Training Act and Trade Regulations

The Vocational Training Act constitutes the legal framework for company-based training of apprentices and does also affect certain areas of technical and vocational schools and colleges as well as special types and pilot schools thereof.

This also means that the school-leaving exam provides graduates of technical and vocational schools

- with access to occupations which require an Apprenticeship Leave Exam in the respective occupation;
- with documentation on the qualifications necessary for certain jobs in the public services sector;
- with the right to adequate minimum wages and salaries.

Students who drop out of a technical and vocational school or college may continue vocational training within the framework of apprenticeship training. Upon request qualifications acquired in the respective technical and vocational school or college have to be accredited.

The extent to which qualifications may be accredited is legally defined and depends on the respective apprenticeship trade as well as other things.

Successful completion of apprenticeship training (dual system) or a technical and vocational school or college provides access to various legally protected crafts and trades. Apart from meeting the general requirements, the exercise of a trade is also conditional upon the submission of specific documentation proving work experience in the respective field and/or qualification tests.

Entrepreneurs Exam Regulations

The self-employed exercise of a craft or a legally protected trade is conditional upon the submission of documentation proving the necessary business and legal qualifications. This is done by means of passing the Entrepreneurs Exam. The

contents of this examination are laid down in the Entrepreneurs Exam Regulations. There are a number of technical and vocational schools and colleges which impart the knowledge and skills tested in this exam. Thus, graduates of these schools and colleges are exempted from the requirement to do the Entrepreneurs Exam. The schools and colleges in question are mainly those with a focus on business education.

Structure and Organization of Initial Vocational Training:

Technical and vocational schools comprise part-time vocational schools for apprentices, which provide apprentices with general knowledge and theoretical know-how, and technical and vocational schools and colleges.

The dual system: Company-based training complemented by education in part-time vocational schools for apprentices

Occupational fields within the dual system

The legally recognized apprenticeship trades comprise the following areas:

- the building trade and related trades
- the clothing and upholsterer trade and the leather-processing trades
- chemistry
- gardening and forestry
- electrical engineering and electronics
- catering/foods
- glass finishing ceramics
- graphic design
- commerce and transport
- woodworking and plastics processing

- painter, lacquerer and sign painter
- metal and sheet metal processing/plumbing/casting /mechanics/
- metal refining and goldsmithery/
- locksmith's trade/blacksmith's trade
- manufacturing of musical instruments
- optics/photography
- paper manufacturing and processing
- beauty care
- textile industry
- dental prosthetics and orthopedics

School-based training in secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges

There are technical and vocational schools and colleges for the following areas:

- schools and colleges for engineering
- schools and colleges for occupations in the business sector
- schools and colleges for tourism
- schools and colleges for fashion and clothing
- schools and colleges for occupations in the social services sector
- schools and colleges for agriculture and forestry
- and other special school types and pilot projects

Co-operation with the Industry

The industry has always been an important partner for technical and vocational schools – thus, curricula are drawn up and priorities are set in line with the requirements of the industry, apprentices receive high-quality training in companies and students of technical and vocational schools and colleges have to serve compulsory work placements.

Moreover, schools and the industry co-operate in various joint projects where the findings of research and development find practical use.

Thus, practice-oriented education and training, which meet the needs and requirements of industry, is a must. The quality of training and further education facilities for initial training (provided by schools just as by the dual system) and regulated further education is measured against its practical value in the labour market.

Quality is also assured by constantly adapting the curricula to new standards.

Curricula are drawn up in close co-operation between experts of the school administration, industry and the business sector as well as the social partners (trade unions, Chamber of Labour, Economic Chamber). The social partners are also given a say in the examination of curricula and other regulations or laws, so that they may contribute with their experience and represent their interests.

High quality of training and education measures is ensured by the fact that curricula fall into the province of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture while access to legally recognized occupations is regulated by other ministries in co-operation with the social partners.

The TVE-Diploma

The introduction of the TVE-Examination (September 1997) has further contributed to the permeability of education systems. Upon passing this exam (which consists of four parts) graduates of the dual system, of at least three years lasting technical and vocational schools, of schools for auxiliary nursing and of schools for the training of para-medical staff gain access to university education.

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Apprenticeship Training in Austria – The Dual System

In Austria apprenticeship training takes place at two different sites: company-based training of apprentices is complemented by compulsory attendance of a part-time vocational school for apprentices [Berufsschule]. Thus, apprenticeship training is also referred to as "dual vocational training system" or as "dual system".

Currently about 40 per cent of all Austrian teenagers enter apprenticeship training upon completion of compulsory education. But although the overall number of apprentices just as the number of those entering apprenticeship training has been going back since 1981, 1997 saw the discontinuation of this trend, for the number of new apprentices increased again.

Upon completion of apprenticeship training about 40 to 44 per cent of all apprentices continue to work for the company where they were trained.

All in all about 40,000 companies train approximately 120,000 apprentices, which corresponds to an average of 3 apprentices per company.

The percentage of female apprentices increased slightly between 1975 and 1989, but has been decreasing ever since 1990 falling to a mere 31 per cent in 1996. The most popular apprenticeship trades among girls are retail-trade merchant, followed by hairdresser and office clerk. Among male apprentices the most popular occupations are motor-vehicle mechanic, followed by electrician. More than 50 per cent of all apprentices are trained for the craftsmen's trades, other important sectors are commerce (16 %), the industry (11 %) and tourism and the leisure industry (10%).

Company-based training is regulated by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour while pedagogical matters fall into the province of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

Apprentices may only be trained in the legally recognized apprenticeship trades. These skilled trades (presently approximately 240) are included in the list of apprenticeship trades [Lehrberufsliste] published by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour in co-operation with the Federal Ministry of Social Security and Generations. Moreover, there are 14 legally recognized apprenticeship trades in the agriculture and forestry sector which are not included in the list.

The list contains the various occupations and informs about the duration of apprenticeship training as well as related apprenticeship trades including training time credits for already acquired vocational training.

Apprenticeship training lasts two to four years, in most cases, however, three years. In case of accreditation of other educational pathways (e.g. vocational schools, vocational training abroad) the period of apprenticeship may be reduced.

Moreover, the period of apprenticeship training may also be reduced for students holding certain qualifications. This especially benefits holders of the "Reifeprüfung"-Certificate for it increases their choice and makes it easier for them to find employment. Training for several occupations

at the same time is possible provided certain requirements are met.

Company-based Training

Companies which train apprentices are obliged to provide apprentices with the skills and know-how stipulated in the occupational profile; this ensures a uniform minimum standard of training. Companies which are not able to provide training which covers the whole occupational profile may avail of the possibility of complementary training within a training network. Thus, even small companies may contribute their share to apprenticeship training.

Protection and Social Security

Company-based training constitutes the major part of apprenticeship training. Apprenticeship training agreements stating the conditions of training within the framework of a contract of employment are signed between the company and the apprentice.

Thus, an apprentice has got full social insurance including health, accident, retirement and unemployment insurance. The duties of a company which is entitled to train apprentices do go beyond the usual duties of an employer to quite some extent.

Apprenticeship training agreements are subject to the regulations of the industrial and social law and to protective labour legislation for teenage employees. Furthermore, the apprentice is entitled to a remuneration, which is fixed in collective labour agreements and varies according to the different apprenticeship trades.

Training in the Real World of Work

Apprentices spend most of the time of their apprenticeship training in the real environment of a manufacturing plant or a services enterprise. This does not only mean that they are fully integrated into the world of work but may also have a positive effect on their social skills, on their skills to cope with problems and on their ego.

One of the major advantages of this system, both for the apprentice as well as the company, is that apprentices may be employed as fully qualified skilled workers right upon completion of apprenticeship training.

Part-time Vocational Schools for Apprentices

Attendance of a part-time vocational school for apprentices [Berufsschule] is compulsory for apprentices who have signed an apprenticeship training agreement with a company.

Attendance of a part-time vocational school for apprentices starts with the beginning of the apprenticeship training agreement or another training agreement in compliance with § 30 of the Vocational Training Act and lasts until its end or the successful completion of the relevant part-time vocational school for apprentices.

The aim of part-time vocational schools for apprentices is to provide apprentices with the theoretical basics of the respective occupation, to promote and complement company-based training and to deepen their general knowledge.

Moreover, it has to provide interested apprentices with adequate preparation for the TVE-Examination by means of differentiated measures and voluntary subjects.

Thus, regulations for practical training, which are stipulated in the vocational profiles, are complemented by a special curriculum defining both the key issues of the technical theory and practical training for the respective apprenticeship trade, the latter taking place in workshops and laboratories.

Structure and Organization of Part-time Vocational Schools for Apprentices:

Education in part-time vocational schools for apprentices may take on the following organizational forms:

- day-release system with courses running for a complete academic year, apprentices attend school for a minimum of one full or two half days a week.
- block-release system with courses lasting for a minimum of eight or four weeks per year
- seasonal-release system, depending on the occupational sector classes may be held during a certain season only

Skeleton Curricula

The curricula of part-time vocational schools for apprentices are skeleton curricula which define educational objectives, contents and the procedures for the planning and realization of study processes. Some examples:

German and Communication Skills

The educational objective is to improve the students' communication and social skills and to broaden their vocabulary in order to provide them with the skills necessary to adequately voice and defend personal and business interests. Students who prepare for the TVE-Exam do receive additional support according to the qualification requirements.

The main criteria when it comes to defining the subject matter is its contribution to the improvement of the students' communication and co-operative skills. In order to meet this aim, the subject matter contains elements of verbal, non-verbal and written communication as well as spelling.

Career-related Foreign Language

The educational aim is to provide students with the qualifications necessary to cope with the demands of working as well as private life in a foreign language. Moreover, this subject aims at imparting knowledge which fosters the students' respect towards people of other cultures and their way of life.

The main criteria for the definition of the subject matter is its usefulness for the students' private and occupational life, especially when it comes to apprenticeship matters.

Civics

The educational aim is to provide the student with the qualifications necessary to play an active, critical and responsible part in society.

The main criteria when it comes to defining the subject matter is its contribution to the improvement of the students' understanding of the real world and of the gap between legitimate claims and reality as well as the representation of Austria's political, cultural, economic and humanitarian achievements.

The Subject Matter

The apprentice within his school and company environment. The apprentice's occupational and social environment. Contemporary history – Austria in the international community. The Austrian legal system. Austria's political system.

Business Education

Economics including business correspondence: The educational aim is to impart knowledge in the following subject areas: information and communication methods, papers, documents, contracts and payment systems, the basics of national economy and applied economics and

some issues of economic policies.

Furthermore, students are to be provided with knowledge on income, financing, purchase and accounting as well as on the improvement of enterprises which might be of importance for his private and occupational life. The main criteria when it comes to defining the subject matter is the mathematical understanding of business matters.

Streaming

For pedagogical reasons and in order to provide special support to interested students, streaming (2 streams) takes places in one, two or three compulsory business and technical subjects.

The decision whether classes are sub-divided into student groups for language and practical training rests with the relevant executive school authorities. Moreover, the relevant executive school authorities may decide upon additional subjects for which teaching has to take place in student groups. In this context, special attention has to be paid to lessons which prepare for the TVE-Exam.

The Apprenticeship Leave Exam

The contract between the employer and the apprentice ends automatically after the stipulated period of time. At the end of apprenticeship training each apprentice may decide whether or not to take the Apprenticeship Leave Exam [Lehrabschlussprüfung]. This exam tests whether the apprentice has acquired the practical skills and qualifications relevant to his occupation and whether he is able to properly perform the tasks characteristic to the apprenticeship trade.

The Apprenticeship Leave Exam is divided into a practical and a theoretical part and consists of a written and an oral exam.

Provided that the apprentice has met the educational objectives of the last year of the respective part-time vocational school he is only required to do the practical part of the exam.

An Apprenticeship Leave Certificate often is of legal importance as well.

Further Education and Training

The Apprenticeship Leave Certificate provides the apprentice with access to two different vocational careers. On the one hand it is a prerequisite for the admission to the Master Craftsman Exam and for qualification tests, and on the other hand it gives access to higher education via the TVE-Exam or the Higher Education Entrance Exam which are prerequisites for taking up studies at colleges, universities, "Fachhochschulen", post-secondary courses and post-secondary colleges.

Outlook

The Austrian apprenticeship training system is highly practice-oriented and esteemed all over the country. In recent years, however, apprenticeship training has experienced a loss in attractiveness due to the poor permeability of educational pathways, the concentration of apprentices on a few occupations and the permanently decreasing willingness of Austrian enterprises to provide training facilities.

Thus, there is a strong demand for a reformation of the apprenticeship system in order to make apprenticeship trades more attractive. Reform measures are already carried out in co-operation with all parties involved.

The most important reform measures are:

- the creation of new apprenticeship trades in future-oriented fields,

- broadly defined training objectives – more comprehensive basic training and later specialization make it easier to find out about individual skills and interests and to act accordingly (reduction of drop-outs and the rate of those who change for another occupation),
- easier access to further education and facilitating transfer from the dual system to the full-time technical and vocational education system. The introduction of the TVE-Examination in 1997 has contributed enormously to the permeability of education systems,
- more flexible training schemes for practical training in companies just as for education in part-time vocational schools,
- permanent adaptation of the curricula to the ever-changing requirements of the labour market and development of appropriate means to guarantee high quality of training,
- financial support for companies which train apprentices,
- removal of bureaucratic impediments,
- more information about less popular and non-gender-specific occupations.

After successful completion of grade 8 (secondary level I) of compulsory education students may apply for admission to a technical and vocational school or college (secondary level II).

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Secondary Technical and Vocational Schools and Colleges

General Information on Secondary Technical and Vocational Schools and Colleges

- 40 per cent of Austrian teenagers choose to serve an apprenticeship training,
- 23 per cent opt for further education at a technical and vocational college,
- 14 per cent for attendance of a secondary technical and vocational school and
- 20 per cent for attendance of the upper level of a secondary academic school.
- Future-oriented Education

For the last two decades secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges have been experiencing a steady rise in student numbers. This is partly due to the well-balanced curriculum they offer and which comprises general education and technical theory in the respective fields as well as practical training (compulsory work placements varying from school to school), and partly to the variety of educational possibilities and fields of specialization.

Objectives

Apart from general education the focus of secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges is on initial vocational training. Upon completion of these schools and colleges graduates may either immediately enter the world of work or go for further education – depending on the respective educational level.

The individual schools' autonomy in the amendment of their curricula opens new ways, such as the development of specific foci or profiles which lead towards specialization in certain occupational fields.

Structure and Organization

There are different organizational forms of secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges which last from three to five years – technical and vocational schools lasting either for three or four years and technical and vocational colleges lasting for five years.

They may either be organized as full-time schools to be attended after grade 8 of compulsory education (secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges), as full-time schools to be attended after the "Reifeprüfung"-Exam (post-secondary courses) or as evening classes (for people under employment).

Much use is made of open and distance learning, for it proves to be a very appropriate means of education for adults and meets specific educational demands in certain regions.

Fees – Financing

Save for some private schools, attendance of technical and vocational schools and colleges is free of charge.

This also holds true for schools for people under employment. Students are, however, required

to meet a minor part of the costs for study materials, textbooks (approx. 10 per cent) and for free public transport tickets (approx. 10 per cent).

Some of the technical and vocational schools and colleges, especially those with special foci, are organized as boarding schools for which grants are possible too.

The costs for the furnishing and equipment of schools and the costs for the teachers are basically met by the federal government save for part-time vocational schools for apprentices where federal and provincial governments share the costs.

Admission

Admission to secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges presupposes successful completion of grade 8 of compulsory education. Depending on the school type, admission is also made conditional upon the assessment of the student's performance in certain subjects and on entrance exams. Some types of technical and vocational schools and colleges also require an aptitude test.

Work Placement – a Typical Feature of Secondary Technical and Vocational Schools and Colleges

The curricula of secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges in Austria include compulsory work placement periods in the industry, the purpose of which is the practical application of knowledge and skills acquired in the various theory lessons and during training periods in workshops, labs, kitchens, etc. Work placements in schools and colleges for occupations in the business sector are optional. Depending on the respective school type, compulsory work placement periods may cover 4 to 24 weeks.

School-leaving Certificates

Students are required to do a project which has to be presented as part of the "Reifeprüfung"- and TVE-Exam and which provides them with the opportunity to demonstrate and use their acquired qualifications and skills.

Secondary technical and vocational colleges offer high-quality training which imparts qualifications that enjoy parity of esteem with qualifications acquired through post-secondary training in other EU Member States.

The training and education in technical and vocational schools ends with a school-leaving exam and qualifies students for immediate exercise of the respective occupations.

Technical and vocational colleges end with a double qualification: the "Reifeprüfung"-Certificate and TVE-Diploma, which does not only provide access to university education but also qualifies graduates for jobs on the executive level.

External Exams

Basically all exams of secondary technical and vocational schools as well as of schools for people under employment may be taken as external exams, which means that school attendance is not required. This also holds true for the "Reifeprüfung"- and TVE-Exam as well as other school-leaving exams.

Qualification of Graduates

After having worked in their respective fields for a period of at least 6 years and upon having written a paper on a subject matter in the relevant field and subsequently having passed an exam held before a committee, graduates of colleges for engineering or colleges for agriculture and forestry may apply for the conferment of the title "Diplom-HTL-Ingenieur" or "Diplom-HLFL-Ingenieur".

Recognition of Technical and Vocational Training within the EU

Ever since the beginning of the 90s technical and vocational colleges which end with a "Reifeprüfung"-Certificate and TVE-Diploma have been enjoying quite some popularity, for these college do not only provide students with vocational qualifications and standard entry qualifications for university but are also fully recognized within the EU:

In compliance with the EU directive 95/43/EC as of 20 July 1995 qualifications provided by technical and vocational colleges and their special types enjoy parity of esteem with qualifications acquired through post-secondary vocational training in other EU Member States.

Geändert am: 13.07.2015

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Adult Education

Adult education is the only field of education in Austria for which there are no legal provisions. Public and private providers offer a variety of complementary courses on personal as well as vocational matters.

School-based further education and training is provided by foremen courses, master craftsmen courses, courses for building workers and schools for employed persons. The range of courses offered for employed persons is similar to those offered by secondary education, just as the objectives correspond to those of the respective schools and colleges.

Regional non-profit organizations offer courses which impart key qualifications and provide people with life skills. Supply is here determined by demand.

Further vocational training in enterprises is determined by the type and size of the respective companies and is often organized by the companies themselves.

1. Basic Information

Legal Situation

Besides school and university education, adult education serves as a third pillar in the Austrian education system.

Contrary to school and university education, there is no constitutional law regulating adult education. The only federal law concerning adult education is the 1973 "Law for Promotional Measures" [Erwachsenenbildungs-Förderungsgesetz] which regulates financial support of adult education and public libraries.

Apart from providing support to adult education institutions – a task which rests with the department responsible for adult education in the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture – the "Law for Promotional Measures" also contains provisions on the maintenance and management of Federal Centres for the Promotion of Adult Education [Förderungsstellen des Bundes für Erwachsenenbildung] within the individual provinces.

Objectives

- The general adult education sector offers a variety of different programmes and courses such as health and leisure time programmes, courses on personality development and cultural education as well as foreign language courses. Moreover, it also organizes socio-political events.
- Adult education also provides for the improvement of vocational qualifications, the acquiring of key qualifications, instruction in the use of new technologies and for the promotion of social and communication skills.
- The second educational pathway provides adults with the opportunity to take school-leaving and other certificates at a later point in their lives (schools for people under employment, Higher Education Entrance Exam, external exams, TVE-Diploma).

Adult education furthermore aims at offering people of all ages the opportunity to organize their

lives autonomously and independently and to reach fulfilment.

These aims need to be realized so that adult education and further vocational training may meet the demands of the 21st century and of the rapidly changing world of work.

Providers of Adult Education

Courses and programmes of adult education are offered by the following providers:

Schools for employed persons, Public Employment Service, the Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions, interest groups, private providers and enterprises.

The most important providers of further vocational training are the adult education institutions of the social partners, i.e. the Vocational Training Institute [Berufsförderungsinstitut] and the Institute for Economic Development [Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut].

2. Regulated and Career-related Further Education and Training

Further education and training is provided by foremen courses, master craftsmen courses, courses for building workers and schools for people under employed persons.

Curricula and exam regulations for these schools and courses are issued by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

As it is the case with initial training (in secondary technical and vocational schools and colleges or within the dual system), the quality of regulated further vocational training is determined by the aim to provide people with knowledge and skills which qualify them for certain jobs and to ensure that students will find an adequate job.

Quality is guaranteed by constantly adapting the curricula to new standards. Curricula are drawn up in close co-operation between experts of the school administration, the industry and the social partners (trade unions, the Chamber of Labour, the Economic Chamber).

2.1. Foremen Courses

Foremen courses [Werkmeisterschulen] offer further job-related theoretical education for people who have completed initial training in the industrial and trade sector. With an overall student number of 5,000, foremen courses can be considered the third largest educational institution in this sector, being preceded only by technical and vocational schools and colleges.

Foremen courses are mainly offered by private institutions, training institutions of employers' (Institutes for Economic Development) and employees' organizations (Vocational Training Institute); teaching is based on national curricula. Within the sector of regulated further education and training, foremen courses are the nationwide best represented educational facilities.

Education in foremen courses is purely school-based and comprises 1040 to 1280 hours (which corresponds to four semesters). Foremen courses end with an exam held before a committee. Successful completion of a foremen course qualifies the graduate to train apprentices and – depending on the field – to become self-employed after having worked in the respective field for four years.

Depending on their technical field, graduates of foremen courses either work in executive and/or leading positions in fields like project planning, production planning, organization, maintenance, sales management, production, testing engineering, supervision of building sites, the becoming operational of plants and staff training. Graduates of foremen courses are qualified for independent and responsible work but also for the instruction and supervision of other staff members.

Foremen courses for employed persons are offered in the fields of building engineering, biotechnology and food technology, industrial chemistry and environmental technology, electrical engineering, electronics, mechanical engineering, sanitary and heating engineering,

plastics engineering, mechanical engineering-engineering operations and maintenance, mechanical engineering-automation technology and mechanical engineering-automotive engineering.

1.2. Master Craftsmen Courses

Just as foremen courses, courses for master craftsmen [Meisterschulen] aim at enhancing technical knowledge and at preparing students for their Master Craftsman Examination. Master craftsmen courses are established at secondary technical and vocational schools and do not collect fees.

Training at master craftsmen courses usually lasts for 2 years and ends with a final exam. After two years of work experience graduates of master craftsmen courses may start self-employment.

Master craftsmen courses are offered in the following areas: painting, sculpture, joinery and interior design, metal design, fashion design, ceramics and stove design, milling, baking and clothing, optometry and contact lens optics.

In addition to that, there are also more advanced courses for joinery, photography, graphic design, dressmaking and textile chemistry.

1.3. Courses for Building Workers

The aim of further education and training provided by courses for building workers [Bauhandwerkerschulen] is to secure employment and to raise qualification standards of employees in small and medium-sized enterprises.

New opportunities for raising seasonal workers' qualification standards during the dull season are to be created or existing ones are to be expanded.

Courses for building workers offer further education and training for bricklayers, stonemasons and carpenters. These courses last for three years and are held during the dull season at eight colleges for engineering.

Training offered by courses for building workers lasts for an overall period of three years. Classes are held for 13 weeks (45 hours per week) each year. Courses for building workers end with a final exam.

A maximum of two thirds of the costs for this type of further education and training may be refunded by the Public Employment Service [Arbeitsmarktservice] (one third being provided by the department responsible for labour-market policies and one third by the European Social Fund). A minimum of one third has to be paid by the employer. Refunding of the above mentioned costs is made conditional upon continued employment during the period of school attendance.

The right to attend courses for building workers is stipulated in collective labour agreements and subject to the respective regulations by the Public Employment Service. School matters are regulated by the School Education Act [Schulunterrichtsgesetz].

The curriculum of courses for building workers includes general just as technical subjects. In the academic year of 1996/97 a total of 900 students was registered, 525 of them received financial support.

1.4. Schools and Colleges for Employed Persons – Second Educational Pathway

The second educational pathway provides adults with the opportunity to take school-leaving certificates of a secondary academic school or a technical and vocational school or college at a later point in their lives. Furthermore, it gives people with completed initial vocational training (obtained at a secondary technical and vocational school or through apprenticeship training) the

opportunity to acquire higher qualifications.

The range of courses offered for employed persons is similar to those offered by secondary education, just as the objectives correspond to those of the respective schools and colleges.

A pilot project on an integrated form of these three types of courses for employed persons was launched at the beginning of the academic year 1996/97. In its initial stage this pilot project which proves to be more flexible and also makes much use of open and distance learning is being carried out at 10 colleges for engineering. Depending on the educational background of the individual student, this new type of college for engineering for people under employment lasts six to eight semesters. This period of study, however, may be further reduced by a crediting of the individual student's skills and qualifications.

Regional non-profit organizations offer courses which impart key qualifications and provide people with life skills. Supply is here determined by demand.

Further vocational training in enterprises is determined by the type and size of the respective companies and is often organized by the companies themselves.

Geändert am: 26.05.2014

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Labour Market - Oriented Training

Providing for individual assistance through orientation, education and training courses complemented by structural, long-term, labour market-oriented measures.

The variety of services offered by the Public Employment Service is to meet the variety of needs.

Labour market-oriented training makes much use of existing facilities but also creates new ones in order to be able to counteract quantitative and qualitative imbalances of the labour market.

Financial support may either be granted to institutions or to individuals who make use of education measures provided by these institutions upon consultation with the Public Employment Service.

Geändert am: 26.05.2014