

4 Case study: Entry requirements and initial training of vocational teachers and trainers in Germany

This chapter looks at teachers and trainers in the German vocational education and training (VET) system. It zooms in on the requirements to join the VET teaching and training workforce and on the initial education and training to prepare teachers and trainers for their role. Particular attention is paid to ways to make pathways into the teaching and training profession accessible and flexible.

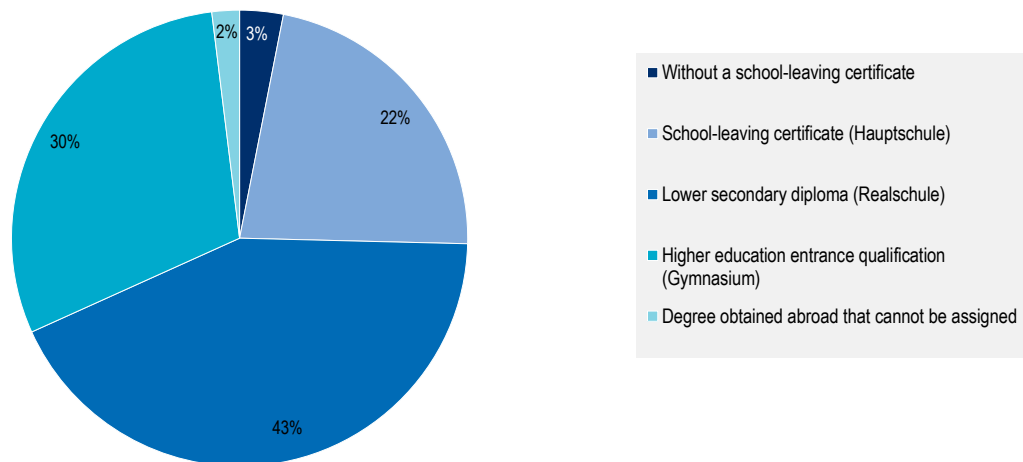
4.1. A snapshot of vocational education and training in Germany

4.1.1. The structure of the German VET system

Vocational education and training (VET) in Germany is delivered at upper-secondary and post-secondary levels. After finishing primary education, students start their lower secondary education in three different pathways: *Gymnasium*, which incorporates both lower and upper secondary education, with a demanding academic programme leading to a university entrance qualification, *Realschule* with a less demanding academic programme leading to a lower secondary diploma, and *Hauptschule* with a programme designed for those deemed to have limited academic ability or interests leading to a school-leaving certificate. Graduates from these two latter typically enrol in a vocational upper-secondary pathway (Hoeckel and Schwartz, 2010^[1]), where they make up for 66% of upper-secondary VET students in 2020 (see Figure 4.1). In most federal states (*Länder*), the three programmes are merged into cooperative or integrated comprehensive schools (*Gesamtschule*).

Figure 4.1. Most upper-secondary VET students in Germany come from *Realschule* and *Gymnasium*

Upper-secondary VET students, according to previous school education (2020)



Source: Adapted from Destatis (2021^[2]), *Berufliche Bildung - Fachserie 11 Reihe 3 - 2020*, <https://www.destatis.de/>.

At the upper-secondary level, Germany offers general education and VET. VET programmes include school-based VET (full-time vocational schools) and dual VET, also called apprenticeships (combining vocational school and in-company training). The majority of VET students enrolls in dual VET: in 2020, about 67% of upper secondary VET entrants (all age groups) started a dual VET programme and the remaining 33% enrolled in school-based VET (of which around 85% concern health, education, and social services) (BIBB, 2021^[3]). Completion of upper secondary VET programmes provides access to post-secondary non-tertiary education or tertiary education depending on the programmes that students follow. Box 4.1 provides details about the different types of VET providers.

Box 4.1. Types of VET providers in Germany

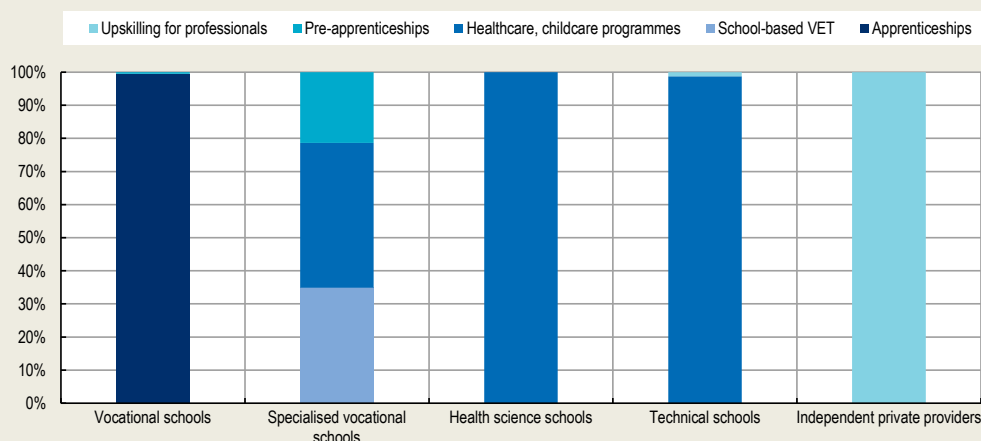
VET programmes at ISCED Levels 3-4 are provided in vocational schools (*Berufsschulen*), specialised vocational schools (*Berufsfachschulen*), trade and technical schools (*Fachschulen*), health sector schools (*Schulen des Gesundheitswesens*), and vocational grammar schools (*Fachgymnasien*), among others. These VET providers are under the responsibility of individual *Länder*. In addition, a range of providers offer continuing vocational education programmes – in particular preparatory courses for master craftsperson examinations (ISCED Levels 5-7) – including social partners (e.g. Chambers of Commerce and Trade, Chambers of Skilled Crafts) and private providers.

The main difference among providers is the kind of programme offered: pre-apprenticeship programmes, apprenticeships, school-based VET or upskilling for experienced professionals (see Figure 4.2). The target audience of different providers varies accordingly. Most providers tend to focus on one specific function: vocational schools' main role is to deliver the off-the-job component of dual programmes, whereas independent private providers focus on a highly specific sector, namely, preparatory courses for master craftsperson examinations, which are not targeted by vocational or specialised vocational schools. Only specialised vocational schools target several types of programmes and therefore overlap with some other provider types. Their specificity is that they provide vocational programmes that do not follow the dual model. Work-based learning takes the form of work placements rather than an alternating period as in apprenticeships. There is some overlap with vocational schools in two areas: pre-apprenticeship programmes and some vocational programmes (which prepare for occupations also targeted by apprenticeships). In addition, there is some overlap between specialised vocational schools and health sector schools.

In terms of the overall number of students for vocational programmes at ISCED Levels 3-5, vocational schools dominate the system, reflecting the central role of apprenticeships in the German VET system (see Figure 4.3). Specialised vocational schools and health sector schools are the next most important provider types, with a focus on school-based VET programmes mostly in specialised fields. Independent private providers focus on the delivery of preparatory courses for master craftsperson examinations (as well as courses that are not part of the formal education and training system). As illustrated by Figure 4.3, each provider type focuses on just one or two levels of education.

Figure 4.2. The different VET provider types in Germany offer distinct VET programmes

Share of VET students by VET provider type

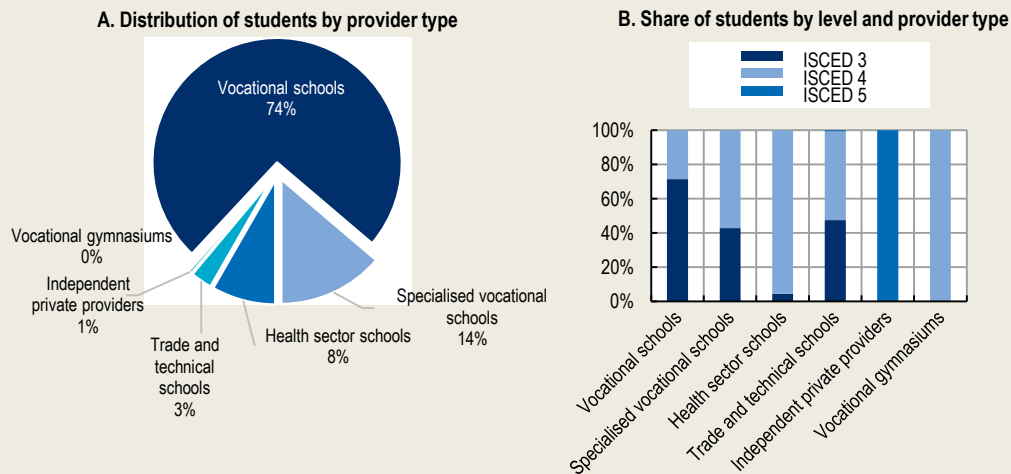


Note: Reference year 2018/19.

Source: OECD calculations based on data collected for the OECD Survey on Vocational Education and Training (2019).

Figure 4.3. Most VET students in Germany are in vocational schools

Students by VET provider type and education level (ISCED levels 3–5)



Note: Reference year 2018/19.

Source: OECD calculations based on data collected for the OECD Survey on Vocational Education and Training (2019).

As a large share of VET students are in dual VET programmes, companies are considered the main VET provider in Germany. The training delivered in companies is sometimes complemented by inter-company training centres (*überbetriebliche Berufsbildungsstätten*). These centres are designed to help small and highly specialised companies engage in apprenticeships. When the company is highly specialised and unable to cover all of the training content contained in the relevant regulations, apprentices may pursue additional practical training in inter-company training centres. The training centres are owned by chambers and receive funding from the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi, 2022^[4]). Small and highly specialised companies may also provide apprenticeships through collaborative apprenticeship schemes (*Verbundausbildung*). Such schemes may take different forms, under the most commonly used model a “lead company” hires the apprentice and partner companies provide training components that the lead company is unable to provide (Azubi.de, 2022^[5]).

In addition to these VET programmes, there are also certain programmes that are considered general but have some vocational content. Such general education programmes with vocational orientation are offered at vocational grammar schools (*berufliches Gymnasium*) and are of a duration of two to three years. Students can choose between different specialisations, such as agricultural economy or technology, and receive a higher education entrance qualification for studies related to their specialisation upon completion of this programme (Deutscher Bundestag, 2021^[6]).

At the post-secondary level, VET programmes at ISCED levels 4 to 5 are open to all upper secondary graduates. These are specialised programmes lasting between one and three years. They lead to qualifications that grant access to university studies or the labour market. Upper-secondary VET graduates from certain programmes may also attend courses offered by trade and technical schools (at ISCED Level 6), pursue professionally-oriented tertiary studies (ISCED Levels 6-7), or complete a bridging course to gain eligibility to universities. In addition, dual study programmes at ISCED Levels 6 to 7 combine academic studies and work-based learning.¹ Depending on the programme focus, their entry requirements differ. These programmes also function as professional development for adults and in some cases lead to a vocational qualification in addition to an academic degree.

Moreover, professional examinations at ISCED Levels 5 to 7 are available for VET graduates who, after a period of employment, seek to upskill and reach higher professional and management positions. Candidates usually pursue preparatory courses for the examinations: for example, a Level 5 examination leads to a professional specialist qualification in a range of target occupations and training programmes are available to prepare for the examination (less than 880 hours of coursework). A Level 6 master craftsperson examination leads to a Meister, also called a professional bachelor qualification, and grants access to academic bachelor programmes and professional master programmes. Moreover, individuals with a professional bachelor qualification are allowed to run their own company in certain trades and hire and train apprentices.²

The focus of the remainder of this chapter is on VET programmes at ISCED Levels 3 to 5.

Work-based and school-based learning

As described above, both school-based VET and dual VET programmes exist in Germany. While school-based VET programmes last one to three years and lead to ISCED Levels 2 to 4, dual non-tertiary programmes usually last two to three years and lead to ISCED Levels 3 to 4. Work-based learning at companies makes up for 70% of the dual apprenticeships, but this can vary across programmes (Huisman and Hippach-Schneider, 2021^[7]). Attending a vocational school for the off-the-job training component is mandatory for all apprentices, while their workplace training conditions are established in a contract signed by both the apprentice and the company offering the apprenticeship. Training regulations and a skeleton curriculum determine the learning content at companies and vocational schools. In order to ensure that the training complies with the regulations and the curriculum competent bodies and the school inspectorate monitor their implementation at the two learning venues (Cedefop, 2020^[8]).

Specialised programmes at ISCED Levels 4-5 may include a traineeship taking place at a company, depending on the provider. Some of the specialised programmes with the highest enrolment numbers are school-based vocational programmes in the health sector, which typically collaborate with hospitals that provide the learners with theoretical and practical training (Cedefop, 2020^[8]).

VET teachers and trainers

In Germany, there are two types of VET teachers at upper-secondary and post-secondary levels: i) teachers of general education and vocational theory, and ii) teachers of vocational practice. The former typically hold a university degree and work part-time or full-time in vocational schools. Teachers of vocational practice teach practical and technical subjects in practice offices, teaching kitchens, or training workshops. They typically hold a vocational qualification and have to complete a continuing training programme. In addition to vocational practice teachers (*Lehrer für Fachpraxis*), five *Länder*³ train subject-related VET teachers,⁴ who, like vocational practice teachers, are responsible for the practical and technical subjects. The main differences between vocational practice teachers and subject-related VET teachers are the training duration (18 months for vocational practice teachers and two to four years for subject-related VET teachers) and that there is an overarching framework agreement for vocational practice teachers, yet none for subject-related VET teachers. As technical colleges at post-secondary level and upper-secondary vocational schools are often co-located, it is common for post-secondary VET teachers to additionally teach at the upper-secondary level (Hensen and Hippach-Schneider, 2016^[9]).

With regards to work-based learning, there are two categories of in-company trainers who are directly involved in training apprentices: qualified trainers, and non-qualified trainers who are not recognised as qualified trainers by law. These non-qualified trainers typically include skilled workers, journeymen or foremen. Most of these trainers work part-time as trainers while pursuing their trade during the rest of their working hours. It is not uncommon for trainers to switch to the VET teaching profession during their career (Huisman and Hippach-Schneider, 2021^[7]).

Details about requirements for teachers and trainers and their preparatory training are described in the next sections.

Governance of the VET system in Germany

In Germany, the federal government, the states (*Länder*) and social partners (trade unions and employer organisations) work closely together to govern VET. At the national level, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung*, BMBF) regulates and co-ordinates in-company training, whereas the Federal Institute for VET (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung*, BIBB) advises VET policy through research and the development process of training regulations. At the regional level, the *Länder* are responsible for school-based VET, and *Land* law regulates ITET for teachers of all school types.

Social partners play a crucial role in VET. They not only contribute to the design and delivery of VET, but they also take the initiative regarding occupational profile developments. Regionally, they are represented in the chambers, whereas nationally, they are part of the BIBB Board and its vocational training committees.⁵

4.2. Entry requirements for teachers and trainers in VET in Germany

In Germany, VET teachers require a specific qualification to be able to teach, which differs between teachers of vocational theory and teachers of vocational practice. Also for trainers, specific qualification requirements apply. Unlike in the other case study countries in this report, trainers in Germany need to pass a dedicated examination to act as qualified in-company trainer. Companies that provide work-based learning are required to have at least one qualified trainer among their workers.

4.2.1. Qualification, experience and skill requirements for teachers in VET

Entry requirements for VET teachers depend on whether they deliver vocational theory or practice. Whereas *teachers of vocational theory* have to pass two state examinations following their university teacher training and their preparatory service, *teachers of vocational practice* have to complete a continuing training programme (*berufliche Weiterbildung*) that builds on their vocational qualifications (usually at ISCED Level 6). This training programme includes theoretical training on pedagogy and a preparatory service, and is usually concluded with a state examination.

Regular VET teacher qualifications

VET teachers in Germany must possess a teaching qualification to teach in upper and post-secondary non-tertiary VET institutions.

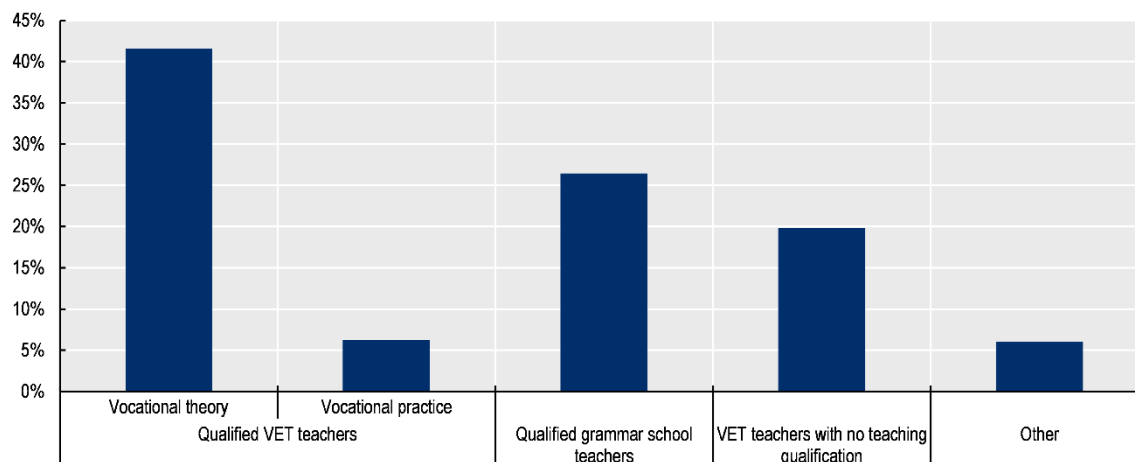
- *Teachers of vocational theory* have to complete teacher training at a university and a practical preparatory service (see next section), both of which are concluded with state examinations. (Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK), 1995, 2018_[10]).
- *Teachers of vocational practice* have to complete a continuing training programme, which includes theoretical training and a practical preparatory service (see next section), and pass a state examination (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2022_[11]; Huismann and Hippach-Schneider, 2021_[7]).
- *University-trained grammar school teachers* may teach general subjects at vocational schools (Huismann and Hippach-Schneider, 2021_[7]).

In 2019/20, 48% of employed VET teachers were qualified VET teachers (42% who usually teach vocational theory and 6% who teach vocational practice), and 26% were qualified grammar school

teachers (who usually teach general education subjects) (see Figure 4.4). About 20% do not possess a teaching qualification, yet they were hired due to a teacher shortage in certain fields (mainly technical subjects) – these teachers are assumed to be ‘side-entrants’ (see section below). Most of them are university graduates holding a technical Master’s degree, while others are skilled workers who can be considered hybrid teachers (Destatis (Statistisches Bundesamt), 2020^[12]; Huismann and Hippach-Schneider, 2021^[7]).

Figure 4.4. Most VET teachers in Germany are qualified teachers (2019-20)

Share of VET teachers by teaching qualification



Note: ‘Other’ refers to those who have a degree in primary or lower secondary education, special education, a German Democratic Republic (DDR) teaching qualification, or those whose degree is unknown.

Source: Adapted from Destatis (Statistisches Bundesamt) (2020^[12]), Berufliche Schulen - Fachserie 11 Reihe 2 - Schuljahr 2019/2020, <https://www.destatis.de>.

VET teachers as ‘side-entrants’

Given that there are VET teacher shortages in certain fields, it has become increasingly common to recruit individuals who have a relevant degree or expertise in these fields but no teaching qualification. While VET schools can usually only hire certified VET teachers, they may recruit graduates from a relevant Master’s programme who have gained some professional experience if there are no certified VET teachers available. These ‘side-entrants’ (*SeiteneinsteigerInnen*) are eventually required to obtain the same competences and pass the same examination as regular VET teachers. They follow a teacher training that includes pedagogical and practical training (usually similar to the regular teacher training), however the content and regulation of the training varies across *Länder*.⁶ They may complete this process while already working as a VET teacher. In some cases, the candidate’s work experience may replace the otherwise mandatory preparatory service and state examination. For instance, in North-Rhine-Westphalia, a minimum of four years of conducive professional activity are required to be exempted from the preparatory service and the state examination (Ministerium des Innern des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2022^[13]; Huismann and Hippach-Schneider, 2021^[7]; Hippach-Schneider et al., 2012^[14]).

4.2.2. Qualification, experience and skill requirements for in-company trainers

In order to offer work-based learning for VET students, training companies in Germany need to be accredited, which in turn requires that they have at least one qualified trainer. Such qualified trainers must have a relevant professional qualification and pass a trainer aptitude examination to demonstrate their

vocational and pedagogical knowledge. The Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*, BBiG) and the Trade and Crafts Code (*Handwerksordnung*, HwO) encompass the legal provisions surrounding the in-company part of VET. It is therefore the federal government that determines the requirements for in-company training staff. It does so in close exchange with the BIBB Board, which represents trade unions, employers, and government officials on the federal and federal state levels. Moreover, the BIBB Board defines criteria to determine whether training venues and their personnel are adequate (BIBB, 2017^[15]).

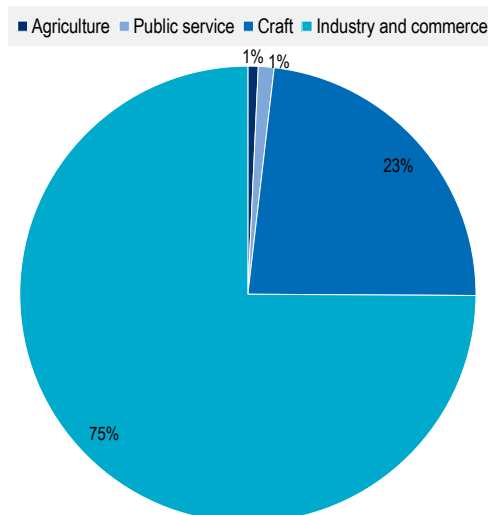
General regulations and practice

The Vocational Training Act (BBiG) stipulates that only ‘personally and professionally qualified’ candidates are eligible to train apprentices.⁷ In order to be professionally suitable, one must have the professional and pedagogical knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to convey the training contents (BMBF, n.d.^[16]).

While the completion of vocational training or studies in the same field as the training occupation validate the candidate’s professional aptitude, the prospective trainers still need to demonstrate their vocational and pedagogical suitability by passing an examination in compliance with the Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude (*Ausbildereignungsverordnung*, AEVO), which is based on the Vocational Training Act. The AEVO examination tests whether the candidate possesses the necessary competences to plan, implement, and monitor in-company training independently. More specifically, this entails examining training requirements, helping with the recruitment of apprentices, and planning, preparing, implementing, and completing the training (BMBF, n.d.^[16]; Huismann and Hippach-Schneider, 2021^[7]). In 2019, there were almost 100 000 candidates for the AEVO, 92.7% of which passed the examination. 75% of them did so in the industry and commerce field and 23% in crafts (see Figure 4.5) (BIBB, 2021^[3]).

Figure 4.5. Most AEVO examinations are passed in the industry and commerce field

Passed AEVO examinations by training fields in 2019



Source: Adapted from BIBB (2021^[3]), Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2021: Informationen und Analysen zur Entwicklung der beruflichen Bildung, <https://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/bibb-datenreport-2021.pdf>.

According to the Vocational Training Act, each company offering apprenticeships needs to employ at least one qualified full-time or part-time in-company trainer responsible for apprenticeships. However, this does not mean that these qualified trainers are the only ones who can support the training of VET students. Skilled workers who are not qualified trainers may also train apprentices alongside their occupational

activities. Unlike qualified in-company trainers, skilled workers are not required to pass the AEVO examination in order to train apprentices. The proof of their professional aptitude suffices, which can usually be demonstrated by a completed vocational training or studies in a related field followed by several years of relevant work experience (Apprenticeship Toolbox, 2019_[17]).

There are several incentives in place to attract prospective qualified in-company trainers. For example, the AEVO examination is integrated into the Master craftsperson examination, thus automatically giving all *Meister* the qualification to train apprentices (see Box 4.2). Moreover, many programmes at universities of applied sciences offer the training course for trainers (AdA, see below) and the AEVO examination as an optional module to their students. Furthermore, those who are interested in becoming qualified trainers may apply for financial support to cover the full or partial cost of the preparatory course for the AEVO examination and the examination fees (see below).

Box 4.2. Master craftsperson examination that integrates the trainer aptitude examination

The trainer aptitude examination is integrated into the Master craftsperson examination, thus automatically giving all *Meister* the qualification to train apprentices. The Master craftsperson examination is divided into four parts that can be completed in any order. Whereas the first two parts focus on the respective craft, the third and fourth parts are the same for all trades. Examinations I and II test the candidate's practical and theoretical knowledge. In the third examination, the candidates have to prove their business management, commercial and legal knowledge. The fourth part of the Master craftsperson examination is the trainer aptitude examination, in which the candidates have to show their vocational and pedagogical knowledge.

Source: Handwerkskammer Region Stuttgart (2022_[18]), Meisterprüfung: Alles Wichtige auf einen Blick, <https://www.hwk-stuttgart.de/artikel/meisterpruefung-alles-wichtige-auf-einen-blick-67,138,525.html>.

Exceptions

Individuals who do not possess the required professional knowledge, skills and abilities as defined in the Vocational Training Act may, under certain circumstances, still be registered as a qualified in-company trainer without passing the AEVO examination.⁸ More concretely, the competent authority under *Land* law may allow such exceptions after hearing the competent body (usually the Chambers). New occupations are often the driver behind these decisions. In 2019, 38 313 of the newly registered in-company trainers were exempted from the AEVO examination, compared to 91 335 people who successfully passed the examination (BIBB, 2021_[3]).

While similar to the training regulations stipulated in the BBiG, the Nursing Profession Reform Act (*Pflegeberufereformgesetz*, PflBRefG), which entails the new Nursing Profession Act (*Pflegeberufegesetz*, PflBG), contains regulations specific to the nursing profession, which, in some cases, can go beyond those of the BBiG.

4.3. Initial preparation for teachers and trainers in VET in Germany

The training to prepare VET teachers in Germany is fairly extensive. For teachers of vocational theory or teachers of general subjects in VET institutions it includes a dedicated bachelor's and master's programme followed by a preparatory service that focuses on teaching practice. The training for teachers of vocational practice also consists of theoretical training and a preparatory service, but it is delivered as a continuing training programme, i.e. to be completed after initial education (usually at bachelor level). For in-company

trainers, training programmes are available to prepare for the AEVO examination – although these training programmes are optional.

4.3.1. Initial teacher education and training in VET

Initial teacher education and training (ITET) in VET is quite complex. ITET for *teachers of vocational theory* includes: i) a teacher training at a university that includes a bachelor and a master programme and 52 weeks of practical work and ii) a preparatory service at a teacher-training college that focuses on teaching practice. Both phases are concluded with a state examination. By passing the second state examination, candidates receive their teaching credentials. *Grammar school teachers*, who may teach general subjects at VET schools, follow the same training structure, yet the in-company training is not mandatory for them.

For prospective *teachers of vocational practice*, a teacher training focusing on pedagogical and practical skills is required. This continuing training programme (*berufliche Weiterbildung*)⁹ is open to those having professional qualifications at ISCED Level 6 and includes pedagogical training and a preparatory service, which is usually concluded with a state examination.

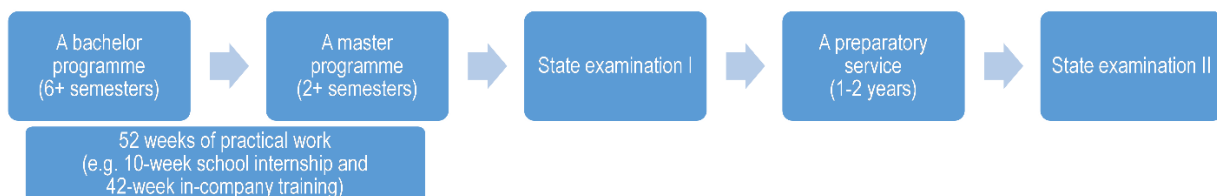
Outside of this regular track, *side entrants* can complete their training while already teaching. In terms of content, their training is the same as for regular teachers, yet the details vary across Länder as the regulations for side-entrants are not uniform.

Teacher training providers, duration and entry requirements

For prospective *vocational theory teachers*, higher education institutions¹⁰ provide teacher training programmes. A university entrance qualification grants access to these programmes. The programmes have the following features (see also Figure 4.6):

- The standard duration of the programmes is ten semesters, which includes a bachelor's programme (at least six semesters) and a master's programme (at least two semesters). It typically includes 52 weeks of practical work taking place at vocational schools (typically 10 weeks) and companies (typically 42 weeks), whereby the organisation of this practical work training varies across *Länder* (in terms of duration and when it takes place during the bachelor's and/or master's programme).
- The programme corresponds to 300 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) and ends with a state examination. After successfully completing this first state examination and obtaining a master of education degree, candidates start their practical preparatory service.
- The preparatory service usually lasts between 12 and 24 months and takes place at teacher-training colleges and VET schools – while the former provide pedagogical and subject-related didactics training, the latter offer trainee teachers in-service training (Hensen and Hippach-Schneider, 2016^[9]; Eurydice, 2022^[19]; Huismann and Hippach-Schneider, 2021^[7]). After the preparatory service, candidates have to pass the second state examination.

Figure 4.6. ITET for prospective teachers of vocational theory



Note: The organisation of the 52 weeks of practical work varies across *Länder*.

Prospective *teachers of vocational practice* pursue a continuing training programme, taking place at study or specialist seminars, at academies, or training institutes. Entry requirements for this training programme are an intermediate secondary school leaving certificate (or an equivalent lower-secondary educational qualification), a vocational qualification (usually at ISCED Level 6) and professional experience. Depending on the chosen subject and the *Land*, this vocational qualification can be a successfully completed Master craftsman or technician's examination. The programme has the following features:

- Depending on the federal state and combination of chosen subjects, the training may take from 18 months to four years to complete the full-time programme to become a qualified VET teacher of vocational practice. Approximately half of the programme duration is dedicated to theory, while the other half focuses on practical training (Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK), 1973^[20]; Hippach-Schneider et al., 2012^[14]; Huismann and Hippach-Schneider, 2021^[7]; Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2022^[11]). In some cases, prospective teachers of vocational practice are also required to pass the first state examination as the case for teachers of vocational theory.
- The training is followed by a one-year preparatory service, after which candidates have to pass a state examination.

The content of initial teacher education and training

Phase 1: Teacher training at university and other educational institutions

The first phase of the regular ITET programme for *teachers of vocational theory* focuses on essential professional and pedagogical knowledge in one of 16 occupational specialisations,¹¹ starting from a bachelor's programme. Within this specialisation, students choose a general and vocational subject that are related to their chosen occupational specialisation (physics and electrical engineering, for instance). In addition to studying these two subjects, they have courses in educational and social sciences. In their Master's programme, students are taught subject-specific didactics and educational theory elements applied to the VET system. During their 52 weeks of practical work training, they can put their recently acquired theoretical knowledge into practice in companies and schools while gaining initial work experience. Given that the *Länder* enjoy a relatively large degree of freedom in educational matters, the practical training is not uniformly organised and implemented across federal states (Hensen and Hippach-Schneider, 2016^[9]; Huismann and Hippach-Schneider, 2021^[7]).

For prospective *vocational practice teachers*, the continuing training programmes provide a theoretical training to acquire pedagogical knowledge, such as methodology and didactics of practical teaching, VET pedagogy, or content to teach to students with special education needs, in theoretical lessons (Huismann and Hippach-Schneider, 2021^[7]). The training focuses entirely on didactics and pedagogy, rather than on vocational or professional content, as the learners in these programmes already have a vocational qualification and work experience.

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) has set out the standard competences that prospective *teachers of vocational theory* and those of *vocational practice*¹² must gain during their training (KMK, 2004, 2019^[21]). Germany also has set standards of teacher training in terms of diversity and inclusion (KMK, 2015^[22]; KMK, 2020^[23]).¹³

Phase 2: Preparatory service

The second ITET phase prepares phase 1 graduates for their work as vocational school teachers. Building on their academic training, the prospective teachers complete their practical training at a VET school. During their preparatory service, they sit in on lessons, assist with teaching, and teach independently to some extent. Moreover, they receive further theoretical and practical training at state seminar institutes, where they also learn how to deal with various issues in the classroom, such as diversity and inclusion. Only if the candidates can demonstrate that they have acquired the professional competences required and that they can complete the professional tasks independently, they pass the second state examination

and receive their teaching credentials (Hensen and Hippach-Schneider, 2016^[9]; Huismann and Hippach-Schneider, 2021^[7]; OECD, 2021^[24]). The KMK adopted frameworks that design and define the preparatory services as well as the state examinations (see Box 4.3).¹⁴

As other prospective teachers, prospective *vocational practice teachers* gain practical experience during their preparatory service by observing in-class teaching and practicing supervised or independent teaching (Huismann and Hippach-Schneider, 2021^[7]).

Box 4.3. Common Requirements for the Design of the Preparatory Service and the Final State Examination

In 2012, the KMK defined common requirements for the design of the preparatory service and the final state examination for prospective teachers of vocational theory. These include:

- Objective and frame of reference: Based on the subject-specific, subject-didactic and educational competences acquired during the first phase of ITET, the preparatory service aims at further developing the competences defined in the teacher education standards that the KMK adopted in 2004 and lastly amended in 2019.
- Entry and admission requirements: To start the preparatory service, participants need to have passed the first state examination and hold a Master of Education (or equivalent).
- Structural requirements: Taking place in various training formats at study seminars, schools or comparable institutions, the preparatory service includes theoretical instruction, classroom practice, and theory-led reflection. The various training formats comprise introductory events, job shadowing, supervised teaching, independent teaching, and seminar-based training.
- Qualitative requirements for the content design: The training content should allow prospective teachers to develop the competences defined in KMK's teacher education standards in fields such as the profession and role of the teacher; didactics and methodology; learning, development, and socialisation; performance and learning motivation; differentiation, integration, and promotion; diagnostics, assessment, and counselling; communication; media education; school development; educational research. In order to ensure the quality of the preparatory service, external and internal evaluation measures have to be carried out. Moreover, staff responsible for teacher training should receive continuous training.
- Principles for the state examination: the preparatory service is concluded with a state examination, which grants access to a public office in accordance with the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*). The examination forms need to be suitable to assess the competences defined in KMK's teacher education standards. Assessments and/or examination results during the preparatory service as well as at least two practical teaching examinations are included in the state examination result. Further examination forms may be provided by the *Länder*.
- For teachers of vocational practice, the Framework Regulation for the Training and Examination of Teachers for Subject Practice in the Vocational School System ("*Rahmenordnung für die Ausbildung und Prüfung der Lehrer für Fachpraxis im beruflichen Schulwesen*"), which the KMK adopted in 1973, applies.

Source: Sekretariat der Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (2012^[25]), Ländergemeinsame Anforderungen für die Ausgestaltung des Vorbereitungsdienstes und die abschließende Staatsprüfung (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 06.12.2012), www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2012/2012_12_06-Vorbereitungsdienst.pdf.

Financing initial teacher education and training

Phase 1: University studies

Initial VET teacher training in Germany is financed by student tuition fees, which are largely covered by subsidies – parents with children below 25 years old who are still in education are eligible to receive child benefits that can contribute to covering higher education costs. In addition, students can apply for financial support schemes to cover their study costs (these apply to students in different types of programmes, not training for teachers only):

- Educational grant (also called BAföG): The Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz*, BAföG) aims at financially supporting students who otherwise would not be able to afford their initial higher education (i.e. regular teacher training). The student has to be younger than 30 when starting the initial higher education programme. This scheme provides a mix of a state subsidy and an interest-free loan, whose amount depends on the student’s financial and social situation. In 2020, 466 000 students received BAföG – a number that has been periodically decreasing for the past years (Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), 2021^[26]).
- Scholarships: There are multiple foundations that offer scholarships to students with different criteria.
- Student and tuition fee loans: Students may also conclude a loan agreement to finance their tuition fees or living costs during their studies. They receive monthly payments that, after completing their studies, they will have to pay back including interest.

As other students, it is common for students who follow VET teacher training to have a part-time job to finance their studies. However, given that the BAföG amount is contingent on the student’s yearly income, they are advised to limit their working hours to 20 hours per week (Fit4Ref, n.d.^[27]).

Phase 2: Preparatory service

As teacher trainees both of theory and practice are employed as “civil servants on probation” (*Beamte auf Widerruf*) during their preparatory service and continuing training programme (*berufliche Weiterbildung*) respectively, they receive corresponding standard salaries and allowances, which may vary across the *Länder* (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2022^[11]; Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft, 2022^[28]). As a response to teacher shortages in electrical engineering and metal technology, candidates of these fields may receive a higher salary during the preparatory service, depending on the federal state. For instance, in Baden-Württemberg, these candidates are paid 170% of the standard preparatory service salary (Lehrer Online in Baden-Württemberg, n.d.^[29]).

Moreover, any direct costs of the continuing training programme for prospective *vocational practice teachers*, such as examination fees, for instance, are borne by the further training authority (*Weiterbildungsbehörde*), a relevant authority for the respective continuing training programme (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2022^[11]). For side entrants, the cost of their continuing training programme is also covered by Lander as it is considered part of their preparatory service.

Quality assurance in initial teacher education and training

The Ministries of Education and Science of the *Länder* bear the responsibility for the regular initial teacher education and training (ITET) that is for teachers of vocational theory. The Ministries govern ITET through regulations, for example, on competencies to achieve through the ITET programmes, the content of the programmes, and examinations or corresponding legal requirements. Higher education institutions formulate the study and examination regulations based on state requirements. However, as it is the responsibility of the state to ensure content quality in higher education -including ITET-, the Ministries need

to approve the respective programme's accreditation. For the case of vocational practice teachers, only the federal states of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Saxony regulate the continuing training programme by their *Land law*.¹⁵

KMK is the main actor in the coordination and development process of education, including ITET. The KMK defines the principles, structure, and duration of the ITET to become a VET teacher.¹⁶ Amongst its principal tasks is the maintenance of quality standards in schools, vocational training and higher education, including ITET. It also defines the general competences and the teacher mission statement for educating, teaching, assessing, and innovating (KMK, 2004, 2019_[21]) as well as common content requirements for subject-related profiles (Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK), 2008, 2019_[30]). Moreover, in 2013, the KMK formulated recommendations on how to assess students' aptitude to complete the first phase of teacher training, as some applicants might not fully grasp the challenges the teaching profession entails (Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK), n.d._[31]; Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK), 2013_[32]).

The KMK has adopted a number of resolutions for the states to ensure the quality of ITET. More recently, the states have put efforts to smoothen the transition from one training phase to another, increase the practical orientation of ITET, provide more support in their early years in the teaching profession, and improve teachers' diagnostic and methodological skills. In addition, given the digital transformation, the increasing shortage of VET teachers, and the need to foster diversity, the KMK plans on further reforming ITET of VET teachers as well as their opportunities for continuous professional development (Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK), n.d._[33]; Huismann and Hippach-Schneider, 2021_[7]).

4.3.2. Preparation for in-company trainers

As mentioned above, while passing the AEVO examination is general required for qualified in-company trainers, the training courses to prepare for the examination are optional. These are called *Ausbildung der Ausbilder* (AdA), training courses for trainers, which aim to prepare candidates for the AEVO examination.

Training providers

Training courses for trainers (AdA) prepare the candidates for the AEVO examination. Mostly, the Chambers of Industry and Commerce (*Industrie- und Handelskammer*, IHK) and Crafts (*Handwerkskammer*, HWK) offer these courses, but private training providers also do so. Moreover, universities of applied sciences offer the training courses for trainers (AdA) and the AEVO examination as an optional module to their students. Candidates may choose between short and intensive full-time courses or longer part-time courses (typically lasting three months). Depending on the provider and whether self-learning phases are in place, the course duration is between 90 and 115 hours that have to be attended. While it is necessary to have the proven, required professional skills, knowledge, and abilities stipulated in the BBiG to become a qualified in-company trainer, one can still enrol in these training courses and pass the trainer aptitude examination without proof of such competencies (Hauptausschuss des Bundesinstituts für Berufsbildung, 2009_[34]; Link, 2020_[35]).

The content of training for in-company trainers

The Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude (AEVO) describes the competences that prospective in-company trainers should acquire to successfully complete the AEVO examination. The competences focus on four fields of action: checking training requirements and planning training (20%), preparing training and assisting in the recruitment of trainees (20%), and conducting (45%) and completing training (15%).¹⁷

The delivery of training for in-company trainers

Providers are flexible in how they conduct their courses, which allows them to offer different learning formats, such as in-person, online or hybrid training. Moreover, they may offer part of the course as self-

learning phases, which allows for a reduction in the hours participants need to attend. However, it remains the provider's responsibility to monitor the students' learning progress when self-learning phases are in place. Regardless of the course format, all qualification contents as described in the 'AEVO framework plan for acquiring the trainer qualification' are relevant for the examination (Hauptausschuss des Bundesinstituts für Berufsbildung, 2009^[34]; Huismann and Hippach-Schneider, 2021^[7]).

Financing training for in-company trainers

The costs for prospective in-company trainers comprise fees for the trainer training courses (AdA) as well as for the written and oral or practical AEVO examinations. As each provider sets its own price for the courses, tuition fees vary greatly. While it is in principle up to the examinees to finance their training, companies often pay the course and examination costs as part of financial support for their employees' professional development. Moreover, there are several federal funding programmes in place, which prospective in-company trainers and employers may apply for, as part of the support for professional development (Institut für Berufliche Bildung (IBB), 2022^[36]). For example (applying broadly to adult learning programmes):

- The Qualifications Opportunities Act (*Qualifizierungschancengesetz*) aims at financially supporting employees pursuing an upskilling or reskilling programme and employers. Contingent on the company size, the state covers 15–100% of the training costs (100% if the employee is older or with a disability) and 25–75% of the wage costs during the training. The latter allows the employee to complete the training full-time while still receiving full pay, thus financially relieving the employer.
- The education premium (*Bildungsprämie*) supports people with a low income for whose current or future occupation the completion of a further education programme is relevant. The federal government subsidises up to 50% of the costs but maximum EUR 500.
- Education vouchers (*Bildungsgutschein*) issued by the Federal Employment Agency or the Job Centre cover the full costs for certified upskilling or reskilling programmes. They are mainly directed at people who are either looking for a job, at risk of unemployment, or need to acquire further vocational qualifications to keep their job.
- The Upgrading Training Assistance Act (*Aufstiegs-BaföG*) is aimed at professionals who would like to upgrade their vocational qualifications in the non-academic sector. The financial support is composed of a grant and a loan and financed by the federal government and the *Länder*.
- Moreover, many *Länder* have their own support schemes in place to help finance upskilling or reskilling. More information can be found in the funding database of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action.

Prospective in-company trainers may also receive funding for their training from local authorities, the Federal Employment Agency, enterprises, and private individuals, which all play a key role in funding opportunities for up-skilling and reskilling.

Quality assurance of training for in-company trainers

Providers of continuing training programmes, which include AdA courses, can implement different quality assurance concepts. For instance, they may receive a certification confirming their procedure of ensuring the programme quality is according to international standards (e.g., DIN ISO 9000ff, DIN ISO 29990 a quality management system standard for providers of education and training services.).¹⁸ Moreover, specific models to enhance the learner-oriented quality development in continuing education (*Lernerorientierte Qualitätsentwicklung in der Weiterbildung*) have been developed. In addition, providers can become members of associations from which they can receive quality seals if they comply with defined standards. Quality awards, such as the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award or the European Quality Award, are further ways to prove the programme's quality standards (BIBB, 2018^[37]).

In general, the AEVO examination itself ensures that the trainers have the right skills and knowledge. The competent bodies, in most cases the chambers, have to ensure the in-company trainers' personal and professional suitability. In addition to monitoring trainer regulations, they advise companies to make sure that the quality of in-company training is maintained or even improved. They are responsible for the AEVO examination including implementation, testing and monitoring. They also adopt examination regulations and set up regional boards (which represent employer and employee organisations and teachers) to carry out the examination.

Germany suspended the requirement of passing the trainer aptitude examination (AEVO) from 2003 to 2009 in an effort to remove bureaucratic hurdles and to facilitate the provision of apprenticeships. However, although the numbers of apprenticeship places and companies offering VET grew, the increase turned out to be smaller than expected. Meanwhile, the reported quality of the apprenticeship training decreased (see Box 4.4) (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB), 2008^[38]; Ulmer, 2019^[39]). As the suspension of the AEVO examination requirement proved that the examination did not constitute an obstacle to offering in-company training and that it was necessary to ensure the quality of apprenticeship training, an amended Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude came into force in 2009 – re-introducing the examination requirement.

Moreover, in order to ensure that quality standards of training for trainers are uniform across the federal states and that prospective trainers are better prepared for their future duties, an advisory committee under the direction of the BIBB created a modernised framework plan in 2009 (Hauptausschuss des Bundesinstituts für Berufsbildung, 2009^[34]; Hensen and Hippach-Schneider, 2016^[9]). In 2020/21, a BIBB study examined the need to adjust the AEVO and the framework plan to current challenges, such as digitalisation or sustainability. It concluded that, due to its relatively open-ended formulations, the AEVO itself does not require an update, yet it should be complemented by general further training and refresher courses. Moreover, the study recommends that the framework plan should be adapted and its content concretised by the end of 2022 to better reflect the current challenges, and that examination methods and practice should be further developed (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB), 2021^[40]).

Box 4.4. The Effects of the Temporary Suspension of the Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude (AEVO)

The BIBB conducted a study on the effects of the temporary suspension of the AEVO, carrying out two surveys in 2007 – one with enterprises and the other with the Chambers. The study assessed enterprises' awareness of the AEVO suspension, its quantitative and qualitative effects, and outlooks.

Awareness of AEVO and its suspension

70% of enterprises in the survey indicated their awareness of the fact that qualification requirements to become an in-company trainer were regulated by law. The level of awareness increased with the size of the company: 15% of firms with less than 10 employees knew of AEVO, compared to 68% of firms with more than 250 employees. Moreover, there was a difference amongst sectors, from the agricultural and home economics sector where 6% of firms were aware of AEVO, the liberal professions (7%), and the crafts and skilled trades (13%), to the services sector (28%) and the industry sector (35%). Only 20% of enterprises knew of the temporary AEVO suspension. Among them, around three-quarters indicated that this change did not have any consequences for them as they already provided vocational training for several years and upheld the qualification requirements stipulated in the AEVO.

Quantitative effects

According to the study, the number of companies for which the AEVO suspension facilitated the process of starting the provision of vocational training or allowed them to provide more training lies between 7 000 and 10 000 companies per year. Among the companies that started providing vocational training after the AEVO suspension were mostly enterprises with less than 10 employees (67%) and enterprises with 10 to 19 employees (28%). Service providers (38%) and commercial enterprises (28%) seemed to

benefit most from the AEVO suspension. The number of additional training places linked to the AEVO suspension probably lies between 10 000 and 25 000 per year. The companies providing more training places were mainly enterprises with 10 to 19 employees (53%) and enterprises with less than 10 employees (32%). It should be noted that the AEVO suspension is only one amongst several other, mainly economic and strategic, reasons why employers decided to provide more training.

Qualitative effects

The rate of training contract cancellation between the training years 2003/04 and 2006/07 for companies that had in-company trainers whose qualifications were in line with the requirements stipulated in the AEVO was 13% compared to 21% for companies that did not have this type of in-company trainers. Firms that only started providing vocational training after 2003 and did not have qualified trainers had a training contract cancellation rate of 29%.

80% of the interviewed Chamber representatives (training advisors) indicated that companies that did not have qualified trainers were more likely to need the Chambers' advisory services. Moreover, when asked about companies with trainers who did not possess the qualifications stipulated in the AEVO, 30% noticed qualitative differences, 32% considered the training quality lower, 37% indicated that there were more conflicts between training personnel and apprentices, 28% said that there were more arbitration cases, 28% stated that more apprentices dropped out, and 16% said that the examination results were lower. Generally, the Chambers of Skilled Crafts were more critical than the Chambers of Industry and Commerce.

It should be noted that these differences result from more than just the presence of qualified in-company trainers. Many companies that only recently started providing vocational training – even those that have qualified in-company trainers – encounter difficulties at the start that need time to be overcome.

Outlook

59% of the company respondents indicated that it is necessary to ensure minimum qualifications of training personnel by law to prove their vocational training skills and knowledge (for instance, by passing an examination). 58% stated that this would contribute to upholding training quality, whereas 44% said that this could serve as a reference for the required trainer training. 43% indicated that it could provide guidelines for the training content, and 44% said that it would ensure that sufficiently qualified trainers could provide training on a longer-term basis.

However, 53% were worried that minimum qualifications would lead to increased costs that many companies would not be able to afford. Moreover, 44% considered it a bureaucratic hurdle, and 39% thought that government regulation of trainer training was unnecessary. 29% indicated the excessive amount of time that one would need to invest to acquire these qualifications as another disadvantage.

More than half of the participating companies considered the following out of 18 proposed skills essential for in-company trainers to acquire: gearing training to the company's work and business processes (75%), collaboration with part-time vocational schools (70%), motivation to pursue lifelong learning (69%), linking initial and continuing vocational training (67%), selecting suitable training place applicants (67%), conflict resolution (64%), training already formally trained skilled personnel (63%), and quality development/management in in-company vocational training (58%).

77% of the Chamber representatives (training advisors) stated that the AEVO should be re-introduced. 65% said that they favoured a revision of the AEVO. Only 3% expressed an interest in abolishing it.

Source: Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB) (2008^[38]), More training companies - More training places - Less quality? The suspension of the Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude (AEVO) and its effects, <https://www.bibb.de/en/14047.php>; Ulmer (2019^[39]), Die Novellierung der Ausbilder-Eignungsverordnung AEVO von 2009: Ein Paradigma für Qualitätsentwicklung in der beruflichen Bildung?, <https://www.bibb.de/dienst/veroeffentlichungen/de/publication/show/9933>

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Notes

¹ These dual programmes are provided by universities, dual universities, universities of applied sciences, and universities of cooperative education.

² The 130 skilled crafts are divided into trades requiring authorisation, on the one hand, and trades not requiring authorisation, on the other hand. For the former, a Meister is required to start a business.

³ Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, North-Rhine Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Saxony.

⁴ e.g. *Fachlehrer, technische Lehrkraft*.

⁵ These committees, made up of employer and union representatives, create and develop training professions and content.

⁶ The website of the German education server (*deutscher Bildungsserver*) provides an overview of the Länder-specific regulations for side-entrants.

⁷ ‘Personally unsuitable candidates’ refer to individuals who have breached the Act severely or multiple times and people who are not allowed to hire children and young people in accordance with the Act on the Protection of Young People at Work (*Gesetz zum Schutze der arbeitenden Jugend*, JArbSchG).

⁸ According to the BBiG § 30: The required professional skills, knowledge and abilities are possessed by those who: 1) have passed the final examination in a subject area corresponding to the training occupation; 2) have passed a recognised examination at a training centre or before an examination authority or a final examination at a state or state-recognised school in a subject area corresponding to the training occupation; 3) have passed a final examination at a German higher education institution in a subject area corresponding to the training occupation; or 4) have obtained an educational qualification abroad in a subject area corresponding to the training occupation, the equivalence of which has been established in accordance with the Vocational Qualifications Assessment Act (*Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz*) or other legal regulations and have been practically active in their occupation for an appropriate period of time.

⁹ In Germany, “*berufliche Weiterbildung*” is a broad term that refers to any continuing training, further education or professional development, including the one for prospective vocational practice teachers. It also refers to any upskilling or reskilling programme, including AdA.

¹⁰ State-recognised universities, higher education establishments equivalent to universities (e.g. *Pädagogische Hochschulen*), and universities of applied sciences.

¹¹ There are 16 broad occupational specialisations: business and administration, metal technology, electrical engineering, construction technology, wood engineering, textile technology and design, laboratory technology/process technology, media technology, colour technology and interior design and surface technology, health and body care, nutrition and home economics, agricultural economics, social pedagogy, nursing and care, vehicle technology, information technology. The federal states may allow additional occupational fields.

¹² The “Common Content Requirements for Subject-Related Sciences and Subject-Related Didactics in Teacher Education” (*Ländergemeinsame inhaltliche Anforderungen für die Fachwissenschaften und Fachdidaktiken in der Lehrerbildung*).

¹³ In 2015, the KMK, together with the German Rectors’ Conference, published joint recommendations on how to implement inclusive teaching in institutions for higher education. Following up on the adopted resolution called “Educating Teachers to Embrace Diversity” (*Lehrerbildung für eine Schule der Vielfalt*), an interim report on the joint declaration’s implementation was published in 2020.

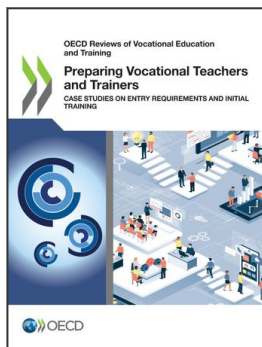
¹⁴ In 2012, the KMK adopted “Common Requirements for the Design of the Preparatory Service and the Final State Examination” (*Ländergemeinsame Anforderungen für die Ausgestaltung des Vorbereitungsdienstes und die abschließende Staatsprüfung*) for prospective teachers, which includes *teachers of vocational theory* (see Box 4.3). The Framework Regulation for the Training and Examination of Teachers for Subject Practice in the Vocational School System (*Rahmenordnung für die Ausbildung und Prüfung der Lehrer für Fachpraxis im beruflichen Schulwesen*), which the KMK adopted in 1973, defines the preparatory service for prospective *teachers of vocational practice*.

¹⁵ The Framework Regulation for the Training and Examination for vocational practice teachers that the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs adopted in 1973 serves as a guideline for providers of the continuing training programme.

¹⁶ In its Framework Agreement on the Training and Examination for a Teaching Profession of Secondary Level II (Vocational Subjects) or for Vocational Schools (Teaching Profession Type 5) (*Rahmenvereinbarung über die Ausbildung und Prüfung für ein Lehramt der Sekundarstufe II (berufliche Fächer) oder für die beruflichen Schulen (Lehramtstyp 5)*), which was adopted in 1995 and lastly amended in 2018.

¹⁷ Completing training include tasks that: 1) prepare trainees for the final or journeyman’s examination, taking into account the examination dates, and to lead the training to a successful conclusion; 2) ensure the registration of trainees for examinations with the competent body and to point out to the latter any special features relevant to the conduct of the examinations; 3) participate in the preparation of a written report based on performance appraisals; 4) inform and advise apprentices about in-company development paths and professional development opportunities (Hauptausschuss des Bundesinstituts für Berufsbildung, 2009^[34]).

¹⁸ In DIN (German Institute for Standardization) ISO 9000ff, quality-relevant minimum requirements for the processes, resources used and organisational structure of a company are defined, compliance with which an independent certification organisation is monitored.



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