

The background of the cover is a dark blue map of Europe with white outlines of countries. Two curved lines, one white and one yellow, sweep across the map from the top left towards the bottom right. The text "Spotlight on VET Germany" is centered in the lower half of the image in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font.

**Spotlight  
on VET  
Germany**

# Spotlight on VET Germany

## Basic principles

There is overall social consensus in Germany that all school-leavers should be offered vocational training.

- The basis is the dual vocational training system.
- The task is to provide all-round professional competences.
- The concept is based on cooperation between the State and industry.
- This involved acting within the framework of the Vocational Training Law.

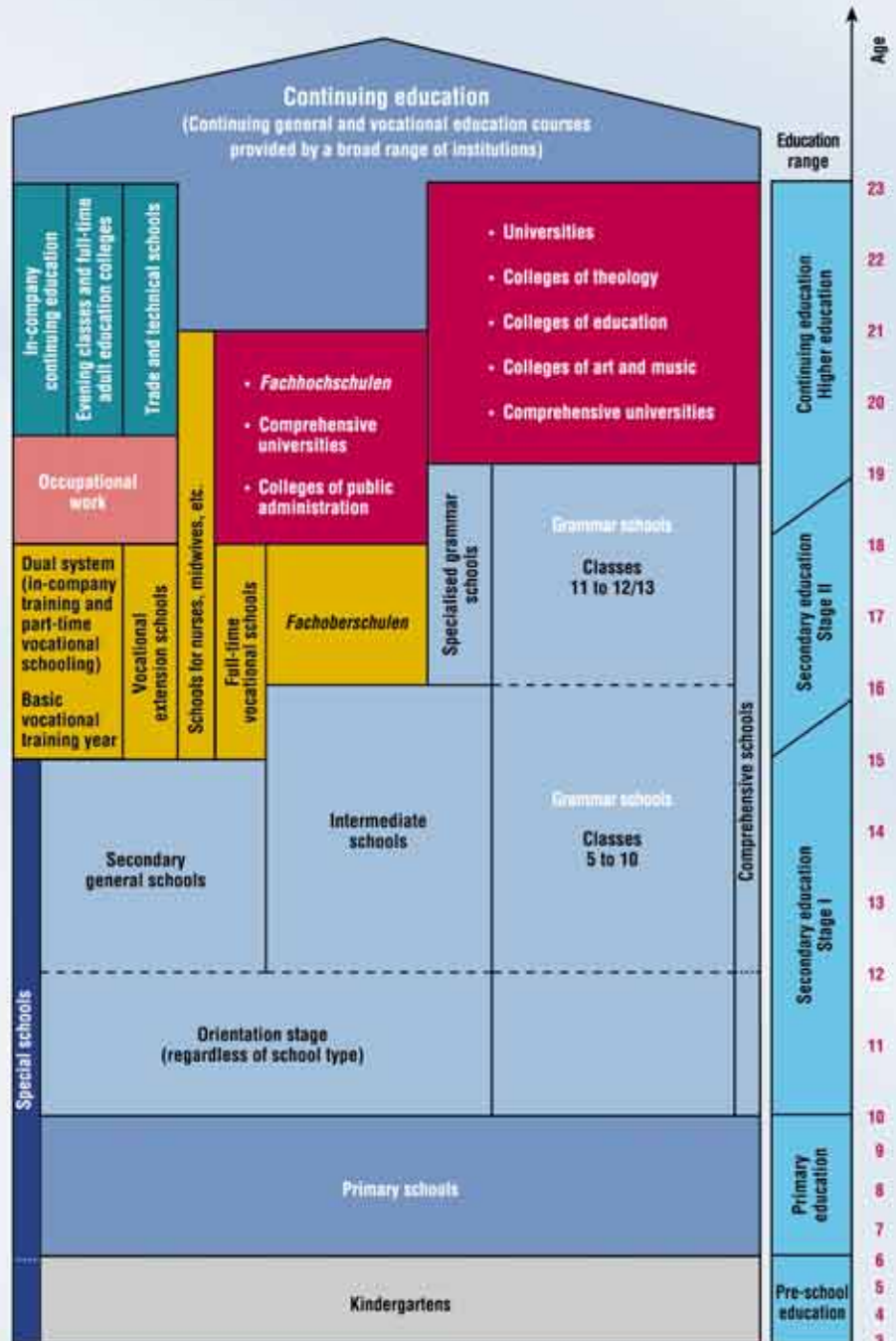
## Structure

Different paths lead to vocational qualifications.

- The **dual system** forms the core of vocational training (duration: usually 3 years). Every young person who has completed full-time compulsory education has access to dual vocational training. A characteristic of this training path, which some 53 % of young people of a cohort complete, is two places of learning: the company and the vocational training school. The dual system provides broad basic vocational training and competences for some 350 recognised occupations. Successful completion provides recognition for employment as a qualified skilled employee. The companies sign contracts with applicants under private law and train them in line with the binding provisions of the vocational training directives which guarantee a national standard. This is monitored by the competent bodies, for example, professional associations as autonomous administrative bodies in industry.
- **Full-time vocational schools in Secondary Education Stage II** differ in their emphasis:
  - the **full-time vocational schools** (*Berufsfachschulen*) have the highest number of students. These schools prepare young people for work or vocational training - usually within the dual system - in many occupational areas, e.g. commercial, tradesmen, care services, languages-related or artistic professions (duration: depending on the course of study 1-3 years). The usual entry requirement is successful completion of the secondary general school.
  - **Fachoberschulen** and **Berufsoberschulen** offer two-year training courses. Generally they build upon vocational training in the dual system and deepen occupational knowledge. They culminate in the certificate of entry to the *Fachhochschule*, which students who have completed vocational training can obtain after one year. With a second foreign language, students may also obtain the school-leaving certificate entitling them to entry to higher education.
  - **Vocational grammar schools/specialised grammar schools** (*berufliche Gymnasien/Fachgymnasien*) provide, in addition to general grammar school education, specialised knowledge in various areas such as economics, technology, nutrition, agriculture, information and communication technologies. They usually lead up to the university entrance examination. It is also possible to acquire an academic and a vocational qualification (educational path providing two qualifications) (duration: 3 to 4 years).
- The *Fachhochschulen* (4 years) and the training academies (3 years but only in some of the *Länder*), for example, offer a **blend of vocational and academic training paths**. With the accent on practically oriented training they prepare for occupational activities requiring the use of scientific knowledge and methods.
- The **vocational education courses** are playing an increasingly important role as part of lifelong learning in order to continually improve the occupational competencies of the individual. The State does not play a major role in regulating or organising this.

# Germany

## Education in Germany: basic structure



Source: BMBF, 2004.

- Diagrammatic representation of the typical structure of the education system in the Federal Republic of Germany. In individual Länder there are variations from the above pattern.
- The age given for attendance at the various educational institutions refers to the earliest possible typical entry.

## Characteristics

- Training directives guarantee a uniform **national standard**. At the same time it affords companies flexibility to agree on a company training plan with the trainees. In the latter the content and timetable may deviate from that set out by the training directive where the specificities of companies so require but the provision of all training content is guaranteed.
- In particular, small and medium-sized companies are not often in a position to provide all learning content. This is catered for by various forms of **training alliances**.
- To help young people disadvantaged on the labour market to cross the first threshold from school and vocational training, there are a number of instruments for **transition management**. For example, in company induction training (*Einstiegsqualifizierung Jugendlicher*, EQJ; duration 6 to 12 months) on the basis of qualification components young people are prepared for dual system vocational training. As these courses reflect the training content in vocational training, the preparatory period also counts towards the overall period of training.
- **Further vocational training**, e.g. to become a **master craftsman**, gives the right to independently exercise a trade, to hire and train apprentices and to study in the *Fachhochschule*; it also facilitates acquisition of qualifications for middle management in companies.

The quality and transparency of further training courses are increasing constantly through using independent tests. The **goods testing foundation (STIFTUNG WARENTEST)** from mid-2002 until the end of 2007 will carry out 20 tests annually looking at the offer of continuing vocational training.

## Challenges

Demographic change, globalisation and European trends require a new strategy to strengthen vocational training. The pillars of the German strategy are:

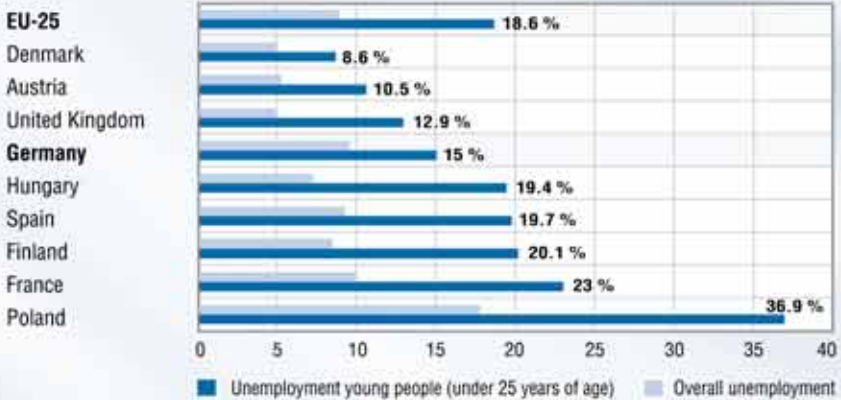
- Increasing the attractiveness of vocational training by increasing permeability and interlinking with other areas of education, e.g. universities;
- Developing a training culture in innovative growth areas such as optical technologies, bio- and nanotechnologies and micro-system technologies;
- Increasing training opportunities through initiatives to improve regional training structures and to increase the participation of migrant companies in training;
- Improving transition management through further development of measures promoting the disadvantaged and creating instruments for qualifying young adults without a school or training qualification;
- Opening up Europe by using the Europass instruments, supporting the development of a European Qualifications Framework and by means of pilot projects relating to a European credit transfer system in vocational training.

With decreasing employment opportunities in recent years there has been a decrease in the training offer of companies. The aim of the programme started by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) at the beginning of 2006, **JOBSTARTER - training for the future**, is to enhance regional training structures and thus increase the number of training places offered by companies ([www.jobstarter.de](http://www.jobstarter.de)).

## Education in figures

The comparative low rate of youth unemployment in Germany can be attributed primarily to the high quality of initial vocational training.

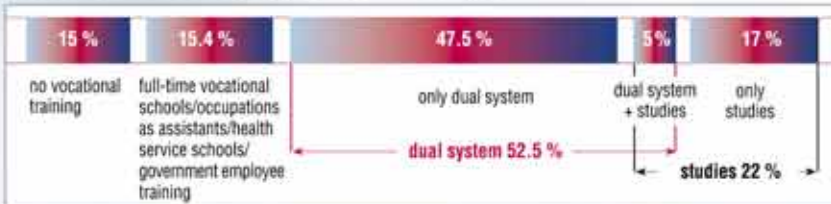
### Youth unemployment in the EU, 2005



Source: Eurostat, EU Labour Force Survey, Eurostat database, 2006.

The following tables demonstrate the key importance of dual training in Germany in international comparison. Some 53 % of the youth cohort in 2004 completed dual system vocational training courses.

### Structure of a cohort by type of qualification, 2004



Source: BIBB, 2006.

### Population aged 25 to 64 years by highest educational achievement in Germany and selected EU countries, 2006, 2nd quarter (%)

Country	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
EU-25	30	46	23
Czech Republic	10	77	13
Austria	20	63	18
<b>Germany</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>24</b>
Denmark	18	47	35
Finland	21	45	35
United Kingdom	27	42	30
France	33	41	25
Italy	49	38	13
Portugal	72	14	13

ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education

ISCED 0-2: pre-school education, primary education, first stage of secondary education

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The countries are listed in order of the proportions of ISCED level 3-4 qualifications.

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## Spotlight on VET Germany

### Further information

- Hippach-Schneider, U.; Krause, M.; Woll C. *Vocational education and training in Germany – Short description*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007. (Cedefop Panorama, 138). Available from Internet [cited 30.1.2007]: [www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information\\_resources/Bookshop/](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/)
- Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung: *Berufsbildungsbericht 2006*. Bonn, Berlin: BMBF, 2006. Available from Internet [cited 30.1.2007]: [www.bmbf.de/pub/bbb\\_2006.pdf](http://www.bmbf.de/pub/bbb_2006.pdf)
- *Berufsbildungsgesetz* (BBiG) of 23 March 2005 (BGBl. I p. 931), as most recently amended by Article 232 of the Order of 31 October 2006 (BGBl. I p. 2407). Available from Internet [cited 30.1.2007]: [www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bbig\\_2005/BJNR093110005.html](http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bbig_2005/BJNR093110005.html)

<a href="http://www.bmbf.de">www.bmbf.de</a>	Federal Ministry of Education and Research
<a href="http://www.bmas.bund.de">www.bmas.bund.de</a>	Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
<a href="http://www.bmwi.bund.de">www.bmwi.bund.de</a>	Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology
<a href="http://www.bmi.bund.de">www.bmi.bund.de</a>	Federal Ministry of the Interior
<a href="http://www.bibb.de">www.bibb.de</a>	Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB)
<a href="http://www.na-bibb.de">www.na-bibb.de</a>	National Agency 'Education for Europe' at BIBB
<a href="http://www.bibb.de/de/26171.htm">www.bibb.de/de/26171.htm</a>	Search for information on professions
<a href="http://www.kmk.org">www.kmk.org</a>	Conference of Ministers for Education and Culture
<a href="http://www.arbeitsagentur.de">www.arbeitsagentur.de</a>	German Federal Employment Agency
<a href="http://www.dihk.de">www.dihk.de</a>	The Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce
<a href="http://www.agbfn.de">www.agbfn.de</a>	The Vocational Education and Training Research Network
<a href="http://www.inwent.org/index.de.shtml">www.inwent.org/index.de.shtml</a>	InWEnt - Capacity Building International
<a href="http://www.daad.de">www.daad.de</a>	The German Academic Exchange Service
<a href="http://www.iwkoeln.de">www.iwkoeln.de</a>	Institute for the German Economy
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<a href="http://www.die-bonn.de">www.die-bonn.de</a>	The German Institute for Adult Education
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<a href="http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/">www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/</a>	Detailed information on European vocational training systems

*We wish to thank Ute Hippach-Schneider (BIBB) for her valuable contribution.*

*This brochure focuses on some of the main aspects of vocational education and training in Germany and does not claim to be exhaustive.*

Project coordinator: *Sylvie Bousquet*



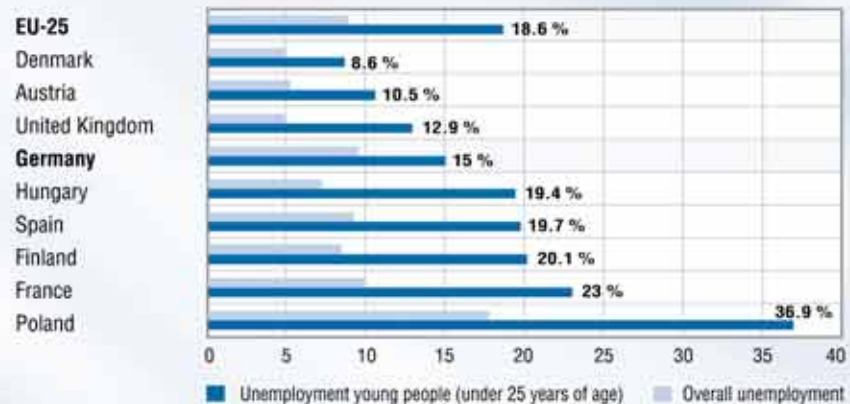
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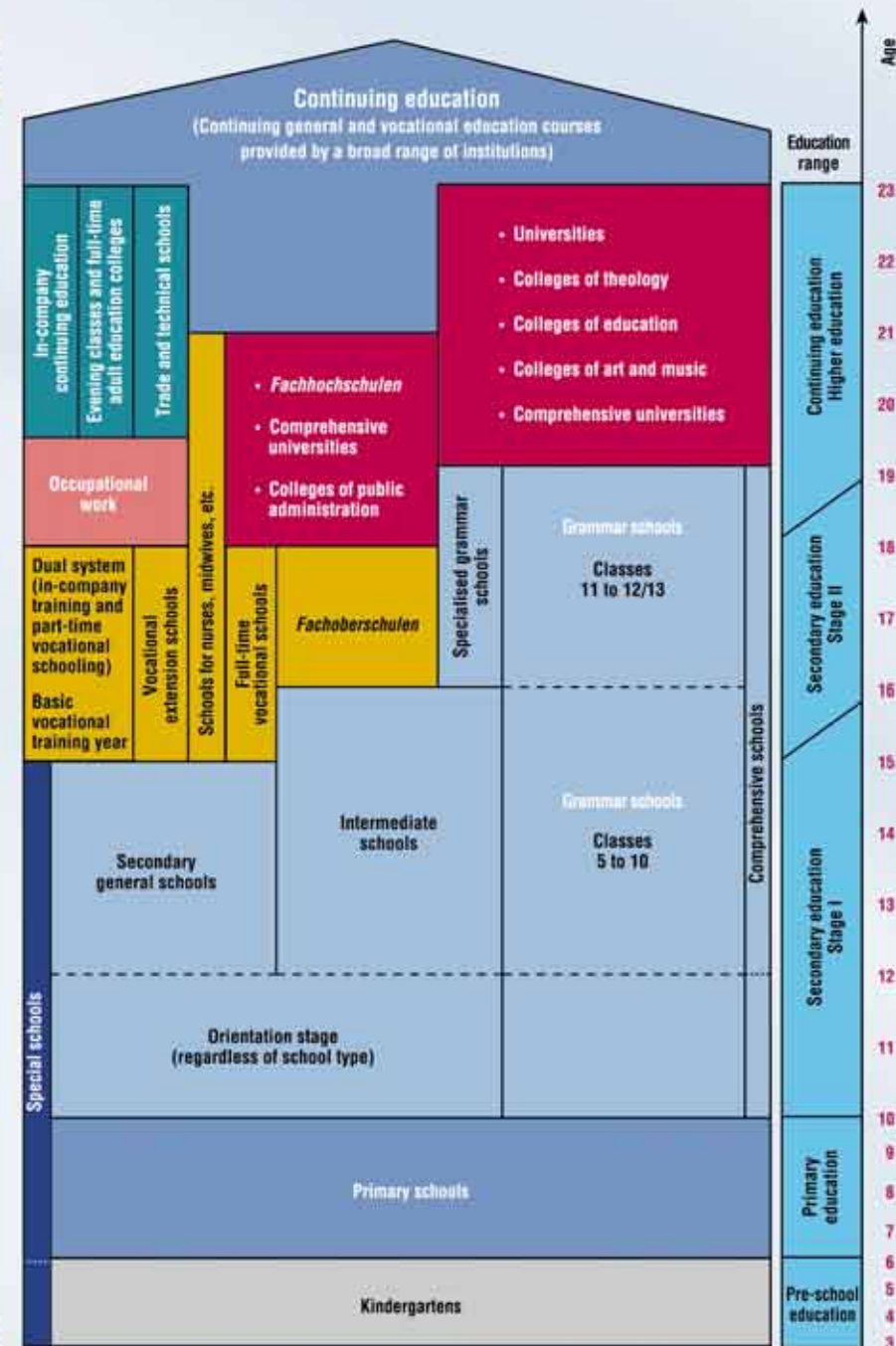
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## Challenges

- Demographic change, globalisation and European trends require a new strategy to strengthen vocational training. The pillars of the German strategy are:
- Increasing the attractiveness of vocational training by increasing permeability and interlinking with other areas of education, e.g. universities;
  - Developing a training culture in innovative growth areas such as optical technologies, bio- and nanotechnologies and micro-system technologies;
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