

Austria

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

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Title: Austria: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2006

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Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Austria. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2006.

Later editions can be viewed from August 2007 onwards at:

http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

Geographic term:

Austria



01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Under the Federal Constitution of 1920, Austria is a parliamentary democratic republic. It comprises the nine provinces of *Burgenland*, *Carinthia (Kärnten)*, *Lower Austria (Niederösterreich)*, *Salzburg*, *Styria (Steiermark)*, *Tyrol (Tirol)*, *Upper Austria (Oberösterreich)*, *Vienna (Wien)* and *Vorarlberg*. Vienna is also the federal capital (See here for attachment [Figure 1](#)).

The head of state is the President of the Republic who is directly elected for a six-year term. S/he appoints the Federal Chancellor who is head of the Federal Government. The Austrian Parliament has two chambers – the National Council (*Nationalrat*) and the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*). The 183 members of the National Council are directly elected by the people every four years. The Federal Council represents the interests of the federal provinces. Its 64 members are delegated by the provincial parliaments (*Landtage*).

Austria is characterised by a strongly federalist structure. Legislative and executive responsibilities are divided between the national and provincial levels. The same applies to responsibilities for vocational education and training (VET). (cf. 0301).

A special role is played by the cooperative partnership between representatives of employers and employees (the ‘social partners’) and government representatives in almost every area of economic and social policy (cf. 0303).

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Austria covers an area of 83 858 km² and had a population of 8 032 926 at the time of the 2001 census. The population has grown steadily over the last 20 years (cf. Tab.1) and is expected to grow further (cf. Tab. 2). While birth rates have been declining since the mid-1970s, opening the borders to Eastern Europe in 1989 has led to higher immigration rates.

YEAR	ANNUAL TOTAL AVERAGE	RELATIVE CHANGE (IN %)
1985	7 564 984	
1995	7 948 278	+ 5.1
2000	8 011 566	+ 0.8
2005	8 225 609	+ 2,7

Source: Statistics Austria, 2006

As in most other EU member states, the age pyramid shows a demographic imbalance towards older citizens. According to population projections (cf. Tab. 2), the percentage of inhabitants over 60 years of age is expected to increase steadily from 22.1% in 2005 to 29.5% in 2025. At the same time, the share of people up to 24 years of age will decrease by almost five percentage points.

Table 2: Population projection, 2005, 2015 and 2025			
	POPULATION PROJECTION (IN %)		
AGE GROUP	2005	2015	2025
0 – 24 years	28.1	25.6	23.6
25 – 59 years	49.7	49.8	46.9
60+	22.1	24.6	29.5
Sum total (in 1,000)	8 226	8 537	8 751

Source: Statistics Austria, 2006

The number of people with obligatory schooling only has dropped significantly within the last ten years (cf. Tab. 3). At the same time the share of graduates from secondary and tertiary education institutions has risen from 9.8% to 15.8% or, respectively, from 5.2% to 7.5%.

Table 3: Resident population by highest level of education attained, 1991, 2001 and 2003			
RESIDENT POPULATION BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED	1991	2001	2003
RESIDENT POPULATION (15+), IN 1,000	6 439.0	6 788.1	6 784.2
of whom, in %			
OBLIGATORY SCHOOLING	41.5	32.0	30.3
APPRENTICESHIP	32.1	35.2	35.8
VET SCHOOL	11.4	10.4	10.6
VET COLLEGE AND GE SCHOOL (SENIOR CYCLE)	9.8	15.4	15.8
HIGHER EDUCATION	5.2	7.0	7.5

Source: Statistics Austria, 2005

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

The Austrian economy is a small, open economy which has developed in a similar way to other EU countries since the late 1990s, including the structural move towards the tertiary sector in recent decades. This is reflected in both the distribution of GDP and in the distribution by economic sector of the total number of persons in gainful employment (cf. Tab. 1).

Table 1: Percentage of GDP and of the total number of persons in gainful employment for each sector of the economy, 2000 and 2004				
	2000		2004	
Economic sector	% of GDP	% of persons in gainful employment	% of GDP	% of persons in gainful employment
Primary sector	2.1	5.8	1.9	5.1
Secondary sector	31.1	30.6	31.1	28.1
Tertiary sector	66.8	63.6	67.1	66.7

Sources: Statistics Austria, Federal Economic Chamber, 2005 and own calculations

The Austrian economy is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises, which account for almost half of all employees (cf. Tab. 2).

Table 2: Workplaces and employees, 2004				
SIZE CATEGORY (NO. OF EMPLOYEES)	ENTERPRISES (ABSOLUTE)	ENTERPRISES (IN %)	EMPLOYERS (ABSOLUTE)	EMPLOYEES
Micro enterprises (1 – 9)	280 873	90.3	348 088	16.4
Small enterprises (10 – 49)	24 516	7.9	482 748	22.8
Medium-sized ent.(50 – 249)	4 623	1.5	267 282	22.0
Large enterprises (250+)	969	0.3	823 006	38.8
Total	310 981	100.0	2 121 124	100.0

Note: The number of all employees (including non-member enterprises of the Economic Chamber) amounted to 3 199 012, according to Statistics Austria, in 2004.

Source: Federal Economic Chamber, 2005

The structure of the employment rate has changed considerably since the 1970s. A falling employment rate among men contrasts with a rising percentage of women in employment. In 2005, the overall employment rate was above the European average (cf. Tab. 3).

Table 3: Employment rates in Austria, EU-15 and EU-25 with breakdown by sex, 2005 (in %)			
	AUSTRIA	EU-15	EU-25
Female	62.0	57.4	56.3
Male	75.4	72.9	71.3
Total	68.6	65.1	63.8

Source: Eurostat (retrieved on 6.7.2006)

Compared with other countries, Austria's unemployment problems appear to be fairly low, especially if the high percentage of seasonal unemployment is taken into account. In 2005, the unemployment rate was approximately 5.2%, which was considerably below the European average (cf. Tab. 4). From an Austrian point of view, however, the increase in structural unemployment causes concern.

Youth unemployment has likewise risen over the past few years. Thanks to the wide diversity of VET options for those who have completed their compulsory schooling, it is still relatively low (cf. Tab. 4). This means that Austria ranks fourth behind the Netherlands, Denmark and Ireland among the EU Member States with the lowest rates of youth unemployment.

Table 4: Unemployment and youth unemployment rates in Austria, EU-15 and EU-25, 2005 (in %)			
	TOTAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE		
	Austria	EU-15	EU-25
FEMALE	5.5	8.9	9.8
MALE	4.9	7.0	7.9
TOTAL	5.2	7.9	8.7
	YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE		
	Austria	EU-15	EU-25
FEMALE	9.9	17.1	18.9
MALE	10.7	16.4	18.2
TOTAL	10.3	16.7	18.5

Source: Eurostat (retrieved on 6.7.2006)

The public expenditures on education and training amounted to 12 432.1 million euro in 2003 (cf. Tab. 5). This corresponded to 5.5% of the GDP.

Table 5: Public expenditures on education and training in million Euro and in % of GDP, 1995, 2000 and 2003						
YEAR	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6	PUBLIC EXPENDITURES ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING	GDP	IN % OF GDP
1995	5 574.3	2 371.7	2 423.8	10 605.8>	175 526	6.0
2000	6 339.1	2 731.7	2 669.1	11 911.3	210 392	5.7
2003	6 500.0	3 008.1	2 924.0	12 432.1	226 968	5.5

Note: 236.0 million Euro could not be allocated in 1995, 171.4 million Euro in 2000.

Source: Statistics Austria (www.statistik.at)

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

The percentage of the working-age population having successfully completed upper stage of secondary education (ISCED 3-4) is very high in Austria (cf. Tab. 1). The reason for this lies in the structure of the education system with its numerous options for VET. This can take the form of full-time VET in schools and colleges or an apprenticeship. In addition, many courses in the senior classes of secondary school impart skills that are learned in other countries in further or higher education, such as training in general nursing leading to qualification as a registered general nurse.

Table 1: Population ages 25 – 64 by highest level of education attained, 2004						
	PRE-PRIMARY, PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION (ISCED 97, LEVEL 0-2)		UPPER SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY NON-TERTIARY ED. (ISCED 97, LEVEL 3-4)		TERTIARY EDUCATION (ISCED 97, LEVEL 5-6)	
	Total (1 000)	%	Total (1 000)	%	Total (1 000)	%
CZECH R.	632	11	4 513	77	737	13
SLOVAKIA	370	13	2 177	74	383	13
POLAND	3 227	16	13 742	68	3 265	16
AUSTRIA	885	20	2 830	63	813	18
LATVIA	194	16	772	63	264	21
LITHUANIA	238	13	1 085	61	471	26
SLOVENIA	225	20	681	61	218	19
HUNGARY	1 338	24	3 255	59	937	17
ESTONIA	78	11	408	58	221	31
LUXEMBOURG	56	22	137	55	57	23
NORWAY	301	12	1 345	55	809	33
SWEDEN	812	17	2 580	54	1 342	28
UK	4 585	15	16 508	53	8 789	28
DENMARK	512	17	1 467	50	975	33
FINLAND	620	22	1 240	44	979	34
FRANCE	10 590	34	12 765	41	7 529	24
GREECE	2 388	41	2 285	39	1 209	21
ICELAND	45	31	56	38	43	29
ITALY	16 161	50	12 345	38	3 876	12

CYPRUS	129	33	144	37	117	30
BELGIUM	1 974	35	1 894	34	1 695	30
IRELAND	774	36	731	34	590	28
SPAIN	13 064	54	4 664	19	6406	27
MALTA	159	75	27	13	25	12
PORTUGAL	4 298	74	744	13	742	13
EU-25	:		:		:	
GERMANY	:		:		:	
NETHERLANDS	:		:		:	

Notes: 2004 = 4th quarter; (:) = not available

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey; NewCronos, release date 29/06/2005

The share of early school leavers has decreased within the last few years. While in 2000 10.2% of the population aged 18 to 24 had attained lower secondary education only, this figure dropped to 9.2% in 2004 (cf. Tab. 2).

Table 2: Percentage of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training					
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
LUXEMBURG	16.8	18.1	17.0	17.0	:
SLOVENIA	:	7.5	4.8	4.3	4.2
CZECH R.	:	:	5.5	6.0	6.1
SLOVAKIA	:	:	5.6	4.9	7.1
DENMARK	11.6	8.8	8.4	10.0	8.1
NORWAY	13.3	9.2	14.0	6.6	4.5

AUSTRIA	10.2	10.2	9.5	9.2	9.2
POLAND	:	7.9	7.6	6.3	5.7
GERMANY	14.9	12.5	12.6	12.8	12.1
LITHUANIA	16.7	13.7	14.3	11.8	9.5
SWEDEN	7.7	10.5	10.4	9.0	8.6
FINLAND	8.9	10.3	9.9	8.3	8.7
FRANCE	13.3	13.5	13.4	13.7	14.2
HUNGARY	13.8	12.9	12.2	11.8	12.6
NETHERLANDS	15.5	15.3	15.0	14.5	14.5
ESTONIA	14.2	14.1	12.6	11.8	13.7
BELGIUM	12.5	13.6	12.4	12.8	11.9
LATVIA	:	:	19.5	18.1	15.6
IRELAND	:	:	14.7	12.3	12.9
CYPRUS	15.1	14.8	14.0	15.1	18.4
EU-25	17.3	16.9	16.6	16.1	15.7
UK	18.3	17.6	17.7	16.7	16.7
GREECE	18.2	17.3	16.7	15.5	14.9

ITALY	25.3	26.4	24.3	23.5	22.3
ICELAND	28.6	30.0	27.3	22.3	26.3
SPAIN	28.8	28.8	29.5	30.8	31.1
PORTUGAL	42.6	44.0	45.1	40.4	39.4
MALTA	54.2	54.2	53.2	48.2	45.0

Notes: (:) = not available

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey, NewCronos, release date 29/06/2005

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

The high standing of VET makes it imperative to keep developing training structures and course content in order to maintain the strong appeal of VET among learners and its acceptance within the labour market. The assured provision of a wide range of courses serves to enable individuals to develop their strengths and interests to the full.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF DIFFERENTIATION

At *berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen, BMHS* (VET schools and colleges, cf. 0403) differentiation is mainly achieved through the provision which allows individual establishments to determine the focus of their curriculum. As regards the dual system (cf. 0404), *Lehrausbildungen* (apprenticeships) are available in almost every area of economic activity, including new areas such as information technology. In the apprenticeship framework a more differentiated range of programmes has been created in recent years to take more account of the diverse levels of prior knowledge and ability of new apprentices. *Integrative Berufsausbildung, IBA* (integrative vocational training), introduced in 2003, makes provision for apprentices to obtain partial qualifications or to extend the duration of their training. It is designed to help young people who cannot complete their apprenticeship without assistance. At the same time, there are also some four-year apprenticeships in high-tech occupations which are particularly designed for gifted young people.

ENSURING PERMEABILITY

Since young people have to take decisions about their education paths at the age of only 14 or 15 (cf. 0402 to 0404), permeability between the various programmes is an important objective of the Austrian education policy. The introduction of the *Berufsreifeprüfung* (cf.

0502) in 1997 created a new path for those who have completed an apprenticeship or a three- or four-year *berufsbildende mittlere Schule, BMS* (VET school). It enables graduates of these schools to obtain entrance qualification for higher education.

UPDATING OF COURSE CONTENT

Continuous updating of the school curricula, and regular redefinition of apprenticeships help to ensure that VET keeps abreast of changes in industry and commerce (cf. 0703).

QUALITY IN VET SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

The main feature of *Qualitätsinitiative Berufsbildung, QIBB* (VET Quality Initiative), launched in 2005, is the integration of school and college activities into a comprehensive system of quality management with a view to safeguarding and further enhancing the quality of teaching and administration with the aid of established best practices. *QIBB* is the common framework for a quality network encompassing every category of VET institution. It covers schools and colleges, the inspectorates of the regional education authorities (cf. 0301) and the VET DG of the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, BMBWK* (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture). As an overarching framework, *QIBB* fosters the development of common strategies but also leaves sufficient scope for account to be taken of the special features of the individual categories of school and college and of individual establishments. *QIBB* is aligned with nationally and internationally recognised quality-management systems for educational establishments. In particular, *QIBB* takes account of the common quality-assurance framework (CQAF) for VET, which was developed at the European level as part of the Copenhagen Process.

TRAINING STANDARDS IN VET SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Given their two fold mission of vocational training and general education, VET schools and colleges (cf. 0403) must respond rapidly to new economic and social demands and make more use of the autonomy available to institutions in shaping their course programmes. This makes it essential to ensure that they offer high-quality training and that their services are comparable. To this end, the Ministry of Education launched a project in 2005 for the development of quality standards for core elements of general education and vocational training. The training standards define target outcomes in the form of specialised and cross-curricular skills which trainees should have acquired by a particular year of schooling. National tests are to be used to check whether the targets have been met.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF *FACHHOCHSCHULE* ACTIVITIES

The introduction of *Fachhochschulen, FH* (universities of applied science, cf. 0407) has considerably broadened the range of opportunities in the field of higher education over the past ten years, and this development process will continue throughout the period up to 2010. It is intended to extend *FH* activity in the fields of technology, science and technology-related services. In addition, the international aspect of *Fachhochschule* activities is being reinforced, as are applied research and development. It is also intended to introduce more courses for people in employment. A key point is assessment for the purpose of quality assurance. The external quality-assurance procedure of *Fachhochschule* degree courses can be organised on the basis of the evaluation regulation enacted by the *Fachhochschulrat* (FH Council), the umbrella body of the *Fachhochschulen* (cf. 0301), as well as through the new Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance (AQA).

REORGANISATION OF TEACHER TRAINING

The *Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Pädagogischen Hochschulen und ihrer Studien* (Tertiary Colleges of Education Act) 2005 incorporates teacher training at *Pädagogische Akademien* (post-secondary teacher training colleges), *Berufspädagogische Akademien* (colleges for vocational teacher training) and *Pädagogische Institute* (in-service teacher training colleges) into the university sector. From 2007, the new *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (tertiary colleges of education) will offer internationally comparable degrees as envisaged in the Bologna Process. In future, tertiary colleges of education will be able to provide training for all educational professions, including training in areas such as school management and adult education (cf. 06).

PROMOTION OF LIFELONG LEARNING

A group of experts has presented a proposal for a comprehensive and coherent lifelong-learning strategy. Detailed discussions and the creation of a lifelong-learning task force to coordinate the necessary strategies and measures are in the pipeline.

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Until March 2005, a two-thirds majority in the National Council (cf. 0101) was required for amendments to legislation relating to schools. This requirement, however, has now been abolished. Nevertheless, provisions regarding compulsory schooling, free schooling and religious instruction continue to have constitutional status, which means that their amendment still requires a two-thirds majority.

Under the Federal Constitution, competence for VET is distributed among various national and regional institutions (cf. Tab. 1).

Table: 1 Distribution of competences for VET	
ENTITY	TASKS
NATIONAL LEVEL	
Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur (BMBWK, Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture)	highest supervisory authority drafts educational legislation (cf. 0302) responsible for the school element of apprenticeship training (cf. 0404), including the drafting of legislative bills and the drawing up framework curricula. It shares the cost of teachers' pay with the <i>Laender</i> finances most of the costs of study at <i>Fachhochschulen</i> (cf. 0407) responsible for CVET in schools and colleges (cf. 0502)
<i>Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft</i> (BMLFUW, Federal Ministry of	responsible for the establishment and the maintenance of <i>höhere Lehranstalt für Land- und Forstwirtschaft</i> (colleges of agriculture and forestry, cf. 0403) as well as for the

<p>Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management)</p>	<p>selection and payment of teaching staff expenditure on teaching staff in <i>land- und forstwirtschaftliche Fachschulen</i> (schools of agriculture and forestry, cf. 0403) is met in equal measure by the Ministry of Agriculture and the provincial governments</p>
<p><i>Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Frauen</i> (BMGF, Federal Ministry of Health and Women's Issues)</p>	<p>responsible for creating the legal basis for the training of health professionals other than doctors (e.g. nursing profession, medical technologists etc., cf. 0403) designs the curricula of these training courses defines conditions governing practical training, examination arrangements appoints teaching staff</p>
<p><i>Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit</i> (BMWA, Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour)</p>	<p>responsible for the enterprise-based training of apprenticeship (cf. 0404), including the drafting of the Vocational Training Act (cf. 0302), drawing up of the official list of apprenticeships and enacting the training and examination regulations for each apprenticeship</p>
<p><i>Bundes-Berufsausbildungsbeirat</i> (BBAB, Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship)</p>	<p>presents the Ministry of Economics with proposals in the form of expert reports on matters concerning apprenticeship training (e.g. introduction of new apprenticeships etc.)</p>
<p><i>Fachhochschulrat</i> (FHR, <i>Fachhochschule Council</i>)</p>	<p>undertakes external quality assurance (accreditation and assessment) of <i>Fachhochschulen</i> (cf. 0407)</p>
REGIONAL LEVEL	
<p><i>Landesschulrat</i> (LSR, Regional Education Authority)</p>	<p>responsible for the supervision of the schools within a <i>Land</i>. This function is performed by the regional school inspectors, each of whom is responsible for a particular category of school. The main body within the LSR is the <i>Kollegium</i> (Education Board), which is required to submit proposals for the appointment of head teachers to the Ministry of Education. The Education Board can also deliver opinions on legislative bills and draft regulations, including proposed amendments to national curricula, and enact regulations applicable to schools within its region</p>
<p>Laender</p>	<p>responsible for the establishment and maintenance of schools of agriculture and forestry and <i>Berufsschulen</i> (part-time vocational schools for apprentices, cf. 0404) meet half of the expenditure on teaching staff for these schools responsible for CVET outside schools and</p>

	colleges (cf. 0502)
Lehrlingsstellen (apprenticeship offices)	responsible for the administration of apprenticeship training (cf. 0404), involving the assessment of the aptitude of training enterprises, the registration of apprenticeship contracts and the organisation of final apprenticeship examinations
Landes-Berufsausbildungbeirat (LBAB, Regional Advisory Board on Apprenticeship)	draws up proposals and makes suggestions regarding apprenticeship training (cf. 0404)
Lehrlings- und Fachausbildungsstellen (apprentice and skilled workers' training centres)	responsible for the enterprise-based part of apprenticeship training in agriculture and forestry (cf. 0404)
LOCAL LEVEL	
Universities, <i>Fachhochschulen</i>	responsible for CVET in universities and <i>Fachhochschulen</i> (cf. 0502)
Local authorities	responsible for CVET (cf. 0502)

0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The most important laws (in alphabetical order) concerning VET are (NB: The abbreviation 'BGBl.' refers to the *Bundesgesetzblatt*, the Federal Law Gazette):

IVET IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

- *Bundesgesetz betreffend die Grundsätze für land-und forstwirtschaftliche Fachschulen*

(Federal Act laying down the Principles governing VET Schools of Agriculture and Forestry), BGBl. No 320/1975, as amended, plus the corresponding implementing act adopted by the *Laender*

Regulates training at VET schools of agriculture and forestry (cf. 0403)

- *Bundesgesetz betreffend die Grundsätze für land- und forstwirtschaftliche Berufsschulen*

(Federal Act laying down the Principles governing Part-time Schools for Apprentices of Agriculture and Forestry), BGBl. No 319/1975, as amended, plus the corresponding implementing acts adopted by the *Laender*

Regulates training at part-time schools for apprentices of agriculture and forestry (cf. 0404)

- *Land- und forstwirtschaftliches Bundesgesetz*

(Federal Agricultural and Forestry Schools Act), BGBl. No 175/1966, as amended

Regulates training at colleges of agriculture and forestry (cf. 0404) and the initial and in-service training of lecturers and instructors in agriculture and forestry (cf. 06)

- *Schulorganisationsgesetz, SchOG* (School Organisation Act), BGBl. No 242/1952, as amended

Defines the responsibilities and structure of Austrian schools (curricula and education level) under the responsibility of the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, BMBWK* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture)

- *Schulunterrichtsgesetz, SchUG* (School Education Act), BGBl. No 472/1986, as amended

Regulates matters such as pupil admissions, pupil assessment, repetition of school years and cooperation between teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians

- *Schulunterrichtsgesetz für Berufstätige* (School Education Act), BGBl. I No 33/1997, as amended

Contains provisions governing the training of adults at VET schools and colleges

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

- *Ausbildungsordnung* (training regulation)

Contains the job profile (a sort of curriculum of enterprise-based training) and a competence profile describing the skills an apprentice must have acquired by the end of his/her apprenticeship period

- *Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG* (Vocational Training Act), BGBl. No 142/1969, as amended

Forms the statutory framework for enterprise-based apprenticeship training. Some provisions also relate to VET schools and colleges (cf. 0403)

- *Bundesgesetz über die Berufsreifeprüfung* (Federal Berufsreifeprüfung Act), BGBl. I No 68/1997, as amended

Lays down rules governing the *Berufsreifeprüfung* (cf. 0502), an examination which enables people to obtain an entrance qualification for general higher education if they have never passed the *Reifeprüfung* at an upper secondary level school

- *Gewerbeordnung, GewO* (Trade Regulation Code), BGBl. No 194/1994, as amended

Lays down the conditions on which a person may start up a business. It also contains rules governing the right of establishment of those who have successfully completed courses at VET schools and colleges (e.g. definition of reckonable attainments)

- *Land- und forstwirtschaftliches Berufsausbildungsgesetz* (Vocational Training in Agriculture and Forestry Act), BGBl. No 298/1990, as amended

Constitutes the legal basis for the enterprise-based part of apprenticeships in agriculture and forestry

- *Jugendausbildungssicherungsgesetz, JASG* (Youth Training Provision Act), BGBl. I No 91/1998, as amended

Contains provisions on political intervention in the labour market for the purpose of rectifying shortages of training places at schools and in enterprises

IVET IN POST-SECONDARY AND TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

- *Akademie-Studiengesetz* (Teacher Training College Act), BGBl. No 94/1994, as amended

Regulates the initial and in-service training of teachers (cf. 06), except for teachers at upper secondary schools, pending the entry into force of the Tertiary Colleges of Education Act 2005 (cf. 0201)

- *Fachhochschule-Studiengesetz, FHStG (Fachhochschule Degree Courses Act)*, BGBl. No 340/1993, as amended

Contains provisions on the accreditation and evaluation of degree courses at *Fachhochschulen* (cf. 0407), on the responsibilities of the *Fachhochschule* Council (cf. 0301) and on the official designation of institutions as *Fachhochschulen*

CVET

- *Erwachsenenbildungsförderungsgesetz, EB-FG (Adult Education Promotion Act)*, BGBl. No 171/1973

Specifies the conditions on which adult education can be supported and the permissible support methods

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

Cooperative partnership between associations of employers and of employees has a long tradition in Austria. The 'social partners', as these representative bodies are known, comprise, on the management side, the *Wirtschaftskammer Österreich* (WKO, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber), the *Landwirtschaftskammer Österreich* (Chamber of Agriculture) and the *Industriellenvereinigung* (Federation of Austrian Industry) with its voluntary membership. The labour side comprises the *Bundeskammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte* (Chamber of Labour) and the *Österreichische Gewerkschaftsbund* (Austrian Trade Union Federation). The social partners' main aim is to reconcile conflicting interests through substantive compromises between the two sides of industry and between the social partners and the government.

Social partnership is based on the principle of voluntarism. It is neither enshrined in the Constitution nor prescribed by statute. The social partners exert a powerful influence on the process of policy- and decision making. There are many ways in which they can bring this influence to bear. One channel that has traditionally been used is both sides' close relationship – partly institutional and partly personal – with political parties. The associations are also brought into the formulation of political aims within government departments by means of formal and informal consultation. This is demonstrated by their participation in numerous committees, advisory boards and commissions on various issues. Even in Parliament, experts from the employers' and employees' bodies are involved in the legislative process.

Table 1: Participation of the social partners in VET

LEVEL	THE SOCIAL PARTNERS	TYPE OF ROLE
NATIONAL LEVEL	submit expert opinion on draft school laws and decrees (e.g. curricula)	advisory role
	provide information on vocational guidance and counselling (cf. 09)	direct role
	encourage cooperation between VET institutions and the business community (cf. 0702)	advisory role
	take initiative to establish new apprenticeships or redefine existing ones (cf. 0404)	direct role
	collaborate on the compiling of framework curricula for part-time schools for apprentices (cf. 0404)	advisory role
	determine the remuneration payable to apprentices as part of the industry-wide process of collective bargaining (cf. 1002)	direct role
	are providers of <i>Fachhochschule</i> degree courses (cf. 0407)	direct role
	determine to a great extent the content of CVET by their CVET provider institutions (cf. 0503)	direct role
SECTORAL LEVEL	submit expert opinion on draft school laws and decrees (e.g. curricula)	advisory role
	provide information on vocational guidance and counselling (cf. 09)	direct role
	encourage cooperation between VET institutions and the business community (cf. 0702)	advisory role
	take initiative to establish new apprenticeships or redefine existing ones (cf. 0404)	direct role

	collaborate on the compiling of framework curricula for part-time schools for apprentices (cf. 0404)	advisory role
	are providers of <i>Fachhochschule</i> degree courses (cf. 0407)	direct role
	determine to a great extent the content of CVET by their CVET provider institutions (cf. 0504)	direct role
SECTORAL LEVEL	submit expert opinion on draft school laws and decrees (e.g. curricula)	advisory role
	provide information on vocational guidance and counselling (cf. 09)	direct role
	encourage cooperation between VET institutions and the business community (cf. 0702)	advisory role
	take initiative to establish new apprenticeships or redefine existing ones (cf. 0404)	direct role
	collaborate on the compiling of framework curricula for part-time schools for apprentices (cf. 0404)	advisory role
ENTERPRISE LEVEL	provide information on vocational guidance and counselling (cf. 09)	direct role
	encourage cooperation between VET institutions and the business community (cf. 0702)	advisory role
	take initiative to establish new apprenticeships or redefine existing ones (cf. 0404)	direct role

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

School attendance is compulsory for all children permanently resident in Austria. Pupils are free to choose whether to attend a state or a private school. The attendance of a state school is free of charge.

General compulsory schooling begins at the age of six and lasts for nine years, which means that most children complete it at the age of 15 (cf. Fig. 1 attachment). Children with special educational needs can either attend special schools which are tailored to their needs or be integrated into mainstream classes at other types of school.

1. PRE-PRIMARY (3-6 YEARS) AND PRIMARY LEVEL (6-10 YEARS)

Kindergarten (nursery school) is the traditional form of pre-primary education for children between the ages of three and six. It is not part of the school system, however, and attendance is voluntary. Some 90% of five-year-olds attend a public or private nursery.

Children's actual 'educational career' begins with four years at primary school (cf. Fig. 1 attachment), where they receive a comprehensive elementary education. A pre-school year is provided for children who have difficulty following lessons, and its content can be integrated into the first two years of primary school.

2. LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL (10-14 YEARS)

At the age of ten comes the first sifting process into two types of school (cf. Fig. 1 attachment), with about 70% of all pupils moving on to *Hauptschule*, *HS* (lower general education school) and the remaining 30% entering the junior cycle of a *allgemein bildende höhere Schule*, *AHS Unterstufe* (higher general education school, junior cycle). In urban areas, where both types of secondary school are equally easy to reach, the distribution is different. In Vienna, for example, fewer than half of all children attend a *Hauptschule*.

To move from primary to secondary education, a pupil needs a favourable report at the end of primary four. Additional performance criteria, such as certain grades in the main school subjects, are required for entry to *AHS Unterstufe*.

2.1 *Hauptschule*, *HS* (lower general education school)

In four years at *Hauptschule*, pupils obtain a basic general education, which qualifies them to move on to stage two of secondary schooling as well as preparing them for working life. In German, mathematics and a modern language, classes are streamed so that pupils' diverse learning needs can be taken into account. Career studies in the third and fourth years (years seven and eight of compulsory schooling) include the opportunity for pupils to spend several days on work experience gaining an insight into the activities of a business. *Hauptschulen* also have the autonomy to specialise in particular subjects, such as modern languages, sport or computing.

2.2 *Allgemein bildende höhere Schule – Unterstufe*, *AHS Unterstufe* (higher general education school – junior cycle)

Allgemein bildende höhere Schule comprises a lower stage of four years and an upper stage of equal duration. Pupils obtain a comprehensive general education. In the first two years (years five and six of compulsory schooling), higher general education schools follow a

curriculum which is identical to that of lower general education schools. From year seven, the differences between the categories of higher general education school begin to emerge. These are:

- the *Gymnasium*, where pupils receive a traditional academic education, including classes in Latin,
- the *Realgymnasium*, which specialises in mathematics, science and subjects such as geometric design, and
- the *wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium*, specialising in economics, chemistry and technical and textile crafts.

The curriculum for the third and fourth years (years seven and eight of compulsory schooling) also prescribes the inclusion of career studies in the timetable.

3. UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL (14-18/19 YEARS)

The last year of compulsory schooling corresponds to the first year of the upper stage of secondary education. It also coincides with more extensive differentiation within the school system (cf. Fig. 1 attached and Tab. 1). Besides the *allgemein bildende höhere Schule – Oberstufe* (higher general education school – senior cycle) and the *Polytechnische Schule* (pre-vocational school), there is now a wide choice of VET paths leading to diverse levels of qualification (cf. 0403 and 0404).

Table 1: Training opportunities at upper secondary level			
SCHOOL TYPE	SCHOOL YEARS	AGE OF STUDENTS	ISCED LEVEL AND QUALIFICATION
GENERAL EDUCATION SCHOOL			
<i>allgemein bildende höhere Schule – Oberstufe, AHS Oberstufe</i> (higher general education school – senior cycle)	9 to 12	14 to 18	ISCED 3A <i>Reifeprüfung</i>
PRE-VOCATIONAL SCHOOL			
<i>Polytechnische Schule, PTS</i> (pre-vocational school)	9	14 to 15	ISCED 3C Certificate
SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES IN VET			
<i>berufsbildende mittlere Schule, BMS</i> (VET school)	9 to 12	14 to 17	ISCED 3B final examination
<i>berufsbildende höhere Schule, BHS</i> (VET college)	9 to 13	14 to 19	ISCED 3A/4A <i>Reifeprüfung</i> and VET diploma
<i>Berufsschule, BS</i> (part-time vocational school for apprentices)	10 to 13	15 to 19	ISCED 3B final apprenticeship examination

Allgemein bildende höhere Schule – Oberstufe, AHS Oberstufe (higher general education school – senior cycle)

In the upper years of higher general education schools comprehensive general education in the mainstream subjects continues. Students generally start a second modern language, and schools have a degree of autonomy to specialise in particular subject areas. The upper stage of higher general education schools culminates in the *Reifeprüfung*, also known as *Matura*, and those who pass this examination are qualified to follow a course of study at the post-secondary (cf. 0406) and tertiary (cf. 0407) levels.

3.1 Polytechnische Schule, PTS (pre-vocational school)

Pre-vocational school begins after year eight of compulsory schooling, lasts for one year and provides a general introduction to vocational training. Each student chooses one of the following subjects: metalwork, electrics, building, woodwork, commercial and secretarial studies, services and tourism. In accordance with the principle of school autonomy, other subjects may be offered, such as information technology and mechatronics. The curriculum is designed in the light of career opportunities in the surrounding region and students' fields of interest. Pre-vocational schools give learners numerous opportunities to familiarise themselves with the world of work so that they will be well prepared for apprenticeship training (cf. 0404).

See here for attachment [Figure 1: Austrian educational system](#)

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

There are no IVET elements at the lower secondary level in Austria.

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

If all forms of VET are considered together, approximately 73% of all young people in upper secondary education are in post-compulsory VET (cf. Tab. 1). Slightly more than half of those in VET (55%) choose a school-based option, while 45% take part in apprenticeship training.

Table 1: Full time students in upper secondary education (ISCED 3)
by programme orientation, 2003

	TOTAL	VET PROGRAMMES		GE AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES	
		Total	%	Total	%
CZECH REP.	490 189	388 862	79	101 327	21
SLOVAKIA	280 416	210 861	75	69 555	25
AUSTRIA	364 844	265 161	73	99 683	27
NETHERLANDS	593 901	410 268	69	183 633	31
LUXEMBOURG	17 874	11 558	65	6 316	35
GERMANY	2 758 024	1 729 839	63	1 028 185	37
SLOVENIA	102 247	64 697	63	37 550	37
NORWAY	199 377	120 662	61	78 715	39
FINLAND	302 688	178 044	59	124 644	41
BELGIUM	514 370	287 454	56	226 916	44
FRANCE	2 583 587	1 457 240	56	1 126 347	44
POLAND	1 816 741	977 090	54	839 651	46
DENMARK	222 003	118 329	53	103 674	47
SWEDEN	371 616	186 659	50	184 957	50
EU 25	18 700 379	8 689 700	46	10 010 679	54
LATVIA	86 295	36 945	43	49 350	57
GREECE	364 270	134 099	37	230 171	63
ICELAND	16 257	5 777	36	10 480	64
UK	3 086 333	1 026 738	33	2 059 595	67
ESTONIA	51 617	16 544	32	35 073	68
SPAIN	957 740	304 032	32	653 708	68
LITHUANIA	100 992	29 341	29	71 651	71
PORTUGAL	298 857	87 365	29	211 492	71
ITALY	2 690 469	698 717	26	1 991 752	74
MALTA	8 164	1 495	18	6 669	82
CYPRUS	31 151	4 278	14	26 873	85
HUNGARY	463 289	64 084	14	399 205	86
IRELAND	144 213	-	-	144 213	100

Source: Eurostat, UOE; NewCronos, release date 29/06/2005

1. *Berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen, BMHS (VET schools and colleges)*

The acquisition of vocational skills and qualifications, along with a sound general education is at the heart of the training provided in VET schools and colleges. Successful completion of this training opens the door to immediate employment and lays the foundations for a wide range of more advanced training and higher qualifications.

Entry into a VET school or college depends on successful completion of year 8 of compulsory schooling. Depending on the pupil's education history and on the applicant's choice of institution and the availability of places, the pupil's record of achievement or an entrance examination may serve to determine his/her eligibility. For artistic or educational and social subjects an aptitude test and/or interview are also required.

Important characteristics of VET schools and colleges include:

- **Differentiation:** Depending on their skills and interests, students can choose from numerous paths and areas of special training focus. Schools and colleges have a degree of autonomy to alter the number of hours devoted to individual subjects with certain limits, offer new subjects or focus more sharply on particular specialised areas. Within these areas, the curricula of most courses in the first two years of training have a common core, and specialisation does not begin until the third year of training.
- **Combination of general education and intensive theoretical and practical specialised training:** Greater weight is assigned to practical aspects of training at VET schools. Activity-based learning is a fundamental principle at both VET schools and colleges; session in workshops, laboratories, kitchens, practice firms etc. and compulsory periods of work experience in business and industry are integral parts of the training programme.
- **Core skills:** Business competence or entrepreneurship is both a cross-curricular principle and an area of special training focus on many courses. Depending on the type of school, up to three foreign languages may be compulsory, and one is always compulsory. A foreign language is increasingly being used as the working language in non-language classes too. Computer literacy is a *sine qua non* in all types of VET, and numerous training courses and areas of special focus are specifically designed to train learners for the information and communication technology (IT) sector.
- **Business projects:** Working on projects and diploma assignments based on specific business- or technology-related tasks, which are also part of the final examinations, enables learners to gather basic technical experience and to master project-management methods. They practise their key skills and make initial contacts that can stand them in good stead when they come to seek their first job.
- **Teachers with business experience:** In many subjects, teaching staff must provide evidence of relevant experience in industry or commerce.

1.1 Berufsbildende mittlere Schulen, BMS or, alternatively, Fachschulen (VET schools)

Courses at VET schools (ISCED 3B), which normally last for three or four years, combine general education with complete vocational training for certain occupations. Courses at a VET school culminate in an *Abschlussprüfung* (final examination). Those who pass the examination are qualified to go straight into employment and have access to certain regulated occupations. Moreover, they lay the foundations for a subsequent business start-up.

VET schools cover the following major areas:

- agriculture and forestry,
- industry and trade,
- business,
- industrial, technical, arts and crafts sectors,
- social work,
- health care.

After passing further exams, such as the *Berufsreifeprüfung* (cf. 0502), or attending *Aufbaulehrgänge* (add-on courses, cf. 0502), young people are eligible to move on to post-secondary (cf. 0406) or tertiary (cf. 0407) education.

VET school courses of one or two years' duration, particularly in the field of social work, combine general education with preparatory vocational training. They generally serve as a 'bridge' to courses in health care or social work, for which the minimum starting age is 17.

1.2 Berufsbildende höhere Schule, BHS (VET college)

The five-year VET college course at a VET college (ISCED 3A/4A) provides a more thorough general education and high-quality specialised training. It concludes with a *Reife- und Diplomprüfung* (*Reifeprüfung* and VET diploma), a double qualification giving successful candidates access to higher education as well as to regulated occupations.

The educational areas offered by VET colleges correspond largely to those offered by VET schools. The following forms of schooling are available:

- technical colleges (branches: mechanical engineering, EDP and organisation, civil engineering and construction, chemistry, textile and engineering, business engineering, information and communication technologies etc.),
- colleges for tourism,
- colleges for fashion and textile technology,
- business colleges,
- colleges for industry and trade,
- colleges for agriculture and forestry (branches: agriculture, horticulture, viticulture, fruit-farming, forestry, dairy farming etc.).

VET colleges also provide the basis for subsequent self-employment, in other words business start-ups. The high level of training at VET colleges is also reflected in the recognition accorded to in the EU framework. The inclusion of VET Colleges in Annex III to Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications testifies to the fact that VET college students obtain vocational qualifications equivalent to those for which post-secondary training is required in most other Member States. For those who go on to study at a *Fachhochschule* (cf. 0407), the skills they have acquired at VET college can shorten the duration of their degree course.

2. *Berufsschule, BS (part-time vocational school for apprentices)*

For part-time vocational schools see 0404.

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

In addition to training in full-time VET schools and colleges (cf. 0403) a considerable amount of IVET is provided by apprenticeship training schemes. Approximately 40% of all young people aged 15 to 18 are prepared for their future occupation within the apprenticeship training system.

No specific school certificate is required for access to an apprenticeship. The training is open to all young people who have completed their nine years of compulsory schooling.

Depending on the apprenticeship chosen, the duration of training is between two and four years. The majority lasts three years. The apprenticeship period is reduced for people who have already completed job-specific training periods in related apprenticeships or acquired relevant school qualifications.

Apprenticeship training takes place in two different learning sites: in *Lehrbetrieben* (training enterprises) and *Berufsschulen* (part-time vocational schools). While apprenticeship is based on a *Lehrvertrag* (apprenticeship contract) under labour law, apprentices are still considered to be in compulsory education because they must enrol in a part-time vocational school.

Around 38 000 enterprises take part in the apprenticeship training scheme, in particular small- and medium-sized enterprises in the fields of commerce, crafts, trade and services, as well as tourism and leisure. They train approximately 85% of all apprentices. Industrial enterprises, companies in the information and consulting sector and firms not affiliated to a chamber (cf. 0303) also make a significant contribution to the training of young people.

Currently (Aug. 2006), there are 255 apprenticeships. They are laid down in the *Lehrberufsliste* (list of recognised apprenticeships), which also specifies the apprenticeship periods and relationships to other apprenticeships including credits awarded for already completed apprenticeship periods.

For each individual apprenticeship, the Economics Minister issues an *Ausbildungsordnung* (training regulation, cf. 0302) which is binding for the training provided in the training enterprises all over Austria. Training regulations stipulate the *Berufsbild* (job profile) of the respective apprenticeship. In a catalogue broken down by apprenticeship years, the job profile lists the basic skills and knowledge to be taught in the course of enterprise-based training. Since recently, not only job profiles but also *Berufsprofile* (competence profile) for newly regulated apprenticeships have been formulated, which lay down, in the form of a short list, the requirements the trained apprentice must be able to meet.

1. *Enterprise-based part of training*

Approximately 80% of the apprenticeship period is spent in the training companies. Vocational training is held under real-life conditions. The apprentice acquires the required

knowledge and skills as stipulated in the job profile for the respective apprenticeship on state-of-the-art machinery and equipment. Immediately upon completion of the training, he or she is able to take up a job as a skilled worker.

The apprenticeship contract is entered into between the *Lehrberechtigte* (authorised apprenticeship trainer) and the apprentice and forms the basis of vocational training in the dual system. It must be concluded in writing. Standardised forms containing the name of the apprenticeship, the beginning and end of the apprenticeship period, the address of the working place(s), reference to the company type and its products/services etc., can be obtained from the *Lehrlingsstelle* (apprenticeship office, cf. 0301).

The *Lehrabschlussprüfung* (final apprenticeship examination) is to establish whether the candidate has acquired the skills and competences required for the respective apprenticeship and is able to carry out the activities particular to the apprenticeship without further supervision in an appropriate manner. The exam consists of a practical and a theoretical part. The latter is waived under certain conditions, i.e. if the candidate can prove successful completion of the part-time vocational school.

2. School-based part of training

The focus of education at part-time vocational schools is on job-oriented tuition (about 75%), general subjects (politics, German and communication, an occupation-related foreign language and other business studies subjects) make up one quarter of the curriculum. Specific-job curricula also include practical training in workshops or laboratories.

Part-time vocational schools are special schools set up for selected apprenticeships. Classes are grouped according to the individual apprenticeship or, in some cases, groups of related apprenticeships.

Classes are held either

- in full-time blocks, where the enterprise-based training is interrupted for some weeks (usually between eight and twelve),
- every week on one or two days.

The precise number of hours of vocational timetables is laid down in the curriculum for the respective apprenticeship. The curriculum is closely linked with the work description and job profile of the training regulation.

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Other youth programmes include so-called *Berufslehrgänge* (vocational pre-apprenticeship training courses) and the *integrative Berufsausbildung* (integrative vocational education and training, integrative VET).

On the basis of the *Jugendausbildungssicherungsgesetz*, JASG (Youth Training Provision Act, cf. 0302) additional training in the form of ten-month vocational pre-apprenticeship training courses is offered as a labour market support measure for young people who find themselves at a disadvantage in the labour market and for those who cannot find an apprenticeship.

These training courses may not start before mid-November of any given year, so as not to compete with 'traditional' apprenticeships. The conditions for participation are that the young person in question must have completed compulsory education and be registered with the *Arbeitsmarktservice*, AMS (Public Employment Service) as looking for an apprenticeship, the

Public Employment Service sees no likelihood of finding an appropriate apprenticeship or the young person has already made at least five independent applications and been unsuccessful. The Public Employment Service allocates the young people to training courses.

These courses are held over ten months and are organised and implemented by parties who are not official employers of apprentices. The aim is to teach the skills and knowledge of the first year of an apprenticeship so that the young person can then switch to a 'proper' apprenticeship in the second year. For any subsequent apprenticeship in the same trade, the initial training period is counted in full. In all other cases, a justifiable proportion is counted. Participants receive a special allowance of € 150 net per month.

The main purpose of the 2003 amendment to the *Berufsausbildungsgesetz* (Vocational Training Act, cf. 0302) was the creation of integrative VET. On the basis of comprehensive preparatory work by the social partners, the legislator created a flexible model for people at a disadvantage in the labour market, enabling them to acquire a professional (partial) qualification.

Integrative IVET is open to persons:

- with special educational needs in compulsory schooling and who were, at least in part, educated according to the curriculum of a *Sonderschule* (special needs school);
- who did not finish or negatively complete a *Hauptschule* (general education school);
- with disabilities;
- of whom it must be assumed, within the framework of career guidance support or after an unsuccessful placement attempt in an apprenticeship, that it will not be possible to find any apprenticeship vacancy for them for reasons exclusively related to the person himself or herself.

Possible integrative vocational training measures include the acquisition of apprenticeship qualifications in an apprenticeship period prolonged by one year, in exceptional cases by two years, or the acquisition of partial qualifications in one or several trades which are relevant for the economy.

Integrative vocational training is facilitated and supported by the *Berufsausbildungsassistenz* (vocational training assistance).

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

For upper secondary school and college graduates there are a number of post-secondary, non-university education pathways in Austria:

1. POST-SECONDARY VET COLLEGES

- *Pädagogische Akademie* (training colleges for compulsory school teachers)
- *Berufspädagogische Akademie* (training colleges for VET teachers)

- *Religionspädagogische Akademie* (training colleges for religious education teachers)
- *Agrarpädagogische Akademie* (training colleges for agricultural and forestry teachers)
- *Akademien für den gehobenen medizinisch-technischen Dienst* (colleges for paramedical staff)
- *Hebammenakademie* (colleges for midwifery)
- *Sozialakademie* (colleges for social work)

2. POST-SECONDARY VET COURSES

- *Kollegs für wirtschaftliche Berufe* (post-secondary VET courses for commercial professions)
- *Kollegs für technische und gewerbliche Berufe* (post-secondary VET courses for technical and crafts professions)
- *Kollegs für Tourismusberufe* (post-secondary VET courses for tourism professions)
- *Kollegs für Kindergartenpädagogik und Sozialpädagogik* (post-secondary VET courses for nursery school teachers and social pedagogy)

1. POST-SECONDARY VET COLLEGES

Post-secondary VET colleges cover a period of four to six semesters and target people (18+) who have successfully passed a

- *Reifeprüfung* (at the end of the senior cycle of higher general education schools),
- *Reifeprüfung* and VET diploma (at the end of VET colleges),
- *Berufsreifeprüfung* (examination providing access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools) or
- *Studienberechtigungsprüfung* (higher education entrance examination).

For certain subjects at training colleges for VET teachers the *Meisterprüfung* (master craftsperson examination) and recognised vocational training and experience can also provide access.

Training in post-secondary VET colleges leads to a *Diplomprüfung* (diploma examination). Graduates have access to specific vocational qualifications.

At the various teacher training colleges great emphasis is placed not only on pedagogic-didactic tuition and specialist subjects, but also on the application of these elements in a school environment. The students are able to visit select schools of the relevant type in order to gain teaching experience. Training colleges for compulsory school teachers run their own training schools, where the students can develop a basic level of teaching experience.

Post-secondary colleges for healthcare professions are organisationally and by location joined to a hospital, at which practical work experience is performed. The educational content consists of a predominantly theory-based medical training and a specialised applied education with a large proportion of practical exercises.

Post-secondary colleges for social work focus on qualifying people to assume elevated positions in the area of social work. Currently, these colleges are being converted into *Fachhochschulen*.

2. POST-SECONDARY VET COURSES

Two-year post-secondary VET courses are designed to provide VET qualifications for graduates of upper secondary schools. VET college graduates have the opportunity to acquire an additional vocational qualification. Graduates of higher GE schools can receive vocational training in the commercial, technical, crafts and tourism sector.

Training at post-secondary VET courses leads to a diploma examination. Graduates of these courses have access to specific vocational qualifications.

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

Until the 1990s, most university degree courses were academic or research-based and lasted at least four years (eight semesters), after which students could embark on postgraduate study leading to a doctorate. A marked change in the tertiary sector came about in 1994 when *Fachhochschulen* were introduced in response to an international trend towards a more vocationally oriented, non-university tertiary sector.

The *Bundesgesetz über Fachhochschul-Studiengänge* (FHStG, *Fachhochschule* Degree Courses Act, cf. 0302) made it possible to establish practice-oriented courses at the tertiary level. *Fachhochschulen* are not developed by the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, BMBWK* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture) but by provider bodies, most of which are from the private sector; once they have been licensed by the *Fachhochschulrat, FHR* (*Fachhochschule* Council), the supervisory council for Austria's *Fachhochschulen* (cf. 0301), they are run by the provider. They are subject to a prescribed accreditation and evaluation procedure, which is overseen by the *Fachhochschulrat*.

In contrast to universities, *Fachhochschulen* provide scientifically underpinned technical and vocational training. They are tailored, in other words, to specific areas of professional activity. A period of practical work experience is a compulsory part of the curriculum. Up to the present time, degree courses have been established in Austrian *Fachhochschulen* in the fields of economics and business management, tourism, engineering sciences, computer science and information technology, media and design. There are also interdisciplinary degree courses as well as courses in the fields of health and welfare, journalism and military science.

As a rule, the requirement for admission to courses at a *Fachhochschule* is the entrance qualification for general higher education or a relevant vocational qualification. Courses of shorter duration (six semesters) have also been created expressly for students who have attended *höhere technische Lehranstalten, HTL* (engineering colleges) and have enough occupational experience to have earned the title *Ingenieur* or *Ingenieurin* (usually three years after graduation). Since the number of students in any year of a given course is limited, applicants must undergo a selection procedure conducted by the provider in cases where the number of applicants for a course exceeds the number of places on the course.

Since the 1996/97 academic year, degree courses for person in employment have also been offered (cf. 0502).

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The main differences between initial vocational education and training (IVET) and continuing vocational education and training (CVET) lie in the ages of the learners and their previous educational attainments. Anyone who has completed IVET by serving a *Lehre* (apprenticeship, cf. 0404), successfully finishing a course at a *berufsbildende mittlere oder höhere Schule* (VET school or college, cf. 0403) or by obtaining a degree from a *Fachhochschule* (cf. 0407) and who then begins another stage in the education process is generally said to be embarking on CVET. Most people are over the age of 20 when they begin CVET.

CVET has a long history in Austria, dating back to the 19th century. In the past 50 years, the development of CVET has been characterised by the involvement of the federal and regional governments as well as by employer and union associations. The latter exert a decisive influence via educational establishments and organisations, which means that they actively co-design the CVET landscape, albeit through their own structure of providers (cf. 0504). These providers are so called non-profit organisations although they take course fees. But their funding is mostly based on subsidies of the background institutions. In distinction to this section of traditional providers a new sector of mostly small companies providing CVET has arisen during the 1990s. These companies are usually subsumed as private providers or profit-providers.

There are various types of CVET in Austria:

1. Publicly promoted CVET for all (cf. 0502)
 - acquisition of *Hauptschule* qualifications (general education school) by adults
 - acquisition of qualifications providing access to higher education
 - schools and colleges for employed people
 - *Fachhochschule* courses (university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation) and university courses for employed people
 - CVET in non-profit providers which are institutionally linked with public bodies
2. CVET as instrument of active labour market policies (cf. 0503)
3. CVET at the initiative of enterprises and social partners (cf. 0504)
 - CVET at the employer's, parent/associate company, equipment suppliers'
 - informal learning at the workplace
 - CVET at the provider institutions of the social partners, i.e. *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI* (of the federal and regional Economic Chambers) and *Berufsförderungsinstitut*,

bfi (of the federal and regional Chambers of Labour and the Austrian Trade Union Federation)

- CVET in profit-provider institutions

4. CVET at the initiative of the individuals (cf. 0505)

- CVET in profit-provider institutions
- CVET in non-profit provider institutions

The entrance requirements for CVET in profit and non-profit providers are largely determined by the qualification to be gained. In cases where specialist requirements are needed, advice and assessments will be offered before the course starts to ensure that it can run as smoothly as possible. Entrance requirements for the public school, university and *Fachhochschule* sector depend on the type of course or evening school involved.

During the last 25 years, a number of supportive measures have been introduced to enable people to take up learning:

INTRODUCING CVET PROVIDERS/CVET PROGRAMMES

In 1994 the *Donau Universität Krems* (Danube University of Krems) was established. It is a centre for CVET in the tertiary sector, whose tasks are limited to offers of postgraduate CVET in the form of courses and short university programmes. To increase accessibility, courses take into consideration the needs of employed people and of persons with care obligations. They are either organised in the evening or at weekends or are supplemented by online offers.

Since 1999 programmes for employed people have been created to attend university through the availability of the *Studienabschlussstipendium* (university graduation grant).

FACILITATING ACCESS TO CVET INSTITUTIONS

Since 1994 employed people have been allowed to attend CVET programmes in *Fachhochschulen* (cf. 0407).

Since 1997 skilled workers and three- and four-year VET school graduates can take the *Berufsreifeprüfung*, which provide access to post-secondary and tertiary educational programmes (cf. 0502).

In 1998 the *Bildungskarenz* (educational leave) was introduced for employees to further their education and training. Employer and employee can agree upon periods of a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve months educational leave. During this time, the *Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS* (Public Employment Service) pays a *Weiterbildungsgeld* (personal CVET benefit) to the employee. The scheme prioritises the acquisition of school and university-level qualifications or foreign language training and a general improvement of skills levels. The *AMS* arranges for substitute workers who are currently unemployed to replace people on leave.

USING OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN LEARNING

In 1991, a *Zentrum für Fernstudien, ZF* (distance learning centre) was established at Linz University. The *ZF* co-operates with the *Fernuniversität Hagen*. Within the framework of this institution, distance studies for students of law and for candidates of the

Studienberechtigungsprüfung, SBP (higher education entrance examination, cf. 0502) are provided. The ZF is a member in the umbrella organisation of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) and co-operates with the Open University (UK). Austrians therefore have the possibility to enrol in a study programme of the *Fernuniversität Hagen* and of other European distance universities and the Open University.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Financial support is provided by a wide range of bodies and entities in Austria (e.g. Economic Chamber, Chamber of Labour, federal ministries, Leonardo da Vinci etc.)

In 2003 a *Bildungsfreibetrag* (training tax allowance) for companies also for external training was introduced by the government. This training tax allowance can also be paid as premium which is especially relevant for smaller companies.

PROMOTING COOPERATION

In 2000, the AUCEN (Austrian Universities Continuing Education Network) was introduced serving as platform for university-based CVET. Since then a working group of CVET and HR development officers at Austrian universities co-operate in the following measures with the aim of promoting university-based CVET and HR development: experience exchanges on university-based CVET and HR development; preparation of recommendations and commentaries in the field of university and CVET policies; PR (CVET database, publications, education fairs); encouragement and implementation of joint (research) projects; networking at the European and international levels; development of new perspectives in the field of university-based CVET and HR development.

0502 - PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

The responsibilities for publicly promoted CVET are divided among the federal government, the *Laender* and municipalities:

The federal government's responsibilities are split between a number of ministries.

- The *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, BMBWK* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture) is responsible for school- and university-based CVET.
- The *Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft, BMLFUW* (Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management) is in charge of CVET for agriculture and forestry professionals.
- The *Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Frauen, BMGF* (Federal Ministry for Health and Women's Issues) is responsible for healthcare professionals.
- The *Bundesministerium für soziale Sicherheit, Generationen und Konsumentenschutz, BMSG* (Federal Ministry of Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection) is in charge of older and disabled people.

Fiscal matters (e.g. the education premium, the tax allowance for education, cf. 1003) fall within the remit of the *Bundesministerium für Finanzen*, *BMF* (Federal Ministry of Finances).

Laender and municipalities meet their responsibilities for CVET in a number of different ways, ranging from making resources available to CVET establishments or their umbrella organisations, to departments in the *Landesregierungen* (regional governments). Financial resources are available in almost all *Laender* to support individuals taking part in adult education, and these are provided in the form of subsidies for course fees.

Depending on the type of CVET, various groups of people are targeted at:

1. SECOND - CHANCE ROUTE TO LOWER SECONDARY QUALIFICATION

Several adult training and CVET institutions offer bridge courses for people who have completed their period of compulsory schooling without acquiring a final certificate. In these courses they are prepared for the qualifying exam to be taken before an examination board for external students at a school.

2. SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES FOR PEOPLE IN EMPLOYMENT

The Austrian schools and colleges for people in employment provide full programmes with a duration of several years. These institutions are set up as part-time evening schools. Their curricula essentially correspond to the structure of the full-time school form. The VET forms of these institutions (i.e. *berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen*, *BMHS* [VET schools and colleges]) are more varied and are attended more frequently by employed people than the *allgemein bildende höhere Schule*, *AHS* (higher general education school).

There are various VET colleges for working people:

- *Berufsbildende höhere Schule für Berufstätige* (VET college for persons in employment): enrolment is subject to successful completion of compulsory schooling. Courses last four to five years and conclude with the *Reifeprüfung* and VET diploma.
- *Kollegs* (post-secondary VET courses): are intended primarily for those who have successfully completed *allgemein bildende höhere Schulen* (higher general education schools, cf. 0402). A pass in the *Reifeprüfung* is the entrance requirement. *Kolleg* courses are modular in form and entail two years of day classes or, in most cases, three years of evening classes. They conclude with a diploma examination.
- *Aufbaulehrgänge* (add-on courses): generally take three years and take those who have successfully completed *berufsbildende mittlere Schule*, *BMS* (VET school, cf. 0403) to the *Reifeprüfung* and VET diploma of the corresponding VET college (cf. 0403). They are also open to those who have served their *Lehre* (apprenticeship, cf. 0404) and who have attended a one- or two-semester *Vorbereitungslehrgang* (preparatory course). Add-on courses are modular in structure, with general educational and advanced specialised modules and are frequently offered in conjunction with *Kollege* courses.

There are special forms of VET school courses at business administration schools and especially at schools specialising in technical trades. The following courses are also offered at *WIFI* and *bfi* establishments (cf. 0504):

- *Werkmeisterschule für Berufstätige* (foreperson courses for people in employment): enable working trades people who have served an apprenticeship or successfully completed a VET school to upgrade their vocational qualifications. These courses last for two years and culminate in an examination before a board. Successful candidates are qualified to train apprentices and, after four years of practical work, to become self-employed in a relevant trade.
- *Bauhandwerkerschule* (courses for building workers): similar to forepersons' schools but are specifically intended for people who have completed their vocational training in a building trade such as bricklaying or carpentry.
- *Meisterschulen* (master craftsperson courses): provide specialised CVET. Their courses last from one to two years; applicants for admission must be at least 18 years of age and are expected, as a rule, to have completed their IVET and/or to have a certain amount of practical experience in their trade.

3. ACQUISITION OF QUALIFICATION PROVIDING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Besides the *Reifeprüfung* at the end of the senior stage of secondary school, the following paths also provide access to post-secondary and tertiary courses:

The *Studienberechtigungsprüfung*, *SBP* (higher education entrance examination) provides access to a particular field of study in post-secondary and tertiary institutions. Applicants to sit the exam must furnish evidence of prior education, training or occupational experience in the chosen subject. In the absence of such evidence, additional examinations may be taken to make up the deficit.

The *Berufsreifeprüfung*, *BRP* is equivalent to the *Matura* certificate at the upper secondary level insofar as it qualifies for studying at post-secondary and tertiary education institutions. It is targeted at apprenticeship graduates, graduates from *berufsbildenden mittleren Schulen*, *BMS* (VET Schools) of at least three years' duration, graduates from nursing courses and specialist paramedical courses of at least 30 months' duration, and for graduates of the skilled workers' examination in agriculture and forestry. The content of the *BRP* is based on the secondary-school curriculum. It consists of four partial exams: German, mathematics, one modern foreign language, and a specialisation from vocational practice. In principle, the *BRP* can be taken without prior attendance of upper secondary schools. The *BRP* Act (cf. 0302) provides that relevant examinations can be taken also upon completion of specific courses recognised by the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture), which are offered by adult learning institutions and are therefore not part of the public education system.

4. FACHHOCHSCHULE AND UNIVERSITY COURSES

Universities offer CVET mostly within the framework of *Universitätslehrgänge* (i.e. short-term university courses for post-graduates and non-academics who satisfy other admission criteria). These courses, which are designed in the same way as master's courses, lead to a

master's degree or to the awarding of the prefix 'Akademischer...' before the graduate's existing professional title, provided that the curriculum has a value of at least 60 ECTS credits. Participants are required to pay a tuition fee, which is set in the light of the actual cost of the course. Most classes take place in the evenings or at weekends. In order to increase the accessibility of these courses, organisational forms that suit people in employment (evening or weekend sessions coupled with access to online resources) are being piloted.

A centre for continuing tertiary education was created in 1994 with the founding of the Danube University of Krems. Its role is defined to the provision of courses at the postgraduate level.

Fachhochschule providers have scope to offer special degree courses for people in employment, which are organised to take account of working people's free time and therefore comprise evening and weekend classes. Distance-learning components are also included, and the obligation to attend practical sessions may be waived for participants with relevant occupational experience. At the present time, about a third of all *Fachhochschule* courses are also offered as part-time courses for working people.

5. CVET IN NON-PROFIT PROVIDERS

In Austria, there is a great variety of non-profit providers which rely on public subsidies and on course fees in various distributions. Traditionally, the non-profit providers are most important for general and external CVET in Austria. The ten largest providers (among others, the *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI* [CVET provider of the federal and regional Chambers of Commerce] and *Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi* [CVET provider of the federal and regional Chambers of Labour and the Austrian Trade Union Federation]; cf. 0504) have joined forces and set up the *Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs, KEBÖ* (Conference of Adult Education in Austria). *KEBÖ* is not a special-interest group in the conventional sense but rather a think tank. It does not provide any continuing education itself. The sessions organised by the individual member institutions of *KEBÖ* differ widely in form and duration, ranging from single lectures to courses based on structured curricula. As well as initiating and implementing qualifying examination for higher education, these institutions also provide advisory services, thereby creating an important interface between supply and demand in the field of CVET.

0503 - TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

In Austria, training for unemployed people is the core task of the *Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS* (Public Employment Service), an autonomous government funded body. It is not a training provider but responsible for funding training programmes for unemployed people. It also funds some skills needs research to develop appropriate measures which achieve labour market requirements.

Other roles of the *AMS* include administering the *Bildungskarenz* (educational leave scheme), introduced in 1998. Employer and employee can agree upon periods of a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve months educational leave. During this time, the *AMS* pays a *Weiterbildungsgeld* (personal CVET benefit) to the employee. The scheme prioritises the acquisition of school and university-level qualifications or foreign language training and a general improvement of skills levels. The *AMS* arranges for substitute workers who are currently unemployed to replace people on leave.

The *AMS* is also entrusted with the skills training promotion for employed people within the framework of the ESF: With this fund it subsidises the costs of employees' skills training

measures. The aim is to safeguard the employment of staff by skilling programmes and thus facilitate CVET activities for employers. The following persons are eligible for promotion upon submission of a training scheme:

- women;
- men over the age of 45;
- unskilled men below the age of 45 who are in an employment relationship under full compulsory insurance or in a special parental leave.

Two thirds of the course fees are promoted. The maximum amount of recognisable course fees is EUR 10 000 per participant and application. Half of the financing comes from AMS and ESF funds each.

In accordance with the stated goals of the National Plan of Action for Employment, the AMS offers qualification possibilities particularly to the physically or mentally disabled, long-term unemployed, older people and young people looking for work. The forms of CVET opportunities are diverse; three of them should be mentioned here:

Since the mid-1980s, the *Arbeitsstiftung* (work foundation) is one of the tools used in Austria to promote CVET for specific economic sectors. Currently three different types of work foundations may be distinguished: business foundations, sectoral foundations, and regional insolvency foundations. The following groups of unemployed people are entitled to take part in one of these work foundations:

- business foundations: former employees of a specific enterprise where many jobs have been shed,
- sectoral foundations: former employees of a specific economic branch; participation is open to all dismissed persons employed in the respective sector across Austria
- regional insolvency foundation: former employees of insolvent enterprises.

Participants can stay in the work foundation for three to five years. This allows them to take part in comprehensive CVET measures or combine different measures. During this period they are entitled to draw *Ausbildungsarbeitslosengeld* (vocational training unemployment benefit) and a scholarship. Work foundations are offered across the country.

Stiftungsähnliche Maßnahmen (foundation-similar measures) are related to work foundations. They are designed for a particular target group, such as women, unemployed people, etc. In contrast to work foundations, however, there exists no legal entitlement to admission. Foundation-like measures have a maximum duration of two to three years. Participants are entitled to a subsistence benefit. In general it can be noted that work foundations and foundation-like measures have similar features as regards content (the only differences concern the target groups addressed by the measures):

- First of all, participants attend a vocational guidance course;
- this is followed by VET or CVET activities; these can consist also of a combination of various measures and include work placements; at the same time, they are assisted by the provider of the foundation;

- finally, there follows the phase of active job hunt: participants take part in an intensive job application training programme and are provided support in the job hunt.

Another tool to promote CVET is the *Qualifizierungsverbund* (composite skills training model), which consists of at least three independent enterprises that develop a tailored skills training scheme for their staff and co-ordinate its implementation. The measures are conducted by external providers, with one enterprise taking over the central project co-ordination. For setting up and implementing such composite skills training models, the AMS provides intensive process support and, in addition, financial assistance. The main support criterion is that the persons taking part in the skilling programme are employees in employment. Persons on *Karenz* (childcare leave) and apprentices are also eligible.

0504 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS

Enterprise CVET is not regulated unless specific qualifications are followed (e.g. *Meisterprüfung* - master craftsperson certificate, cf. 0502). On the whole the term enterprise CVET is understood as the entire range of internal measures financed and organised by the company as well as the external courses where employees take part; also forms of cost-sharing (where enterprises pay fees and employees participate during their free time) are included. According to the second CVT Survey, around 72% of all Austrian enterprises provided any type of continuing vocational training to their employees in 1999 (cf. Tab. 1 in 0504).

Table 1: Training enterprises as % of all enterprises, by size class (1999)				
	TOTAL (%)	SIZE CLASS (NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES)		
		10-49 (%)	50-249 (%)	250+ (%)
DENMARK	96	95	98	100
SWEDEN	91	88	99	99
NETHERLANDS	88	85	96	98
UK	87	85	91	98
NORWAY	86	84	97	100
FINLAND	82	78	97	99
IRELAND	79	75	98	100
FRANCE	76	70	93	98
GERMANY	75	71	87	98
AUSTRIA	72	68	91	96
LUXEMBOURG	71	67	83	99
BELGIUM	70	66	93	100
CZECH REPUBLIC	69	62	84	96
ESTONIA	63	58	85	96

EU-25	61	56	80	95
LATVIA	53	49	70	91
SLOVENIA	48	35	72	96
LITHUANIA	43	37	60	80
POLAND	39	36	52	63
HUNGARY	37	32	51	79
SPAIN	36	31	58	86
ITALY	24	20	48	81
PORTUGAL	22	17	46	78
GREECE	18	11	43	78
CYPRUS	:	:	:	:
ICELAND	:	:	:	:
MALTA	:	:	:	:
SLOVAKIA	:	:	:	:

Note: 'Training enterprise' are enterprises that did provide any type of continuing vocational training to their employees; Cyprus, Malta, Slovakia, Iceland were not covered by CVTS2

Source: Eurostat, NewCronos, 2nd Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS2)

All Austrian social partners have established their own CVET institutions. They are organised as non-profit education and training establishments and are open to all interested persons and for all topics that are of economic relevance. The social partners co-operate in labour market policies also with the *Arbeitsmarktservice*, AMS (Public Employment Service). Moreover, the activities of the social partners include measures in the field of *Fachhochschule* programmes. They run *Fachhochschule* programmes either alone or in co-operation with other establishments. The social partners were also active in the introduction of the *Berufsreifeprüfung*, BRP, which aims to facilitate access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- and four-year *berufbildenden mittleren Schulen* (VET schools).

1. CVET AT THE EMPLOYER'S, PARENT/ASSOCIATE COMPANY, EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS'

Companies are frequent venues of adult learning: courses within the enterprise, at supplier firms, and at the parent company are an increasingly important type of vocational qualification. Moreover, informal learning is realised through the exchange of experience with colleagues and reading specialist literature.

In terms of organisation, enterprise CVET ranges from learning in the workplace to specialised educational measures implemented by the company. A characteristic feature of enterprise CVET is the division of the costs between employers and employees. Course fees are usually covered by the employer, the time for the training is provided by the employee.

2. CVET AT THE PROVIDER INSTITUTIONS OF THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

All Austrian social partners have established their own institutions for CVET.

The *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI*, operated by the *Wirtschaftskammer Österreich* (Austrian Federal Economic Chamber), on the employers' side, targets its education effort at apprentices, skilled workers and executives. The courses it offers range from management and business administration to self-development and languages as well as courses for particular industries. Since the second half of the 1990s, the *WIFIs* have run *Fachhochschule* programmes focussing on technology and business. The *WIFIs'* offer is rounded off by the *WIFI-Fachakademien* (WIFI specialist colleges), *Werkmeisterschulen* (foreperson courses), *Vorbereitungslehrgänge* (bridge courses) and preparatory courses for exams e.g. *Berufsreifeprüfung*, tailor-made in-company CVET as well as educational counselling.

The *Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi* is the CVET institution of the *Kammern für Arbeiter und Angestellte* (Chambers of Labour) and the *Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund* (Austrian Trade Union Federation) on the employees' side. The programmes on offer cover self-development and management, data processing, secretarial and business studies, languages, courses in health and welfare occupations, preparatory courses for officially recognised examinations, such as the *Studienberechtigungsprüfung* (higher education entrance examination) and the *Berufsreifeprüfung*, and educational and training measures for people who are unemployed or who face the threat of unemployment. The *bfi* also runs *Kollegs* (post-secondary VET courses) and provides *Fachhochschule* courses.

The *Ländliche Fortbildungsinstitut, LFI* is the training enterprise of the *Landwirtschaftskammern* (Chambers of Agriculture). The training programme offered by the *LFI*, as well as covering all the traditional farming and forestry specialisation, also includes protection of the natural environment, self-development, health and nutrition, data processing, building, energy and agricultural engineering, service provision and income diversification. The range of educational services extends from practical training courses, educational courses and seminars to lectures and public discussions, study groups and visits to farms and other businesses. The *LFI* likewise provides preparatory courses for the *Berufsreifeprüfung*.

0505 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Individual adults have different motivations to engage in CVET activities. Both job-related and non-job-related motives are of relevance and often hard to distinguish. A number of surveys on CVET have been conducted but there is still a lack of data on general motivations for participating. In 2002, a survey examining motives for their participation in CVET measures shows that the majority of adults view it as a personal issue.

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET

Pre-service teacher training takes place in dedicated post-secondary establishments, namely, in *Pädagogischen Akademien* (teacher training colleges), at *Berufspädagogischen Akademien* (vocational teacher training colleges) and *Agrarpädagogischen Akademien* (agricultural teacher training colleges), as well as at universities. The type of training institution largely depends on the category of school in which the student will subsequently teach. The in-service training of teachers takes place at the *Pädagogischen Institute* (in-service teacher training colleges).

As the Bologna Process unfolds and comparable degrees are introduced in higher education, all of post-secondary training courses will be brought under one roof in *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (tertiary colleges of education).

In contrast to teachers at general education schools, the teaching staff of schools and colleges in the VET sector fall into various categories in terms of education and training, occupational experience and status. With the exception of teachers of academic subjects, several years' experience in a trade or in industry is required for appointment to the teaching staff of a VET institution. Many instructors also combine their teaching duties with an occupation in industry or commerce.

The following factors are considered crucial in guaranteeing up-to-date, high-quality initial and in-service training of teaching staff:

- experience in industry or commerce as an appointment criterion,
- completed vocational training as an appointment criterion,
- training in education science during first years of service,
- closest possible cooperation with industry or commerce,
- some staff engaged in parallel activity in industry or commerce, and
- inclusion of modern technology and media.

Besides changing the post-secondary teacher training colleges into tertiary colleges of education, some other reforms are being discussed at the moment:

Modernising initial teacher education: Austria has initiated an in-depth reform of its initial teacher education system. At present teachers are prepared in one type of institution with only limited bridging opportunities for continued education and transfer between sectors. This rigidity is the subject of the reforms presently underway in teacher education. They aim at modernising initial teacher education by raising teaching standards, tightening the linkage between theory, practice and research, deepening ICT in the curriculum, and reorienting the mission of teacher education institutions towards a lifelong learning perspective for teachers. The reforms also provide for the closer integration of initial teacher education and in-service education institutions, which had previously tended to operate somewhat independently.

Networking of educational institutions: Another subject to be discussed critically is the introduction of obligatory CVET for teachers outside teaching hours. In this connection, also changes in the organisational structure are debated. A clear preference is going towards flexible networks or alliances of colleges. Such a configuration is well suited to the modern concept of learning from multiple sources, to the use of ICT, self-paced learning, innovative methodologies, and to the federal nature of the country. Networks linking the pedagogical universities as hubs with associated practice schools and in-service education delivery points, could allow economies of scale, capitalise on staff expertise, and facilitate cross fertilisation. The concept of networks of teacher education institutions characterised by internal complementarity together with external competition could be extended to include the traditional universities themselves. This could lead to the formation of consortia offering a comprehensive range of services – teaching, research, assessment, consulting, mentoring, coaching, technical assistance for projects – to all teachers and schools.

0602 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

1. PRE-SERVICE (INITIAL) TRAINING

Table 1 gives an overview of all types of teachers, trainers and training facilitators in IVET:

Table 1: Teachers, trainers and training facilitators in IVET	
TYPES OF TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND TRAINING FACILITATORS	PLACE OF PRE-SERVICE (INITIAL) TRAINING
<i>POLYTECHNISCHE SCHULE, PTS (PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOL)</i>	
teachers of general education subjects	<i>Pädagogische Akademie</i> (teacher training college)
teachers of craft-specific theoretical subjects	teacher training college
teachers of craft-specific practical subjects	teacher training college
<i>BERUFSBILDENDE MITTLERE SCHULE, BMS (VET SCHOOL) AND BERUFSBILDENDE HÖHERE SCHULE, BHS (VET COLLEGE)</i>	
teachers of general education subjects	university
teachers for business administration subjects	university
teachers for nutrition science and home economic management subjects	<i>Berufspädagogische Akademie</i> (vocational teacher training college)
teachers of information and office management	
teachers of craft-specific theoretical subjects	university vocational teacher training college <i>Agrarpädagogische Akademie</i> (agricultural teacher training college)
teachers of craft-specific practical subjects	vocational teacher training college <i>Berufspädagogische Akademie</i> (vocational teacher training college) <i>Pädagogisches Institut</i> (in-service teacher training college) agricultural teacher training college
<i>BERUFSSCHULE (PART-TIME VOCATIONAL SCHOOL FOR APPRENTICES)</i>	
teachers of general education subjects	vocational teacher training college
teachers of craft-specific theoretical subjects	vocational teacher training college agricultural teacher training college
teachers of craft-specific practical subjects	vocational teacher training college agricultural teacher training college

KOLLEGS (POST-SECONDARY VET COURSES) AND AKADEMIEN (POST-SECONDARY VET COLLEGES)	
teachers of general education subjects	university
teachers of craft-specific theoretical subjects	university vocational teacher training college
teachers of craft-specific practical subjects	vocational teacher training college
all types of teachers	university
TRAINING ENTERPRISES	
<i>Ausbilder</i> (apprenticeship trainer)	<i>Ausbilderkurs</i> (IVET trainer course) at a CVET provider institution

PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Teachers of prevocational schools (cf. 0402) follow post-secondary training at teacher training colleges. The course lasts at least six semesters and ends with a *Lehramtsprüfung* (teaching diploma examination). Teachers are qualified in at least two subjects.

VET SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Teachers at VET schools and colleges (cf. 0403) are subject area specialists. The nature of training courses and admission requirements depend on the subjects to be taught. Pre-service training of teachers of general education subjects takes place at university. Study programmes consist of two subject areas, pedagogical training and a period of practical training. In addition, teachers of general subjects must undergo one year of teaching practice before being entitled to join a school. Teachers of some craft-specific theoretical subjects at VET schools and colleges have to have professional experience in the relevant area in addition to university training. Special training is provided for teachers of practical subjects and teachers of some theoretical subjects in VET schools in vocational teacher training colleges or in-service teacher training colleges.

PART-TIME VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Part-time vocational school (cf. 0404) teachers are trained at the vocational teacher training college. Teachers of general, business studies and theoretical subjects have to have the *Reifeprüfung* certificate (school leaver's examination in *allgemein bildenden höheren Schulen* [higher general education schools]) or the *Reifeprüfung* certificate and VET diploma (school leaver's examination in *berufsbildenden höheren Schulen* [VET colleges]) and two years of professional experience. Teachers teaching practical subjects must have a *Meisterprüfung* (master craftsperson certificate) as a professional qualification or an equivalent certificate and six years of relevant professional experience.

POST-SECONDARY VET COURSES AND COLLEGES

The teaching staff at post-secondary VET courses and colleges (cf. 0406) possesses the same qualifications profiles as teachers in VET schools and colleges. In addition, teachers in humanities (teaching science, education science, school law, and the psychology and sociology of teaching) must have a doctorate, whilst teachers in the field of vocational teaching or practical work must be able to demonstrate longstanding relevant experience.

TEACHERS AT *FACHHOCHSCHULE* AND UNIVERSITY COURSES

Instructors at *Fachhochschule* and university courses (cf. 0407) possess a craft-specific university or *Fachhochschule* degree as well as a PhD degree. For teaching at universities and *Fachhochschule* courses, the pedagogic-didactic experience and suitability of instructors must be determined. Within the framework of working as a *Lehrbeauftragter* (contractual teacher) or *wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter* (scientific staff), personal suitability for teaching can be determined and experience can be gathered.

AUSBILDER (APPRENTICESHIP TRAINERS)

The pre-service training of apprenticeship (cf. 0404) trainers is regulated by the *Berufsausbildungsgesetz* (Vocational Training Act, cf. 0302), which stipulates that enterprises providing apprenticeship training must employ at least one responsible trainer. His or her task may either be fulfilled by the person entitled to train (i.e. the company owner) or assigned to another staff member.

The first prerequisite for training apprentices is proof of specialist knowledge and skills in the relevant apprenticeship. Evidence of these is a successful *Lehrabschlussprüfung* (final apprenticeship examination) or the successful completion of a VET school or college. Proof of at least two years of professional experience following certification is also required.

The second prerequisite is the successful completion of the *Ausbilderprüfung* (trainer examination). This exam takes place orally and establishes whether the required level of knowledge and skills for apprenticeship training are present and whether they can be applied in practice. This comprises the specification of training objectives, the planning of the apprenticeship training provided by the business, as well as the preparation, implementation and monitoring of training, behaviour towards the apprentice and questions pertaining to legal groundwork (Vocational Training Act, laws governing the employment of children and young people, etc.). Since 1997, successful completion of a forty-hour *Ausbilderkurs* (trainer course) completed with a conversation of a vocation-specific nature about pedagogic, legal and methodical issues has been equivalent to completion of the trainer examination.

2. CONTINUING TRAINING PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Teachers of prevocational schools receive continuing training either through autonomous study or by attending training establishments. Only 15 hours of such training per year are compulsory. In-service training activities can be attended either during the holidays, in the teacher's free time or during working hours.

VET SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Teachers at VET schools and colleges are legally bound to keep their knowledge and skills up to date. How they obtain the requisite knowledge is their own choice. The in-service

training of teachers takes place primarily at a college of in-service teacher training. At least one such college has been set up in each *Land*. The *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur*, BMBWK (Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture) is responsible for the guidelines relating to budgets and contents. Currently, emphasis is placed on the following aspects:

- information technology
- foreign languages and international certificates
- school development and the autonomy of schools
- internationalisation – European awareness
- imparting of key qualifications
- personal development and communication
- practice companies
- environment
- generic cross-curricular themes

PART-TIME VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Teachers receive CVET either through autonomous study or by attending training establishments. They are required by law to attend a total of at least 15 hours of organised in-service training per years.

POST-SECONDARY VET COURSES AND COLLEGES

As regards CVET, the situation is the same as for VET school and college teachers.

TEACHERS AT *FACHHOCHSCHULE* AND UNIVERSITY COURSES

CVET for teachers at university and *Fachhochschule* courses is focussed mainly on professional content. New findings in the respective fields, or new scientific methods, are either self-studied continuously or taken from subject literature, conferences and conventions.

IN SERVICE TRAINING OF *AUSBILDER* (APPRENTICESHIP TRAINERS)

The in-service training of apprentice trainers is not regulated by law and takes place on a voluntary basis. *WIFI* and *bfi* (cf. 0504), the VET provider institutions of the social partners (cf. 0303), the in-service teacher training college and the centres for apprentice training and vocational training in agriculture and forestry offer appropriate courses.

0603 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

The pre- and in-service training of teachers and instructors at schools and colleges for persons in employment (cf. 0502) is identical to that of their counterparts at *berufsbildenden mittleren und höheren Schulen*, *BMHS* (VET schools and colleges).

There are no explicit rules governing the training in private and non-profit establishments, in companies and on employability courses (cf. 0502, 0503 and 0504) of teachers of adult-education classes. Applicants are primarily expected to possess specialised know-how. Languages, for example, are often taught by teachers of modern languages with university of post-secondary college training, while data-processing classes are frequently given by specialists with occupational experience. There are opportunities for teachers of adult-education classes to attend induction courses in education theory and teaching methods, but there is no obligation to undergo such training.

In-service training is likewise unregulated, but the institutions do offer seminars for their teaching staff. The *Erwachsenenbildungs-Förderungsgesetz* (Adult Education Act) of 1973 (cf. 0302) established the legal basis for the creation of an in-service training establishment for teaching staff in the field of adult education, namely the *Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung, bifeb* (Federal Institute for Adult Education), which is under the authority of the Federal Ministry of Education.

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

The *Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS* (Public Employment Service) is the foremost promoter of instruments and methods designed to assist in the assessment of skill requirements. These instruments and methods include:

- skills need analyses for particular economic sectors, target groups, etc.
- the *Qualifikations-Barometer* (qualification barometer) created by the AMS in 2002 ([cf. www.ams.or.at/qualifikationsbarometer](http://www.ams.or.at/qualifikationsbarometer)), in which information on the skills deemed most desirable by businesses at the present time and in the foreseeable future is collected, structured and made accessible to the general public through the Internet,
- the AMS research network, which enables numerous Austrian research institutes to exchange information and services to harness the synergy generated by their interaction,
- an annual colloquium on future skill requirements, at which specific issues such as skill shortages in health and welfare and the training needs of young people and of older employees are discussed with representatives of the national business and labour organisations.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Bridging different types and levels of education is realised in various ways in Austria:

1. VET AND HE

Berufsreifeprüfung, BRP (an examination through which individuals who already have an initial vocational qualification, such as those who have successfully completed a *Lehre*

[apprenticeship] or a course at a *berufsbildende mittlere Schule* [VET school], obtain an entrance qualification for higher education by passing certain tests)

Studienberechtigungsprüfung, SBP (higher education entrance examination)

recognition of professional qualifications

2. GE/VET AND HE:

Studienberechtigungsprüfung, SBP

3. EDUCATION – ECONOMY/LABOUR MARKET

Übungsfirmen (training firms)

JUNIOR companies

1. VET AND HE

Berufsreifeprüfung, BRP

Introduced in 1997, the *BRP* represents a significant development in increasing the permeability of the educational system, giving graduates of apprenticeships, VET schools or nursing and healthcare schools the opportunity to gain access to higher education. Formally, it can be categorised as a *Reifeprüfung* (school leaver's examination) at an upper secondary school. Partial examinations may also be taken in recognised preparatory courses at adult education establishments. However, at least one of the four partial examinations must be completed at an upper level secondary school or college. Preparatory courses for the *BRP* have different durations; depending on the provider and the subject, they may take up to four semesters. The costs for the participation in preparatory courses are the responsibility of the participants. Subsidies are available from regional governments and the social partners in various forms, and can cover up to half of the participation costs for the course.

Studienberechtigungsprüfung, SBP

For more information cf. point 2 "GE/VET and HE".

RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Professional qualifications replace the required proof of the general university entrance qualification for accessing *Fachhochschule* programmes (university-level programmes of at least three years' duration with technical-vocational orientation). Whenever the educational goal of the programme in question so requires, entrants with professional qualifications must furnish evidence of additional examinations.

2. GE/VET AND HE

Studienberechtigungsprüfung, SBP

Another possibility of gaining limited-access qualifications for higher education is the *SBP* (higher education entrance examination). This exam consists of five parts (compulsory and elective subjects); the former are specified for the study course in question. As a preparation for the different exams, bridge courses are offered against payment by adult learning institutions and universities.

3. EDUCATION – ECONOMY/LABOUR MARKET

Übungsfirmen (training firms)

Training firms are mock-ups of real enterprises which are designed to provide students with an insight into the complex structure and operational procedures of real companies. They have to be established and used for teaching purposes at all *Handelsschulen und Handelsakademien* (schools and colleges of business administration). In training firms students are presented with the various trade-specific business situations ranging from the procurement over the rendering of a service up to sales. The necessary commercial and administrative steps have to be taken with regard to the respective commercial customs and in compliance with legal regulations. Goods and services just as money are merely virtual, though. Interdisciplinary, action-, problem- as well as practice-oriented education in training firms aims at providing students with an insight into intra- and inter-operational procedures. The acquisition of key qualifications (e.g. the ability to work in teams, interdisciplinary thinking, language skills) enhances the graduates' mobility and flexibility in the world of work.

JUNIOR companies

"Junior" companies are founded within the framework of the project "Junior – pupils found companies" set up by the *Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft Österreich* (Austrian Economics Society). In contrast to the training firms, the founding and running of a company is not simulated, but actually takes place. Real goods or services are made available, requiring the use of real capital. The "Junior" companies are not fixed as part of school curricula and are voluntary, but are declared as a school-related activity in *allgemein bildenden höheren Schulen* (higher general education schools, cf. 0402) and *Polytechnischen Schulen* (prevocational schools, cf. 0402).

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

BERUFSBILDENDE MITTLERE UND HÖHERE SCHULEN, BMHS (VET SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES)

Training objectives and course content at VET schools and colleges are prescribed in framework curricula. These are enacted by the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, BMBWK* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture). Moves to reform the curricula, introduce new subjects, specialisations or new elements (e.g. e-learning elements) are initiated by the educational institutions themselves or by the Ministry. In the framework of bodies known as *Lehrplankommissionen*, teachers and experts from the Ministry and from the business community design curricula for the various teaching subjects. Like numerous other institutions, the social partners (cf. 0303) receive the drafts and are asked for their opinion. When they implement the framework curricula, schools and colleges have a degree of autonomy, which they can exercise by adjusting the number of hours assigned to individual subjects or by developing their own areas of special focus in order to meet the needs of the regional economy.

LEHRE (APPRENTICESHIP)

Berufsbilder (training profiles) are enacted by the *Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit, BMA* (Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour) in the framework of the relevant *Ausbildungsordnung* (training regulation, cf. 0302). Moves to adapt existing profiles or introduce new sets of descriptors are often initiated by companies or by the representative bodies of employers and employees. The *Bundes-Berufsausbildungsbeirat, B-BAB* (Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship, cf. 0301) also makes proposals or compiles expert reports on proposed reforms. The actual formulation of the occupational descriptors, which are the key to training requirements, is generally done by subcommittees of the Federal

Advisory Board or by the educational research institutes of the employers' and employees' bodies, namely the *ibw*, the Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy, and the *öibf*, the Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Education and Training.

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

The Austrian VET system is characterised by a concentration on formal IVET. The main legal bases concerning the objectives and contents of education, final examinations and entitlements are the *Schulorganisationsgesetz, SchOG* (School Organisation Act, cf. 0302) and the *Schulunterrichtsgesetz, SchUG* (School Education Act, cf. 0302) containing regulations for *berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen* (VET schools and colleges, cfl 0403) and for *Berufsschulen* (part-time schools for apprentices, cf. 0404) as well as the *Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG* (Vocational Training Act, cf. 0302), which regulates apprenticeship training. The *Gewerbeordnung, GewO* (Trade Regulation Code, cf. 0302) and the decrees enacted on its basis contain all regulations concerning the self-employed practice of a regulated or a free trade.

In the following the main ways of receiving formal vocational qualifications are illustrated with regard to the assessment of skills and competences acquired within the individual formal training programmes as well as the entitlements connected with their completion.

1. APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

The legal groundwork for the *Lehrabschlussprüfung* (final apprenticeship examination) is laid down in the *Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG* (Vocational Training Act, cf. 0302), the *allgemeine Prüfungsordnung* (general examination regulation for final apprenticeship examinations) and the *Prüfungsordnung* (examination regulation) for the individual apprenticeship.

Upon the successful completion of the final apprenticeship examination the apprentice is qualified as a skilled worker with the adequate rights and duties of employment. In some cases (e.g. in tourism) the final apprenticeship examination may also entitle the skilled worker to carry out a regulated trade without any further certificates. It is also possible that a final apprenticeship examination and the evidence of work experience in an entrepreneurial or managerial position in the relevant business are sufficient to get a *Gewerbeberechtigung* (entitlement to carry out a trade).

2. VET SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

One- or two-year VET schools end with an *Abschlusszeugnis* (certificate of completion). Students in three- and four-year VET schools have to take an *Abschlussprüfung* (final examination) at the end of their education. Students who complete these three- and four-year VET schools are qualified for the practice of a relevant occupation and have access to regulated professions.

VET colleges are completed with the *Reife- und Diplomprüfung* (*Reifeprüfung* and VET diploma examination). The graduates receive the access right to higher education as well as vocational qualifications which allow the practice of advanced professions according to the type of training. In most other EU member states, these vocational qualifications are acquired at post-secondary level. The examination regulations for the different forms of VET colleges

are issued by the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture).

3. VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR ADULTS KOLLEGS (POST-SECONDARY VET COURSES)

Post-secondary courses (cf. 0406) give persons who have a *Reifeprüfung*, a *Berufsreifeprüfung*, *BRP* (examination providing access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools) or a *Studienberechtigungsprüfung*, *SBP* (higher education entrance examination) the opportunity to acquire theoretical and practical knowledge which corresponds to that of a VET college of the same area of specialisation. Post-secondary VET courses are completed with a *Diplomprüfung* (diploma examination).

WERKMEISTERSCHULEN(FOREMAN COURSES)

Foreman courses (cf. 0502) extend the theoretical vocational education of persons with completed vocational education in technical-industrial areas.

MEISTERSCHULEN AND MEISTERKLASSEN (MASTER CRAFTSPERSON SCHOOLS)

The master craftsperson schools (cf. 0502) serve for the vocational education and preparation for the *Meisterprüfung* (master craftsperson examination) of persons with completed vocational education in the industrial-technical and arts and crafts areas. The courses last one to two years and are completed with a final examination. Master craftsperson schools fall in the competence of the Education Ministry.

FACHAKADEMIEN (SPECIALIST VET COLLEGES)

Specialist VET colleges have been offered since 1993. They build on an already completed apprenticeship training and lead to advanced vocational knowledge. The completion of specialist VET colleges enables access to regulated trades upon proof of relevant vocational activities for a certain period of time.

4. PROOF OF COMPETENCY EXAMINATIONS FOR REGULATED TRADES

Meisterprüfungen für Handwerke (master craftsperson examinations for crafts) and *Befähigungsprüfungen* (qualifying examinations for other regulated trades) take place within the *Landeswirtschaftskammern* (Regional Economic Chambers). A new modular examination system provides candidates for the master craftsperson examination with more flexibility and personal responsibility. Relevant final apprenticeship examinations replace certain modules. Other training programmes can likewise replace modules, entirely or partially. The Federal Economic Chamber has to determine the topics of the master craftsperson examination, which requires confirmation of the Economics Ministry.

0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

There are only limited possibilities to have non-formally or informally vocational qualifications validated and recognised:

CERTIFICATION OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS ACCORDING TO EN 45013

In order to standardise quality assurance in personnel certification across Europe, the norm EN 45013 has been introduced at the European level. The certificate confirms that its holder has adequate qualifications in a clearly defined vocational area. For an institute to be allowed to certify the required conformity, it must receive accreditation from the *Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit* (Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour) according to the Austrian *Akkreditierungsgesetz* (Accreditation Act). Accredited certification institutions currently provide certification primarily for personnel working in the areas of quality and environment management and specific technical areas. Certificates are valid for a time period of three to five years.

CERTIFICATION OF NON-FORMALLY ACQUIRED COMPETENCES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FORMAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Possibilities for the recognition of vocational experience are provided primarily by access to examinations within the formal educational system and the attainment of certificates of competence.

EXCEPTIONAL ACCESS TO THE LEHRABSCHLUSSPRÜFUNG (FINAL APPRENTICESHIP EXAMINATION)

The *Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG* (Vocational Training Act, cf. 0302) enables access to the final apprenticeship examination for people without formal training (apprenticeship or school), and thus gives the possibility to acquire a formal vocational qualification. People must be over 18 years of age and furnish evidence that they have acquired the knowledge and skills required for the respective apprenticeship, e.g. by exercising a relevant semi-skilled or other practical activity of appropriate length or by attending relevant tuition at school. Furthermore, completion of at least half of the period stipulated for the respective apprenticeship is accepted as evidence if there is no other possibility of entering into an apprenticeship contract for the remaining apprenticeship period.

In accordance with the Vocational Training Act skilled workers have the opportunity to take another final apprenticeship examination in an apprenticeship related to their first one.

BERUFSREIFEPRÜFUNG, BRP

The *BRP* is equivalent to the *Matura* certificate (school leaver's certificate) at the upper secondary level insofar as it qualifies for studying at post-secondary and tertiary educational institutions. It is targeted at apprenticeship graduates, graduates from *berufsbildenden mittleren Schulen, BMS* (VET Schools) of at least three years' duration, graduates from nursing courses and specialist paramedical courses of at least 30 months' duration, and for graduates of the skilled workers' examination in agriculture and forestry.

The *BRP* consists of four partial exams: German, mathematics, one modern foreign language, and a specialisation from vocational practice. In principle, the *BRP* can be taken without prior attendance of upper secondary schools. The *BRP* Act provides that relevant examinations can be taken also upon completion of specific courses recognised by the

Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur (Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture), which are offered by adult learning institutions and are therefore not part of the public education system.

STUDIENBERECHTIGUNGSPRÜFUNG, SBP (HIGHER EDUCATION ENTRANCE EXAMINATION)

Another possibility of gaining limited-access qualifications for entering post-secondary and tertiary education and training is the *SBP* (higher education entrance examination). This exam consists of five parts (compulsory and elective subjects); the former are specified for the study course in question. As a preparation for the different exams, bridge courses are offered against payment by adult learning institutions and universities.

ACCESS TO FACHHOCHSCHULE PROGRAMMES

Professional qualifications replace the required proof of the general university entrance qualification into *Fachhochschule* programmes (university-level programmes of at least three years' duration with technical-vocational orientation). Whenever the educational goal of the degree programme in question so requires, entrants with professional qualifications must furnish evidence of additional examinations.

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

There is a wide variety of facilities and providers for information and counselling about VET possibilities in Austria:

EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS

Educational and vocational counselling in the school sector is primarily the responsibility of the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture). From grade 5 onwards, pupils and parents have access to educational counsellors in all schools, i.e. *allgemein bildenden höheren Schulen* (higher general education schools), *Hauptschulen* (general education schools) and *Sonderschulen* (special needs schools). These counsellors are responsible for informing them about the range of educational paths, the relevant entry requirements and the final qualifications gained by means of information materials and various media. Additionally, they are responsible for providing them with an all-encompassing overview of possibilities in CVET. The counselling is performed by teaching staff with relevant training, as a supplementary service to normal teaching duties. Depending on the type of school, these teachers are known as *Schülerberater* (guidance counsellors) or *Bildungsberater* (educational consultants).

In grades 7 and 8 the subject *Berufsorientierung* (vocational guidance) with 32 hours per year is mandatory. It can be taught as a separate subject or be integrated into several subjects. It supports the students in reflecting their interests and aptitudes, their ideas about shaping their future personal and career lives. It also provides for actual contact to real working life, e.g. through practical training sessions in companies, meetings with people from the world of work, etc.

Students' counselling at *Polytechnischen Schulen* (prevocational schools, cf. 0402) is of special interest, as this school type is at the transition between compulsory school and further educational pathways. Thus, school students and parents are informed about the

local apprenticeship situation. In careers guidance lessons they are informed on and prepared for relevant information events, practical training sessions in companies, career fairs, information days at the *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI* (CVET provider institute of the Economic Chamber, cf. 0504) and at the *Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi* (CVET provider of the Chamber of Labour and the Austrian Trade Union Federation, cf. 0504).

At the *berufsbildenden mittleren und höheren Schulen* (VET schools and colleges, cf. 0403) there are also specially trained teachers working as guidance counsellors. These counsellors play a special role, as, on the one hand, at VET schools and colleges students have already made a first decision about their vocational career. On the other hand, these schools also provide for a good, general education, which leaves the whole spectrum of further careers open to the students. Therefore, careers counselling and guidance at these schools always integrate more intensive reflections on the preliminary career decision made.

TERTIARY SECTOR

In the tertiary sector most universities have *Psychologische Beratungsstellen für Studierende* (psychological counselling centres for students), which offer support to students as regards the choice of programme and life at university, as well as *Berufsplanungszentren* (career planning centres) that help students enter the labour market. Both organisations fall into the province of the Education Ministry.

The Ministry also maintains a university information service which publishes various information brochures to be downloaded on www.bmbwk.gv.at. Moreover, it provides CD-ROMs, telephone information and legal aids for students and organises career fairs. The biggest career fair is the *BeSt – Die Messe für Beruf, Studium und Weiterbildung* (fair on jobs, education and further training). Hundreds of exhibitors from all educational spheres contribute to this fair, which is organised in cooperation with the *Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS* (Public Employment Service).

ADULT EDUCATION

In the area of adult education, career information, guidance and counselling are increasingly considered an important educational task. This has become obvious in the establishment of comprehensive educational databases (www.erwachsenenbildung.at, www.eduvista.com), in the formation of a national platform for educational counselling, and the arrangement of inter-institutional information and counselling services acting independently of the service providers.

Moreover, especially bigger adult education establishments often provide their own counselling services, e.g. the *WIFI*, the *bfi*, the *Volkshochschulen, VHS* (Adult Education Centres), etc.

COUNSELLING BY THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

The counselling service of the *AMS* is provided in the *Berufsinformationszentren, BIZ* (vocational information centres). Currently, there are 56 located throughout Austria, providing comprehensive information about jobs, their contents and requirements, IVET possibilities, the job market situation and CVET offers.

Besides comprehensive information materials such as brochures, information sheets, videos, etc., the *AMS* has introduced job information programmes for a variety of target groups and developed education and training databases, which are accessible on www.ams.or.at/berufsinfo.

EURES counsellors, supported by the EURES database, are also in place within the AMS to provide information about jobs and working conditions in other European countries.

COUNSELLING BY THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

The Chamber of Labour and the trade unions primarily offer counselling through their adult education establishment, the *Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi* (CVET provider institution). Additionally, they produce information materials and organise information events.

The Economic Chambers, which also host the *Lehrlingsstellen* (apprenticeship offices) and the CVET provider institution *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI*, focus on job-related CVET counselling. There are many *Berufsinformationszentren, BIZ* (vocational information centres) not only in the capital of each *Land*, but also in district towns. Moreover, the Economic Chambers set up the *Berufsinformationscomputer (BIC)*, which can be accessed on www.bic.at. This service includes job descriptions, IVET and CVET opportunities, relevant addresses and links.

FURTHER COUNSELLING OPPORTUNITIES

A number of other counselling facilities offer a variety of services to specific target groups. For instance, each *Land* has its own woman's counselling service, which provides information on gender-specific educational and vocational issues, alongside a wide range of other services. Similar institutions exist to provide information and counselling to the disabled, as well as to immigrants.

There is also a rise in the level of private, non-profit or commercial counselling services that offer a range of services, such as educational counselling, vocational information and careers guidance. These are often performed in connection with other services such as job exchanges, application training and related schemes and programmes.

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS

The counselling opportunities in the school sector are primarily directed at pupils and parents. Consultation is offered individually to pupils and their parents, but also to whole classes, parent-teacher meetings, etc. Moreover, information materials are distributed, excursions and school trips to relevant events are organised.

The service of the *Schulpsychologie – Bildungsberatung* (school psychology – education counselling) is available to pupils, teachers and parents seeking advice and expert opinions in questions concerning the avoidance, reduction and solving of potential problems. Responsibilities range from psychological (or psychotherapeutic) care to the creation of information materials and lecturing. Additionally, the counsellors assist and participate in the CVET of school and educational counsellors.

Since the school year 1998/99 *Beruforientierung* (vocational guidance) has been a compulsory exercise in the 3rd and 4th forms of *Hauptschulen* (general education schools) and in junior cycles of *allgemein bildenden höheren Schulen, AHS* (higher general education schools). The curriculum gives schools two organisational possibilities in this respect: Vocational guidance may be conducted as a separate subject or integrated in the compulsory subjects. The purpose of these exercises includes strengthening the decisiveness, social competence, ambition and perseverance of the pupils. Conversation in classes, role-playing games and group tasks are implemented, information fairs and

businesses are visited, and work-experience days and weeks are organised. The pupils are also encouraged to make use of external counselling opportunities.

TERTIARY SECTOR

The target groups of the *Psychologische Beratungsstellen für Studierende* (psychological counselling centres for students) are school leavers and students of third-level educational establishments. General student's advice, psychological counselling, psychotherapy, aptitude diagnoses, training and group sessions are provided by these centres.

The *Berufsplanungszentren* (career planning centres) offer students and graduates individual counselling sessions and information events on the writing of letters of application, curriculum vitae as well as on personal career planning. Seminars on presentation, rhetoric, IT etc. and events such as career fairs and company presentations are also organised.

COUNSELLING BY THE ARBEITSMARKTSERVICE, AMS (PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE)

Counselling and orientation measures of the AMS are available to all people registered as unemployed. The many and varied forms of information materials and online tools in the *Berufsinformationszentren, BIZ* (vocational information centres) are available to all interested parties free of charge. These centres are primarily designed for self-service. Information materials and access to databases are provided; members of staff are available for individual orientation discussions.

COUNSELLING BY THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

The counselling services of the worker's special-interest groups are targeted at young people and adults. As well as individual counselling with psychological tests, courses on vocational orientation, information events and materials are available.

The target groups of counselling services provided by the Economic Chambers include young people, adults, parents, teachers and businesspeople. The vocational information centres of the Economic Chambers offer a wide range of self-service information materials, as well as vocation-related events, such as industry presentations, schooling and information events and application trainings. The education counsellors of the *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI* (CVET provider institution of the federal and regional Economic Chambers) offer individual counselling services, which include psychological tests.

FURTHER COUNSELLING OPPORTUNITIES

Further counselling services are available for specific target groups such as women, the disabled, older workers, workers with placement difficulties, immigrants, etc. Among other services, these institutions offer counselling relating to educational and vocational questions according to different methods.

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

There is no general legal regulation governing the qualifications and aptitudes of vocational and educational counsellors. Only the CVET of counsellors responsible to the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture) is regulated by decree.

EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS

Schüler- und Bildungsberater (guidance counsellors and educational consultants) are teaching personnel with a teaching diploma and several years of teaching experience. Headmasters are responsible for selecting teachers to take on the role as pupil and education counsellor. CVET takes place within the framework of a training programme comprising basic training seminars as well as in-depth courses. Teacher workgroups are responsible for the constant refreshing of relevant knowledge.

The qualifications required of *Berufsorientierungslehrer, BO-Lehrer* (vocational guidance teachers) are not regulated by law. There are differences in the contents and organisation of training. On the one hand, it is possible to take relevant courses within the framework of the teaching training course. On the other hand, teachers who are in employment may participate in relevant training courses. The Education Ministry is currently working on the establishment of a curriculum for the training of vocational guidance teachers to ensure a unified way of qualification.

TERTIARY SECTOR

The psychologists employed in the *Schulpsychologie – Bildungsberatung* (school psychology – education counselling) system are university graduates and are required to begin training for higher psychological services in schools when they enter employment. The training must be completed within four years. Designed to introduce the counsellors to the required basic knowledge, skills and experience necessary for successful performance in the service of school psychology, the training comprises three parts: in-service training, self-education in the development of specific subjects relevant in school psychology, and the participation in a training course. The training concludes with an obligatory examination.

COUNSELLING BY THE *ARBEITSMARKTSERVICE, AMS* (PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE)

The training of employees in the *AMS* is regulated internally. Staff working in the area of counselling must have achieved at least *Reifeprüfung* level (school leaver's examination granting access to higher education). During initial training, staff move between training courses which they may attend in person or participate in by e-learning and weeks of on-the-job training. Training and specialist coaches are nominated to oversee the entire training period, to assure the adherence to the regulations governing duration of practical training and monitor the level of training. Initial training lasts 40 weeks; the training is completed with an examination. CVET for staff of *AMS* centres are offered at district and regional level. The educational contents is decided according to inquires into training requirements which take place every two or three years.

COUNSELLING BY THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

The educational and vocational counsellors of the social partners and in their CVET provider institutions are trained internally, often in cooperation with other institutions. Counselling is conducted primarily by psychologists, social education teachers or staff with similar qualifications.

The educational and vocational counsellors of the Economic Chambers and the *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI* (its CVET provider) meet at least twice a year to exchange experiences and receive further training in specific areas. The situation is similar for counsellors of the Chamber of Labour and its CVET provider institution, the *Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi*, who meet regularly for workshops.

FURTHER COUNSELLING OPPORTUNITIES

The following CVET opportunity is open to all educational and vocational counsellors: The *Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung St. Wolfgang* (Federal Institute for Adult Education in St. Wolfgang) offers an in-service training course for all people employed in the sector of educational and vocational counselling or vocational orientation. The following subjects are included: client-centred counselling, information management, tools of educational counselling, subsidies, systematic counselling, teaching counselling, etc.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

Within the last few years, a number of steps have been taken that have changed the administrative structure that governs funding of VET:

INCREASE OF UNIVERSITY- AND SCHOOL-AUTONOMY

On 1 January 2004, universities obtained full legal status and are therefore responsible for their own budget, most of which is provided by the state. Austrian schools have relatively few funds of their own to administer. However, reforms are under way to increase their financial autonomy.

SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING COMPANIES

Several subsidies have been introduced to support *Lehrbetriebe* (apprenticeship training companies), e.g. the *Lehrlingsprämie* (apprentice premium) or the *Lehrlingsfreibetrag* (apprentice tax allowance). For more information cf. 1002.

CVET MEASURES

Federal and regional authorities have funded a number of measures to promote CVET for all:

- acquisition of secondary level 1 qualifications (*Hauptschulabschluss* = completion of general education schools) by adults
- introduction of the *Berufsreifeprüfung, BRP*, an examination with which apprenticeship and three- and four-year VET school graduates gain access to higher education
- establishment of schools and colleges for employed people
- setting up of *Fachhochschule* courses (university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation) and *Universitätslehrgänge* (i.e. short-term university courses for post-graduates as well as for persons without HE graduation) for employed people
permission to apply the *Bildungsfreibetrag* (training tax allowance) also to internal CVET measures (cf. 1003 for more information)

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The following bodies are responsible for funding the various types of IVET:

Table 1: Funding of IVET	
TYPES OF IVET	BODIES
IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL	
<i>Polytechnische Schule, PS</i> (prevocational school)	<i>Laender</i> , municipalities, federation
<i>berufsbildende mittlere Schule, BMS</i> (VET schools)	federation
<i>berufsbildende höhere Schule, BHS</i> (VET college)	federation
<i>Bildungsanstalt für Kindergartenpädagogik / Sozialpädagogik</i> (training colleges for nursery school teachers / social pedagogy)	federation
IVET IN COMPANIES – APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING	
enterprise-based part of training	companies, state subsidies
<i>Berufsschule</i> (part-time vocational school for apprentices): school-based part of training	<i>Laender</i> , federation
OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS	
<i>Berufslehrgänge</i> (vocational pre-apprenticeship training courses)	federation
<i>integrative Berufsausbildung</i> (integrative vocational training)	companies, state subsidies
VET AT POST-SECONDARY (NON-TERTIARY) LEVEL	
<i>Akademien</i> (post-secondary VET colleges)	federation
<i>Kollegs</i> (post-secondary VET courses)	federation
VET AT TERTIARY LEVEL	
universities	federation, students
<i>Fachhochschulen</i> (university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation)	federation, students

IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL

In the financing of IVET at upper secondary level a differentiation must be made between direct financing (from public funds) and indirect financing (benefits, free travel, schoolbook initiatives, etc.).

As regards the direct funding of prevocational schools, they are maintained by the *Laender* or municipalities. Maintaining and operating a school includes the establishment, maintenance and repair of the school buildings, payment of overheads, purchase of equipment and teaching aids, provisions for the school doctor, and the employment of the necessary auxiliary staff (caretakers, maintenance staff, etc.). The employment of teachers

at this school type is the responsibility of the *Laender*. However, the *Laender* are fully compensated for the cost of teachers' salaries by the *Bund* (federation) in the process of fiscal adjustment. Prevocational schools are not allowed to charge tuition fees. Transport to and from school as well as textbooks are provided to pupils almost free of charge. Only a small contribution of 10% has to be paid.

VET schools and colleges are established and maintained by the federation, which bears the full cost, including teachers' salaries. Teachers do not enter into an employment contract with the school, but with the federation. With respect to the absence of tuition fees, free transport and textbooks the situation is the same as in prevocational schools.

The 'dual' in the dual apprenticeship system also describes the financing. The school-based part is financed by public funds. The *Landesschulräte* (regional education boards, cf. 0301) bear the costs of equipping part-time vocational schools (machines, equipment and teaching materials). The federation and each *Land* bear half of the personnel costs. The enterprise-based part is financed by the company itself, with the possibility of state subsidies. The following subsidies are available:

- Since January 2002, training companies have been able to claim an annual *Lehrlingsprämie* (apprenticeship premium) of EUR 1 000 for each apprentice through their tax return. This covers their average wage costs for the time when their apprentices attend school.
- Companies employing a larger number of apprentices in 2005 than in 2004 receive a premium over a period of three years for each additional apprentice; the monthly amount of the graduated premium ranges from EUR 400 to EUR 100 per apprentice.
- In the first and second year of an apprenticeship, both the employer's and the apprentice's health-insurance contributions are waived.
- The contribution to accident insurance I waived in respect of apprentices throughout the entire apprenticeship.
- As a rule, contributions to unemployment insurance are only payable in the last year of the apprenticeship.

Additionally, there is a variety of funding measures available within the framework of apprentice training, of which the most important is the funding for apprenticeship places. This is conducted by the *Arbeitsmarktservice*, AMS (Public Employment Service) as part of the active job market policies. The following groups are eligible for this type of funding:

- girls in apprenticeships in which women are considerably underrepresented (i.e. in which the percentage of female apprentices amounted to less than 40% of the total number of apprentices in the previous training year);
- particularly disadvantaged apprenticeship applicants, such as young people who have physical disabilities, mental or emotional deficiencies or learning difficulties or who are socially maladjusted;
- adults (over 19 years old), whose employment problem is due to a lack of qualification which can be solved by an apprenticeship;

- apprentices, if they acquire additional qualifications beyond the job requirements.

OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

On the basis of the *Jugendausbildungs-Sicherungsgesetz 1998*, JASG (Youth Training Provision Act, cf. 0302) additional training in the form of ten-month vocational pre-apprenticeship training courses is offered as a labour market support measure for young people who find themselves at a disadvantage in the labour market and for those who cannot find an apprenticeship. The *Arbeitsmarktservice*, AMS (Public Employment Service) allocates young people to these training courses, during which they receive a special allowance of € 150 net per month.

The *integrative Berufsausbildung* (integrative vocational training) is targeted at people who are at a disadvantage in the labour market and includes the acquisition of apprenticeship qualifications in an apprenticeship period prolonged by one year, in exceptional cases by two years, or the acquisition of partial qualifications in one or several trades which are relevant for the economy. This system is funded by the AMS and the companies employing people from the target group.

VET AT POST-SECONDARY (NON-TERTIARY) LEVEL

Post-secondary VET courses and colleges are established and maintained by the federation, which bears the full cost, including teachers' salaries.

VET AT TERTIARY LEVEL

The *Universitätsgesetz, UG 2002* (University Act) has given the universities complete autonomy. This has also led to a new funding system, which will enter into force as of 2007. This new system stipulates that the responsible Education Minister enters into a *Leistungsvertrag* (performance agreement) with every university for a term of three years. The university provides the draft of the performance agreement, which is subject to negotiation.

The university budget of the federal authorities – just like the total federal budget – is decided by parliament. 20% of the total budget is allocated in line with a formula, based on performance indicators and indicators for the objectives of society. 80% of the total budget is distributed among the different universities on the basis of negotiations of their performance agreement. The following criteria are applied: requirements, demand, performance and objectives of society. As of 2007, the three-year global budget of the individual universities will thus comprise a formula-based budget and a negotiated budget. The universities submit their proposals for the performance agreements, which are based on the substance laid down by law.

In addition to state funding, the universities have additional funding sources. Since they have become fully fledged legal entities, they may acquire property, conduct research on a commission basis, etc., and they can use this income for meeting their tasks as universities. Moreover, a large part of the money available to the *Forschungsförderungsfonds, FFF* (fund for the promotion of scientific research), which is fed from the federal budget, is allocated to the universities.

Furthermore, the *Studiengebühren* (tuition fees), which amount to EUR 363.36 per semester (Feb. 2005), remain with the respective university. The tuition fee must be paid in advance of

every semester. Students are entitled to choose from among the possible special-purpose dedications of the tuition fees which the *Senat* (senate) established.

Students are also entitled to financial support, which comprises direct and indirect support measures funded from public money for the most part. Indirect support measures are independent of any social need; as far as their financial volume is concerned, they constitute the overwhelmingly largest part of the state's support measures. They comprise family allowances, sharing the insurance coverage of parents or self-insurance schemes, statutory accident insurance, as well as fiscal benefits whenever children are enrolled as students. Direct support measures, which are granted pursuant to the *Studienförderungsgesetz* (Student Support Act), depend upon the social needs and the academic success of students. The income of the student and/or the person with maintenance obligations is decisive for the definition of social need. In this connection, there are also special support measures such as study grants (paying the entire or part of the tuition fee), commuter travelling grants, benefits for studying abroad, etc. In addition, the universities receive funds from the Education Ministry to grant performance-based or research scholarships in order to support students who achieve especially good results.

One characteristic feature of the *Fachhochschule* sector is the system of mixed funding based on the standard cost system. The federal government bears the costs per study place; the costs for buildings, investments and a part of the running costs are borne by the provider of the *Fachhochschule* programme (usually the governments of the *Laender*, regional or supra-regional authorities, the social partners, etc.).

For some *Fachhochschule* programmes students are required to pay tuition fees. Concerning tuition fees and student support measures the same situation applies as for universities.

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

The funding of CVET is either publicly provided or made available by companies.

PUBLICLY PROVIDED CVET

As CVET is largely provided by independent providers, the federal government's primary role lies in tasks relating to funding. With the introduction of the *Gesetz zur Förderung der Erwachsenenbildung und des Volksbüchereiwesens* (Public Funding of Adult Education and National Libraries Act) in 1973 the legal basis for public funding of CVET was created. Essentially, public funding is a commitment of the federal government to support educational establishments that work on a non-profit basis. For the providers of CVET, however, there is no legal right to funding.

The public expenditure of the federal and regional governments as well as of municipalities comprise a wide range of activities, including:

- courses in second chance education,
- tax deductible amounts and education premiums for businesses,
- subsidies for private training costs,
- schools for people in employment,
- libraries etc.

Financial support is organised by the adult education department of the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, BMBWK* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture), which is responsible for the federal funding departments for adult education present in seven *Laender*. Most educational institutions funded by the Education Ministry are represented within the *Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs, KEBÖ* (Conference of Adult Education in Austria).

Since 2000, Austrian employers can claim a special *Bildungsfreibetrag* (training tax allowance) for investments in training. This training incentive is regulated by federal tax law. Initially, the training tax allowance was 9% of the expenses on external training only. From 2003 onwards, the allowance has been increased to 20% and extended to training measures organised internally. The incentive allows companies not only to deduct the actual cost of training as a business expense from their taxable income but also an additional 'virtual expense' of 20%. Thus, the tax base is diminished by 120% of the actual expense. Companies that do not make enough profit in a given year to benefit from this tax deduction can, as an alternative, claim a *Bildungsprämie* (training premium) of 6% of the actual expense which is deducted from the tax liability or paid out to the firm.

ENTERPRISE-BASED CVET

Enterprise-based CVET – understood as the entire range of internal measures financed and organised by the company as well as the external courses where employees take part – is not regulated by law unless specific qualifications are followed (e.g. *Meisterprüfung* [master craftsman certificate], cf. 0502). A characteristic feature of enterprise-based CVET is the division of the costs between employers and employees. Course fees are usually covered by the employer, the time for the training is provided by the employee.

According to the Eurostat CVTS-2, costs for CVET account for 1.3% of the total costs for employees (cf. Tab. 1 in 1003). This seems relatively low compared to other countries (cf. UK: 3.6%, Denmark: 3%, EU-15: 2.3%). However, it must be taken into account that the CVTS-2 does not include the smallest businesses, employees in the public sector, the entire agricultural sector and potentially a portion of the professional workers.

Table 1: Cost of CVT courses as % of total labour cost (all enterprises), by type of cost (1999)

	TOTAL COSTS	DIRECT COSTS	LABOUR COSTS OF PARTICIPANTS
NETHERLANDS	2.8	1.7	1.1
SWEDEN	2.8	1.6	1.3
CZECH REPUBLIC	1.9	1.2	0.7
LUXEMBOURG	1.9	1	1
GREECE	0.9	0.4	0.5
UK	3.6	2.8	0.8
ESTONIA	1.8	1.3	0.5
LITHUANIA	0.8	0.5	0.3
POLAND	0.8	0.5	0.3
ITALY	1.7	1.2	0.6
BELGIUM	1.6	0.6	0.9
FINLAND	2.4	1.3	1.1
FRANCE	2.4	1	1.2
IRELAND	2.4	1.5	1
GERMANY	1.5	0.9	0.7
SPAIN	1.5	0.5	0.9
EU-25	2.3	1.4	0.8
NORWAY	2.3	1.4	0.9
AUSTRIA	1.3	0.8	0.5
SLOVENIA	1.3	0.8	0.5
DENMARK	3	1.7	1.4
HUNGARY	1.2	0.5	0.4
PORTUGAL	1.2	0.7	0.6
LATVIA	1.1	0.8	0.4
CYPRUS	:	:	:
ICELAND	:	:	:
MALTA	:	:	:
SLOVAKIA	:	:	:

Note: Total costs: direct costs, labour costs of participants and balance of contributions to national or regional training funds and receipts from national or other funding arrangements

Cyprus, Malta, Slovakia and Iceland were not covered by CVTS2

Source: Eurostat, NewCronos, 2nd continuing vocational training survey in enterprises (CVTS2)

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Job market policy and training measures are essentially public responsibilities, and are therefore almost wholly publicly financed. The main portion of the necessary financial means is provided by the *Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit, BMWA* (Federal Ministry for Economics and Labour). Financial input from regional and local governments or private initiatives (predominantly religious initiatives) for the training of the unemployed represents a significantly smaller portion.

The *Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS* (Public Employment Service) receives the financial means from the Economics Ministry, but is solely responsible for developing funding guidelines for active job market policies. Besides defining targets for job market policies and maintaining a supervisory role, the Economics Minister has no influence on the funding guidelines developed by the *AMS*.

Since Austria's entrance into the EU in 1995, it has had access to financial means from the European Social Fund (ESF) for education initiatives based on job market policies. Modern and innovative CVET activities and employment initiatives are at the centre of the ESF-objective-3. Funding is particularly intended for people at risk of not finding employment. Seven focus points specify which target groups and measures are to be funded in Austria from 2000 to 2006:

- combating unemployment,
- equal opportunities for the disabled,
- education,
- company-based qualifications,
- equal opportunities for men and women,
- territorial employment packets,
- information and networking.

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

Future policy priorities for funding VET focus on the following aspects:

- Increasing the financial autonomy of schools and colleges: This decentralisation measure should give schools and colleges more scope in terms of investments.
- Offering more CVET opportunities for people in employment: The aim of this measure is to encourage as many employees as possible to take part in CVET and, thus, in lifelong learning.

- Reducing the number of people without secondary level 1 qualifications by promoting the acquisition of a *Hauptschulabschluss*: All students should at least complete general education school.

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

The Austrian implementation strategies to embed the concept of lifelong learning (LLL) are still in an initial stage. This is predominantly due to the fact that political discussions on the purposes and methods of LLL have only started as a result of the introduction of LLL as an objective for employment policy within the framework of the National Plans of Action.

The implementation strategies rest on the following three principles:

- development of broad consensus on the necessity of LLL by including all participants;
- positioning towards short-term effects within the area of LLL (for example, an increase in participation levels);
- no explicit differentiation between vocational and general education.

These principles should be adhered to by:

- upgrading and expanding of counselling services;
- establishing local learning centres;
- improving permeability between the different education sectors;
- promoting mobility;
- introducing tax deductions for CVET measures and funding financing models according to demand.

As a first step, a work group and twelve coordination workshops were set up in 2001 to develop scenarios for specific strategies to implement LLL and improve the cooperation between the relevant protagonists. The work group included educational policy and labour-market experts as well as representatives of the social partners. The coordination workshops concentrated on the prerequisites necessary to establish LLL in Austria (creation of indicators, definition of basic qualifications, incentive systems, etc.).

Since its foundation in 2001, the *Zukunftsforum Weiterbildung* (future forum CVET) has monitored activities in the CVET sector and developed new initiatives, including methods to increase permeability between various fields of education and encourage innovations for the acquisition of new basic qualifications spanning all sectors. This forum consists of members of decision-making bodies from educational policy (ministries, regional and local governments, social partners) and representatives of the labour-market as well as important institutions of the adult education sector.

An effective and comprehensive statistical evaluation tool for the educational sector was introduced with the implementation of the *Bildungsdokumentationsgesetz 2002* (Education Documentation Act of 2002). The results of these evaluations have helped establish the number of graduates from second chance education in a uniform way. The data can therefore be used as a foundation for further strategy development.

The importance of tools to increase transparency of acquired qualifications is becoming more pronounced as a result of increased workers' mobility within the European area. Austrian initiatives focus largely on applying the tools implemented at EU level.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Europeanising of the Austrian VET system is being promoted by means of four procedures:

The first procedure is the recognition of foreign certificates in Austria and of Austrian certificates in other EU member states. Until recently, common practice was to establish equivalence between foreign and similar Austrian certificates. If this equivalence was not achievable, the applicant had to make up the missing examinations. Now a range of bilateral agreements are in place which ensure mutual recognition of completed apprenticeships (including Germany, Italy and Switzerland). Currently, an agreement is being negotiated with the Czech Republic.

The second procedure focuses on adapting certification systems to common international forms of certification. An obvious example of this was the implementation of the conventional international three-tier study programme structure in the tertiary sector. Since 2002, universities and *Fachhochschulen* (university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation) are permitted to establish baccalaureate, master and doctorate study programmes.

The third procedure concerns the adoption of standardised certificates and proof of documentation on qualifications and competencies across Europe, thereby recognising the value of informally acquired qualifications. Possibilities in this area include the European Computer Driving License, the European Curriculum Vitae, the certificate supplement, the diploma supplement, the European Language Portfolio and the EUROPASS Training scheme. This procedure incorporates protagonists from the regular school system and the tertiary sector as recognising bodies as well as private education providers (e.g. the Austrian Computer Society).

In the fourth procedure attempts are being made to achieve common forms of completion in vocational education with other European countries. The difference between this procedure and the previous one is that this initiative is not exclusively political. A good example of this is the Leonardo da Vinci project EUROBAC, in which an international project partnership is working on a European diploma of completed vocational education.

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