

VET in Germany

Vocational education and training (VET) in Germany is based on cooperation between the State, companies and social partners. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is responsible for general VET policy issues and has a coordinating and steering role for all training occupations in cooperation with the respective ministries. The BMBF also works closely with the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), which conducts research and advises the Federal Government and VET providers. The *Länder* (federal states) are responsible for school-based parts of VET and have VET committees with employer and employee representatives.

The apprenticeship programme (dual system) at upper secondary level (EQF level 4) is the main pillar of VET and also attracts upper secondary graduates: more than one in four apprentices had achieved a higher education entrance qualification before enrolling in apprenticeship. Programmes usually last three years and combine two learning venues, companies and vocational schools (work-based learning share approximately 75%). There are no basic access requirements for participating in the dual VET programme, but an apprenticeship contract must be concluded between learner and company. Enterprises bear the costs of company-based training and pay learners a wage. Those successfully completing training are qualified to be employed as skilled workers. Progression is possible through various VET programmes offered at post-secondary and tertiary level.

Parallel to the apprenticeships are school-based VET programmes at upper secondary level (EQF level 2 to 4), which differ in terms of access, length, types and levels of qualification they lead to. These include:

- programmes at full-time vocational schools (*Berufsfachschule*, duration one to three years depending on the type and level of qualification), leading, for example, to a qualification as nurse or childcare worker. The minimum entrance requirement is the lower secondary general school certificate (*Hauptschulabschluss*);
- general upper secondary programmes with a vocational component, which usually lead to the general higher education entrance qualification (*Berufliches Gymnasium/Fachgymnasium*, duration two to three years). Entrance requirement

is the intermediate level certificate (*mittlerer Schulabschluss*).

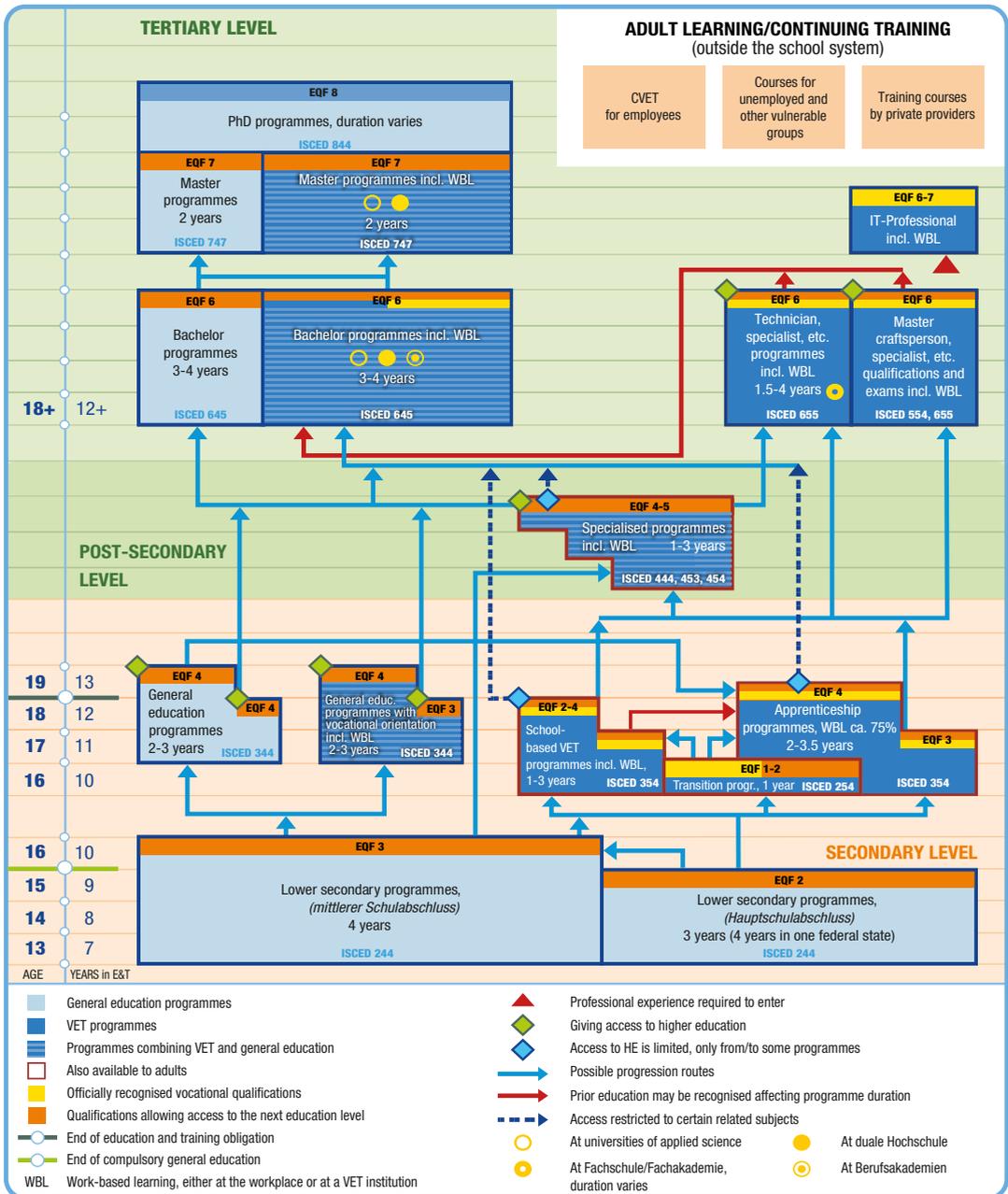
Young people with social disadvantages, learning difficulties or handicap, or insufficient German language skills (migrants) have the possibility to qualify further through different transition programmes: the pre-vocational training (secondary school leaving certificate can be acquired) or basic vocational training year.

At post-secondary level, specialised programmes (*Berufsoberschulen* and *Fachoberschulen*) build on the intermediate school leaving certificate (*mittlerer Schulabschluss*) or initial VET and impart deeper occupational knowledge. They last one to three years and lead to entrance qualifications for universities of applied sciences or universities.

At tertiary level, vocationally qualified applicants can access advanced vocational training (AVT) leading to qualifications at EQF level 6, including master craftsperson, technician, and specialist (*Meister, Techniker, Fachwirt*). AVT confers the right to exercise a trade independently, to hire and train apprentices and to enrol in subject-related bachelor programmes. It also facilitates the acquisition of middle management qualifications in companies. AVT is a major factor contributing to the attractiveness of the VET pathway. Courses to prepare for these AVT qualifications are offered by chambers or schools (*Fachoberschulen*, master craftsperson schools). Access to the respective assessment generally requires several years of practice in the related occupation.

Practice-oriented learning is also an important element of higher education (EQF levels 6 to 7). Dual study programmes provide a blend of vocational and academic training, offered by universities of applied sciences (bachelor programmes) and other higher education institutions (*Berufsakademien, duale Hochschule*). Some of them lead to double qualifications (vocational qualification and bachelor or master degree). Enterprises bear the costs of company-based training and pay learners a wage based on a contract.

Continuing training is playing an increasingly important role in improving employability. It is characterised by a wide variety of training providers and a low degree of State regulation.



NB: ISCED-P 2011. This is a simplified chart, based on the unified approach used for the spotlights on VET in all EU-28 countries plus Iceland and Norway.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Germany.



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