

# Future Starters programme for young adults without initial vocational qualification (Zukunftsstarter)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 GERMANY

## Timeline

2015 Implementation	2016 Implementation	2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation	2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation
2021 Implementation	2022 Implementation	2023 Implementation
2024 Implementation	2025 Implementation	

ID number 35220

## Background

Lifelong learning and vocational training are becoming increasingly important due to the comprehensive structural change and demographic development. In addition, skilled workers are increasingly in demand, while the demand for unskilled jobs is declining. The post-qualification of young adults without a vocational qualification is an important lever to secure the demand for skilled workers.

## Objectives

The initiative *Future starters (Zukunftsstarter)* targets young people between 25 and 35 years old without initial vocational training and aims to attract 120 000 young adults to IVET between 2016 and 2020.

## Description

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Employment Agency (BA) joint initiative to provide initial vocational training for young adults *Training will be something - late starters wanted (AusBILDUNG wird was - Spätstarter gesucht)* started in 2013 and was initially scheduled for three years, before being further developed and continued as *Future Starters (Zukunftsstarter)* from August 2016 to 2020. The programme has been extended until 2025. Based on the expanded funding and support options offered by the law to strengthen vocational training and employment insurance coverage (AWStG), it will recruit into qualifying vocational training 120 000 participants in the age group from 25 to under 35 who are eligible for support under the German Social Code (SGB II and SGB III). This initiative offers support not only to the unemployed but also to employees who do not yet have a vocational qualification. Young adults with disabilities and refugees can also profit from this initiative. Funding is available for full- or part-time training that prepare for a recognised vocational qualification. This can take the form of

(re)training with a provider or individual in-company (re)training, a preparatory course for the so-called 'external examination' or further training with a certified partial qualification. Some of the young adults also take up unsubsidised vocational training after the counselling.

### **2015 Implementation**

### **2016 Implementation**

### **2017 Implementation**

### **2018 Implementation**

### **2019 Implementation**

In 2019, around 38 000 young adults (14 000 women and 24 000 men) started training under the initiative, either in the form of a funded or an unfunded training measure.

### **2020 Implementation**

According to a BMAS report from January 2021, the initiative's target of attracting at least 120 000 young adults by the end of 2020 has already been exceeded: by July 2020 it reached 150 000 entries. This is also due to the fact that entries have increased significantly since January 2019 and part of the target group has been motivated for initial in-company training. Migrants and refugees were also able to benefit from the initiative (share of almost 25%). The success rates were generally positive. There is still potential for improvement in the area of individual in-company retraining in contrast to (re)training by a VET provider in a recognised VET qualification. The areas of support with a focus on care for the elderly, driving, office work, and transport and logistics correspond quite well to labour market needs. There is still potential for development in the occupational group of IT and other ICT occupations.

### **2021 Implementation**

In 2021, the Future Starters programme continued. Further, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS), the Federal Employment Agency (BA) and the Administrative Council of the BA have agreed to continue their commitment to initial and continuing training for young adults on an increased scale.

### **2022 Implementation**

The *Future Starters* initiative continued from January 2022 until the end of 2025. During this period, for example, the share of retraining in companies is to be increased. Particular attention will be paid to severely disabled people, rehabilitated individuals and refugees.

### **2023 Implementation**

Since January 2022, around 24 000 young adults have embarked on qualification-oriented further apprenticeships. In addition, a good 5 000 young adults have started unsubsidised apprenticeships as part of the initiative.

### **2024 Implementation**

In 2024, the Future Starters initiative continued on a regular basis. Since January 2022, around 52 000 young adults have embarked on qualification-oriented further apprenticeships. In addition, around 10 500 young adults have started unsubsidised apprenticeships as part of the initiative.

### **2025 Implementation**

In 2025, the implementation report on the National Continuing Education Strategy was published, referring to the initiative, which will expire at the end of 2025. As of October 2025, there is no information available about the continuation of the initiative beyond the end of 2025.

## Bodies responsible

- Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS)
- Federal Employment Agency (BA)

## Target group

### Learners

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Learners with migrant background, including refugees

Learners with disabilities

## Thematic categories

### Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Lifelong guidance

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

## Subsystem

IVET

## Further reading

[BA website on the Future starters programme](#)

[The Future Starters initiative will continue from January 2022 until the end of 2025](#)

[BMAS report on funded programmes in 2020, pp. 26-28](#)

[National Further Education Strategy - Implementation Report 2025](#)

## Related policy developments

### 2025 Implementation

### Perfect match programme for SMEs

The *Perfect match* programme (2015-20; funding volume per year: EUR 6 million including ESF funding) is designed to counteract matching problems on the training market.

 GERMANY

Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

**Cooperation among stakeholders to facilitate transition from school to work**

To provide young people with the best possible one-stop support in the transition from school to work, local alliances known as JBA have been established in many places since 2011 (first in Hamburg but ten years later widespread in Germany with more than 350 agencies).

 GERMANY

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

**Integrating migrants and refugees in VET and work**

Since 2015, in line with the federal ESF integration guideline, the IvAF integration programme (Integration of asylum seekers and refugees) has contributed to the sustainable integration of asylum seekers, asylum applicants and refugees in training and employment through comprehensive counselling

 GERMANY

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

**Expanding vocational guidance and support from school until completion of training**

Nationwide standard support measures anchored in the Social Code (e.g. SGB III) cover the transition from school to work, for example with various forms of vocational preparation and continuous support during training.

 GERMANY

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Practical  
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IVET

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Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

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