

Transparent and unified development of apprenticeship profiles

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 AUSTRIA

Timeline



ID number 29910

Background

The speed of change in the economy's demands of future workers - especially against the background of technical developments - poses the challenge for apprenticeship training to react just as quickly by modernising existing training regulations and occupational profiles and creating new ones.

Apprenticeship training has now been assigned to NQF level 4. This binding classification brings new requirements for the development of apprenticeship occupations. It has to be ensured that the corresponding level is met and expressed in appropriately formulated learning outcomes.

In this context, an amendment (2015) to the Vocational Training Act (BAG) introduced new guiding concepts for apprenticeship training, such as occupation competences and key competences. This reflects to the objective of apprenticeship training that graduates are competent to take on responsibility and independence in work and learning situations. These new legal framework conditions require an adaptation of the formal process of apprenticeship development as well as the formulation principles of the training objectives.

Objectives

- (a) regular review and update of the content of apprenticeship programmes;
- (b) transparent and binding structure for the development/revision of a training regulation, including a guideline;
- (c) task description for the actors involved in the development process;
- (d) involvement of relevant professional practitioners such as in-company apprenticeship trainers;
- (e) improved coordination between vocational training and trainers (learning place: workplace) and curriculum development (learning place: part-time vocational schools);
- (f) preliminary occupational profile screening as a basis for the revision of occupational profiles;
- (g) scientific guidance of the development process by a research institute until completion of the expert draft.

Description

In autumn 2018, the Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) initiated the review (*Lehrberufsscreening*) and update of the content of apprenticeship programmes. The review was carried out by the two education research institutes, ibw and öibf. It will serve as the basis for updating and introducing new apprenticeship training content. Challenges included the time pressure for processing the large number of different apprenticeship training regulations and the collection of reliable statistical data for small-sized apprenticeship schemes. In 2018, seven new apprenticeship programmes were established and eight existing ones modernised. Digitalisation became a regular feature of the training content, which improved the attractiveness of apprenticeship training for young people.

In 2019, the *Evidence-based development of apprenticeship profiles project*, guidelines were initiated as a next step and guidelines were defined, which aimed to present the development of an apprenticeship profile step by step (*Leitlinien zur Lehrberufsentwicklung*). The intention was to set up a formal procedure for the development of an apprenticeship occupation and to make it transparent and uniform. The guidelines were intended to establish a binding reference for all actors at the steering, planning and implementation levels with a description of the tasks and responsibilities in this process. The duration of this process should be about one year. The following steps were defined for this purpose:

- (a) the need for a new occupational profile or a revision of an existing occupational profile is determined. Such a process may be initiated, for example, by a periodic screening of apprenticeship occupations or by the social partners, companies, ministries, etc. The notification of need must be made to the Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW);
- (b) a decision is made by the BMDW whether to go ahead with the development;
- (c) elaboration of the expert draft (part 1): under the scientific moderation of a research institute, and with the involvement of professional experts who work or train in the profession (in-company apprenticeship trainers), a draft is prepared in workshops;
- (d) elaboration of the expert draft (part 2): further workshops with social partner representatives and vocational school teachers will be held;
- (e) the expert drafts are discussed in social partnership committees;
- (f) the legislative process is carried out by the BMDW (e.g. review processes, regulation of the occupational profile);
- (g) according to the regulation, supplementary documents are created to support the implementation of the training (training guides, examiner guides, guides for the approval of training companies).

The guidelines also define how the individual elements of the training regulations are to be described (competence-oriented formulations, subject-specific and cross-disciplinary competences, gender-neutral formulations). The basis for implementing these guidelines was laid down in an amendment to the Vocational Training Act (BAG) which was agreed with the social partners (Economic Chamber, Chamber of Labour and Trade Union Federation), passed by parliament in January 2020, and will come into force on 1 May 2020.

2018 Implementation

2019 Design

In 2019, a research project elaborated guidelines for the development of new occupational profiles in apprenticeship training. Eight new apprenticeship occupations were established and 12 modernised.

2020 Implementation

On the basis of the guidelines developed in 2019, the amendment to the Vocational Training Act (BAG) was passed by parliament in January 2020 and came into force on 1 May 2020. It lays down first basic principles for the development of new occupational profiles. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, further negotiations with the social partner

institutions regarding the implementation details were postponed.

In 2020, around 35 apprenticeship occupations were modernised and four new apprenticeships were created. The modernised apprenticeships included all 30 commercial/administrative apprenticeships. The job descriptions are consistently formulated in a competence-oriented manner.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, further negotiations with the social partner institutions regarding the implementation details of the guidelines were postponed. At the same time, a total of 12 apprenticeship occupations were newly regulated or introduced based on the current standards on training regulations. Two apprenticeship occupations were withdrawn. Two training regulation trials were transferred to regular apprenticeship occupations.

2022 Implementation

The scientifically assisted updating and development of the apprenticeship professions continued in 2022.

Two new apprenticeship occupation profiles and four new specialisations to existing profiles were introduced, eight occupation profiles were updated, and one profile was transferred from a training regulation trial to a regular apprenticeship occupations profile.

Two further transversal areas of expertise on 'digitalisation' and 'sustainability/green skills' will be established in all updated and newly developed apprenticeships.

The competence-oriented development of apprenticeships was included in the National implementation plan in 2022, as was the integration of the topic of sustainability in all training regulations and the development of new apprenticeships in green skills/sustainability.

In 2022, the development of a training regulation for two nursing apprenticeships was also started as a supplement to the existing school-based nursing training: this takes into account a long-standing wish of various interest groups. So far, there are no corresponding nursing apprenticeships in the dual training system in Austria. In terms of content, the two training programmes will be closely based on the existing school-based training programmes, but adapted to company training requirements.

2023 Implementation

The amendment to the Vocational Training Act, which was published in June 2023, introduces apprenticeships in nursing assistant professions. While training for nursing assistant professions was previously only possible in health and nursing schools and regulated within the framework of the Health and Nursing Act (GUKG), it is now possible to acquire the professional qualification also as part of an apprenticeship.

In order to equate vocational training in nursing assistant professions within the framework of apprenticeship training with the regulation of vocational training within the framework of the Health and Nursing Care Act, the provisions of the GUKG were adapted accordingly.

Additionally two apprenticeship packages were issued in 2023. The first ordinance in May 2023 modernised three apprenticeships. The second regulation in December 2023 modernised five apprenticeships, including the apprenticeship 'Electrical Engineering', which was expanded to include extensive 'green' skills, including a separate module on renewable energy and electromobility, which led to the implementation of measures from the Just Transition Action Plan for a green transition in VET.

To improve clarity, the ordinance on the apprenticeship list, which has been

continuously expanded since the 1970s, was reissued in 2023, in which the individual apprenticeships are legally established and their mutual relationships (apprenticeship time credits when changing) and the replacement for the apprenticeship final examination are specified.

2024 Implementation

On 1 July 2024, a new package of apprenticeships came into force, introducing three new apprenticeships and modernising four. The new apprenticeships are 'Fiber composite technology', 'District heating technology' and 'Climate gardener', which shows a strong focus on creating apprenticeships for a green transition.

The new training regulations are competence-oriented, i.e. formulated according to learning outcomes. Interdisciplinary competency like 'quality-oriented, safe and sustainable work' and 'Digital work' are integrated in separate competency areas.

Bodies responsible

- Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) (until 2022)
- Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO)
- Chamber of Labour (AK)
- Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB)
- Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy (BMAW)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Education professionals

Trainers

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Acquiring key competences

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET agile in adapting to labour market challenges

Osnabrück Declaration

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Amendment of the Vocational Training Act to regulate the development of new occupational profiles](#)

[Description of the process of establishing new occupation profiles](#)

[Website of the Ministry of Labour and Economy with information on new and modernised apprenticeship programmes \(in German only\)](#)

Related policy developments

2024 Implementation

Green transition in VET

Various projects have already been initiated and launched in recent years that serve to achieve the stated objectives. With the National implementation plan (NIP), these activities were bundled and intensified in 2022.

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Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Action plan for green transition in education and training

In order to set up the action plan for the green transition in education and training, the Federal Ministry for Climate Protection (BMK) together with the Vienna Public Employment Service (AMS) and the Vienna Chamber of Labour (AK) initiated the 'Just transition working group on training and furt

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Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Increasing attractiveness of apprenticeship training

In January 2020, the Austrian parliament passed an amendment to the Vocational Training Act (BAG), jointly developed by the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs and the social partners.

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Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET

“ ... ” Cite as

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