

# Increasing attractiveness of apprenticeship training



## Timeline



ID number 29622

## Background

A company survey conducted by the ibw in the spring of 2019 showed that Austrian companies have a considerable need for skilled workers: 88% of more than 4 600 companies surveyed said they had felt the lack of skilled workers, 46% already very strongly. There is a particular demand for those with an apprenticeship certificate and 57% of the companies surveyed stated that they have difficulties in finding apprenticeship graduates.

Even though there has recently been a slight increase in the number of new apprenticeship entrants (2017 to 2019), this increase cannot meet the companies' demand for trained skilled workers. At the same time, a significant increase in participation in training among traditional target groups does not seem very realistic.

## Objectives

Increasing the attractiveness of apprenticeship training, through:

- (a) addressing new/additional target groups for apprenticeship training by making the framework conditions more attractive;
- (b) improving the quality assurance of inter-company training and the transition from inter-company training to a company workplace;
- (c) make it possible for those with care duties or health restrictions to start or continue their apprenticeship training by reducing the daily or weekly training period.

## Description

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. This brings several provisions designed to make apprenticeship training more attractive, in particularly to open up further target groups for this form of training or to facilitate access to, and completion of, training for certain target groups. The following

amendments came into force on 1 May 2020:

- (a) apprenticeship programmes development and review of existing programmes: to reflect national and international developments and changes in economic, social and technical needs in vocational training and to carry out a compulsory regular analysis of all occupational profiles at least every five years;
- (b) change in unattractive terms: the term apprenticeship allowance was changed to apprenticeship income and the term continued use was changed to continued employment;
- (c) supra-company training on behalf of the Public Employment Service (AMS) makes it possible for individuals (especially young people at risk of early leaving and young people not in education and training), who cannot find an in-company training place, to undergo apprenticeship training in a supra-company centre. In this regard, supra-company training is an essential measure within the training obligation up to the age of 18. To improve the transition between supra-company training and the company-based workplace, it will be obligatory in future to include more inter-company cooperation in the training process. If in individual cases there are no internships available, an individual training plan is to be provided as a substitute. At the same time, the prerequisites for running a supra-company training centre will be clearly defined. This includes the necessary organisation and equipment of the institution, the required number of persons entitled to receive training and a concept to promote proactive placement in an in-company training relationship;
- (d) for parents with childcare obligations (caring for their own children until the start of the first year of compulsory schooling) and those with health restrictions, the possibility of part-time apprenticeship training has been established; this also includes the possibility of converting existing full-time training contracts into part-time training. In this context, it is also an important step to ensure that young people can complete their training and fulfil their training obligation up to the age of 18;
- (e) if apprenticeship training is started after completion of vocational school in a similar (related) field of training, the permitted apprenticeship period is reduced due to this relationship. Often this shortening is so great that the apprenticeship contract is not concluded because the remaining training period is too short for the company to provide the apprentice with the vocationally relevant content. To make training possible in such cases, it will be possible in future to extend the remaining apprenticeship period permitted by a maximum of one year.

With respect to the part-time apprenticeship training the amendment makes it possible for companies and apprentices to agree on a reduction in the daily or weekly training time for up to half of the normal working time as stipulated by law or collective agreements. At the same time, the duration of the apprenticeship period may be extended by up to two years. This means that for an apprenticeship occupation with a regular training period of three years, the apprenticeship period can be extended for up to five years.

There is also a part-time apprenticeship option, limited until 31 August 2020, to enable short-time work in the training company in accordance with the Labour Market Service Act.

In this amendment to the Vocational Training Act, in connection with the development and review of apprenticeship training programmes, the foundations were also laid for the transparent development of training regulations/profiles, which, alongside quality assurance, are also intended to raise the attractiveness of apprenticeship training.

### **2019 Legislative process**

In 2019, the legislative amendments described above were drafted and agreed in the political decision-making process between the government and the social partners.

### **2020 Approved/Agreed**

The ordinance amending the Vocational Training Act (*Federal Law Gazette I No 18/2020*) was passed by parliament in January 2020 and published on 21 March 2020.

After the law came into force in May 2020: no further significant implementation was

carried out due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as attention was focused on dealing with the crisis. The regulation on part-time apprenticeship formed the legal basis for the implementation of short-time work for apprentices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new option of part-time apprenticeship training also laid the groundwork in 2020 for allowing short-time work for apprentices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 2021 Implementation

In 2021, the regulation on part-time apprenticeship is in place and short-time work for apprentices continued to be made possible under this regulation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to be able to check the effect of the new regulation in the future, it was suggested by research institutes to record how many apprenticeship contracts are concluded with part-time apprenticeship. However, statements on this will only be possible in the medium term.

### 2022 Implementation

In 2022, making apprenticeship training more attractive was included as a measure in the National Implementation Plan (NIP). In addition to the measures already being implemented, a project of the Ministry of Labour and Economy was initiated under the title Startup Apprenticeship [Startup Lehre] and begun in 2022. In this project, established companies form a training alliance with a startup to facilitate their entry into apprenticeship training. This pilot project is supported by funds from the company-based apprenticeship funding scheme.

### 2023 Implementation

In 2023, the work on the law on higher vocational education (Higher VET Act) was completed and preparations were made for its introduction.

### 2024 Implementation

The Higher VET Act came into effect on 1 May 2024, which promotes the development of higher VET qualifications and increases thereby the attractiveness of apprenticeships.

### 2025 Implementation

In September 2025 the first higher VET qualification 'Technical Consulting for Energy Efficiency' came into effect.

## Bodies responsible

- Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) (until 2022)
- Federal Ministry of Labour and Economy (BMAW) (until 2025)
- Federal Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism (BMWET)

## Target group

### Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices  
Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)  
Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers  
Learners with disabilities

## Entities providing VET

Companies  
VET providers (all kinds)

## Thematic categories

### Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Further developing national quality assurance systems

### Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses  
Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

### Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

## European priorities in VET

### VET Recommendation

VET promoting equality of opportunities

## Subsystem

IVET

## Further reading

[Amendment to the Vocational Training Act 2020, Federal Law Gazette I No 18/2020](#)

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[Notes on the amendment of the Vocational Training Act 2020](#)

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[ReferNet news Austria: new possibility for part-time apprenticeship](#)

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[Higher VET Act \(in German only\)](#)

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[Regulation of the Federal Economic Chamber on the introduction an acquisition of the higher VET qualification 'Technical Consulting for Energy Efficiency' \(validation and examination regulation\) \(in German only\)](#)

## Related policy developments

**2023 Completed**

### Apprenticeship response to the COVID 19 crisis

To keep the apprenticeship system running, the following two key measures were taken in response to the COVID-19 crisis:

Apprenticeship bonus

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### **Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

### **Subsystem**

IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## **Transparent and unified development of apprenticeship profiles**

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.

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### **Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

### **Subsystem**

IVET

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**2022 Completed**

## **Transversal competences in apprenticeship**

In 2019, the Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) commissioned a project to screen the job profiles of all apprenticeship training regulations (project title: Job profile screening to create a list of priorities). The aim of the project was to determine which:

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### **Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

### **Subsystem**

IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## **Establishing a higher VET field**

To realise parity of esteem and increase the visibility and public perception of higher VET qualifications, a discussion on the establishment of a defined educational field for higher VET qualifications was started in 2019 within educational policy.

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**Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

**Subsystem**

CVET

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**2025 Implementation****Apprenticeships for adults leading to NQF level 5**

Under the title Apprenticeship NEW for adults, the Federal Economic Chamber has taken the initiative within its education campaign (*Bildungsoffensive*) to develop a programme for people with a higher education entrance qualification that leads to a dual VET qualification at NQF/EQF level

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**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2025 Implementation****Training Obligation Act - training up to the age of 18**

The legislation introducing a training obligation until the age of 18 was approved by parliament in 2016 and came into force in the summer of 2017.

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**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2025 Implementation****Improving the transparency of partial qualifications**

The 2015 amendment to the Vocational Training Act provided for standardised forms of partial qualifications.

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**Type of development**

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

“ … ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Increasing attractiveness of apprenticeship training: Austria. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/29622>