

Attracting side entrants to the teaching profession

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 GERMANY

Timeline

2018 Implementation 2019 Implementation 2020 Implementation
2021 Implementation 2022 Implementation 2023 Implementation
2024 Implementation

ID number 28144

Background

Due to a VET teacher shortage, the 16 Federal States coordinated by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) jointly decided in 2013 to attract university students in certain subjects (mostly technical) to join the VET teacher university training programme. They are the so-called side entrants (*Quereinsteiger*). Since 2013, and especially from 2015 to 2017, there has been a significant increase in the recruitment of side-entrants.

Objectives

Fighting against teacher shortage.

Description

Education falls under the competence of the Federal States. In 2018, the education ministry of North-Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) launched a recruitment campaign to attract side entrants and career changers to teaching, including in VET schools, specifically targeting those able to teach subjects with particular teacher shortage:

- (a) machine technology,
- (b) electrical engineering,
- (c) social pedagogy,
- (d) health.

In principle, only trained teachers with a teaching degree from a university and who have successfully passed the state examination at the end of the preparatory service will be recruited into the teaching service of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Should there be no trained teachers available in some regions or for individual schools, the schools may also select persons without a corresponding teacher training if they can provide evidence of a non-teaching tertiary degree for the advertised subject and the schools consider them suitable. To ensure a successful start in the new job, all lateral entrants receive an in-

service training in which they are taught the pedagogical basics of the teaching profession.

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

In 2019, due to the increasing demand for teachers, all 16 Federal States offered similar possibilities to side entrants and career changers to become a teacher, but with different conditions and focuses, depending on their own specific needs.

2020 Implementation

In 2020, due to the increasing demand for teachers, all 16 Federal States offered similar possibilities to side entrants and career changers to become a teacher, but with different conditions and focuses, depending on their own specific needs. In NRW VET schools for example, there is still a shortage in the topics machine technology, electrical engineering, social pedagogy, and health.

2021 Implementation

The issue of teacher shortages is still current in Germany. According to a study published on 25 January 2022 on behalf of the education union VBE, teacher shortages in the future will be much greater than indicated in the calculations of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Federal States in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK). Many Federal States already make use of applicants from side entry or lateral entry to ensure teacher supply. According to a report (Klemm, 2019), 34 281 teachers were recruited nationwide in 2017/18, of which 4 367 came to schools via side entry. This results in an average rate of 12.7%. However, the differences within the Federal States are great. In some, the demand for teachers can only be met by using side entrants.

2022 Implementation

In 2022, the situation at German schools is becoming increasingly dramatic - there is a shortage of teachers everywhere, in particular in East Germany. Depending on calculations and estimates, there are currently 12 000 to 40 000 vacancies at German schools. In its report from 2022, the Institute of the German Economy (IW) sees a gap of 59 000 full-time equivalents for the school year 2030/31, assuming the learner-teacher ratio remains the same. According to forecasts, there could even be a shortage of 158 000 teachers at schools in Germany by 2035. The situation is particularly dramatic in the STEM subjects: In the school year 2030/31, only one third of all positions in mathematics at secondary schools in North Rhine-Westphalia could be filled by regularly trained teachers, and in physics only 18%.

Therefore, side entrants at schools are indispensable in most federal states, in particular in STEM subjects. Since the side entry models for teachers vary significantly between federal states, the Standing Scientific Commission of the KMK (SWK) recommended in January 2023 a systematic inventory of all side entry models with regard to organisation, scope and content, followed by evaluation and further development of such models - as one of many recommendations for dealing with the acute shortage of teachers.

2023 Implementation

In 2023, 12% of the 35000 new teachers recruited last year had no traditional teacher training.

In a statement issued at the end of January 2023, the Standing Scientific Commission of the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs issued recommendations on how to deal with the acute shortage of teachers. Statements by professional associations and professional institutions from the vocational school sector criticised the initiative and pointed out that it would counteract the associations'

efforts to attract new teachers specifically to the vocational college system. The Association of Vocational Trainers in North Rhine-Westphalia is in favour of the increased use of multi-professional teams. Nevertheless, the recommendations would have undesirable side effects, leading to a deterioration in working and employment conditions.

The dossier 'Quereinstieg im Praxis-Check', available on the Robert Bosch Foundation's school portal, contains current studies on lateral entry into the teaching profession, interviews with experts from academia and practice and an overview of the distribution of lateral entrants in the federal states.

The lateral entry master's degree programme (Q-Master) in Berlin was developed and supervised as part of the K2teach project funded by the QLB (see Long-term quality initiative for teacher training).

2024 Implementation

In June 2024, the KMK decided to create additional pathways into the teaching profession. These include opening up access to the profession to so-called single-subject teachers and graduates of so-called lateral entry Master's programmes and dual study programmes. With this decision, it is following the concept 'Measures to recruit additional teachers and to structurally supplement teacher training'. The aim is to open up further professional groups with initially different educational or professional biographies. In addition, further training programmes are also to be established as a regular part of the teaching profession.

In the publication 'Doppelter Praxistransfer in der Lehrkräftebildung für berufliche Schulen. Von beruflichen Vorerfahrungen über das wissenschaftliche Studium in die Schule' (Dual transfer of practice in teacher training for vocational schools. From previous work experience to academic study to the school), the topic of practice transfer is also examined from the perspective of quality assurance in teacher training (see also Long-term quality initiative for teacher training).

Bodies responsible

- Federal States (Länder)
- Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK)

Target group

Education professionals

Teachers

Thematic categories

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Attractiveness of the teaching and training profession/career

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Designing additional pathways into the teaching profession - Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of 13 June 2024](#)

Dossier on VET teacher shortage

Side-entering teacher at part-time VET school in NRW [Lehrkraft am Berufskolleg] (in German only)

Side-entering teacher in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW)

Federal States recruiting side entrants as teachers

Large regional differences in the need for and use of side entrants

Dossier: Side entrance put to the test in practice

Publication 'Double transfer of practice in teacher training for vocational schools. From previous work experience to university to the classroom' (2024)

Q-Master: Qualification of Quereinsteiger*innen in the Master of Education

“ … ” **Cite as**

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