

# Alliance for initial and further training

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN

 GERMANY

## Timeline



ID number 28134

## Background

In order to meet the growing challenges of a shortage of apprentices and skilled workers, transformation processes, school drop-outs without qualifications and mismatches between applicants and training companies, a central political platform and an action alliance are needed to strengthen the attractiveness, quality, performance and integration power of dual vocational training.

## Objectives

The objectives of the Alliance for initial and further training are:

- (a) reducing the number of young people without school leaving certificate;
- (b) providing each person with a path leading to a VET qualification;
- (c) reducing the mismatch between applicants seeking apprenticeship places and companies offering them, and supporting the regional mobility of applicants;
- (d) strengthening further training, particularly advanced VET at tertiary level;
- (e) increasing the number of apprenticeship places and companies willing to provide them.

## Description

The 2015-18 Alliance for initial and further training was agreed between the Federal Government, Federal States, business and industry, the unions and the Federal Employment Agency at the end of 2014.

Within the alliance, sectors committed to providing 20 000 places annually for introductory training (transition programme), which has been implemented: 17 500 young people took up this type of training in 2015 and 21 000 in 2018. Evaluations showed that around 70% of young people moved into regular apprenticeships within six months after completing introductory training.

The partners also agreed to offer training places for assisted VET (AsA) for disadvantaged learners, including mentoring adapted to apprentices' needs. Apprentices were eligible to receive a basic training allowance during the pre-vocational phase. They could also receive continued support throughout the pre-vocational training and apprenticeship from the same provider. 10 000 young people started the assisted training in 2018.

In 2016, a process to help find training places/apprentices was put in place: every young person who was still looking for a training place on 30 September of a given year should receive three offers for company-based training. Trade unions and employer organisations participated in the initiative.

### **2015 Implementation**

### **2016 Implementation**

### **2017 Implementation**

### **2018 Implementation**

### **2019 Implementation**

In 2019, 17 000 young people took up introductory training EQ (*Einstiegsqualifizierung*; actual expenditure in 2019: EUR 39.46 million based on SGB III and II). Further, 8 000 young people started an assisted training AsA (*Assistierte Ausbildung*; actual expenditure in 2019: EUR 59.84 million based on SGB III and II) in 2019.

The 2015-18 Alliance was renewed and a new agreement 2019-21 was signed by all partners (Federal Government, *Länder*, chambers, employer and employee organisations, Federal Employment Agency) on 26 August 2019. A kick-off meeting took place in November 2019.

The renewed Alliance for initial and further training 2019-21 is further committed to strengthening the attractiveness, quality, performance and integrative power of VET. The main goal is still to enable more young people to find an in-company apprenticeship place and more companies to fill their apprenticeship places. The Alliance also aims to strengthen VET with its modern advanced training opportunities (especially at tertiary level) and career paths as an equivalent alternative to academic education.

### **2020 Implementation**

In April 2020, the Alliance partners (including BMBF, DIHK, DGB) published a list of current measures (and corresponding links) providing support to apprentices and training companies during the COVID-19 crisis.

New challenges for the training market have arisen due to this crisis. In a joint declaration on 26 May 2020, the Alliance partners agreed on special measures to support training companies and secure apprenticeship placements during and after the pandemic. This declaration was the main basis for the new federal programme, Securing apprentice placements, during the crisis.

The declaration covered six fields of action:

- (a) support for affected companies;
- (b) reopen VET schools and enable digital learning;
- (c) ensure final examinations;
- (d) ensure the continuation of training programmes that have been started;
- (e) stabilise the training offer and enable new contracts;
- (f) support for initial, continuing and further training providers.

### **2021 Implementation**

In 2021, the Alliance was extended until 31 December 2022.

In March 2021, the partners of the *Alliance for initial and continuing vocational training* agreed on measures to strengthen vocational training and to stabilise the training market to avoid a COVID-19-related decline in supply and demand in the 2021/22 training year. The focus will be on strengthening vocational orientation, training counselling and matching for apprentices and companies and financial support for the preparation of apprentices for examinations. The Federal Securing Training Places programme will extend and expand the funding opportunities for companies that provide training.

In the Summer of VET initiative (June to October 2021), the joint efforts of the Alliance partners succeeded in placing vocational and dual training prominently in the public eye, regionally and nationwide. The initiative included around 800 regional events to get more young people and companies interested in VET.

## 2022 Implementation

In 2022, the *Alliance for initial and further training* continued to promote dual VET with its good labour market and earning opportunities - highlighting the very good prospects for all young people of finding a training place. The alliance website was relaunched and its thematic contents were updated with many new links and videos addressing training companies and young people. The continuation of the alliance is planned for 2023 onwards.

As part of the *Week of vocational training* from 14 to 18 March 2022, live chats with vocational counsellors took place on Youtube. The employment agencies informed those responsible for training in companies about how they can use in-company training to secure their skilled labour needs for tomorrow, how they can present themselves to young people as an attractive training company and which recruitment channels are suitable for attracting apprentices. In addition, funding opportunities were presented that contribute to stabilising training relationships and successfully leading apprentices to a vocational qualification.

The *Summer of VET* initiative was reconducted from May until November 2022 to support the VET market with more than 750 events and campaigns nationwide. Young people were given insights into more than 300 apprenticeship occupations and career opportunities. Many young people were brought together with potential training companies. The campaign was accompanied on the social media channels under the #AusbildungSTARTEN. Four guiding themes have shaped this Summer of VET:

- (a) providing vocational guidance,
- (b) showing the attractiveness of training,
- (c) strengthening the diversity of talents and
- (d) promoting post-placement.

## 2023 Implementation

The Alliance for initial and further training between the main VET actors has been relaunched for 2023-26 to support the school-to-work transition and promote an inclusive VET. Its Summer of VET 2023 initiative supported the VET market with events and campaigns nationwide. Young people were given insights into occupations and were brought together with training companies. Training seekers without placement received support in finding opportunities. Along these lines, the German parliament has passed the Act to promote initial and further training including the Training guarantee in July 2023, introducing a subsidised vocational orientation internship, a mobility grant, and making participation in introductory training easier.

## 2024 Implementation

For the fourth time in a row, the Alliance launched its *Summer of VET* initiative on 2 May 2024 under the motto: those who start training today are shaping the future as skilled workers! The partners of the Alliance advertised and informed between May and October 2024 online (#AusbildungSTARTEN - Start an apprenticeship!) and in face-to-

face formats on the following topics:

- (a) In May: Prospects of an apprenticeship
- (b) In June: Searching for and finding a training place
- (c) In July: Experience professional practice
- (d) In August: Funding opportunities
- (e) In September/October: Follow-up placement.

The Alliance was supported by the Federal Chancellor with a personal greeting at the start of the initiative.

On 26 June 2024, the kick-off meeting of a network of training ambassador initiatives took place in the auditorium of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Protection (BMWK). A total of 65 participants, mainly from chambers of skilled crafts and chambers of industry and commerce, came to Berlin from all over Germany to discuss their training ambassador initiatives.

### 2025 Implementation

Around 60 participants attended the third network meeting of the *training ambassador initiatives* at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs in Berlin on 26 February 2025. The network is part of the Alliance for Initial and Continuing Training.

In April 2025, the funding period of the initiative *JOBvision – train. qualify. shape.* started. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular, which often have difficulty finding and retaining suitable apprentices, are supported by the initiative.

At the start of the *Summer of VET* on 5 May 2025, the Alliance was supported by the Federal Chancellor with a personal greeting (video) and by ZDH President (Video 'Discover over 130 skilled trades and #AusbildungSTARTEN'). For the fifth time, the partners of the Alliance advertised and informed between May and October 2025 online (#AusbildungSTARTEN) and in face-to-face formats about starting an apprenticeship.

Around 140 advisors from the *Perfect match and welcome guides programme* gathered in Berlin (BMWE) on 12 and 13 June 2025. The programme is supported by the Alliance.

## Bodies responsible

- Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE) (since 2025)
- Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) (until 2025)
- Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) (until December 2021)
- Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS)
- Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ) (since 2025)
- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) (until 2025)
- Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration
- German Trade Union Confederation (DGB)
- Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK)
- Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA)
- Federation of German Industries (BDI)
- German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH)
- Federal association of liberal professions (BFB)
- Federal Employment Agency (BA)
- Federal States (Länder)

## Target group

### Learners

Young people (15-29 years old)  
Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)  
Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers  
Learners with disabilities  
Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or social-economic disadvantaged position)

### **Entities providing VET**

Companies  
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)  
VET providers (all kinds)

## **Thematic categories**

### **Governance of VET and lifelong learning**

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

### **Modernising VET offer and delivery**

Expanding VET programmes to EQF levels 5-8  
Acquiring key competences  
Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

### **Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation**

Permeability between IVET and CVET and general and vocational pathways, academic and professional higher education  
Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies  
Lifelong guidance  
Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

## **European priorities in VET**

### **VET Recommendation**

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

VET promoting equality of opportunities

### **Osnabrück Declaration**

Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

## **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

## **Further reading**

[Website of the Alliance for initial and further training](#)

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[Summer of VET 2025](#)

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[Summer of VET 2024](#)

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[Act to promote initial and further training, incl. training guarantee \(2023\)](#)

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[Joint declaration of Alliance partners 2023-26](#)

## Related policy developments

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### 2025 Implementation

#### The Excellence Initiative for VET

With the Excellence Initiative for VET policy projects are combined into an overarching agenda. Individual activities will be launched successively during 2022 to 2026. Over EUR 750 million have been earmarked for this purpose.

 GERMANY

##### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

##### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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### 2023 Discontinued

#### Securing apprenticeship placements during the COVID-19 crisis

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Government (BMBF, BMAS, BMWi) decided on key measures to support apprenticeship and to secure skilled labour in June 2020 with a total funding budget of up to EUR 500 million.

 GERMANY

##### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

##### Subsystem

IVET

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### 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**

## Supporting SMEs to provide future-proof VET

Under the umbrella initiative, VET 4.0, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) initiated a special funding line (Initial and continuing vocational training in the economy 4.0 – Support structures for SMEs in the adaptation process of in-company training) within the JOBSTARTER plus

 GERMANY

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## Qualifying trainers for the future world of VET

Since 2015, BIBB has funded eighteen ‘VET for sustainable development’ projects (BBNE). They experimented and evaluated relevant curriculum concepts, digital teaching, learning materials and examination questions on green skills for initial and continuing VET, e.g.

 GERMANY

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## Digital education and upskilling of VET teachers

Under its *Digital pact for schools* programme (2019-24), the Federal Government aims to fund the digital infrastructure in all German schools, including vocational schools, to promote the uptake of digital skills.

 GERMANY

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2024 Completed**

**Long-term quality initiative for teacher training**

The Federal Government and the Federal States (represented by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs KMK) have launched a joint programme, the Quality initiative for teacher training (*Qualitätsoffensive Lehrerbildung, QLB*), a funding competition scheme

 GERMANY

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

**Attracting university dropouts to VET**

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has been supporting countrywide pilots to ease access to VET for university dropouts to address predicted shortages of skilled workers. The funding volume of support has amounted to EUR 16 million for 2014-20.

 GERMANY

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

**Promoting innovations for excellent VET - InnoVET programmes**

In January 2019, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) launched the project Shaping the future - innovations for excellent vocational training (InnoVET) and ran the first call.

 GERMANY

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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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.

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**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## **Promoting dual VET**

Given the increasing trend towards academic education, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs (BMWi) have set up a joint campaign to present dual VET (apprenticeship) as an attractive option.

 GERMANY

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2021 Completed**

## **Pact for vocational training**

The Pact for VET (*Der Berufsbildungspakt*) includes the following measures, partly addressing work-based learning:

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**Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Alliance for initial and further training: Germany. 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/28134>