

Lifelong vocational guidance for young people and adults

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 GERMANY

Timeline



ID number 28133

Background

Due to growing transformation processes and structural changes in the labour and VET market in the last years, lifelong vocational guidance for school graduates and later for employed and unemployed persons has become increasingly important.

Objectives

The aim of these measures is to provide guidance for young people for initial VET as well as career counselling for adults throughout their working life

Description

Building upon the results of its pilot project Continuing education and training guidance, the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, BA) launched in 2017 a more comprehensive Lifelong vocational guidance project. The project targets both young people and adults. In 2018, it was piloted at four locations.

The Lifelong vocational guidance (*Lebensbegleitende Berufsberatung*, LBB) is based on the BA 2025 strategy of the employment service, which provides better support for customers during structural change in the training and labour market, as well as at important decision points in their employment biography. Lifelong career counselling pursues a preventive approach and contributes to people and work coming together more smoothly. The BA cooperates with all stakeholders and network partners involved in the training and labour market. More than 4 700 professionally trained career counsellors are available nationwide. Several formats are used:

- (a) career guidance events,
- (b) individual guidance (in person, by telephone or video communication),
- (c) low-threshold consultation on site (e.g. in schools and companies),
- (d) customised online services for young people and adults for orientation and
- (e) own search.

The project started with Area 1, Continuing education guidance for young people, before starting a career; Area 2, Employed and unemployed adults, and Area 3, Online services, will follow.

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

As of 1 January 2019, the service offering vocational guidance before entering working life will be introduced nationwide (Area 1).

2020 Implementation

Since January 2020, the lifelong career guidance of the BA has been extended to adults (Area 2: unemployed or in employment), in addition to young people.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, the online self-exploration tools *Check-U* and *New plan*, aim to inspire choices of new professional paths and shows the possibilities for development or further training on the job (Area 3). Additional components, such as a test for further training and expansion of the search functions, will be made available by October 2022.

2022 Implementation

In 2022, the Federal Employment Agency (BA) intensified its lifelong career guidance services (LBB) by expanding the digital self-exploration tools (*Check-U* for new entrants into professional life and *NewPlan* for those in work). A brochure describing all LLB services was published by the BA in November 2021.

As an association in which guidance associations and stakeholders, experts from science and research, business organisations and trade unions have joined forces, the German National Guidance Forum in Education, Career and Employment (Nationales Forum Beratung in Bildung, Beruf und Beschäftigung e.V.) is committed to the professional development of guidance services in Germany and in Europe. The nfb brochure *Career Guidance in the Life Course - Structures and Services in Germany* (in English) was updated in 2022, in cooperation with the national Euroguidance centre in the BA. This brochure informs guidance practitioners about the basic features of the German guidance system in the field of education, career and employment and provides a compact overview of guidance structures and guidance services in Germany.

2023 Implementation

In 2023, the BA's lifelong career guidance (LBB), which is already anchored in the Social Code III (SGB III), was further strengthened. The LBB service offers career guidance to people before entering employment (BBvE) and to people in employment (BBiE), for example when re-entry or career reorientation is involved. With BBiE, the BA is expanding its career guidance services. Since the end of 2022, 600 counsellors have been available nationwide at 39 network locations to provide career guidance to employees and those returning to work. The overall aim of lifelong career guidance is to support young people and adults throughout their working lives, particularly with regard to changing conditions on the training and labour market.

In December 2023, the IAB (Institute for Employment Research of the Federal Employment Agency) published the research report 21/2023: Who makes use of career guidance in working life (BBiE)? A process data analysis. As the BA services addressed different target groups during the period investigated, the IAB research report examines 45 000 employed persons, just under 9 000 unemployed persons and around 17 500 other persons who attended at least one initial guidance appointment in 2021 and who fulfilled some additional conditions.

2024 Implementation

Since 25 June 2024, the New Plan - an online tool for professional development - has been integrated into the national education platform 'my NOW'. All New Plan functions will remain available in the new design.

The IAB research report 01/2024 presents the results of an online survey among employees and recipients of unemployment benefits. Among other things, the survey asked whether workers were aware of and used the New Plan tool, were interested in professional development and felt well informed about their wage and employment opportunities. The report also examines whether people answered these questions differently if they had previously received an information letter about the New Plan tool. The sample analysed in this report comprised approximately 4 400 people.

The main results of the report are:

- (a) on average, people receiving unemployment benefit knew about and used New Plan more often than those in full-time employment. People who had received the information letter sent in advance knew and used New Plan significantly more often;
- (b) two thirds of the full-time employees surveyed and three quarters of the unemployment benefit recipients surveyed were interested in professional development;
- (c) more than half of the full-time employees and unemployment benefit recipients surveyed unemployment benefit recipients felt (rather) well informed about their earnings and employment opportunities. The information letter sent out in advance had no influence on their responses.

Bodies responsible

- Federal Employment Agency (BA)

Target group

Learners

Young people (15-29 years old)
Adult learners
Unemployed and jobseekers

Entities providing VET

Companies
VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Coordinating VET and other policies

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs
Lifelong guidance

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

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

Osnabrück Declaration

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

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Web portal of Federal Employment Agency \(BA\)](#)

[Online self-exploration tool New plan](#)

[Online self-exploration tool Check-U](#)

[IAB research report on the role of information in the use of New Plan \(2024\)](#)

[IAB research report on who makes use of career guidance in working life \(2023\)](#)

[nfb brochure "Career Guidance in the Life Course - Structures and Services in Germany" in English \(2022\)](#)

[Brochure \(11/2021\) on Lifelong vocational guidance \(LBB\)](#)

[Brochure \(11/2018\) on Lifelong vocational guidance \(LBB\)](#)

Related policy developments

2024 Implementation

National education platform (NOW!)

In 2021, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is funding the first prototype of a technical infrastructure for a digital education platform.

 GERMANY

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Municipalities education programme

With the ESF Plus education municipalities programme, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) supports districts and independent cities in the further development of their education landscape.

 GERMANY

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Programmes supporting literacy and basic education for adults

In 2016, the national strategy for literacy and basic education for adults was followed by the Decade for literacy 2016-26, which provided EUR 180 million for the funding of related projects.

 GERMANY

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

CVET

2024 Implementation

National Skills Strategy

In November 2018, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) launched a committee to develop a National continuing education strategy (*Nationale Weiterbildungsstrategie*).

 GERMANY

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

CVET

2024 Implementation

Expanding financial support for CVET and advanced vocational qualifications

In 2016, the legislation promoting further training (AWStG) was amended.

 GERMANY

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

CVET

2024 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

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

2021 Completed

Pact for vocational training

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

 GERMANY

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28133>

