Partial qualifications to support the low-qualified and unskilled

**Timeline**

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**ID number 28122**

**Background**

In 2012, the shortage of skilled workers was already noticeable in many regions and sectors and was supposed to exacerbate by the challenges of the coming years. Therefore, it is important to address target groups that have been less in focus so far. Access to the labour market for people without a vocational qualification was usually difficult, yet these people brought with them professional potential that often remained unused.

The number of low-skilled and unskilled adults on the labour market increased partly due to new immigration waves in the last decades. Partial qualifications were developed first by employers to support the upskilling of their unskilled employees alongside work.

**Objectives**

Partial qualifications can be a subsequent path to a qualification for the target group of low-skilled adults (older than 25 years) and thus a perspective for qualified employment.

**Description**

Partial qualifications (*Teilqualifikationen, TQ*) are educational offers, which allow learners to gain vocational qualifications through systematic, successive qualifications based on the dual training regulations. Once the total of the partial qualifications is completed, the learner can take an examination for external candidates. The work on procedures for certifications and the development of training modules is continuing. There are several current projects on TQ, including:

1. the employer initiative partial qualification *One TQ better!*, setting up a seal of quality for partial qualification (since 2013: 2 700 participants);
2. the BMBF-funded TQ project ETAPP (2019-21), aiming to develop nationwide standardised partial qualifications together with the employer associations (BDA and ADBW);
3. the chambers of industry and commerce (DIHK) initiative USE OPPORTUNITIES! with partial qualifications towards recognised vocational qualification (2017-22), also aiming to develop nationwide standardised partial qualifications. The project, USE OPPORTUNITIES! With partial qualifications towards recognised vocational
qualification, started in October 2017 for 3 years. This initiative aims at developing standardised framework conditions for the qualification of low-skilled and unskilled adults aged over 25. The emphasis is on developing training modules geared to regional needs and certification of partial qualifications to give low-skilled and unskilled adults the opportunity to acquire a complete vocational qualification or at least an upgradable qualification. The project includes the establishment of a coordination office for the control, quality assurance and monitoring of activities, the development of guidance and support structures, and cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) for the development of the training modules. The project budget is EUR 583 000 from 2017 to 2019.

In 2018, 55% of IHKs were active in the context of certification of partial qualifications; a further 22% were planning an offer. Partial qualifications modules for the specialist for metal technology, the industrial electrician and the specialist for courier, express and postal services were developed. The catering modules for restaurant and hotel specialists, chefs and clerks working for the office management were submitted to BIBB for external validation.

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In 2019, the participation of IHKs in the project was expanded almost country-wide. Work was carried out on procedures for the certification of partial qualifications. New training modules were developed, particularly in cooperation with the education institutions of the commercial sector. Partial qualification modules are now offered by most IHKs and in many occupations.

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In 2020, the TQ project of the chambers (IHKs - Use opportunities) was extended until September 2022 with an additional BMBF funding amounting to EUR 375 000.

Central objectives of the new funding phase:

1. networking of stakeholders: jointly promoting TQ and further developing it nationwide;
2. information transfer: support IHKs in promoting quality and national standards;
3. raising awareness: disseminating best practices and making success factors more visible.

In 2020, work was done on the development of new partial qualifications and their standardisation. There was also a focus on creating uniform structures, contributing to improving the data situation, and looking at interfaces to other instruments of post-qualification.

Three videos were published illustrating best practices in three companies enabling their staff without vocational qualification to obtain such a certification through partial qualifications alongside work.

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Both the DIHK Use opportunities project and the ETAPP partner project were continued in 2021 as agreed. In 2021, the DIHK project on partial qualifications published an interactive brochure on the standardisation and implementation of partial qualifications. The brochure presents background and results of the first term of the project, successful implementation of TQs in practice, recommendations and an outlook on the coming project phase.

The Employers' initiative for partial qualification (AGi TQ) has developed a quality seal that ensures a nationwide standardised offer of TQs by the participating German
employers’ associations and business-related education institutions. All offers that bear this seal of quality contain a promise of quality - both for the graduates of a TQ and for their (potential) employers and companies in all sectors in Germany.

**2022 Implementation**

Based on their initiative *USE OPPORTUNITIES! with partial qualifications towards recognised vocational qualification*, the chambers of industry and commerce (DIHK) developed in 2022 a digital competence assessment for partial qualifications (written part).

The flyer *Five reasons for partial qualifications* was updated in January 2022. Since only one in four companies is aware of the funding opportunities offered by the Federal Employment Agency and only one in ten uses these opportunities, it is important to disseminate such information amongst companies, for example by distributing the new flyer or by organising information events.

On 29 June 2022, the DIHK TQ project organised such an event on partial qualifications and their implementation in practice. The outcomes of the event are presented online. Another example of dissemination is the nationwide TQ Action Day held on 4 May 2022 by the employers’ initiative for partial qualification (AGI TQ), with various activities at the participating locations to draw attention to the topic.

**Bodies responsible**

- Chambers of industry and commerce (IHKs)
- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)
- Federal Employment Agency (BA)
- Confederation of German Employers’ Associations (BDA)
- Association of the Educational Organisations of German Business (ADBW)

**Target group**

**Learners**
Adult learners
Low-skilled/qualified persons

**Thematic categories**

**Governance of VET and lifelong learning**
Further developing national quality assurance systems

**Modernising VET offer and delivery**
Using learning-outcome-based approaches and modularisation
Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

**Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications**
Developing and applying qualifications smaller/shorter than full

**Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation**
Promotion strategies and campaigns for VET and lifelong learning
Permeability between IVET and CVET and general and vocational pathways, academic and professional higher education
Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs
Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

**European priorities in VET**

**VET Recommendation**

- Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET
- VET promoting equality of opportunities

**Subsystem**

IVET

**Further reading**

- DIHK-TQ project website
- ETAPP project's website
- Employer initiative on partial qualification, AGi TQ
- TQ website of the Federal Employment Agency
- Video on partial qualifications (in DE with EN subtitles)
- Quality seal of AGi TQ

**Related policy developments**

**2023 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.

**Type of development**
- Practical measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**
- IVET CVET

**2022 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

2022 Implementation
Validation and recognition

The ValiKom project aims to promote the validation of non-formally and informally acquired skills in Germany and was initiated by the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (DHKT) and the German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK), together with the Federal Ministry for Education and Research.

GERMANY

Type of development
Practical measure/Initiative

Subsystem
IVET CVET

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