

Digital skills initiative

POLICY DEVELOPMENT	PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE	 AUSTRIA
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Timeline

2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation	2021 Implementation
2022 Implementation	2023 Implementation	2024 Implementation
2025 Implementation		

ID number 27978

Background

Digitalisation poses a variety of challenges for all employees and companies. Often, employees and jobseekers are observed to lack competence in the use of digital tools and applications. At the same time, it can be observed that digital transformation does not only require technical skills to cope with the changes, but that a set of methodological skills, social skills and personal attitudes is becoming just as important.

Although there are many national and international studies on this subject, many results remain superficial. Above all, a concrete view of the daily challenges in companies is sometimes missing.

Objectives

Updating initial and continuing education programmes and curricula to meet the needs of digitalisation.

Description

In 2019 the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) organised a total of 10 company workshops within the framework of the New digital skills initiative, which is a new development of the AMS New skills project, which has been running since 2009. High-ranking representatives of leading Austrian companies participated in five different clusters (manufacturing industries, trade, tourism, construction and office/administration/IT). The aim of the workshops was to identify the new demands placed on employees and jobseekers against the background of the increasing digitalisation of the world of work. The results of the workshops will inform the updating of initial and continuing education programmes and curricula. Guidelines are to be developed for companies to adapt the skills of their employees. The results are also to be incorporated in an appropriate way into measures to develop the skills of jobseekers. The Austrian Economic Chamber and the Austrian Chamber of Labour are involved in the project.

2019 Implementation

In November 2019, a first report was presented at a major New digital skills event, based on the workshop results (see description) and accompanying projects, such as expert interviews (New skills talks). This report is explicitly addressed to companies and is intended to help them develop strategies and identify topics for the training and further education of their own employees.

A final report on the first project phase with a detailed presentation of results and recommendations for various stakeholders is underway.

2020 Implementation

The full report on the 2019 workshop results was published in July 2020.

The project places great emphasis on face-to-face workshops but these were temporarily suspended in 2020 due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Workshops with companies are to be resumed in 2021 as soon as the situation permits. Virtualisation of the workshop work is still not planned. However, the New skills talks (interviews with experts from a wide range of fields on the topic of digitalisation and its impact on the world of work and the need for skills) were continued in 2020 and the results published on a continuing basis as short reports.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, the Digital Skills Initiative of AMS was continued with another 12 expert interviews (New skills talks). These were published intermittently as short reports and contributed to deepening the understanding of the digital transformation and its practical impact on skills needs and occupational changes in various economic sectors.

The results from the Digital Skills Initiative are, in particular, findings and recommendations regarding which skills are becoming more important from the perspective of company representatives and which play (or should play) a major role in education and training, as well as in human resources development. The key message is that, due to digitalisation, social, methodological and personal skills in particular are gaining in importance. In many cases, there are also complaints about a lack of basic skills. This does not mean that subject-specific skills (hard skills) are becoming less important, but from the companies' point of view, this is not where the major challenge lies in developing the necessary skills.

The results aim to raise awareness of the importance of developing digital skills and are continuously presented at events (usually online due to the COVID-19 situation). In this way they are made available to companies, education and training institutions, career guidance practitioners and learners of all age groups.

In the online occupational information system of the AMS, a classification was made for all occupations with short descriptions of which level of digital competences is required according to the Austrian Digital Competence Framework (based on the European framework).

2022 Implementation

In 2022 the project was continued with another 14 expert interviews (New skills talks) with an additional focus on the topic of green transition. The interviews will be published as short reports in the first half of 2023.

In addition, a synopsis of all interviews conducted in 2020 to early 2022 was published as a separate report in 2022. The interviews form an overview of the developments, changes and challenges, that representatives of companies, research and educational institutions, public authorities, etc. see in the context of digitalisation and the need for competences.

2023 Implementation

In 2023, the project was continued with another 14 expert interviews (New skills talks) keeping the additional focus on green transition. The interviews will be published as short reports in the first half of 2024.

2024 Implementation

In 2024, a synopsis of all interviews conducted from mid-2022 to mid-2024 was published in a separate report. The project was continued with another 14 expert interviews (New skills talks), focussing on artificial intelligence (AI).

2025 Implementation

In 2025, the project of the 14 expert interviews focussing on the topic of AI continued and were published in form of short reports on an ongoing basis by the Austrian Employment Service.

In addition, the so-called digitisation brochure was published in July 2025. This is teaching material for lower and upper secondary schools, which examines the topic of digitisation from different perspectives and deals with it extensively, particularly from the point of view of career choice and training, with theoretical input and practical teaching tasks.

Bodies responsible

- Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS)
- Chamber of Labour (AK)
- Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Adult learners
Unemployed and jobseekers
Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment

Entities providing VET

Companies

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses
Acquiring key competences

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Press release of the AMS Austria](#)

Short report on project results (in German only)

New digital skills - full research report on the project results (in German only)

Anthology of New Skills talks 2020 to 2022 of the Public Employment Service (AMS)

Anthology of New Skills talks 2022 to 2024 of the Public Employment Service (AMS)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Digital competence model for Austria (DigComp 2.2 AT)

In 2019, the Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) published the Digital competence model for Austria (DigComp 2.2 AT).

 AUSTRIA

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2017 Completed

Revising qualifications for industry 4.0

In 2017, an expert group within the Association Industry 4.0 Austria started to reflect on how the qualifications and competences required for industry in the digital age could be developed in initial and continuing education and training.

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Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

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

