

# We educate the economy plan: promoting innovative and excellence in VET



## Timeline



ID number 27971

## Background

In addition to its function as a representative of the interests of companies, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber acts as a training provider in many areas. In apprenticeship training, school-based vocational training, academic education and continuing vocational training, the Economic Chamber with its organisations and institutions is one of the most important non-governmental training providers.

At the same time, many companies are facing an increasing shortage of skilled workers.

Against this background, the Economic Chamber intends to further promote its vocational education and training (VET) activities and optimise them, in particular by using digital solutions.

## Objectives

The project aims to improve the competitiveness of the Austrian economy through modern and excellent VET and promote innovation while supporting social inclusion. It is supported by policy-makers and developed in cooperation with the Economic Chambers of the federal provinces (*Länder*).

## Description

The We educate the economy plan was approved in 2018 by the Austrian Economic Chamber and focusses on developing projects in five fields:

- (a) virtual learning platforms, for example for virtual company tours or online career information;
- (b) digital tools for apprenticeship training, such as digital learning worlds for apprentices, online tools for planning and documenting apprenticeship training and digital training and continuing education platforms for trainers;
- (c) continuing training, such as new apprenticeship training for adults and competence checks of individual skills;

- (d) a Campus of the economy, to support companies in training abroad, further developing Erasmus for apprentices and skilled workers and expanding and professionalising Skills Austria;
- (e) a Business in schools strand, with companies involved in MINT (mathematics, informatics, natural sciences and technology) subjects in schools and relaunching the Innovation Foundation for Education.

## **2018 Approved/Agreed**

### **2019 Implementation**

In 2019, the first concrete measures were implemented:

- (a) talent checks for learners in VET schools and higher general education;
- (b) expanding apprenticeship training for adults by providing new offers for graduates of academic secondary schools through the Dual academy model;
- (c) the introduction of an online registration tool for the final apprenticeship examination;
- (d) establishing the online-platform, School meets business, for education offers and events related to business education, financial literacy, entrepreneurship education and career orientation. School meets business brings schools together with companies and entrepreneurs in a targeted manner.

Some other projects are in a pilot phase, such as the development of a web app to present the education offers of the Economic Chamber as continuous education pathways from initial training to further education and higher qualification.

Another goal of the measure, to bring the EuroSkills 2020 to Austria, was achieved in 2019, though its implementation had to be postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 crisis.

### **2020 Implementation**

While projects in most areas of the initiative remain in the development stage, in 2020 some further sub-projects were completed and the results implemented. For example, the talent check, a uniform Austria-wide comprehensive test for young people at the end of upper secondary school was fully implemented. The check is used in the career information centres of the Economic Chamber to support young people in their orientation during the transition to further education and training or the labour market.

Increased efforts were made in 2020 on the development of a digital learning platform, which is intended to bring together the existing digital offers of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO), but for which new offers are also to be developed. This sub-project is one of the core offerings within the initiative but is currently still in the development stage. A prototype of the above-mentioned web app to present the education offers of the Economic Chamber has been completed. A pilot to implement this project is currently being designed.

### **2021 Implementation**

In 2021, a first internal prototype of the virtual learning platform 'wise up' was developed and has since been intensively tested, optimised and filled with or linked to existing content. The focus of these developments was on the identification of a suitable competence model, the screening of learning content and the qualitative or target group-specific evaluation of this content. The work on this has not yet been completed.

Another goal of the programme, to bring the EuroSkills to Austria, was achieved in September 2021 when the EuroSkills were held in Graz and around 400 participants from across Europe competed for medals and awards in 48 competition trades. Russia was the most successful nation, ahead of Austria and France.

As a new focus of work within the framework of the initiative We educate the economy, graduate tracking was commissioned in 2021. The aim is to examine the impact of the WKO education measures in terms of career entry, career change and participant satisfaction, by carrying out regular graduate surveys and secondary statistical analyses ('graduate tracking'). In 2021, a research project was piloted, together with the ibw (ibw Austria, Research and Development in VET) as a research partner, and the preliminary work was started.

### **2022 Implementation**

As of the beginning of November 2022, around 1 500 users from around 100 companies were registered on the platform. Companies have here the opportunity to digitalise their own company-specific learning content and make it accessible to their employees. In addition, more than 15 000 online courses are currently available on this platform. The target groups of the learning platform are companies themselves as well as their employees, apprentices, job seekers and generally all kinds of learners who want to develop themselves in different job-related competence areas through online content.

The work on collecting and developing new content for the learning platform continued. A central focus is on the development of digital learning tracks to support the training of apprentices. In a first step, such learning tracks have been developed for 11 apprenticeship occupations since 2022. In this process, specific learning objectives are defined in accordance with the training regulations, digital content for achieving these learning objectives is collected, the quality of the content/offers is checked and ensured, new content is created where necessary (gap analysis) and the content is combined into continuous learning pathways, including learning objective checks, together with subject experts.

The digital learning tracks for apprentices are a central component of the learning platform and form a separate measure in the 2022 developed National Implementation Plan (NIP).

The web app for the presentation of the education offers of the Economic Chamber as continuous education pathways from initial training to further education and higher qualification, which also is part of the NIP, was further developed, the information was expanded and presented in a new way.

For the graduate tracking piloted in 2021, the monitoring of apprenticeship graduates was carried out in 2022 on the one hand and a survey of graduates of the master craftsperson and qualification examinations on the other. The results of this monitoring were not yet available in 2022.

### **2023 Implementation**

The tracking of apprenticeship graduates and dropouts from 2011 to 2020 was published. The results show that three years after completing/dropping out of training, 88% of all graduates who had passed their final examination with distinction were in employment, but only 44% of those who had dropped out of training (prematurely). At the same time, no more than 5% of graduates who passed their final apprenticeship examination with distinction were unemployed, compared to 24% of those who dropped out of their training early. The rest (7% of graduates with excellent results versus 34% of dropouts) fall into other categories such as further education and training (rare), not recorded by the labour market or unknown (which often means moving abroad).

In addition, the tracking of graduates of master craftsperson and proof of competence examinations from 2019 to 2020 was published in 2023. The results show that these examinations mostly meet the high expectations in terms of specialist competence and managerial skills put on them, while the social recognition of these qualifications still has room for development and improvement.

In the digital learning platform wise-up a total of ten so called 'professional channels'

which summarise the different learning tracks of an apprenticeship profession were published in 2023, for example for apprenticeships in mechatronics, metal technology, electrical engineering, retail and office administration, all of which are among the apprenticeships with the highest numbers of apprentices.

### **2024 Implementation**

In 2024, a new project called Financial education for apprentices was commissioned. It aims to improve the financial literacy of apprentices, a target group that had never been specifically addressed up to that point. To this end, 10 e-learning courses on everyday situations directly related to the lives of apprentices are being created. The first courses, entitled My first salary and My first home, were published in the autumn 2024 and are available free of charge.

In wise-up platform another 'professional channel' was published for the apprenticeship Installations and building technology.

### **2025 Implementation**

In autumn 2025, a total of 20 'professional channels' were available on the wise up platform. The latest publications were the professions plastics technology, plastics process engineering and in-house logistics services clerk.

In addition, a new initiative was developed in the form of an online financial education programme for apprentices. As of October 2025, courses on 10 topics are available as part of this learning programme, e.g. 'My first home', 'My first household budget' and 'Saving costs in everyday life'.

As these courses are interesting for all professions, they are also published on the wise up platform as so-called 'interdisciplinary content' – supplemented by additional tasks in learning paths.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO)

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Young people (15-29 years old)

Adult learners

Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment

### **Education professionals**

Trainers

Adult educators

Guidance practitioners

### **Entities providing VET**

Companies

VET providers (all kinds)

### **Other stakeholders**

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

## **Thematic categories**

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

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Establishing and developing skills intelligence systems

## **Modernising VET offer and delivery**

Diversifying modes of learning: face-to-face, digital and/or blended learning; adaptable/flexible training formats

Developing and updating learning resources and materials

Acquiring key competences

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

## **Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences**

Supporting teachers and trainers for and through digital

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

Promotion strategies and campaigns for VET and lifelong learning

Lifelong guidance

## **European and international dimensions of VET**

EU and international skills competitions

# **European priorities in VET**

## **VET Recommendation**

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

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

## **Osnabrück Declaration**

European Education and Training Area and international VET

# **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

# **Further reading**

[Information about the plan on the Austrian Economic Chamber's website](#)

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[School meets business](#)

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[Website of Euroskills 2021 in Graz](#)

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[wise-up - The digital education and training platform for Austria's economy \(only in German\)](#)

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[Website 'Education of the Economy' including education pathways \(only in German\)](#)

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[Monitoring of apprenticeship graduates 2011-2020. ibw-research brief No 114 \(in English\)](#)

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[Master craftsman and proof of competence examinations in Austria - graduate survey. ibw-research brief No 113 \(in English\)](#)

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[Austria: digital learning platform for apprentices \(in English\)](#)

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[Austria: Financial education for apprentices \(in English\)](#)

## Related policy developments

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**2025 Implementation**

### Digital career guidance offers

In addition to the activities of schools and the Public Employment Service, the Chamber of Labour (AK) and the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO) are important providers of services and tools for the vocational orientation of young people.

 AUSTRIA

#### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

#### Subsystem

IVET

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**2025 Implementation**

### Digitisation of training design and administration in dual VET

Within the framework of the Education of the economy initiative of the Austrian Economic Chamber, various activities and measures have been implemented since 2018, partly in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, to advance digitisation in apprenticeship training both in terms of content and a

 AUSTRIA

#### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

#### Subsystem

IVET

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**2022 Completed**

### Career check for young adults

In 2020, the Career check for young adults was introduced by the Austrian Economic

Chambers and rolled out in five federal provinces. The career check is a combination of testing and counselling that supports young people in their career development.

 AUSTRIA

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## Establishing a higher VET field

To realise parity of esteem and increase the visibility and public perception of higher VET qualifications, a discussion on the establishment of a defined educational field for higher VET qualifications was started in 2019 within educational policy.

 AUSTRIA

**Type of development**

Strategy/Action  
plan

**Subsystem**

CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## Apprenticeships for adults leading to NQF level 5

Under the title Apprenticeship NEW for adults, the Federal Economic Chamber has taken the initiative within its education campaign (*Bildungsoffensive*) to develop a programme for people with a higher education entrance qualification that leads to a dual VET qualification at NQF/EQF level

 AUSTRIA

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## Skilled labour radar

In 2018, the Austrian Economic Chamber published the Skilled labour radar, a research report prepared on its behalf presenting key indicators on unemployment, employment

trends and the job market, as well as the results of a survey amongst 4 500 enterprises on the need for, and shortage of, skill

 AUSTRIA

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2022 Completed**

## Supporting the digitalisation of VET

In November 2017, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber issued a call for tenders for a funding programme financed by the Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs to support projects on the use of digital opportunities in dual VET and the promotion of the development of digital competence

 AUSTRIA

**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/27971>