

Austria

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

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Title: Austria: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2005

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Author: ReferNet Austria

Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Austria. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2005. Later editions can be viewed at http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

Geographic term:

Austria

THEMATIC OVERVIEWS



01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Austria is a democratic republic as defined in the constitution of 1920. The constitution establishes the federal and constitutional principles and the separation of powers. Federal legislative power is centred in the *Nationalrat* (National Council, whose members are elected every four years by the population in accordance with the system of proportional representation), and the *Bundesrat* (Federal Council holding only a suspending veto right, consisting of members representing their *Bundesland* [Land]). National Council and Federal Council constitute the *Bundesversammlung* (National Assembly).

Austria is divided into nine independent *Laender*: *Burgenland*; *Kärnten* (Carinthia); *Oberösterreich* (Upper Austria); *Niederösterreich* (Lower Austria); *Salzburg*; *Steiermark* (Styria); *Tirol* (Tyrol); *Vorarlberg*; and, the capital city, *Wien* (Vienna). Executive responsibilities rest with these *Laender*, unless the constitution places the executive responsibility with the *Bundesregierung* (Federal Government). The central administrative bodies of the federal government are the *Bundespräsident* (Federal President), *Bundeskanzler* (Federal Chancellor) and *Bundesminister* (Federal Ministers). In each province, the *Landesregierung* (Regional Government) forms the central administrative body.

A noteworthy feature of Austrian politics is the *Sozialpartnerschaft* (social partnership). It provides the basis for cooperation between economic and social interests and mediates in case of disagreements between employers' and employees' interest groups.

Austria has been a member of the EU since 1 January 1995. The Euro was introduced on 1 January 2002, and has been the only legal currency since 1 March 2002.

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Lying in central Europe, Austria is 83 871 km² and has more than 8.1 million inhabitants. As the table below shows, the population has grown steadily over the last 20 years and is expected to grow further. While birth rates have been declining since the mid-1970s, opening the borders to eastern Europe in 1989 has led to higher immigration rates.

YEAR	ANNUAL TOTAL AVERAGE / POPULATION PROJECTION	RELATIVE CHANGE (IN %)
1985	7 564 984	
1990	7 677 850	+ 1.5
1995	7 948 278	+ 3.5
2000	8 011 566	+ 0.8
2002	8 083 797	+ 0.9
2003	8 117 754	+ 0.4
2005	8 131 354	+ 0.2
2010	8 255 368	+ 1.5
2015	8 347 927	+ 1.1

2020	8 400 920	+ 0.6
2025	8 425 533	+ 0.3

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2005

As in most other EU member states, the age pyramid shows a demographic imbalance towards older citizens. According to population projections (cf. table below), the percentage of inhabitants over 60 years of age is expected to increase steadily from 21.1 % in 2001 to 29.5 % in 2025. At the same time, the share of people up to 24 years of age will decrease by more than five percentage points.

AGE GROUPS	POPULATION PROJECTION (IN %)					
	2001	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
0-24 YEARS	28.8	28.1	26.8	25.6	24.4	23.6
25-59 YEARS	50.1	49.7	49.8	49.8	49.0	46.9
60 + YEARS	21.1	22.1	23.4	24.6	26.7	29.5

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2005

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

The Austrian economy is a small, open economy which has developed in a similar way to other EU countries since the late 1990s, including the structural move towards the tertiary sector in recent decades. This is apparent in the proportional distribution of the GDP, as well as in the distribution of the labour force by sectors of industry (cf. table below).

SECTORS OF INDUSTRY	GDP	LABOUR FORCE *	
	RELATIVE (IN %)	ABSOLUTE	RELATIVE (IN %)
PRIMARY SECTOR	1.8	214 900	5.4
SECONDARY SECTOR	27.3	1 173 600	29.6
TERTIARY SECTOR	70.9	2 578 800	65.0
TOTAL	100.0	3 967 300	100.0

* Labour force = sum of employees, self-employed and assisting family members

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2005

Austria's economy is structured around small and medium-sized business. Almost a quarter of all businesses in Austria do not have employees. The proportion of businesses with more than 500 employees is well below one percent, although they employ almost a quarter of the labour force. An additional quarter of the workforce is employed in businesses consisting of 100-500 employees. The majority of the workforce is therefore employed in businesses with less than 100 employees.

The structure of the workforce has changed; declining numbers of men in the workforce have been matched by a rise in participation of women. Currently, the total labour force participation rate in Austria is notably higher than the European average (69.2 % vs. 62.9 %). Unemployment in Austria is at about 4.7 % (Eurostat calculation), thus significantly lower than comparative international levels.

Unemployment rates (in %) 2003 (seasonally adjusted):

	EUROSTAT	AMS(ACC. TO NAT. DEF.)	UNDER 25 YEARS (AMS)
MALE	5.1	7.5	7.9
FEMALE	4.3	6.0	6.8
TOTAL	4.7	7.0	7.4

Sources: Eurostat, *Arbeitsmarktservice*, AMS (Public Employment Service)

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

In comparison to the EU-15 countries, Austria had the highest proportion of 25 to 64 year-olds (63% vs. 42%) that completed an ISCED level 3 or 4 programme as their highest educational attainment in 2002. Considering all EU-25 countries, Austria had the fourth highest rate, following the Czech Republic (76%), the Slovak Republic (75%) and Poland (68%). Only around one-fifth (22%) of the Austrian population aged 25 to 64 left school without obtaining an upper secondary qualification (cf. EU-15: 34%, EU-25: 32%) in 2002. The proportion of tertiary level graduates amounted to 15%, as compared to 21% (EU-15) or respectively 20% (EU-25).

The reason for the high proportion of ISCED level 3 or 4 graduates lies in the fact that Austria has a wide variety of VET options starting after compulsory schooling. The majority of students follow the VET stream (approximately 75%), where they have the choice between school-based options (three- to four-year VET schools and five-year VET colleges) and apprenticeship training (two- to four-year training programmes that take place in companies and part-time vocational schools). Upon completion of these VET programmes, students can immediately enter the job market or are fully qualified skilled workers.

The high participation rate in VET programmes also accounts for the fact that the percentage of 18 to 24 year-olds with lower secondary education only and who are not in CVET is comparatively low (9.5% vs. 15.9% in the EU as a whole).

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

A DIFFERENTIATED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM THAT GUARANTEES PERMEABILITY

The primary goal of the Austrian educational policy is to maintain and expand a wide variety of VET options. At the upper secondary level, students can choose between full-time school-based VET in *berufsbildenden mittleren und höheren Schulen*, *BMHS* (VET schools and colleges) and simultaneous training in companies and part-time VET schools within the so-called *dualen System* or *Lehre* (dual system or apprenticeship training). The wide range of VET programmes available at this level makes students take their career decision already at the age of 14 / 15. At the same time educational policy aims at ensuring permeability between the different routes. Upon completion of any type of VET, including apprenticeship training, graduates can progress to university level programmes either directly or via other pathways.

NEW TOOLS TO INCREASE PERMEABILITY

The permeability of the VET system was increased in 1997 by the introduction of the *Berufsreifeprüfung*, *BRP* (examination providing access to HE for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools). Increasing importance is also placed on certifying the participation in second chance education and the exceptional sitting of the *Lehrabschlussprüfung* (final apprenticeship examination). The introduction of a new instrument within the dual system, the *Integrative Berufsausbildung* (integrative vocational training), which is targeted at disadvantaged young people, allows for adjustments in the contents or the pace of learning.

CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES WITH FUTURE-ORIENTED CONTENT

VET curricula and *Berufsbilder* (job profiles) for apprenticeship trainings are regularly updated and revised and new programmes are introduced to ensure that the educational system responds to changing labour market/skills needs.

LIFELONG LEARNING AS A CENTRAL EMPHASIS OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Recent government declarations have included lifelong learning as a priority in educational policy. In specific areas, clear and promising concepts exist. However, due to the divisions of responsibility among different ministries and regional governments, a comprehensive and uniform strategy has yet to emerge.

FRAMEWORKS AND MECHANISMS

The Austrian VET system is relatively stable in terms of its structures and regulative mechanisms. This is mainly due to the requirement for a two-thirds majority in parliament to pass school laws, as well as to the role of the social partnership in shaping educational policy. The role of the social partners is particularly relevant within the dual system. Represented in *Berufsausbildungsbeiräten* (federal and regional advisory bodies on apprenticeship) that

are based within the *Bundes- und Landeswirtschaftskammern* (Federal and Regional Economic Chambers), they are responsible for introducing new apprenticeships or changing the requirements for existing ones.

FUTURE-ORIENTED CURRICULA

In VET curricula great emphasis is placed on ICT literacy and entrepreneurship, innovative learning tools and environments as well as on adequate methodology. The *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture) supports schools through a number of specifically designed initiatives. To enhance language skills beyond the scope of regular language tuition, in some schools technical subjects are taught in a foreign language (mainly English).

The increase of flexibility and transparency should make apprenticeship training more attractive for young people and encourage more companies to train. Recent policy proposals aim at introducing a modular structure with basic modules formulated identically for several related apprenticeships and specialised modules that answer the need for increasing specialisation in training.

DIFFERENTIATION OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

Fachhochschulen (university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation), financed by the state but run privately, often with the assistance of *Laender*, communities and social partners, have been available since 1994. Since 1999 private education providers have also had the possibility to receive accreditation as a private university from the independent *Akkreditierungsrat* (Accreditation Council). The *Universitätsgesetz 2002* (University Act of 2002) changed the status of the state universities. This law provides for the autonomy of the universities, as well as for the creation of *Universitätsräte* (university councils) consisting of members from outside the university system. Since 1999 it has been possible for study programmes at universities (and since recently also at *Fachhochschulen*) to restructure their curricula according to the three-tier-degree system Bachelor-Master-Doctor.

LIFELONG LEARNING

Besides the approaches towards increased permeability, lifelong learning policies concentrate on encouraging CVET. While the framework for CVET for the unemployed is clearly defined by legal regulations and decision-making bodies (with an important role played by the social partners), private and company training is only indirectly encouraged by tax incentives. The *Bildungsfreibetrag* (20% training tax allowance for companies) introduced in 2000 and amended in 2002 is important to mention in this context.

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

In Austria, the responsibilities for IVET and CVET are divided among a variety of bodies and entities:

ENTITY	MAIN TASKS	LEVEL
IVET IN SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS		
Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, BMBWK(Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture)	highest supervisory body for general and vocational education and training	national level
<i>Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft, BMLFUW</i> (Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management)	responsible for <i>land- und forstwirtschaftlichen Schulen</i> (schools for agriculture and forestry)	national level
<i>Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Frauen, BMGF</i> (Federal Ministry for Health and Women's Issues)	in charge of <i>Schulen im Gesundheitswesen</i> (healthcare schools)	national level
Landesschulrat(Regional Education Board)	appointment of teachers and head teachers; issuing general directives on existing laws and ordinances; submitting expert opinions on draft laws and regulations	<i>Laender</i> level
Bezirksschulrat(District Education Board)	issuing general directives and submitting expert opinions on draft laws and regulations	<i>Laender</i> level

Fachhochschulrat, FHR (<i>Fachhochschule</i> Council; <i>Fachhochschule</i> courses are university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation)	main responsibilities include accrediting and evaluating FH courses	national level
<i>Universitätsrat</i> (University Council), <i>Senat</i> (Senate), <i>Rektorat</i> (Rectorate) and <i>Rektor/in</i> (Rector)	running universities	local level
APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING		
Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit, BMWA (Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour)	enterprise-based part of apprenticeship training	national level
Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, BMBWK (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture)	school-based part of apprenticeship training	national level
<i>Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat BBAB</i> (Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship)	submitting expert opinions to the Economics Ministry	national level
<i>Lehrlingsstelle</i> (Apprenticeship Office)	apprenticeship authority of the first instance	<i>Laender</i> level
<i>Landeshauptmann</i> (Regional Governor)	apprenticeship authority of the second instance	<i>Laender</i> level
<i>Landesberufsausbildungsbeirat, LBAB</i> (Regional Advisory Board on Apprenticeship)	providing consultancy services in all issues related to VET	<i>Laender</i> level
Landesschulrat (Regional Education Board)	responsible for implementing the federal framework curricula for <i>Berufsschulen</i> (part-time VET schools)	<i>Laender</i> level
CVET		
Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, BMBWK (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture)	responsible for general CVET, schools for people under employment, CVET at universities and <i>Fachhochschulen</i>	national level
<i>Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, AMS</i> (Public Employment Service)	responsible for labour-market-related CVET	national level
<i>Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft, BMLFUW</i> (Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management)	responsible for CVET for professionals in agriculture and forestry	national level
<i>Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Frauen,</i>	responsible for CVET for healthcare	national

BMGF(Federal Ministry for Health and Women's Issues)	professionals	level
Laender, municipalities, interest groups, religious denominations and companies	making resources available, providing CVET/running CVET institutions	Laender and local levels

IVET IN SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

At national level, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has overall responsibility for primary and secondary education, including GE and VET schools. Schools for agriculture and forestry fall under the responsibility of the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, while healthcare schools are the responsibility of the Ministry for Health and Women's Issues. In general, the federal government introduces draft laws, known as government bills, in the *Nationalrat* (National Council). The drafts produced by the various ministries are submitted to a number of relevant authorities (*Kollegien* [Collegiate Councils] in the regional and district education boards, various interest groups etc.) for an expert opinion. Furthermore, the ministries promulgate curricula on the basis of the *Schulorganisationsgesetz*, *SchOG* (School Organisation Act). The spadework for curricular development is entrusted to working groups of teachers set up to cover most subjects. All curricula provide for areas of school autonomy, which schools can but are not required to use.

The regional and district education boards are the school authorities of the *Laender*. The central body within each education board is the Collegiate Council, made up of voting members and members with consultative status. One of the major tasks of the regional education board's Collegiate Council is to submit three proposals for the appointment of teachers and head teachers at intermediate and upper secondary schools and colleges. The Collegiate Council at both levels issues general directives on existing laws and ordinances (e.g. curricula) and submits expert opinions on draft laws and regulations.

The central state organ for the *Fachhochschule* sector is the *Fachhochschule* council, which comes under the supervision of the Education Minister. Its main functions includes accrediting and evaluating degree programmes.

The highest state organ for the university sector is the Education Minister. The *Laender* have no direct competencies for university matters. The activities of the Ministry are essentially limited to legal supervision, negotiating the *Leistungsverträge* (performance agreements) and a three-year global budget, receiving the performance reports, as well as controlling and monitoring. The Ministry has set up university councils as self-administrative bodies, bound by no instructions, as implementing bodies. They have a strategic and a supervisory function, as well as the task of electing or dismissing the rector and the vice-rector(s). The strategic tasks primarily relate to the approval of the development plan, the intra-university structural organisation and the drafting of the performance agreement with the Ministry. Moreover, they include the arrangement for external evaluations and the involvement in decisions on the range of studies and in the drawing up of curricula. The supervisory function comprises the preparation of the performance report, the knowledge survey and the closing of accounts. The executive body of a university is the senate. It enacts and amends the statutes, issues the curricula for degree programmes and university courses, advertises the function of rector and prepares a short list of three for the election by the university council. The rectorate (one rector and up to four vice-rectors) is the actual operational body of a university. All university facilities are under its control. The rectorate prepares decisions for the university council and the senate, appoints the intra-university executive staff, allocates budgets and human resources and submits reports. The rector is the chairperson of a rectorate. He/She represents the university vis-à-vis the Minister when entering into performance agreements, appoints the university professors on the basis of proposals by an appointment committee and is the highest superior of the university staff members.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

The largest part of the apprenticeship training is within the sphere of competence of the Economics Minister who issues regulations for each apprenticeship on the basis of expert opinions submitted by the Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship. This board consists of representatives of the social partners. Part-time vocational school teachers are co-opted as advisory members. Provisions concerning the organisation of part-time vocational schooling and the cornerstones for the framework curricula are laid down in the School Organisation Act. The Federal Minister for Education, Science and Culture issues the framework curricula for the part-time vocational schools for each apprenticeship.

The apprenticeship offices of the Regional Economic Chambers act as apprenticeship authorities of the first instance. They examine (in co-operation with representatives of the Regional Chambers of Labour) if training enterprises are suited to provide apprenticeship training in subject- and staff-related respects; in addition, they are responsible for examining and recording apprenticeship contracts. They must provide wide-ranging counselling to apprentices and training enterprises in all matters concerning apprenticeship. The Regional Governors are responsible for apprenticeship training and act as the apprenticeship authority of the second instance. They decide on appeals in apprenticeship training matters, such as the withdrawal of the authorisation as training enterprise, and on cancellations of illegally registered apprenticeship training contracts. The Regional Governors appoint the members of their respective Regional Advisory Boards on Apprenticeship. The Regional Advisory Board on Apprenticeship provides consultancy services in all issues related to apprenticeship training. It is responsible for submitting expert opinions, proposals and suggestions related to the dual system in the respective *Land*. Part-time vocational schools are within the sphere of competence of the respective *Land*, which is also responsible for implementing the federal framework curricula for part-time vocational schools for each apprenticeship and for supervising part-time vocational schools in educational and technical matters. These duties are carried out by the regional education boards and the people monitoring part-time vocational schools at the regional level.

CVET

The national government's responsibilities for CVET are split between a number of ministries. General adult learning, schools for working people and CVET at universities or *Fachhochschulen* are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The *Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung St. Wolfgang* (Federal Institute for Adult Education in St. Wolfgang) answers to the Ministry and deals with CVET of adult educators and

librarians. Responsibility for labour-market training organised by the Public Employment Service lies with the Ministry of Economics and Labour. The Ministry for Health and Women's Issues is responsible for the CVET of healthcare, the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management for agriculture and forestry professionals. The *Bundesministerium für Finanzen*, *BMF* (Federal Ministry of Finance) is responsible for matters to do with taxation. *Laender* and municipalities, interest groups and religious denominations as well as companies also show a firm commitment to CVET, actively helping to shape the CVET landscape by providing funds or running CVET institutions.

0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IVET IN SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Laws and decrees regulating school life and school education in Austria are drawn up in cooperation with the social partners. School legislation at the federal level (save universities) may only be amended by a two-thirds majority of the *Nationalrat* (National Council) with at least half of the members present. The most important federal laws are (NB: The dates refer to the original version, amendments have been made in most cases, though):

SCHULORGANISATIONSGESETZ, SCHOG 1962 (SCHOOL ORGANISATION ACT OF 1962)

The main concerns of this act were to provide educational opportunities for all kinds of interests and abilities and to provide for higher permeability of the educational system as well as for a reorganisation of teacher training and for a uniform basis for the education system. Moreover, it provided for unlimited and free-of-charge access to all levels of public schools and for co-education in all public schools. It also contains provisions on curricula regulations and pilot projects.

SCHULTERRICHTSGESETZ, SCHUG 1974 (SCHOOL EDUCATION ACT OF 1974)

This act regulates the internal organisation of the Austrian educational system and provides for the right of teachers, parents and pupils to participate in decision-making processes in schools. Furthermore, it contains provisions on the admission to schools, on entrance exams and aptitude tests, on teaching and assessment matters, on the transfer to and repetition of a grade, on the maximum length and completion of school attendance, on the *Reife- und Diplomprüfung* (*Reifeprüfung* and VET diploma examination), on final exams, on school regulations, on the functions of teachers, on teacher meeting, on the relationship school-pupil, school-parents, school-teacher, on the extended school community, on school physicians, on procedure regulations and on final regulations.

UNIVERSITÄTSGESETZ, UG 2002 (UNIVERSITY ACT OF 2002)

This act, which became fully effective on 1 January 2004, has given the universities complete autonomy, on account of the new control instruments such as global budgets and *Leistungsverträge* (performance agreements). The universities were transformed to become legal entities under public law and divested from the federal administrative system. The 2002 University Act further develops the efforts at decentralisation of the nineties and expands them by, inter alia, introducing the so-called 'full legal capacity' and substituting the budget law of the federal authorities by elements from commercial law. As a result, the legal basis was prepared for creating 'university enterprises' in the future, which will be in a position to access new funding sources in addition to the money received from the federal government.

FACHHOCHSCHULE-STUDIENGESETZ, FHStG 1993 (FACHHOCHSCHULE STUDIES ACT OF 1993)

This act introduced the *Fachhochschule* sector in Austria. Thus the monopoly of the state as provider of HE was abolished and the institutions were given greater autonomy to organise themselves. Moreover, this act redistributed the rights of disposal due to the private form of organisation of the course-providing bodies and introduced more independence, responsibility and flexibility for the education provider. It decentralised the decision-making process, i.e. the relevant decisions are now made where most of the knowledge and information is pooled. The tasks of the state were limited to external quality assurance via the *FH* council and financing.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG 1969 (Vocational Training Act of 1969)

This act provides the statutory framework for the enterprise-based part of apprenticeship training. It comprises all legal regulations concerning e.g. *Lehrbetrieb* (training companies), rights and duties of training companies and apprentices, *Lehrvertrag* (apprenticeship contract), *Lehrlingsentschädigung* (remuneration for apprentices) etc. The *Lehrberufsliste* (list of recognised apprenticeships) currently (Jan. 2005) contains more than 250 apprenticeships.

AUSBILDUNGSORDNUNGEN (TRAINING REGULATIONS)

The regulations for the individual apprenticeships are issued by the Economics Minister on the basis of expert opinions submitted by the *Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat, BBAB* (Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship). Training regulations stipulate the *Berufsbild* (job profile) of the respective apprenticeship. In a catalogue broken down by apprenticeship years, the job profile lists the basic skills and knowledge to be taught in the course of enterprise-based training. The training regulations lay down the minimum requirements to be met during training, and the facts and know-how to be passed on in the training enterprise. At the same time, a consistent training level for the individual apprenticeship must be ensured.

SCHOOL LAWS

The school-based part of apprenticeship training is regulated by the various schools laws (cf. above).

CVET

Erwachsenenbildungsförderungsgesetz, EB-FG (Adult Education Promotion Act)

Non-school and non-university based CVET is not governed by the state under the constitution, but is rather the responsibility of the *Laender* and municipalities in Austria. Each *Land* has its own way of fulfilling this responsibility (making resources available, organisation etc.). Due to the constitutional situation mentioned above, the Adult Education Promotion Act is, so to speak, a voluntary commitment on the part of the national government which does not affect the right of the *Laender* to take decisions. Under the EB-FG, financial support must be provided, but the law does not specify the level of support. Financial resources are available in almost all *Laender* to support individuals taking part in adult education, and these are provided in the form of subsidies for course fees.

SCHOOL LAWS

By contrast, the responsibility for CVET with regard to schools and universities clearly lies with the Ministry of Education and is subject to the statutory regulations applying to this area (cf. above).

ARBEITMARKTSERVICEGESETZ (PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE ACT) AND ARBEITSMARKTFÖRDERUNGSGESETZ (LABOUR MARKET PROMOTION ACT)

These two acts provide the legal bases for training related to labour market policy.

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

The social partnership is based on a system of employers' and employees' chambers and associations with a wide range of responsibilities:

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOCIAL PARTNERS	TYPE OF ROLE
NATIONAL LEVEL	submitting expert opinion on draft school laws and decrees (e.g. curricula) suggestions to introduce new apprenticeship or modernise existing ones	advisory role
	negotiating <i>Kollektivverträge</i> (collective bargaining agreements)	participation in decision-making process
LAENDER LEVEL	submitting expert opinion on draft school laws and decrees (e.g. curricula) suggestions to introduce new apprenticeships or modernise existing ones	advisory role
SECTORAL LEVEL	submitting expert opinion on draft school laws and decrees (e.g. curricula) suggestions to introduce new apprenticeship or modernise existing ones	advisory role

The social partners are able to exert influence through representatives who are members of law-making bodies. The social partners exert their influence in the early stages of the law-making process by making use of the rights of legal assessment to be incorporated into the legislative process before the law reaches parliament for ratification. This also applies to all laws pertaining to education.

Within the framework of the dual system, the social partners take initiatives to introduce new apprenticeships or modernise existing ones. Via the *Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat, BBAB* (Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship) responses to regulations for individual apprenticeships are presented to the Economics Minister, usually in form of assessment reports, which are then applied throughout Austria by decree.

The social partners also play a central role in the question of remunerations for apprentices, generally decided on the basis of collective bargaining agreements. Collective bargaining agreements are legally binding for all companies within the relevant administrative sector or area. In exceptional cases, collective bargaining agreements are set up for individual companies. A higher remuneration rate than is defined in the collective bargaining agreement can be negotiated in the *Lehrvertrag* (apprenticeship contract).

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

School attendance is compulsory for all children permanently resident in Austria. Pupils are free to choose whether to attend a state or a private school. The attendance of a state school is free of charge.

Compulsory schooling starts on the first of September following the child's sixth birthday and lasts nine years. Children who turn six between September 1 and December 31 of the current school year may start primary school prematurely, provided they are mentally and physically mature enough to follow lessons.

PRIMARY LEVEL

Compulsory schooling (cf. diagram attached) starts with the four-year attendance of either a *Volksschule* (primary school) or a *Sonderschule* (special needs school). The objective of primary schools is to provide children with a basic and well-balanced general education which fosters their social, emotional, intellectual and physical skills and abilities. Special needs schools are designed to promote and educate mentally or physically disadvantaged children, who are not able to follow lessons in primary school, and prepare them for integration into the world of work. Special needs schools constitute an alternative to integrated teaching of children in conventional schools.

LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

Years five to eight of compulsory schooling may be completed at a *Hauptschule* (general education school), at the *Unterstufe der allgemeinbildenden höheren Schule, AHS* (junior cycle of a higher general education school) or at a senior special needs school. The GE school prepares pupils for employment and for the transition to intermediate and upper secondary schools. The junior cycle of higher GE schools comprises four years (10- to 14-year-olds) and provides a comprehensive and in-depth general education. It has a dual function, since it both prepares pupils for the corresponding senior cycle and enables them to transfer to vocational schools.

One year before the completion of compulsory education, the decision on the continuing path is made. Pupils can choose from among a wide variety of education and training pathways: They may attend a school or college with the focus on either general education or VET (cf. diagram attached). Currently, about 63% of those who attended the junior cycle of a higher GE school continue with the senior cycle, 47% change into a VET school or college. Around

one-third of all GE school graduates complete compulsory schooling in the one-year *Polytechnische Schule* (prevocational school), more than half of them move to a VET school or college. A minority of around 6% changes into the senior cycle of the higher GE school.

If all forms of VET are considered together, approximately 72% of all young people in upper secondary education are in post-compulsory VET. Slightly more than half of those in VET (55%) choose a school-based option, while 45% take part in apprenticeship training.

The following table lists all IVET providers and the age range of their students:

LEVEL AND TYPE OF SCHOOL	AGE RANGE
UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL	
<i>Polytechnische Schule</i> (prevocational school)	14 - 15
<i>Berufsbildende mittlere Schulen</i> (VET schools)	14+
<i>Berufsbildende höhere Schulen</i> (VET colleges)	14 – 19
<i>Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik / Sozialpädagogik</i> (training colleges for nursery school teachers / social pedagogy)	14 – 19
<i>Berufsschule</i> (part-time vocational school for apprentices)	15+
POST-SECONDARY LEVEL	
<i>Akademien</i> (post-secondary VET colleges)	18+
<i>Kollegs</i> (post-secondary VET course)	18+
TERTIARY LEVEL	
vocationally-oriented university courses	18+
<i>Fachhochschulen</i> (university level study programme of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation)	18+

[Austrian Educational System](#)

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

There are no IVET elements at the lower secondary level in Austria.

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

At upper secondary level the differentiation in the school system becomes more marked due to the more clearly discernible interests and talents of pupils, as well as the requirements of society for different forms of vocational qualifications. Besides the senior cycle of the higher GE school, years 9 to 13 (14- to 19-year-olds) are also provided in secondary VET schools. Around 28% of all students in upper secondary education choose a GE programme, the majority of 72% enrolls in a VET programme.

OBERSTUFE DER ALLGEMEINBILDENDEN HÖHEREN SCHULE, AHS (SENIOR CYCLE OF THE HIGHER GE SCHOOL)

The aim of the senior cycle of the higher GE school is to communicate a comprehensive and thorough general education. It lasts four years and ends with the *Reifeprüfung* or *Matura* (*Reifeprüfung* examination, i.e. school leaver's examination). Particular emphasis is placed on applied learning, independent study, languages and the recognition of connections between the individual subjects. The *Reifeprüfung* allows for students to go on to university, *Fachhochschulen* (university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation), *Akademien* and *Kollegs* (post-secondary VET colleges and courses).

Students following the VET stream have the choice between the following VET options:

POLYTECHNISCHE SCHULE, PTS (PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOL)

Prevocational school can be attended after the eighth school grade and lasts one year. It is used primarily as the ninth school year by the 14 to 15 year-olds who wish to learn an occupation immediately upon completion of compulsory schooling.

Pupils are prepared for later life, especially for working life, by receiving more in-depth general education (around 45% of the curriculum), career orientation and basic vocational training (approximately 55%). An orientation period at the start of the school year and career orientation as the basic goal of all courses create numerous opportunities for students to become familiar with working life. A programme of on-site visits and practical training days is designed to help students select a vocation.

Each pupil must select a vocational field from the ones offered by the school (metal, electrical, wood, construction, commerce/clerical, services/tourism). The compulsory subjects (German, English and mathematics) are taught in achievement groups. All pupils in prevocational school must learn to use computers for practical everyday and vocational purposes.

BERUFSBILDENDE MITTLERE SCHULEN, BMS (VET SCHOOLS)

VET schools provide not only a thorough general education but also practical vocational training for specific occupations.

VET schools last from one to four years (grades 9 to 12) and cover the following major areas:

- agriculture and forestry,
- industry and trade,
- business
- industrial, technical, arts and crafts sectors,
- social work,
- healthcare.

To attend a VET school, students must have completed the eighth grade at a GE school or the junior cycle at a higher GE school. Graduates of the third achievement group in GE schools who wish to enter a three- or four-year VET school must sit an admission examination in the corresponding compulsory subject areas. Successful graduates of the ninth year in a prevocational school do not require the admission examination to attend a VET school. An aptitude test must be passed by applicants wishing to enter VET schools focussing on the arts or sports. If a VET school is unable to accept all applicants, the school may itself set stricter requirements with a view to ordering candidates. This is usually done on the basis of the pupils' performance in school reports from year 8.

VET schools focus on practical training in school workshops, laboratories, kitchens and practice enterprises. Pupils must take part in compulsory practical training in companies or enterprises during their summer holidays.

Students who complete at least a three-year VET school can enter a trade and/or take up a craft. They can also gain HE entrance qualification by taking the *Berufsreifeprüfung*, *BRP* (examination providing access to HE for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools), which comprises four sections: mathematics, German, modern languages and an in-depth examination on the vocational training selected at the VET school.

BERUFSBILDENDE HÖHERE SCHULE, BHS (VET COLLEGE)

VET colleges provide general and vocational education (double qualification) and lead both to the exercise of an occupation and to general university requirements. Education is full-time, lasts five years (grades 9 to 13) and ends with the *Reife- und Diplomprüfung* (*Reifeprüfung* and VET diploma examination).

The educational areas offered by VET colleges correspond largely to those offered by VET schools. The following forms of schooling are available:

- technical colleges (branches: mechanical engineering, EDP and organisation, civil engineering and construction, chemistry, textile and engineering, business engineering, information and communication technologies etc.),
- colleges for tourism,
- colleges for fashion and textile technology,
- business colleges,
- colleges for industry and trade,

- colleges for agriculture and forestry (branches: agriculture, horticulture, viticulture, fruit-farming, forestry, dairy farming etc.).

Students wishing to be admitted to VET colleges must have completed the fourth grade at GE schools, the junior cycle of a higher GE school or the ninth grade at a prevocational school. Students from the fourth grade of a GE school must also pass an entrance test in German, English or mathematics, if they were in the lowest achievement group in the relevant subject or were graded as "adequate" in the second achievement group; students who achieved "satisfactory" in the second achievement group can be admitted to the class if they have a conference resolution. An aptitude test must be passed by students wishing to enter a VET college with artistic orientation. If a VET college is unable to accept all applicants, it may set its own stricter requirements with a view to ordering candidates. This is usually done on the basis of the pupils' performance in school reports from year 8.

The curriculum is divided into three equal parts: general education, vocational theory and vocational practice. VET college pupils are required to take part in compulsory practical training in relevant companies during the summer holidays (not including pupils at trade colleges who may take part in optional work experience schemes).

Pupils successfully completing VET colleges are entitled to practice their own trade after two years of professional experience. They may also have access to the regulated trades. After three years of professional experience in their field, graduates of technical colleges and colleges of agriculture and forestry may be called "Ingenieur".

Due to the duration and intensity of the training, particularly in the area of vocational qualifications, VET colleges were incorporated into Appendix D of the EU directive 92/51/EEC (95/43/EC) (Council Directive of 18th of June 1992 pertaining to the regulation of measures for recognition of vocational proofs of competencies, supplementary to directive 89/48/EWG). This means that graduates of VET colleges achieve a level equivalent to graduates of (at least) one year of post-secondary training programmes in other EU member states, and are therefore able to assume similar responsibilities and perform similar tasks.

BILDUNGSANSTALTEN FÜR KINDERGARTENPÄDAGOGIK / SOZIALPÄDAGOGIK (TRAINING COLLEGES FOR NURSERY SCHOOL TEACHERS / SOCIAL PEDAGOGY)

Training colleges for nursery school teachers train kindergarten teachers and (with an additional examination) nursery trainers. Colleges for social pedagogy train non-teaching supervisory staff for day centres and boarding establishments for children and adolescents, as well as for youth work outside school.

Admission is conditional upon the successful completion of the 8th year and passing an aptitude test. The courses at these colleges last five years and end with a *Reifeprüfung* and VET diploma examination, entitling students to enrol in university studies.

The curriculum for both college types comprise general education, such as German, a modern foreign language, history, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, music and PE, and also job-oriented subjects. The theoretical part takes place at the colleges, while the practical training is in normal nursery schools, day care centres or boarding establishments. Students practise under the supervision of specially trained nursery school teachers or non-teaching supervisory staff.

BERUFSSCHULE (PART-TIME VOCATIONAL SCHOOL FOR APPRENTICES)

For part-time vocational schools see 0404.

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

In addition to training in full-time VET schools and colleges (cf. 0403) a considerable amount of IVET is provided by apprenticeship training schemes. Approximately 40% of all young people aged 15 to 18 are prepared for their future occupation within the apprenticeship training system.

No specific school certificate is required for access to an apprenticeship. The training is open to all young people who have completed their nine years of compulsory schooling.

Depending on the apprenticeship chosen, the duration of training is between two and four years. The majority lasts three years. The apprenticeship period is reduced for people who have already completed job-specific training periods in related apprenticeships or acquired relevant school qualifications.

Apprenticeship training takes place in two different learning sites: in *Lehrbetrieben* (training enterprises) and *Berufsschulen* (part-time vocational schools). While apprenticeship is based on a *Lehrvertrag* (apprenticeship contract) under labour law, apprentices are still considered to be in compulsory education because they must enrol in a part-time vocational school.

Around 40 000 enterprises take part in the apprenticeship training scheme, in particular small- and medium-sized enterprises in the fields of commerce, crafts, trade and services, as well as tourism and leisure. They train approximately 85% of all apprentices. Industrial enterprises, companies in the information and consulting sector and firms not affiliated to a chamber also make a significant contribution to the training of young people.

Currently (Jan. 2005), there are more than 250 apprenticeships. They are laid down in the *Lehrberufsliste* (list of recognised apprenticeships), which also specifies the apprenticeship periods and relationships to other apprenticeships including credits awarded for already completed apprenticeship periods.

For each individual apprenticeship, the Economics Minister issues an *Ausbildungsordnung* (training regulation), which is binding for the training provided in the training enterprises all over Austria. Training regulations stipulate the *Berufsbild* (job profile) of the respective apprenticeship. In a catalogue broken down by apprenticeship years, the job profile lists the basic skills and knowledge to be taught in the course of enterprise-based training. Since recently, not only job profiles but also *Berufsprofile* (work descriptions) for newly regulated apprenticeships have been formulated, which lay down, in the form of a short list, the requirements the trained apprentice must be able to meet.

ENTERPRISE-BASED PART OF TRAINING

Approximately 80% of the apprenticeship period is spent in the training companies. Vocational training is held under real-life conditions. The apprentice acquires the required knowledge and skills as stipulated in the job profile for the respective apprenticeship on state-of-the-art machinery and equipment. Immediately upon completion of the training, he or she is able to take up a job as a skilled worker.

The apprenticeship contract is entered into between the *Lehrberechtigte* (authorised apprenticeship trainer) and the apprentice and forms the basis of vocational training in the dual system. It must be concluded in writing. Standardised forms containing the name of the apprenticeship, the beginning and end of the apprenticeship period, the address of the working place(s), reference to the company type and its products/services etc., can be obtained from the *Lehrlingsstelle* (apprenticeship office).

The *Lehrabschlussprüfung* (final apprenticeship examination) is to establish whether the candidate has acquired the skills and competences required for the respective apprenticeship and is able to carry out the activities particular to the apprenticeship without further supervision in an appropriate manner. The exam consists of a practical and a theoretical part. The latter is waived under certain conditions, i.e. if the candidate can prove successful completion of the part-time vocational school.

SCHOOL-BASED PART OF TRAINING

The focus of education at part-time vocational schools is on job-oriented tuition (about 75%), general subjects (politics, German and communication, an occupation-related foreign language and other business studies subjects) make up one quarter of the curriculum. Specific-job curricula also include practical training in workshops or laboratories.

Part-time vocational schools are special schools set up for selected apprenticeships. Classes are grouped according to the individual apprenticeship or, in some cases, groups of related apprenticeships.

Classes are held either

- in full-time blocks, where the enterprise-based training is interrupted for some weeks (usually between eight and twelve),
- every week on one or two days.

The precise number of hours of vocational timetables is laid down in the curriculum for the respective apprenticeship. The curriculum is closely linked with the work description and job profile of the training regulation.

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Other youth programmes include so-called *Berufslehrgänge* (vocational pre-apprenticeship training courses) and the *integrative Berufsausbildung* (integrative vocational training).

On the basis of the *Jugendausbildungs-Sicherungsgesetz 1998*, JASG (Youth Training Guarantee Act of 1998) additional training in the form of ten-month vocational pre-apprenticeship training courses is offered as a labour market support measure for young people who find themselves at a disadvantage in the labour market and for those who cannot find an apprenticeship.

These training courses may not start before mid-November of any given year, so as not to compete with 'traditional' apprenticeships. The conditions for participation are that the young person in question must have completed compulsory education and be registered with the *Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS* (Public Employment Service) as looking for an apprenticeship, the Public Employment Service sees no likelihood of finding an appropriate apprenticeship or the young person has already made at least five independent applications and been unsuccessful. The Public Employment Service allocates the young people to training courses.

These courses are held over ten months and are organised and implemented by parties who are not official employers of apprentices. The aim is to teach the skills and knowledge of the first year of an apprenticeship so that the young person can then switch to a 'proper' apprenticeship in the second year. For any subsequent apprenticeship in the same trade, the initial training period is counted in full. In all other cases, a justifiable proportion is counted. Participants receive a special allowance of € 150 net per month.

The main purpose of the 2003 amendment to the *Berufsausbildungsgesetz* (Vocational Training Act) was the creation of integrative vocational training. On the basis of comprehensive preparatory work by the social partners, the legislator created a flexible model for people at a disadvantage in the labour market, enabling them to acquire a professional (partial) qualification.

Integrative vocational training is open to persons

- with special educational needs in compulsory schooling and who were, at least in part, educated according to the curriculum of a *Sonderschule* (special needs school);
- who did not finish or negatively complete a *Hauptschule* (GE school);
- with disabilities;
- of whom it must be assumed, within the framework of career guidance support or after an unsuccessful placement attempt in an apprenticeship, that it will not be possible to find any apprenticeship vacancy for them for reasons exclusively related to the person himself or herself.

Possible integrative vocational training measures include the acquisition of apprenticeship qualifications in an apprenticeship period prolonged by one year, in exceptional cases by two years, or the acquisition of partial qualifications in one or several trades which are relevant for the economy.

Integrative vocational training is facilitated and supported by the *Berufsausbildungsassistenz* (vocational training assistance).

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

For upper secondary school and college graduates there are a number of post-secondary, non-university education pathways in Austria:

POST-SECONDARY VET COLLEGES

- *Pädagogische Akademie* (training colleges for compulsory school teachers)
- *Berufspädagogische Akademie* (training colleges for VET teachers)
- *Religionspädagogische Akademie* (training colleges for religious education teachers)
- *Agrarpädagogische Akademie* (training colleges for agricultural and forestry teachers)
- *Akademien für den gehobenen medizinisch-technischen Dienst* (colleges for paramedical staff)
- *Hebammenakademie* (colleges for midwifery)
- *Sozialakademie* (colleges for social work)

POST-SECONDARY VET COURSES

- *Kollegs für wirtschaftliche Berufe* (post-secondary VET courses for commercial professions)
- *Kollegs für technische und gewerbliche Berufe* (post-secondary VET courses for technical and crafts professions)
- *Kollegs für Tourismusberufe* (post-secondary VET courses for tourism professions)
- *Kollegs für Kindergartenpädagogik und Sozialpädagogik* (post-secondary VET courses for nursery school teachers and social pedagogy)

POST-SECONDARY VET COLLEGES

Post-secondary VET colleges cover a period of four to six semesters and target people (18+) who have successfully passed a:

- *Reifeprüfung* examination (at the end of the senior cycle of higher GE schools),
- *Reifeprüfung* and VET diploma examination (at the end of VET colleges),
- *Berufsreifeprüfung* (examination providing access to HE for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools) or
- *Studienberechtigungsprüfung* (HE entrance examination).
- For certain subjects at training colleges for VET teachers the *Meisterprüfung* (master craftsperson examination) and recognised vocational training and experience can also provide access.

Training in post-secondary VET colleges leads to a *Diplomprüfung* (diploma examination). Graduates have access to specific vocational qualifications.

At the various teacher training colleges great emphasis is placed not only on pedagogic-didactic tuition and specialist subjects, but also on the application of these elements in a school environment. The students are able to visit select schools of the relevant type in order to gain teaching experience. Training colleges for compulsory school teachers run their own training schools, where the students can develop a basic level of teaching experience.

Post-secondary colleges for healthcare professions are organisationally and by location joined to a hospital, at which practical work experience is performed. The educational content consists of a predominantly theory-based medical training and a specialised applied education with a large proportion of practical exercises.

Post-secondary colleges for social work focus on qualifying people to assume elevated positions in the area of social work. Currently, these colleges are being converted into *Fachhochschulen*.

POST-SECONDARY VET COURSES

Two-year post-secondary VET courses are designed to provide VET qualifications for graduates of upper secondary schools. VET college graduates have the opportunity to acquire an additional vocational qualification. Graduates of higher GE schools can receive vocational training in the commercial, technical, crafts and tourism sector.

Training at post-secondary VET courses leads to a diploma examination. Graduates of these courses have access to specific vocational qualifications.

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

University-level, tertiary education is provided by the following institutions in Austria:

- Universities
- *Fachhochschulen*

UNIVERSITIES

University courses primarily aim at providing an academic education to young people (18+) in conjunction with a scholarly career preparation. The 1999 reform of the study regulations created the legal basis for changing the former two-level system with *Diplomstudien* (diploma studies) and *Doktorstudien* (doctoral studies) to a three-level system (bachelor, master, doctoral studies). Human medicine, dentistry and teacher training courses may even now only be offered as diploma courses with two levels.

In principle, students do not automatically receive a professional qualification upon completing their studies. If a statutory, regulated professional qualification is needed for an academic career – with the exception of veterinary medicine – postgraduate training must be undertaken (e.g. doctor, university lecture, judge etc.). Under the *Universitätsgesetz 2002* (University Act of 2002), degree programmes (i.e. diploma courses, bachelor, master and doctorate courses) offer preparatory training for careers in the sciences and the arts as well as for training in a professional capacity that requires knowledge of science and the arts.

To be admitted to a normal course of study, students must have the *Reifeprüfung* certificate, the *Reifeprüfung* and VET diploma certificate, the *Berufsreifeprüfung* certificate or the HE entrance examination certificate for the respective course. Students apply to a specific university for a course of study. They then have to enrol for the chosen course each semester. Students who do not meet some of the formal admission requirements for the chosen course of study have to take supplementary examinations either before matriculation (e.g. biology for the study of medicine) or during the first semester of the course. Art universities require the *Reifeprüfung* certificate only for some of their courses. Admission is subject to an entrance examination in which artistic talent is assessed. Students wishing to follow a teacher training programme for the subject physical education and for the study course of sports science must pass an aptitude test for physical/motor skills.

Studies last from six to twelve semesters (three to six academic years). Doctoral studies take at least an additional four semesters. In practice, studies generally take longer than this: about 8% of university students and about 23% of students at art universities complete their studies in the legally envisaged time.

A curriculum must be drawn up and announced for the degree programmes that a university sets up. The senate must create a collegial board with decision-making powers for this purpose. The curriculum is the central document of every degree programme. It governs, in particular, the qualification profile and the structure of the programme (which may consist of different phases, for example), as well as the examination subjects and the courses required prior to taking an examination, other achievements and the way in which examinations must be taken.

Both at universities and art universities, *Diplomprüfungen* (diploma examinations) have to be sat for each phase of study; bachelor and master examinations have to be taken for bachelor and master courses. Under the University Act of 2002, the responsible collegial board should set the rules governing tests in the individual curricula. This includes, in particular, regulations concerning the method and purpose of examinations and the way in which they are organised. In addition to the bachelor, diploma and master examinations, at least two pieces of class coursework (for the bachelor degree), a diploma paper (for the diploma course) or a thesis (for the master degree) have to be submitted. For a doctorate, the main demonstration of academic achievement is the candidate's dissertation, and the course ends with an oral examination.

FACHHOCHSCHULEN

Fachhochschule programmes are degree programmes at university level which serve to provide scientifically founded training for specific professions. They are tailor-made to specific job profiles.

Access to *Fachhochschulen* is not limited to people with a HE entrance qualification. They are also open to people who have succeeded in obtaining vocational qualifications. Nevertheless, these applicants need to take additional training before beginning their studies. Courses at *Fachhochschulen* welcome anyone that meets the registration requirements provided there are sufficient places on the course. Students are selected by means of entrance examinations.

Fachhochschulen have a practice-oriented focus and therefore comprise in their curriculum an obligatory professional practical training. The statutory minimum course duration for the completion of a course is a total of six semesters for the bachelor degree, including the work placement, following the introduction of the three-level course in 2003; the corresponding master course takes two to four semesters. The diploma course, which may still be taken at *Fachhochschulen*, is limited to eight to ten semesters and also ends with a work placement. Graduates may opt to follow a doctorate course at a university.

There is no central regulation regarding the examination system for *Fachhochschulen*; each course has its own rules on exams. A course ends with a degree examination comprising a *Diplomarbeit* (diploma thesis) and an examination taken before a committee. For bachelor's degree programmes, the final examination consists of individual written assignments done in class and a cross-subject oral examination.

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND AND MAIN TYPES OF CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

In Austria, the term *Weiterbildung* (CVET) is usually associated with vocational or job-related learning, whereas *Erwachsenenbildung* (adult learning) is rather seen as a general form of learning. This section concentrates on CVET, whose main aims are the preservation, deepening, and expanding of skills as a qualification for vocational abilities, mobility, and vocational identity, as well as personal development. Its key tasks are to secure jobs, reduce unemployment, allow the re-entry into the labour market and facilitate career advancements. CVET differs from IVET in particular in terms of participation age and type of programme attended: CVET programmes start after the

completion of an IVET or HE programme. The majority of participants in CVET learning programmes are about 20 years or older.

CVET has a long history in Austria, dating back to the 19th century. In the past 50 years, the development of CVET has been characterised by the involvement of the federal and regional governments as well as by employer and union associations. The latter exert a decisive influence via educational establishments and organisations, which means that they actively co-design the CVET landscape, albeit through their own structure of providers. These providers are so called non-profit organisations although they take course fees. But their funding is mostly based on subsidies of the background institutions. In distinction to this section of traditional providers a new sector of mostly small companies providing CVET has arisen during the 1990s. These companies are usually subsumed as private providers or profit-providers. The Austrian micro-census from June 2003 shows that about twelve percent of all employees active in CVET in 2002/2003 participated in a job-related course delivered by private providers.

There are various types of CVET in Austria:

PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

- acquisition of *Hauptschule* qualifications (general education school) by adults
- acquisition of qualifications providing access to HE
- schools and colleges for employed people
- *Fachhochschule* courses (university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation) and university courses for employed people
- CVET in non-profit providers which are institutionally linked with public bodies

CVET AS INSTRUMENT OF ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES AND SOCIAL PARTNERS

- CVET at the employer's, parent/associate company, equipment suppliers'
- informal learning at the workplace
- CVET at the provider institutions of the social partners, i.e. *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI* (of the federal and regional Economic Chambers) and *Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi* (of the federal and regional Chambers of Labour and the Austrian Trade Union Federation)
- CVET in profit-provider institutions

CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUALS

- CVET in profit-provider institutions
- CVET in non-profit provider institutions

The entrance requirements for CVET in profit and non-profit providers are largely determined by the qualification to be gained. In cases where specialist requirements are needed, advice and assessments will be offered before the course starts to ensure that it can run as smoothly as possible. Entrance requirements for the public school, university and *Fachhochschule* sector depend on the type of course or evening school involved.

0502 - PLANNING AND ORGANISATION OF LEARNING

PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

The responsibilities for publicly promoted CVET is divided among the federal government, the *Laender* and municipalities:

The federal government's responsibilities are split between a number of ministries.

- The *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture) is responsible for school- and university-based CVET.
- The *Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft, BMLFUW* (Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management) is in charge of CVET for agriculture and forestry professionals.
- The *Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Frauen, BMGF* (Federal Ministry for Health and Women's Issues) is responsible for healthcare professionals.
- The *Bundesministerium für soziale Sicherheit, Generationen und Konsumentenschutz* (Federal Ministry of Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection) is in charge of older and disabled people.

Laender and municipalities meet their responsibilities for CVET in a number of different ways, ranging from making resources available to CVET establishments or their umbrella organisations, to departments in the *Landesregierungen* (regional governments). Financial resources are available in almost all *Laender* to support individuals taking part in adult education, and these are provided in the form of subsidies for course fees.

In addition to public bodies belonging to the State, *Laender* and municipalities, there are a number of non-profit providers that have traditionally had an important place in CVET in Austria. The larger providers (cf. 0503 for more information) have joined together in the *Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs* (Conference of Adult Education in Austria).

Depending on the type of CVET, various groups of people are targeted at. These target groups will be discussed in more details in 0503.

CVET AS INSTRUMENT OF ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

In Austria, training for unemployed people is the core task of the *Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS* (Public Employment Service), an autonomous government funded body. It is not a training provider but responsible for funding training programmes for unemployed people. It also funds some skills needs research to develop appropriate measures which achieve labour market requirements.

Other roles of the *AMS* include administering the *Bildungskarenz* (educational leave scheme), introduced in 1998. Employer and employee can agree upon periods of a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve months educational leave. During this time, the *AMS* pays a *Weiterbildungsgeld* (personal CVET benefit) to the employee. The scheme prioritises the acquisition of school and university-level qualifications or foreign language training and a general improvement of skills levels. The *AMS* arranges for substitute workers who are currently unemployed to replace people on leave.

The *AMS* is also entrusted with the skills training promotion for employed people within the framework of the ESF: With this fund it subsidises the costs of employees' skills training measures. The aim is to safeguard the employment of staff by skilling programmes and thus facilitate CVET activities for employers. The following persons are eligible for promotion upon submission of a training scheme:

- women;
- men over the age of 45;
- unskilled men below the age of 45 who are in an employment relationship under full compulsory insurance or in a special parental leave.

Two thirds of the course fees are promoted. The maximum amount of recognisable course fees is EUR 10 000 per participant and application. Half of the financing comes from *AMS* and ESF funds each.

CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES AND SOCIAL PARTNERS

Enterprise CVET is not regulated unless specific qualifications are followed (e.g. *Meisterprüfung* - master craftsman certificate, etc.). On the whole the term enterprise CVET is understood as the entire range of internal measures financed and organised by the company as well as the external courses where employees take part; also forms of cost-sharing (where enterprises pay fees and employees participate during their free time) are included.

All Austrian social partners have established their own CVET institutions. They are organised as non-profit education and training establishments and are open to all interested persons and for all topics that are of economic relevance. The social partners co-operate in labour market policies also with the *AMS*. Moreover, the activities of the social partners include measures in the field of *Fachhochschule* programmes. They run *Fachhochschule* programmes either alone or in co-operation with other establishments. The social partners were also active in the introduction of the *Berufsreifeprüfung, BRP*, which aims to facilitate access to HE for skilled workers and graduates of three- and four-year *berufsbildenden mittleren Schulen* (VET schools).

CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUALS

Individual adults have different motivations to engage in CVET activities. Both job-related and non-job-related motives are of relevance and often hard to distinguish. A number of surveys on CVET have been conducted but there is still a lack of data on general motivations for participating. In 2002, one survey of people planning to engage in CVET, examining motives for their participation reflects that the majority of adults views it as a personal issue.

0503 - DELIVERY MECHANISMS AND PROVIDERS

PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

ACQUISITION OF GE SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS

Several adult training and CVET institutions offer bridge courses for people who have completed their period of compulsory schooling without acquiring a final certificate. In these courses they are prepared for the qualifying exam to be taken before an examination board for external students at a school.

ACQUISITION OF QUALIFICATION PROVIDING ACCESS TO HE

The *Berufsreifeprüfung, BRP* is equivalent to the *Matura* certificate (school leaver's certificate) at the upper secondary level insofar as it qualifies for studying at post-secondary and tertiary education institutions. It is targeted at apprenticeship graduates, graduates from *berufsbildenden mittleren Schulen, BMS* (VET Schools) of at least three years' duration, graduates from nursing courses and specialist paramedical courses of at least 30 months' duration, and for graduates of the skilled workers' examination in agriculture and forestry.

The *BRP* consists of four partial exams: German, mathematics, one modern foreign language, and a specialisation from vocational practice. In principle, the *BRP* can be taken without prior attendance of upper secondary schools. The *BRP* Act provides that relevant examinations can be taken also upon completion of specific courses recognised by the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture), which are offered by adult learning institutions and are therefore not part of the public education system.

Another possibility of gaining limited-access qualifications for entering post-secondary and tertiary education and training is the *Studienberechtigungsprüfung, SBP* (HE entrance examination). This exam consists of five parts

(compulsory and elective subjects); the former are specified for the study course in question. As a preparation for the different exams, bridge courses are offered against payment by adult learning institutions and universities.

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES FOR EMPLOYED PEOPLE

The Austrian schools and colleges for employed people provide full programmes with a duration of several years. These institutions are set up as part-time evening schools. Their curricula essentially correspond to the structure of the full-time school form. The VET forms of these institutions (i.e. *berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen*, *BMHS* [VET schools and colleges]) are more varied and are attended more frequently by employed people than the *allgemeinbildende höhere Schule*, *AHS* (higher GE school).

VET schools for employed people have more participants studying technical subjects (*Werkmeisterschulen* [foreman courses], *Bauhandwerkerschulen* [building craftsman schools], *Meisterschulen* [master craftsperson schools]) than sales-related subjects (*Handelsschulen* [business administration schools]). Other types include VET schools for social occupations (e.g. caring for the elderly) and schools for healthcare and nursing. With the exception of foreman courses, building craftsman as well as master craftsperson schools that are organised in non-profit adult learning institutions, the other programmes take place in public schools.

VET colleges for employed people comprise occupational fields in engineering, industry and trade, business, and occupations in the service industries management. The majority of students enrol in the forms focussing on engineering and business. VET colleges for employed people have a duration of four to five years. They are attended in the evenings. The successful completion of compulsory school is the only prerequisite. *Kollegs* (post-secondary VET courses) are oriented towards *AHS* graduates and are offered in a full-time form and in a half-time evening variant. The half-time form most commonly has a duration of three years. The three-year *Aufbaulehrgänge* (add-on courses) are oriented towards graduates of a VET school providing relevant professional qualifications.

FACHHOCHSCHULE AND UNIVERSITY COURSES

Universities offer CVET mostly within the framework of *Universitätslehrgänge* (i.e. short-term university courses for post-graduates as well as for persons without HE graduation) in evening classes, block form, and on weekends as well. The introduction of the *Universitätsgesetz 2002* (University Act of 2002) gave Austrian universities considerable autonomy, including CVET options placed on offer there. The *Donau Universität Krems* (Danube University Krems) only offers CVET courses. It is currently responsible for providing more than a third of further education at university. The *Zentrum für Fernstudien* (distance learning centre) was set up in 1991 at the University of Linz and has four study centres in Austria. The distance learning centre cooperates with the *Fernuniversität Hagen*.

The *Fachhochschule* sector established in 1994 is also becoming increasingly important in CVET. Around a quarter of the students at *Fachhochschulen* are working people.

CVET IN NON-PROFIT PROVIDERS

In Austria, there is a great variety of non-profit providers which rely on public subsidies and on course fees in various distributions. Traditionally, the non-profit providers are most important for general and external CVET in Austria. The ten largest providers (among others, the *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut*, *WIFI* [CVET provider of the federal and regional Chambers of Commerce] and *Berufsförderungsinstitut*, *bfi* [CVET provider of the federal and regional Chambers of Labour and the Austrian Trade Union Federation]; cf. below for more information) have joined forces and set up the *Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs*, *KEBÖ* (Conference of Adult Education in Austria).

CVET AS INSTRUMENT OF ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

As mentioned in 0502, the *AMS* is not a training provider but is responsible for funding training programmes. The commissioning of provider(s) is decided either upon a tendering procedure which is governed by the *Bundesvergabegesetz* (Federal Procurement Law) or by means of a direct award. The aptitude of providers who have submitted their offers in time is examined on the basis of different types of evidence provided. In case more than five applications for participation are received from suitable training providers, the best applicants are selected on the basis of selection criteria, in which context the provider's experiences and, in particular, its equality orientation (i.e. the share of women among teaching and support staff) play a key role. The range of institutions conducting training measures and courses for the *AMS* include the *WIFI* and *bfi* as well as many smaller private or publicly supported training providers.

CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES AND SOCIAL PARTNERS

CVET AT THE EMPLOYER'S, PARENT/ASSOCIATE COMPANY, EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS'

Companies are frequent venues of adult learning: courses within the enterprise, at supplier firms, and at the parent company are an increasingly important type of vocational qualification. Moreover, informal learning is realised through the exchange of experience with colleagues and reading specialist literature.

In terms of organisation, enterprise CVET ranges from learning in the workplace to specialised educational measures implemented by the company. A characteristic feature of enterprise CVET is the division of the costs between employers and employees. Course fees are usually covered by the employer, the time for the training is provided by the employee.

CVET AT THE PROVIDER INSTITUTIONS OF THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

All Austrian social partners have established their own institutions for CVET.

WIFI belongs to the Economic Chamber and can be found in all *Laender*. It is the biggest provider of CVET in Austria. Training activities are designed for target groups at all levels in companies. Since the second half of the 1990s, the *WIFIs* have run *Fachhochschule* programmes focussing on technology and business. The *WIFIs'* offer is rounded off by the *WIFI-Fachakademien* (*WIFI* specialist colleges), *Werkmeisterschulen* (foreman courses), *Vorbereitungslehrgänge* (bridge courses) and preparatory courses for exams e.g. *Berufsreifeprüfung*), tailor-made in-company CVET as well as educational counselling.

The *bfi* acts as CVET institution of the federal and regional Chambers of Labour and the Austrian Trade Union Federation. The *bfi* provides a considerable proportion of labour market integration training on behalf of the *AMS*. The courses mainly focus on EDP and technology, health and social services, languages, and second-chance education (attainment of school and vocational qualifications for adults). Regarding courses commissioned by the *AMS*, *Facharbeiter-Intensivausbildungen* (skilled workers' intensive training) and activating measures supporting placement are most frequently used. Training courses tailored to specific enterprise requirements round off the current field of activities of the *bfis*.

The *Ländliche Fortbildungsinstitut, LFI* (institute for further education in rural areas) is a rural adult education institution that is active throughout Austria. The *LFI*'s main area of work is CVET in agriculture and forestry and also rural home economics. Training is provided to help people overcome the economic and cultural changes underway in rural areas.

CVET IN PROFIT-PROVIDER INSTITUTIONS

In the past few years the number of private profit-oriented associations and institutions providing educational facilities has increased. These associations and institutions usually specialise in certain areas like foreign languages, management, personality development and so on.

0504 - ACCESS TO LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND PROGRAMMES

During the last 25 years, a number of supportive measures have been introduced to enable people to take up learning:

INTRODUCING CVET PROVIDERS/CVET PROGRAMMES

- In 1994 the *Donau Universität Krems* (Danube University of Krems) was established. It is a centre for CVET in the tertiary sector, whose tasks are limited to offers of postgraduate CVET in the form of courses and short university programmes. To increase accessibility, courses take into consideration the needs of employed people and of persons with care obligations. They are either organised in the evening or at weekends or are supplemented by online offers.
- Since 1998 CVET programmes have been launched that target specific groups, such as *Aktionsprogramm* (Adult Learning Action Programme).
- Since 1999 programmes for employed people have been created to attend university through the availability of the *Studienabschlussstipendium* (university graduation grant).

FACILITATING ACCESS TO CVET INSTITUTIONS

- Since 1994 employed people have been allowed to attend CVET programmes in *Fachhochschulen*.
- Since 1997 skilled workers and three- and four-year VET school graduates can take the *Berufsreifeprüfung*, which provide access to post-secondary and tertiary educational programmes.
- In 1998 the *Bildungskarenz* (educational leave) was introduced for employees to further their education and training. Employer and employee can agree upon periods of a minimum of three and a maximum of twelve months educational leave. During this time, the *Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS* (Public Employment Service) pays a *Weiterbildungsgeld* (personal CVET benefit) to the employee. The scheme prioritises the acquisition of school and university-level qualifications or foreign language training and a general improvement of skills levels. The *AMS* arranges for substitute workers who are currently unemployed to replace people on leave.

USING OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN LEARNING

- In 1991, a *Zentrum für Fernstudien, ZF* (distance learning centre) was established at Linz University. The *ZF* co-operates with the *Fernuniversität Hagen*. Within the framework of this institution, distance studies for students of law and for candidates of the *Studienberechtigungsprüfung, SBP* (HE entrance examination) are provided. The *ZF* is a member in the umbrella organisation of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) and co-operates with the Open University (UK). Austrians therefore have the possibility to enrol in a study programme of the *Fernuniversität Hagen* and of other European distance universities and the Open University.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

- Financial support is provided by a wide range of bodies and entities in Austria (e.g. Economic Chamber, Chamber of Labour, federal ministries, Leonardo da Vinci etc.)
- In 2003 a *Bildungsfreibetrag* (training tax allowance) for companies also for external training was introduced by the government. This training tax allowance can also be paid as premium, which is especially relevant for smaller companies.

PROMOTING COOPERATION

- In 2000, the AUCEN (Austrian Universities Continuing Education Network) was introduced serving as platform for university-based CVET. Since then a working group of CVET and HR development officers at Austrian universities co-operate in the following measures with the aim of promoting university-based CVET and HR development: experience exchanges on university-based

CVET and HR development; preparation of recommendations and commentaries in the field of university and CVET policies; PR (CVET database, publications, education fairs); encouragement and implementation of joint (research) projects; networking at the European and international levels; development of new perspectives in the field of university-based CVET and HR development.

0505 - BRIDGING INITIAL AND POST INITIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The question of permeability in implementing lifelong learning strategies receives great attention in Austria. The bridging of IVET and CVET is facilitated by the following measures:

1. Berufsreifeprüfung, BRP
2. Studienberechtigungsprüfung, SBP
3. recognition of prior learning and qualifications

1. BERUFSREIFEPRÜFUNG, BRP

The *BRP* is equivalent to the *Matura* certificate (school leaver's certificate) at the upper secondary level insofar as it qualifies for studying at post-secondary and tertiary educational institutions. It is targeted at apprenticeship graduates, graduates from *berufsbildenden mittleren Schulen*, *BMS* (VET Schools) of at least three years' duration, graduates from nursing courses and specialist paramedical courses of at least 30 months' duration, and for graduates of the skilled workers' examination in agriculture and forestry.

The *BRP* consists of four partial exams: German, mathematics, one modern foreign language, and a specialisation from vocational practice. In principle, the *BRP* can be taken without prior attendance of upper secondary schools. The *BRP* Act provides that relevant examinations can be taken also upon completion of specific courses recognised by the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture), which are offered by adult learning institutions and are therefore not part of the public education system.

2. STUDIENBERECHTIGUNGSPRÜFUNG, SBP

Another possibility of gaining limited-access qualifications for entering post-secondary and tertiary education and training is the *SBP* (HE entrance examination). This exam consists of five parts (compulsory and elective subjects); the former are specified for the study course in question. As a preparation for the different exams, bridge courses are offered against payment by adult learning institutions and universities.

3. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND QUALIFICATIONS

In this connection, the following measures are important to mention:

- Exceptional access to the *Lehrabschlussprüfung* (final apprenticeship examination)

The *Berufsausbildungsgesetz* (Vocational Training Act) opens access to final apprenticeship examinations to persons who have not completed any formal training (dual training or school) and thus provides them with the possibility of acquiring a formal vocational qualification. People must be over 18 years of age and furnish evidence that they have acquired the knowledge and skills required for the respective apprenticeship, e.g. by exercising a relevant semi-skilled or other practical activity of appropriate length or by attending relevant tuition at school. Furthermore, completion of at least half of the period stipulated for the respective apprenticeship is accepted as evidence if there is not other possibility of entering into an apprenticeship contract for the remaining apprenticeship period.

- Access to *Fachhochschule* programmes

Professional qualifications replace the required proof of the general university entrance qualification. Whenever the educational goal of the degree programme in question so requires, entrants with professional qualifications must furnish evidence of additional examinations.

- Certification in the learning of foreign languages

In the most recent amendment (1999) to the *Berufsreifeprüfung* Act, certain language certificates are accepted as replacement for the compulsory modern language subject.

- Bilateral agreements

Austria has concluded bilateral agreements on the mutual recognition of final apprenticeship trades with Germany, Hungary, the South Tyrol, the Czech Republic.

- Implementation of the instruments for transparency as suggested by the EU

This includes the EUROPASS Training scheme and the European Curriculum Vitae, as well as the Certificate and Diploma Supplements, the language portfolios etc.

0506 - RE-EDUCATION AND RE-TRAINING NEEDS DUE TO LABOUR MARKET DEVELOPMENTS AND MOBILITY

Within the framework of adult education, several qualification measures based on job market policies are being implemented in Austria. These apply particularly to groups who cannot be integrated into in-company CVET measures or initial training schemes and therefore pose risks on the job market. An important protagonist in the implementation of such measures is the *Arbeitsmarktservice*, *AMS* (Public Employment Service). The *AMS* exerts significant influence on the CVET market in these segments by means of its task allocation policies.

In accordance with the stated goals of the National Plan of Action for Employment, qualification possibilities are offered particularly to the physically or mentally disabled, long-term unemployed, older people and young people looking for work. Additionally, focus is placed on creating equal rights within the framework of gender mainstreaming. The forms of CVET opportunities are diverse; two of them should be mentioned here:

Since the mid-1980s, the *Arbeitsstiftung* (work foundation) is one of the tools used in Austria to promote CVET for specific economic sectors. Currently three different types of work foundations may be distinguished: business foundations, sectoral foundations, and regional insolvency foundations. The following groups of unemployed people are entitled to take part in one of these work foundations:

- business foundations: former employees of a specific enterprise where many jobs have been shed
- sectoral foundations: former employees of a specific economic branch; participation is open to all dismissed persons employed in the respective sector across Austria
- regional insolvency foundation: former employees of insolvent enterprises

Participants can stay in the work foundation for three to five years. This allows them to take part in comprehensive CVET measures or combine different measures. During this period they are entitled to draw *Ausbildungsarbeitslosengeld* (vocational training unemployment benefit) and a scholarship. Work foundations are offered across the country. *Stiftungsähnliche Maßnahmen* (foundation-similar measures) are related to work foundations. They are designed for a particular target group, such as women, unemployed people, etc. In contrast to work foundations, however, there exists no legal entitlement to admission. Foundation-like measures have a maximum duration of two to three years. Participants are entitled to a subsistence benefit. In general it can be noted that work foundations and foundation-like measures have similar features as regards content (the only differences concern the target groups addressed by the measures):

- First of all, participants attend a vocational guidance course;
- this is followed by VET or CVET activities; these can consist also of a combination of various measures and include work placements; at the same time, they are assisted by the provider of the foundation;
- finally, there follows the phase of active job hunt: participants take part in an intensive job application training programme and are provided support in the job hunt.

Another tool to promote CVET is the *Qualifizierungsverbund* (composite skills training model), which consists of at least three independent enterprises that develop a tailored skills training scheme for their staff and co-ordinate its implementation. The measures are conducted by external providers, with one enterprise taking over the central project co-ordination. For setting up and implementing such composite skills training models, the AMS provides intensive process support and, in addition, financial assistance. The main support criterion is that the persons taking part in the skilling programme are employees in employment. Persons on *Karenz* (childcare leave) and apprentices are also eligible.

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - GENERAL BACKGROUND

CREATING HE INSTITUTIONS

While some future teachers are trained at university, others attend the *pädagogische Akademie* (teacher training college) at post-secondary level. These institutions are to become *Hochschulen für pädagogische Berufe* (pedagogical universities) by 2007. The reform is trying to ensure that strengths of the various approaches are brought together into a more coherent whole. The teacher training colleges need to enhance their academic standards and the universities to focus more on didactics and preparing student teachers for the demands of modern schools. Overall, the system is seen to need upgrading and quality enhancement in order to respond to the requirements of to-day's society with its view of education as a lifelong learning process – for both students and teachers. There is also a concern to narrow the quality gap between teacher education institutions, and to lift the status of teacher education within the HE sector so it is attractive to able and committed students.

MODERNISING INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

Austria has initiated an in-depth reform of its initial teacher education system. At present teachers are prepared in one type of institution depending on where they will teach and there are only limited bridging opportunities for continued education and transfer between sectors. This rigidity is the subject of the reforms presently underway in teacher education. They aim at modernising initial teacher education by raising teaching standards, tightening the linkage between theory, practice and research, deepening ICT in the curriculum, and reorienting the mission of teacher education institutions towards a lifelong learning perspective for teachers. The reforms also provide for the closer integration of initial teacher education and in-service education institutions, which had previously tended to operate somewhat independently.

NETWORKING OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Another subject to be discussed critically is the introduction of obligatory CVET for teachers outside teaching hours. In this connection, also changes in the organisational structure are debated. A clear preference is going towards flexible networks or alliances of colleges. Such a configuration is well suited to the modern concept of learning from multiple sources, to the use of ICT, self-paced learning, innovative methodologies, and to the federal nature of the country. Networks linking the pedagogical universities as hubs with associated practice schools and in-service education delivery points, could allow economies of scale, capitalise on staff expertise, and facilitate cross fertilisation. The concept of networks of teacher education institutions characterised by internal complementarity together with external competition could be extended to include the traditional universities themselves. This could lead to the formation of consortia offering a comprehensive range of services – teaching, research, assessment, consulting, mentoring, coaching, technical assistance for projects – to all teachers and schools.

0602 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS/TRAINERS IN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

The following table shows all types teachers and trainers in VET (save apprenticeship trainers, cf. 0603), their necessary formal education as well as information about in-service training:

	PRE-SERVICE TRAINING	IN-SERVICE TRAINING
TEACHERS IN <i>POLYTECHNISCHEN SCHULEN</i> (PRE-VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS)		
teachers of general education subjects	<i>Pädagogische Akademie</i> (teacher training college)	15 hours of training per years are compulsory
teachers of craft-specific theoretical subjects	<i>Pädagogische Akademie</i> (teacher training college)	
teachers of craft-specific practical subjects	<i>Pädagogische Akademie</i> (teacher training college)	
TEACHERS IN <i>BERUFSBILDENDEN MITTLEREN SCHULEN</i> (VET SCHOOLS) UND <i>BERUFSBILDENDEN HÖHEREN SCHULEN</i> (VET COLLEGES)		
teachers of general education subjects	university teacher training course in the respective subject	not compulsory
teachers of craft-specific theoretical subjects	university teacher training course in the respective subject <i>Berufspädagogische Akademie</i> (vocational teacher training college)	
teachers of craft-specific practical subjects	<i>Berufspädagogische Akademie</i> (vocational teacher training college) <i>Pädagogisches Institut</i> (in-service teacher training college)	
TEACHERS AT <i>BERUFSSCHULEN</i> (PART-TIME VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS)		
teachers of general education subjects	<i>Berufspädagogische Akademie</i> (vocational teacher training college)	15 hours of training per years are compulsory
teachers of craft-specific theoretical subjects	<i>Berufspädagogische Akademie</i> (vocational teacher training college)	
teachers of craft-specific practical subjects	<i>Berufspädagogische Akademie</i> (vocational teacher training college)	
TEACHERS IN <i>KOLLEGS</i> (POST-SECONDARY VET COURSES) AND <i>AKADEMIEN</i> (POST-SECONDARY VET		

COLLEGES)		
teachers of general education subjects	university teacher training course in the respective subject	not compulsory
teachers of craft-specific theoretical subjects	university teacher training course in the respective subject <i>Berufspädagogische Akademie</i> (vocational teacher training college)	
teachers of craft-specific practical subjects	<i>Berufspädagogische Akademie</i> (vocational teacher training college)	
TEACHERS AT <i>FACHHOCHSCHULE</i> AND UNIVERSITY COURSES		
all types of teachers	university course	continuous in-service training

PREVOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Teachers of prevocational schools follow post-secondary training at teacher training colleges. The course lasts at least six semesters and ends with a *Lehramtsprüfung* (teaching diploma examination). Teachers are qualified in at least two subjects.

Teachers receive continuing training either through autonomous study or by attending training establishments. Only 15 hours of such training per year are compulsory. In-service training activities can be attended either during the holidays, in the teacher's free time or during working hours.

VET SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Teachers at VET schools and colleges are subject area specialists. The nature of training courses and admission requirements depend on the subjects to be taught. Pre-service training of teachers of general education subjects takes place at university. Study programmes consist of two subject areas, pedagogical training and a period of practical training. In addition, teachers of general subjects must undergo one year of teaching practice before being entitled to join a school. Teachers of some craft-specific theoretical subjects at VET schools and colleges have to have professional experience in the relevant area in addition to university training. Special training is provided for teachers of practical subjects and teachers of some theoretical subjects in VET schools in vocational teacher training colleges or in-service teacher training colleges.

CVET is not compulsory for teachers at VET schools and colleges. However, they are encouraged to attend further training in in-service teacher training colleges. At least one in-service teacher training college has been set up in each *Land*. The *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur*, BMBWK (Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture) is responsible for the guidelines relating to budgets and contents. Currently, emphasis is placed on the following aspects:

- subject-specific continuing and further training
- information technology
- foreign languages and international certificates
- school development and the autonomy of schools
- internationalisation – European awareness
- imparting of key qualifications
- personal development and communication
- in-service and further training of head teachers
- practice companies
- environment

- generic cross-curricular themes

PART-TIME VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Part-time vocational school teachers are trained at the vocational teacher training college. Teachers of general, business studies and theoretical subjects have to have the *Reifeprüfung* certificate (school leaver's examination in *allgemeinbildenden höheren Schulen* [higher GE schools]) or the *Reifeprüfung* certificate and VET diploma (school leaver's examination in *berufsbildenden höheren Schulen* [VET colleges]) and two years of professional experience. Teachers teaching practical subjects must have a *Meisterprüfung* (master craftsperson certificate) as a professional qualification or an equivalent certificate and six years of relevant professional experience.

Teachers receive CVET either through autonomous study or by attending training establishments. Only 15 hours of such training per year are compulsory. In-service training activities can be attended either during the holidays, in the teacher's free time or during working hours.

POST-SECONDARY VET COURSES AND COLLEGES

The teaching staff at post-secondary VET courses and colleges possess the same qualifications profiles as teachers in VET schools and colleges. In addition, teachers in humanities (teaching science, education science, school law, and the psychology and sociology of teaching) must have a doctorate, whilst teachers in the field of vocational teaching or practical work must be able to demonstrate longstanding relevant experience.

As regards CVET, the situation is the same as for VET school and college teachers.

TEACHERS AT FACHHOCHSCHULE AND UNIVERSITY COURSES

Instructors at *Fachhochschule* and university courses possess a craft-specific university or *Fachhochschule* degree as well as a PhD degree. For teaching at universities and *Fachhochschule* courses, the pedagogic-didactic experience and suitability of instructors must be determined. Within the framework of working as a *Lehrbeauftragter* (contractual teacher) or *wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter* (scientific staff), personal suitability for teaching can be determined and experience can be gathered.

CVET for teachers at university and *Fachhochschule* courses is focussed mainly on professional content. New findings in the respective fields, or new scientific methods, are either self-studied continuously or taken from subject literature, conferences and conventions.

0603 - TRAINING OF TRAINERS/TEACHERS AT THE WORKPLACE (APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING AND CVET IN ENTERPRISES)

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING OF AUSBILDER (APPRENTICESHIP TRAINERS)

The pre-service training of apprenticeship trainers is regulated by the *Berufsausbildungsgesetz* (Vocational Training Act), which stipulates that enterprises providing apprenticeship training must employ at least one responsible trainer. His or her task may either be fulfilled by the person entitled to train (i.e. the company owner) or assigned to another staff member.

The first prerequisite for training apprentices is proof of specialist knowledge and skills in the relevant apprenticeship. Evidence of these is a successful *Lehrabschlussprüfung* (final apprenticeship examination) or the successful completion of a VET school or college. Proof of at least two years of professional experience following certification is also required.

The second prerequisite is the successful completion of the *Ausbilderprüfung* (trainer examination). This exam takes place orally and establishes whether the required level of knowledge and skills for apprenticeship training are present and whether they can be applied in practice. This comprises the specification of training objectives, the planning of the apprenticeship training provided by the business, as well as the preparation, implementation and monitoring of training, behaviour towards the apprentice and questions pertaining to legal groundwork (Vocational Training Act, laws governing the employment of children and young people, etc.). Since 1997, successful completion of a forty-hour *Ausbilderkurs* (trainer course) completed with a conversation of a vocation-specific nature about pedagogic, legal and methodical issues has been equivalent to completion of the trainer examination.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF APPRENTICESHIP TRAINERS

CVET of apprenticeship trainers is not regulated by law. Possibilities for further training are provided by training facilities of the social partners as well as by the *pädagogische Institute* (in-service teacher training colleges).

PRE- AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF CVET TRAINERS IN ENTERPRISES

Many companies offer in-service training to their employees. Generally, the trainers come from outside the company (from adult education establishments or as freelance coaches), who visit the businesses for a period of time to teach the employees. Thus, more information about the pre- and in-service training of CVET trainers is provided in 0604.

0604 - TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING (OUTSIDE ENTERPRISES)

Neither the pre- nor the in-service training of CVET trainers in adult training establishments is regulated by law in Austria.

CVET trainers have usually completed training in a field relevant for their training discipline. This can be a university degree in case they teach general subjects (e.g. languages). However, specialist knowledge and experience have a higher level of importance than a certificate of formal education.

Pedagogic-didactic know-how can be acquired by CVET trainers also within the framework of a *Trainerausbildung* (CVET trainer course), the attendance of which is, however, not compulsory. A CVET trainer course is organised by the CVET institution offering this course, in cooperation with the instructors. The contents are specified in accordance with the actual requirements of everyday-training life. Additionally, didactic principles as well as various teaching methods and social competences are also imparted.

Very few trainers are in permanent employment at adult education establishments, most work on a freelance basis.

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

At the beginning of 2002, the *Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich*, AMS (Public Employment Service) launched an online information system called *AMS-Qualifikations-Barometer*, AMS-QB (qualification barometer) in order to anticipate skills. This information system refers to up-to-date labour market analyses and qualification research studies and shows labour market trends and future qualification requirements for all occupational fields. The AMS-QB is available to the general public on www.ams.or.at/qualifikationsbarometer.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Bridging different types and levels of education is realised in various ways in Austria:

VET AND HE

- *Berufsreifeprüfung, BRP*
- *Studienberechtigungsprüfung*
- recognition of professional qualifications

GE/VET AND HE:

- *Studienberechtigungsprüfung, SBP*

EDUCATION – ECONOMY/LABOUR MARKET

- *Übungsfirmen* (training firms)
- JUNIOR companies
- education cluster

VET AND HE

BERUFSREIFEPRÜFUNG, BRP

Introduced in 1997, the *BRP* represents a significant development in increasing the permeability of the educational system, giving graduates of apprenticeships, VET schools or nursing and healthcare schools the opportunity to gain access to HE. Formally, it can be categorised as a *Reifeprüfung* (school leaver's examination) at an upper secondary school. Partial examinations may also be taken in recognised preparatory courses at adult education establishments. However, at least one of the four partial examinations must be completed at an upper level secondary school or college. Preparatory courses for the *BRP* have different durations; depending on the provider and the subject, they may take up to four semesters. The costs for the participation in preparatory courses are the responsibility of the participants. Subsidies are available from regional governments and the social partners in various forms, and can cover up to half of the participation costs for the course.

STUDIENBERECHTIGUNGSPRÜFUNG, SBP

For more information cf. point 2 "GE/VET and HE".

RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Professional qualifications replace the required proof of the general university entrance qualification for accessing *Fachhochschule* programmes (university-level programmes of at least three years' duration with technical-occupational orientation). Whenever the educational goal of the programme in question so requires, entrants with professional qualifications must furnish evidence of additional examinations.

GE/VET AND HE

STUDIENBERECHTIGUNGSPRÜFUNG, SBP

Another possibility of gaining limited-access qualifications for HE is the *SBP* (HE entrance examination). This exam consists of five parts (compulsory and elective subjects); the former are specified for the study course in question. As a preparation for the different exams, bridge courses are offered against payment by adult learning institutions and universities.

EDUCATION – ECONOMY/LABOUR MARKET

ÜBUNGSFIRMEN (TRAINING FIRMS)

Training firms are mock-ups of real enterprises which are designed to provide students with an insight into the complex structure and operational procedures of real companies. They have to be established and used for teaching purposes at all *Handelsschulen und Handelsakademien* (schools and colleges of business administration). In training firms students are presented with the various trade-specific business situations ranging from the procurement over the rendering of a service up to sales. The necessary commercial and administrative steps have to be taken with regard to the respective commercial customs and in compliance with legal regulations. Goods and services just as money are merely virtual, though. Interdisciplinary, action-, problem- as well as practice-oriented education in training firms aims at providing students with an insight into intra- and inter-operational procedures. The acquisition of key qualifications (e.g. the ability to work in teams, interdisciplinary thinking, language skills) enhances the graduates' mobility and flexibility in the world of work.

JUNIOR companies "Junior" companies are founded within the framework of the project "Junior – school pupils found companies" set up by the *Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft Österreich* (Austrian Economics Society). In contrast to the training firms, the founding and running of a company is not simulated, but actually takes place. Real goods or services are made available, requiring the use of real capital. The "Junior" companies are not fixed as part of school curricula and are voluntary, but are declared as a school-related activity in *allgemeinbildenden höheren Schulen* (higher GE schools) and *Polytechnischen Schulen* (prevocational schools).

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

The continuous modernisation of *Ausbildungsordnungen* (training regulations) is of great importance to ensure that requirements on modern *Berufsbilder* (job profiles) are met. There are four phases connected with the introduction of a new apprenticeship:

PREPARATION

The initiative for a new regulation is generally taken by the social partners. But also international developments and educational programmes play a key role in this respect. In any case, labour market prerequisites and practical requirements of the sector are always of great importance.

ELABORATION OF THE TRAINING REGULATION AND FRAMEWORK CURRICULUM

On behalf of the *Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit, BMWA* (Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour) the contents of training regulations is drafted by the *Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat* (Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship) in cooperation with two Austrian research institutes active in formulating new curricula and objectives of apprenticeship training programmes. At the same time the *Rahmenlehrplan für Berufsschulen* (framework curriculum for part-time vocational schools) are prepared by experts and presented to the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture).

ISSUING OF REGULATIONS

All stakeholder (social partners, education authorities, apprenticeship authorities etc.) are involved in a consultation process during which the drafts are reviewed. After this period the final training regulations are issued by the Economics Ministry and framework curricula for part-time vocational schools by the Education Ministry.

FOLLOW-UP MEASURES

After the publications of the training regulation and the framework curriculum, supportive manuals and additional material are elaborated by the social partners. Information to training enterprises is provided by the *Lehrlingsstellen* (apprenticeship offices). *Ausbilder* (apprenticeship trainers) and *Prüfer* (examiners of final apprenticeship examinations) are trained. Training regulations and curricula are continuously evaluated and, if needed, adjusted.

VET SCHOOLS

The Education Ministry promulgates curricula on the basis of the *Schulorganisationsgesetz, SchOG* (School Organisation Act). The spadework for curricular development is entrusted to working groups of teachers set up to cover most subjects. The social partners are also given a say in the examination of curricula and other regulations or laws, so they may contribute with their experience and represent their interests.

All curricula provide for areas of school autonomy, which schools can but are not required to use. This autonomy enables schools and colleges to choose between focal points of training within the curricula, but also to shape the school profile, for example to orientate training programmes to meet the demands of the industry.

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

The Austrian VET system is characterised by a concentration on formal IVET. The main legal bases concerning the objectives and contents of education, final examinations and entitlements are the *Schulorganisationsgesetz, SchOG* (School Organisation Act) and the *Schulunterrichtsgesetz, SchUG* (School Education Act) containing regulations for *berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen* (VET schools and colleges) and for *Berufsschulen* (part-time schools for apprentices) as well as the *Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG* (Vocational Training Act), which regulates apprenticeship training. The *Gewerbeordnung, GewO* (Crafts, Trade and Industry Act) and the decrees enacted on its basis contain all regulations concerning the self-employed practice of a regulated or a free trade.

In the following the main ways of receiving formal vocational qualifications are illustrated with regard to the assessment of skills and competences acquired within the individual formal training programmes as well as the entitlements connected with their completion.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

The legal groundwork for the *Lehrabschlussprüfung* (final apprenticeship examination) is laid down in the *Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG* (Vocational Training Act), the *Allgemeine Prüfungsordnung* (general examination regulation for final apprenticeship examinations) and the *Prüfungsordnung* (examination regulation) for the individual apprenticeship.

Upon the successful completion of the final apprenticeship examination the apprentice is qualified as a skilled worker with the adequate rights and duties of employment. In some cases (e.g. in tourism) the final apprenticeship examination may also entitle the skilled worker to carry out a regulated trade without any further certificates. It is also possible that a final apprenticeship examination and the evidence of work experience in an entrepreneurial or managerial position in the relevant business are sufficient to get a *Gewerbeberechtigung* (entitlement to carry out a trade).

VET SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

One- or two-year VET schools end with an *Abschlusszeugnis* (certificate of completion). Students in three- and four-year VET schools have to take an *Abschlussprüfung* (final examination) at the end of their education. Students who complete these three- and four-year VET schools are qualified for the practice of a relevant occupation and have access to regulated professions.

VET colleges are completed with the *Reife- und Diplomprüfung* (Reifeprüfung and VET diploma examination). The graduates receive the access right to HE as well as vocational qualifications which allow the practice of advanced professions according to the type of training. In most other EU member states, these vocational qualifications are acquired at post-secondary level. The examination regulations for the different forms of VET colleges are issued by the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture).

VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR ADULTS

KOLLEGS (POST-SECONDARY VET COURSES)

Post-secondary courses give persons who have a *Reifeprüfung*, a *Berufsreifeprüfung, BRP* (examination providing access to HE for skilled workers and graduates of three- to four-year full-time VET schools) or a *Studienberechtigungsprüfung, SBP* (HE entrance examination) the opportunity to acquire theoretical and practical

knowledge which corresponds to that of a VET college of the same area of specialisation. Post-secondary VET courses are completed with a *Diplomprüfung* (diploma examination).

WERKMEISTERSCHULEN (FOREMAN COURSES)

Foreman courses extend the theoretical vocational education of persons with completed vocational education in technical-industrial areas.

MEISTERSCHULEN AND MEISTERKLASSEN (MASTER CRAFTSPERSON SCHOOLS)

The master craftsperson schools serve for the vocational education and preparation for the *Meisterprüfung* (master craftsperson examination) of persons with completed vocational education in the industrial-technical and arts and crafts areas. The courses last one to two years and are completed with a final examination. Master craftsperson schools fall in the competence of the Education Ministry.

FACHAKADEMIEN (SPECIALIST VET COLLEGES)

Specialist VET colleges have been offered since 1993. They build on an already completed apprenticeship training and lead to advanced vocational knowledge. The completion of specialist VET colleges enables access to regulated trades upon proof of relevant vocational activities for a certain period of time.

PROOF OF COMPETENCY EXAMINATIONS FOR REGULATED TRADES

Meisterprüfungen für Handwerke (master craftsperson examinations for crafts) and *Befähigungsprüfungen* (qualifying examinations for other regulated trades) take place within the *Landeswirtschaftskammern* (Regional Economic Chambers). A new modular examination system provides candidates for the master craftsperson examination with more flexibility and personal responsibility. Relevant final apprenticeship examinations replace certain modules. Other training programmes can likewise replace modules, entirely or partially. The Federal Economic Chamber has to determine the topics of the master craftsperson examination, which requires confirmation of the Economics Ministry.

0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

There are only limited possibilities to have non-formally or informally acquired vocational qualifications validated and recognised:

CERTIFICATION OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS ACCORDING TO EN 45013

In order to standardise quality assurance in personnel certification across Europe, the norm EN 45013 has been introduced at the European level. The certificate confirms that its holder has adequate qualifications in a clearly defined vocational area. For an institute to be allowed to certify the required conformity, it must receive accreditation from the *Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit* (Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour) according to the Austrian *Akkreditierungsgesetz* (Accreditation Act). Accredited certification institutions currently provide certification primarily for personnel working in the areas of quality and environment management and specific technical areas. Certificates are valid for a time period of three to five years.

CERTIFICATION OF NON-FORMALLY ACQUIRED COMPETENCES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FORMAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Possibilities for the recognition of vocational experience are provided primarily by access to examinations within the formal educational system and the attainment of certificates of competence.

EXCEPTIONAL ACCESS TO THE LEHRABSCHLUSSPRÜFUNG (FINAL APPRENTICESHIP EXAMINATION)

The *Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG* (Vocational Training Act) enables access to the final apprenticeship examination for people without formal training (apprenticeship or school), and thus gives the possibility to acquire a formal vocational qualification. People must be over 18 years of age and furnish evidence that they have acquired the knowledge and skills required for the respective apprenticeship, e.g. by exercising a relevant semi-skilled or other practical activity of appropriate length or by attending relevant tuition at school. Furthermore, completion of at least half of the period stipulated for the respective apprenticeship is accepted as evidence if there is no other possibility of entering into an apprenticeship contract for the remaining apprenticeship period.

In accordance with the Vocational Training Act skilled workers have the opportunity to take another final apprenticeship examination in an apprenticeship related to their first one.

BERUFSREIFEPRÜFUNG, BRP

The *BRP* is equivalent to the *Matura* certificate (school leaver's certificate) at the upper secondary level insofar as it qualifies for studying at post-secondary and tertiary educational institutions. It is targeted at apprenticeship graduates, graduates from *berufsbildenden mittleren Schulen, BMS* (VET Schools) of at least three years' duration, graduates from nursing courses and specialist paramedical courses of at least 30 months' duration, and for graduates of the skilled workers' examination in agriculture and forestry.

The *BRP* consists of four partial exams: German, mathematics, one modern foreign language, and a specialisation from vocational practice. In principle, the *BRP* can be taken without prior attendance of upper secondary schools. The *BRP* Act provides that relevant examinations can be taken also upon completion of specific courses recognised by the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture), which are offered by adult learning institutions and are therefore not part of the public education system.

STUDIENBERECHTIGUNGSPRÜFUNG, SBP

Another possibility of gaining limited-access qualifications for entering post-secondary and tertiary education and training is the *SBP* (HE entrance examination). This exam consists of five parts (compulsory and elective subjects); the former are specified for the study course in question. As a preparation for the different exams, bridge courses are offered against payment by adult learning institutions and universities.

ACCESS TO FACHHOCHSCHULE PROGRAMMES

Professional qualifications replace the required proof of the general university entrance qualification into *Fachhochschule* programmes (university-level programmes of at least three years' duration with technical-vocational orientation). Whenever the educational goal of the degree programme in question so requires, entrants with professional qualifications must furnish evidence of additional examinations.

9001 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

There is a wide variety of facilities and providers for information and counselling about VET possibilities in Austria:

EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS

Educational and vocational counselling in the school sector is primarily the responsibility of the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture). From grade 5 onwards, pupils and parents have access to educational counsellors in all schools, i.e. *allgemeinbildenden höheren Schulen* (higher GE schools), *Hauptschulen* (GE schools) and *Sonderschulen* (special needs schools). These counsellors are responsible for informing them about the range of educational paths, the relevant entry requirements and the final qualifications gained by means of information materials and various media. Additionally, they are responsible for providing them with an all-encompassing overview of possibilities in CVET. The counselling is performed by teaching staff with relevant training, as a supplementary service to normal teaching duties. Depending on the type of school, these teachers are known as *Schülerberater* (guidance counsellors) or *Bildungsberater* (educational consultants).

In grades 7 and 8 the subject *Berufsorientierung* (vocational guidance) with 32 hours per year is mandatory. It can be taught as a separate subject or be integrated into several subjects. It supports the students in reflecting their interests and aptitudes, their ideas about shaping their future personal and career lives. It also provides for actual contact to real working life, e.g. through practical training sessions in companies, meetings with people from the world of work, etc.

Students' counselling at *Polytechnischen Schulen* (prevocational schools) is of special interest, as this school type is at the transition between compulsory school and further educational pathways. Thus, school students and parents are informed about the local apprenticeship situation. In careers guidance lessons they are informed on and prepared for relevant information events, practical training sessions in companies, career fairs, information days at the *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI* (CVET provider institute of the Economic Chamber) and at the *Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi* (CVET provider of the Chamber of Labour and the Austrian Trade Union Federation).

At the *berufsbildenden mittleren und höheren Schulen* (VET schools and colleges) there are also specially trained teachers working as guidance counsellors. These counsellors play a special role, as, on the one hand, at VET schools and colleges students have already made a first decision about their vocational career. On the other hand, these schools also provide for a good, general education, which leaves the whole spectrum of further careers open to the students. Therefore, careers counselling and guidance at these schools always integrate more intensive reflections on the preliminary career decision made.

TERTIARY SECTOR

In the tertiary sector most universities have *Psychologische Beratungsstellen für Studierende* (psychological counselling centres for students), which offer support to students as regards the choice of programme and life at university, as well as *Berufsplanungszentren* (career planning centres) that help students enter the labour market. Both organisations fall into the province of the Education Ministry.

The Ministry also maintains a university information service which publishes various information brochures to be downloaded on <http://www.bmbwk.gv.at>. Moreover, it provides CD-ROMs, telephone information and legal aids for students and organises career fairs. The biggest career fair is the *BeSt – Die Messe für Beruf, Studium und Weiterbildung* (fair on jobs, education and further training). Hundreds of exhibitors from all educational spheres contribute to this fair, which is organised in cooperation with the *Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS* (Public Employment Service).

ADULT EDUCATION

In the area of adult education, career information, guidance and counselling are increasingly considered an important educational task. This has become obvious in the establishment of comprehensive educational databases (<http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at>, <http://www.eduvista.com>), in the formation of a national platform for educational counselling, and the arrangement of inter-institutional information and counselling services acting independently of the service providers.

Moreover, especially bigger adult education establishments often provide their own counselling services, e.g. the *WIFI*, the *bfi*, the *Volkshochschulen, VHS* (Adult Education Centres), etc.

COUNSELLING BY THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

The counselling service of the *AMS* is provided in the *Berufsinformationszentren, BIZ* (vocational information centres). Currently, there are 56 located throughout Austria, providing comprehensive information about jobs, their contents and requirements, IVET possibilities, the job market situation and CVET offers.

Besides comprehensive information materials such as brochures, information sheets, videos, etc., the *AMS* has introduced job information programmes for a variety of target groups and developed education and training databases, which are accessible on <http://www.ams.or.at>.

EURES counsellors, supported by the EURES database, are also in place within the *AMS* to provide information about jobs and working conditions in other European countries.

COUNSELLING BY THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

The Chamber of Labour and the trade unions primarily offer counselling through their adult education establishment, the *Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi*. Additionally, they produce information materials and organise information events.

The Economic Chambers, which also host the *Lehrlingsstellen* (apprenticeship offices) and the CVET provider institution *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI*, focus on job-related CVET counselling. There are many *Berufsinformationszentren, BIZ* (vocational information centres) not only in the capital of each *Land*, but also in district towns. Moreover, the Economic Chambers set up the *Berufsinformationscomputer (BIC)*, which can be accessed on <http://www.bic.at>. This service includes job descriptions, IVET and CVET opportunities, relevant addresses and links.

FURTHER COUNSELLING OPPORTUNITIES

A number of other counselling facilities offer a variety of services to specific target groups. For instance, each *Land* has its own woman's counselling service, which provides information on gender-specific educational and vocational issues, alongside a wide range of other services. Similar institutions exist to provide information and counselling to the disabled, as well as to immigrants.

There is also a rise in the level of private, non-profit or commercial counselling services that offer a range of services, such as educational counselling, vocational information and careers guidance. These are often performed in connection with other services such as job exchanges, application training and related schemes and programmes.

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS

The counselling opportunities in the school sector are primarily directed at pupils and parents. Consultation is offered individually to pupils and their parents, but also to whole classes, parent-teacher meetings, etc. Moreover, information materials are distributed, excursions and school trips to relevant events are organised.

The service of the *Schulpsychologie – Bildungsberatung* (school psychology – education counselling) is available to pupils, teachers and parents seeking advice and expert opinions in questions concerning the avoidance, reduction and solving of potential problems. Responsibilities range from psychological (or psychotherapeutic) care to the creation of information materials and lecturing. Additionally, the counsellors assist and participate in the CVET of school and educational counsellors.

Since the school year 1998/99 *Beruforientierung* (vocational guidance) has been a compulsory exercise in the 3rd and 4th forms of *Hauptschulen* (GE schools) and in junior cycles of *allgemeinbildenden höheren Schulen, AHS* (higher GE schools). The curriculum gives schools two organisational possibilities in this respect: Vocational guidance may be conducted as a separate subject or integrated in the compulsory subjects. The purpose of these exercises includes strengthening the decisiveness, social competence, ambition and perseverance of the pupils. Conversation in classes, role-playing games and group tasks are implemented, information fairs and businesses are visited, and work-experience days and weeks are organised. The pupils are also encouraged to make use of external counselling opportunities.

TERTIARY SECTOR

The target groups of the *Psychologische Beratungsstellen für Studierende* (psychological counselling centres for students) are school leavers and students of third-level educational establishments. General student's advice, psychological counselling, psychotherapy, aptitude diagnoses, training and group sessions are provided by these centres.

The *Berufsplanungszentren* (career planning centres) offer students and graduates individual counselling sessions and information events on the writing of letters of application, curriculum vitae as well as on personal career planning. Seminars on presentation, rhetoric, IT etc. and events such as career fairs and company presentations are also organised.

COUNSELLING BY THE ARBEITSMARKTSERVICE, AMS (PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE)

Counselling and orientation measures of the AMS are available to all people registered as unemployed. The many and varied forms of information materials and online tools in the *Berufsinformationszentren, BIZ* (vocational information centres) are available to all interested parties free of charge. These centres are primarily designed for self-service. Information materials and access to databases are provided; members of staff are available for individual orientation discussions.

COUNSELLING BY THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

The counselling services of the worker's special-interest groups are targeted at young people and adults. As well as individual counselling with psychological tests, courses on vocational orientation, information events and materials are available.

The target groups of counselling services provided by the Economic Chambers include young people, adults, parents, teachers and businesspeople. The vocational information centres of the Economic Chambers offer a wide range of self-service information materials, as well as vocation-related events, such as industry presentations, schooling and information events and application trainings. The education counsellors of the *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI* (CVET provider institution of the federal and regional Economic Chambers) offer individual counselling services, which include psychological tests.

FURTHER COUNSELLING OPPORTUNITIES

Further counselling services are available for specific target groups such as women, the disabled, older workers, workers with placement difficulties, immigrants, etc. Among other services, these institutions offer counselling relating to educational and vocational questions according to different methods.

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

There is no general legal regulation governing the qualifications and aptitudes of vocational and educational counsellors. Only the CVET of counsellors responsible to the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture) is regulated by decree.

EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS

Schüler- und Bildungsberater (guidance counsellors and educational consultants) are teaching personnel with a teaching diploma and several years of teaching experience. Headmasters are responsible for selecting teachers to take on the role as pupil and education counsellor. CVET takes place within the framework of a training programme comprising basic training seminars as well as in-depth courses. Teacher workgroups are responsible for the constant refreshing of relevant knowledge.

The qualifications required of *Berufsorientierungslehrer, BO-Lehrer* (vocational guidance teachers) are not regulated by law. There are differences in the contents and organisation of training. On the one hand, it is possible to take relevant courses within the framework of the teaching training course. On the other hand, teachers who are in employment may participate in relevant training courses. The Education Ministry is currently working on the establishment of a curriculum for the training of vocational guidance teachers to ensure a unified way of qualification.

TERTIARY SECTOR

The psychologists employed in the *Schulpsychologie – Bildungsberatung* (school psychology – education counselling) system are university graduates and are required to begin training for higher psychological services in schools when they enter employment. The training must be completed within four years. Designed to introduce the

counsellors to the required basic knowledge, skills and experience necessary for successful performance in the service of school psychology, the training comprises three parts: in-service training, self-education in the development of specific subjects relevant in school psychology, and the participation in a training course. The training concludes with an obligatory examination.

COUNSELLING BY THE ARBEITSMARKTSERVICE, AMS (PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE)

The training of employees in the AMS is regulated internally. Staff working in the area of counselling must have achieved at least *Reifeprüfung* level (school leaver's examination granting access to HE). During initial training, staff move between training courses which they may attend in person or participate in by e-learning and weeks of on-the-job training. Training and specialist coaches are nominated to oversee the entire training period, to assure the adherence to the regulations governing duration of practical training and monitor the level of training. Initial training lasts 40 weeks; the training is completed with an examination. CVET for staff of AMS centres are offered at district and regional level. The educational contents is decided according to inquires into training requirements which take place every two or three years.

COUNSELLING BY THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

The educational and vocational counsellors of the social partners and in their CVET provider institutions are trained internally, often in cooperation with other institutions. Counselling is conducted primarily by psychologists, social education teachers or staff with similar qualifications.

The educational and vocational counsellors of the Economic Chambers and the *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI* (its CVET provider) meet at least twice a year to exchange experiences and receive further training in specific areas. The situation is similar for counsellors of the Chamber of Labour and its CVET provider institution, the *Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi*, who meet regularly for workshops.

FURTHER COUNSELLING OPPORTUNITIES

The following CVET opportunity is open to all educational and vocational counsellors: The *Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung St. Wolfgang* (Federal Institute for Adult Education in St. Wolfgang) offers an in-service training course for all people employed in the sector of educational and vocational counselling or vocational orientation. The following subjects are included: client-centred counselling, information management, tools of educational counselling, subsidies, systematic counselling, teaching counselling, etc.

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

Within the last few years, a number of steps have been taken that have had an influence on VET funding:

INCREASE OF UNIVERSITY- AND SCHOOL-AUTONOMY

On 1 January 2004, universities obtained full legal status and are therefore responsible for their own budget, most of which is provided by the state. Austrian schools have relatively few funds of their own to administer. However, reforms are under way to increase their financial autonomy.

SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING COMPANIES

Several subsidies have been introduced to support *Lehrbetriebe* (apprenticeship training companies), e.g. the *Lehrlingsprämie* (apprentice premium) or the *Lehrlingsfreibetrag* (apprentice tax exemption). For more information cf. 1002.

CVET MEASURES

Federal and regional authorities have funded a number of measures to promote CVET for all:

- acquisition of secondary level 1 qualifications (*Hauptschulabschluss* = completion of general education schools) by adults
- introduction of the *Berufsreifeprüfung, BRP*, an examination with which apprenticeship and three- and four-year VET school graduates gain access to HE
- establishment of schools and colleges for employed people
- setting up of *Fachhochschule* courses (university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation) and *Universitätslehrgänge* (i.e. short term university courses for post-graduates as well as for persons without HE graduation) for employed people
- permission to apply the *Bildungsfreibetrag* (training tax allowance) also to internal CVET measures (cf. 1003 for more information)

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The following bodies are responsible for funding the various types of IVET:

TYPES OF IVET	BODIES
IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL	

<i>Polytechnische Schule, PS</i> (prevocational school)	<i>Laender</i> , municipalities,federation
<i>berufsbildende mittlere Schule, BMS</i> (VET schools)	federation
<i>berufsbildende höhere Schule, BHS</i> (VET college)	federation
<i>Bildungsanstalt für Kindergarten-pädagogik / Sozialpädagogik</i> (training colleges for nursery school teachers / social pedagogy)	federation
IVET IN COMPANIES – APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING	
enterprise-based part of training	companies, state subsidies
<i>Berufsschule</i> (part-time vocational school for apprentices): school-based part of training	<i>Laender</i> , federation
OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS	
<i>Berufslehrgänge</i> (vocational pre-apprenticeship training courses)	federation
<i>integrative Berufsausbildung</i> (integrative vocational training)	companies, state subsidies
VET AT POST-SECONDARY (NON-TERTIARY) LEVEL	
<i>Akademien</i> (post-secondary VET colleges)	federation
<i>Kollegs</i> post-secondary VET courses)	federation
VET AT TERTIARY LEVEL	
universities	federation, students
<i>Fachhochschulen</i> (university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation)	federation, students

IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL

In the financing of IVET at upper secondary level a differentiation must be made between direct financing (from public funds) and indirect financing (benefits, free travel, schoolbook initiatives, etc.).

As regards the direct funding of prevocational schools, they are maintained by the *Laender* or municipalities. Maintaining and operating a school includes the establishment, maintenance and repair of the school buildings, payment of overheads, purchase of equipment and teaching aids, provisions for the school doctor, and the employment of the necessary auxiliary staff (caretakers, maintenance staff, etc.). The employment of teachers at this school type is the responsibility of the *Laender*. However, the *Laender* are fully compensated for the cost of

teachers' salaries by the *Bund* (federation) in the process of fiscal adjustment. Prevocational schools are not allowed to charge tuition fees. Transport to and from school as well as textbooks are provided to pupils almost free of charge. Only a small contribution of 10% has to be paid.

VET schools and colleges are established and maintained by the federation, which bears the full cost, including teachers' salaries. Teachers do not enter into an employment contract with the school, but with the federation. With respect to the absence of tuition fees, free transport and textbooks the situation is the same as in prevocational schools.

The "dual" in the dual apprenticeship system also describes the financing. The school-based part is financed by public funds. The *Landesschulräte* (regional education boards) bear the costs of equipping part-time vocational schools (machines, equipment and teaching materials). The federation and each *Land* bear half of the personnel costs. The enterprise-based part is financed by the company itself, with the possibility of state subsidies. The following subsidies are available:

- **Lehrlingsprämie (apprentice premium):** For all apprenticeships that existed after 1 January 2002, companies can apply for a premium of € 1,000 per year and apprentice within the framework of the tax declaration. Businesses may choose between the apprentice premium and the *Lehrlingsfreibetrag* (apprentice tax allowance).
- **Apprentice tax allowance:** for apprenticeships entered into prior to 1 January 2003, companies may apply for three partial tax allowance amounts of € 1,460.
- **Exemption from the employer's contribution to health insurance for the first two apprenticeship years, and from accident insurance contributions for every year following 1 October 2002.**
- **Exemption from the surcharge on employer's contribution to unemployment insurance from 1 January 2003.**

Additionally, there is a variety of funding measures available within the framework of apprentice training, of which the most important is the funding for apprenticeship places. This is conducted by the *Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS* (Public Employment Service) as part of the active job market policies. The following groups are eligible for this type of funding:

- girls in apprenticeships with a low level of female participation
- young people in disadvantaged positions in the job market
- adults (over 19 years old), whose employment problem is due to a lack of qualification which can be solved by an apprenticeship
- apprentices, if they acquire additional qualifications beyond the job requirements

OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

On the basis of the *Jugendausbildungs-Sicherungsgesetz 1998, JASG* (Youth Training Guarantee Act of 1998) additional training in the form of ten-month vocational pre-apprenticeship training courses is offered as a labour market support measure for young people who find themselves at a disadvantage in the labour market and for those who cannot find an apprenticeship. The *Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS* (Public Employment Service) allocates young people to these training courses, during which they receive a special allowance of € 150 net per month.

The *integrative Berufsausbildung* (integrative vocational training) is targeted at people who are at a disadvantage in the labour market and includes the acquisition of apprenticeship qualifications in an apprenticeship period prolonged by one year, in exceptional cases by two years, or the acquisition of partial qualifications in one or several trades which are relevant for the economy. This system is funded by the *AMS* and the companies employing people from the target group.>

VET AT POST-SECONDARY (NON-TERTIARY) LEVEL

Post-secondary VET courses and colleges are established and maintained by the federation, which bears the full cost, including teachers' salaries.

VET AT TERTIARY LEVEL

The *Universitätsgesetz, UG 2002* (University Act of 2002) has given the universities complete autonomy. This has also led to a new funding system, which will enter into force as of 2007. This new system stipulates that the responsible Education Minister enters into a *Leistungsvertrag* (performance agreement) with every university for a term of three years. The university provides the draft of the performance agreement, which is subject to negotiation.

The university budget of the federal authorities – just like the total federal budget – is decided by parliament. 20% of the total budget is allocated in line with a formula, based on performance indicators and indicators for the objectives of society. 80% of the total budget is distributed among the different universities on the basis of negotiations of their performance agreement. The following criteria are applied: requirements, demand, performance and objectives of society. As of 2007, the three-year global budget of the individual universities will thus comprise a formula-based budget and a negotiated budget. The universities submit their proposals for the performance agreements, which are based on the substance laid down by law.

In addition to state funding, the universities have additional funding sources. Since they have become fully fledged legal entities, they may acquire property, conduct research on a commission basis, etc., and they can use this income for meeting their tasks as universities. Moreover, a large part of the money available to the

Forschungsförderungsfonds, FFF (fund for the promotion of scientific research), which is fed from the federal budget, is allocated to the universities.

Furthermore, the *Studiengebühren* (tuition fees), which amount to EUR 363.36 per semester (Feb. 2005), remain with the respective university. The tuition fee must be paid in advance of every semester. Students are entitled to choose from among the possible special-purpose dedications of the tuition fees which the *Senat* (senate) established.

Students are also entitled to financial support, which comprises direct and indirect support measures funded from public money for the most part. Indirect support measures are independent of any social need; as far as their financial volume is concerned, they constitute the overwhelmingly largest part of the state's support measures. They comprise family allowances, sharing the insurance coverage of parents or self-insurance schemes, statutory accident insurance, as well as fiscal benefits whenever children are enrolled as students. Direct support measures, which are granted pursuant to the *Studienförderungsgesetz* (Student Support Act), depend upon the social needs and the academic success of students. The income of the student and/or the person with maintenance obligations is decisive for the definition of social need. In this connection, there are also special support measures such as study grants (paying the entire or part of the tuition fee), commuter travelling grants, benefits for studying abroad, etc. In addition, the universities receive funds from the Education Ministry to grant performance-based or research scholarships in order to support students who achieve especially good results.

One characteristic feature of the *Fachhochschule* sector is the system of mixed funding based on the standard cost system. The federal government bears the costs per study place; the costs for buildings, investments and a part of the running costs are borne by the provider of the *Fachhochschule* programme (usually the governments of the *Laender*, regional or supra-regional authorities, the social partners, etc.).

For some *Fachhochschule* programmes students are required to pay tuition fees. Concerning tuition fees and student support measures the same situation applies as for universities.

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

The funding of CVET is either publicly provided or made available by companies.

PUBLICLY PROVIDED CVET

As CVET is largely provided by independent providers, the federal government's primary role lies in tasks relating to funding. With the introduction of the *Gesetz zur Förderung der Erwachsenenbildung und des Volksbüchereiwesens* (Public Funding of Adult Education and National Libraries Act) in 1973 the legal basis for public funding of CVET was created. Essentially, public funding is a commitment of the federal government to support educational establishments that work on a non-profit basis. For the providers of CVET, however, there is no legal right to funding.

The public expenditure of the federal and regional governments as well as of municipalities comprise a wide range of activities, including:

- courses in second chance education
- tax deductible amounts and education premiums for businesses
- subsidies for private training costs
- schools for people in employment
- libraries etc.

Financial support is organised by the adult education department of the *Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, BMBWK* (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture), which is responsible for the federal funding departments for adult education present in seven *Laender*. Most educational institutions funded by the Education Ministry are represented within the *Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs, KEBÖ* (Conference of Adult Education in Austria).

Since 2000, Austrian employers can claim a special *Bildungsfreibetrag* (training tax allowance) for investment in training. This training incentive is regulated by federal law tax. Initially, the training tax allowance was 9% of the expenses on external training only. From 2003 onwards, the allowance has been increased to 20% and extended to training measures organised internally. The incentive allows companies not only to deduct the actual cost of training as a business expense from their taxable income but also an additional "virtual expense" of 20%. Thus, the tax base is diminished by 120% of the actual expense. Companies that do not make enough profit in a given year to benefit from this tax deduction can, as an alternative, claim a *Bildungsprämie* (training premium) of 6% of the actual expense which is deducted from the tax liability or paid out to the firm.

ENTERPRISE-BASED CVET

Enterprise-based CVET – understood as the entire range of internal measures financed and organised by the company as well as the external courses where employees take part – is not regulated by law unless specific qualifications are followed (e.g. *Meisterprüfung* [master craftsperson certificate]). A characteristic feature of enterprise-based CVET is the division of the costs between employers and employees. Course fees are usually covered by the employer, the time for the training is provided by the employee.

According to the Eurostat CVTS-2, costs for CVET account for 1.3% of the total costs for employees. This seems relatively low compared to other countries (cf. UK: 3.6%, Denmark: 3%, EU-15: 2.3%). However, it must be taken into account that the CVTS-2 does not include the smallest businesses, employees in the public sector, the entire agricultural sector and potentially a portion of the professional workers.

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

Job market policy and training measures are essentially public responsibilities, and are therefore almost wholly publicly financed. The main portion of the necessary financial means is provided by the *Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit, BMWA* (Federal Ministry for Economics and Labour). Financial input from regional and local governments or private initiatives (predominantly religious initiatives) for the training of the unemployed represents a significantly smaller portion.

The *Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS* (Public Employment Service) receives the financial means from the Economics Ministry, but is solely responsible for developing funding guidelines for active job market policies. Besides defining targets for job market policies and maintaining a supervisory role, the Economics Minister has no influence on the funding guidelines developed by the *AMS*.

Since Austria's entrance into the EU in 1995, it has had access to financial means from the European Social Fund (ESF) for education initiatives based on job market policies. Modern and innovative CVET activities and employment initiatives are at the centre of the ESF-objective-3. Funding is particularly intended for people at risk of not finding employment. Seven focus points specify which target groups and measures are to be funded in Austria from 2000 to 2006:

- combating unemployment
- equal opportunities for the disabled
- education
- company-based qualifications
- equal opportunities for men and women
- territorial employment packets
- information and networking

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

Future policy priorities for funding VET focus on the following aspects:

- increasing the financial autonomy of schools and colleges
- offering more CVET opportunities for people in employment
- reducing the number of people without secondary level 1 qualifications by promoting the acquisition of a *Hauptschulabschluss* (completion of a general education school)

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

The Austrian implementation strategies to embed the concept of lifelong learning (LLL) are still in an initial stage. This is predominantly due to the fact that political discussions on the purposes and methods of LLL have only started as a result of the introduction of LLL as an objective for employment policy within the framework of the National Plans of Action.

The implementation strategies rest on the following three principles:

- development of broad consensus on the necessity of LLL by including all participants;
- positioning towards short-term effects within the area of LLL (for example, an increase in participation levels);
- no explicit differentiation between vocational and general education.

These principles should be adhered to by:

- upgrading and expanding of counselling services;
- establishing local learning centres;
- improving permeability between the different education sectors;
- promoting mobility;

- introducing tax deductions for CVET measures and funding financing models according to demand.

As a first step, a work group and twelve coordination workshops were set up in 2001 to develop scenarios for specific strategies to implement LLL and improve the cooperation between the relevant protagonists. The work group included educational policy and labour-market experts as well as representatives of the social partners. The coordination workshops concentrated on the prerequisites necessary to establish LLL in Austria (creation of indicators, definition of basic qualifications, incentive systems, etc.).

Since its foundation in 2001, the *Zukunftsforum Weiterbildung* (future forum CVET) has monitored activities in the CVET sector and developed new initiatives, including methods to increase permeability between various fields of education and encourage innovations for the acquisition of new basic qualifications spanning all sectors. This forum consists of members of decision-making bodies from educational policy (ministries, regional and local governments, social partners) and representatives of the labour-market as well as important institutions of the adult education sector.

An effective and comprehensive statistical evaluation tool for the educational sector was introduced with the implementation of the *Bildungsdokumentationsgesetz 2002* (Education Documentation Act of 2002). The results of these evaluations have helped establish the number of graduates from second chance education in a uniform way. The data can therefore be used as a foundation for further strategy development.

The importance of tools to increase transparency of acquired qualifications is becoming more pronounced as a result of increased workers' mobility within the European area. Austrian initiatives focus largely on applying the tools implemented at EU level.

1102 - IMPACT OF EUROPEANISATION/INTERNATIONALISATION ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Europeanising of the Austrian VET system is being promoted by means of four procedures:

The first procedure is the recognition of foreign certificates in Austria and of Austrian certificates in other EU member states. Until recently, common practice was to establish equivalence between foreign and similar Austrian certificates. If this equivalence was not achievable, the applicant had to make up the missing examinations. Now a range of bilateral agreements are in place which ensure mutual recognition of completed apprenticeships (including Germany, Italy and Switzerland). Currently, an agreement is being negotiated with the Czech Republic.

The second procedure focuses on adapting certification systems to common international forms of certification. An obvious example of this was the implementation of the conventional international three-tier study programme structure in the tertiary sector. Since 2002, universities and *Fachhochschulen* (university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation) are permitted to establish baccalaureate, master and doctorate study programmes.

The third procedure concerns the adoption of standardised certificates and proof of documentation on qualifications and competencies across Europe, thereby recognising the value of informally acquired qualifications. Possibilities in this area include the European Computer Driving License, the European Curriculum Vitae, the certificate supplement, the diploma supplement, the European Language Portfolio and the EUROPASS Training scheme. This procedure incorporates protagonists from the regular school system and the tertiary sector as recognising bodies as well as private education providers (e.g. the Austrian Computer Society).

In the fourth procedure attempts are being made to achieve common forms of completion in vocational education with other European countries. The difference between this procedure and the previous one is that this initiative is not exclusively political. A good example of this is the Leonardo da Vinci project EUROBAC, in which an international project partnership is working on a European diploma of completed vocational education.

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List of acronyms

Acronym	German denotation	English denotation/explanation
AHS	<i>Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule</i>	higher general education school, junior cycle and senior cycle
AMS	<i>Arbeitsmarktservice</i>	Public Employment Service
AMS-QB	<i>Arbeitsmarktservice-Qualifikationsbarometer</i>	qualification barometer of the Public Employment Service
AUCEN	<i>Austrian Universities Continuing Education Network</i>	
BAG	<i>Berufsausbildungsgesetz</i>	Vocational Training Act
BBAB	<i>Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat</i>	Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship
BFI	<i>Berufsförderungsinstitut</i>	CVET provider institution of the Chamber of Labour and the Austrian Trade Union Federation
BHS	<i>Berufsbildende höhere Schule</i>	VET college
BIC	<i>Berufsinformationscomputer</i>	database containing career information, job descriptions etc.
BIZ	<i>Berufsinformationszentrum</i>	vocational information centres
BMBWK	<i>Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur</i>	Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
BMF	<i>Bundesministerium für Finanzen</i>	Federal Ministry of Finances
BMGF	<i>Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Frauen</i>	Federal Ministry for Health and Women's Issues
BMS	<i>Berufsbildende mittlere Schule</i>	VET school
BMLFUW	<i>Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft</i>	Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
BMWA	<i>Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit</i>	Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour
BMHS	<i>Berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen</i>	VET schools and colleges

BO	<i>Berufsorientierung</i>	vocational orientation
BRP	<i>Berufsreifeprüfung</i>	examination providing access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- and four-year full-time VET schools
EB-FG	<i>Erwachsenenbildungsförderungsgesetz</i>	Adult Education Promotion Act
FFF	<i>Forschungsförderungsfonds</i>	fund for the promotion of scientific research
FH	<i>Fachhochschule</i>	university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation
FHR	<i>Fachhochschulrat</i>	<i>Fachhochschule</i> Council
FHStG	<i>Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz</i>	<i>Fachhochschule</i> Studies Act
GewO	<i>Gewerbeordnung</i>	Crafts, Trade and Industry Act
JASG	<i>Jugendausbildungs-Sicherungsgesetz</i>	Youth Training Guarantee Act
KEBÖ	<i>Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs</i>	Conference of Adult Education in Austria
LAP	<i>Lehrabschlussprüfung</i>	final apprenticeship examination
LBAB	<i>Landesberufsausbildungsbeirat</i>	Regional Advisory Board on Apprenticeship
LFI	<i>Ländliche Fortbildungsinstitut</i>	institute for further education in rural areas
PTS	<i>Polytechnische Schule</i>	prevocational school
SBP	<i>Studienberechtigungsprüfung</i>	higher education entrance examination
SchOG	<i>Schulorganisationsgesetz</i>	School Organisation Act
SchUG	<i>Schulunterrichtsgesetz</i>	School Education Act
UG	<i>Universitätsgesetz</i>	University Act
WIFI	<i>Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut</i>	CVET provider institution of the Economic Chamber
ZF	<i>Zentrum für Fernstudien</i>	distance learning centre

