

VET in Austria

Austrian vocational education and training (VET) ranks high, as demonstrated by its differentiated offer and high attractiveness: around 70% of each age cohort opt for a VET path at the end of compulsory education. The last year (year 9) of compulsory education and the first of upper secondary education coincide. School-based VET and apprenticeships (dual track training) coexist. They cover nearly all economic sectors and lead to different qualification levels (either EQF 4 or 5). Most school-based VET comes under the remit of the education ministry. Governance of apprenticeship is shared by the ministries of economy (company-based track) and education (school-based track), the social partners and the *Länder*. There is also a variety of VET programmes at tertiary level and for adults.

Upper secondary level

Alongside general education programmes, learners can choose from various pre-VET and VET options in different occupations/sectors:

- different types of one- or two-year pre-VET (PTS, ISCED 341; BMS, ISCED 351): learners acquire general education, key competences and basic vocational skills preparing them for further school-based VET, apprenticeships and simple jobs on the labour market;
- three- to four-year school-based VET (BMS, ISCED 354, EQF 4): learners strengthen their general education and acquire the respective occupational competences and qualifications to perform medium-level jobs. Those who complete an add-on programme or take the *Berufsreifeprüfung* (exam for people whose initial VET does not automatically qualify them for entry into higher education) also obtain general access to higher education studies;
- five-year school-based VET (BHS, ISCED 354-554, EQF 5): combining theory and practice, these programmes offer high-quality occupation-related training while strengthening learners' general education. They lead to double qualifications for senior positions in business and general access to higher education at the same time (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*);

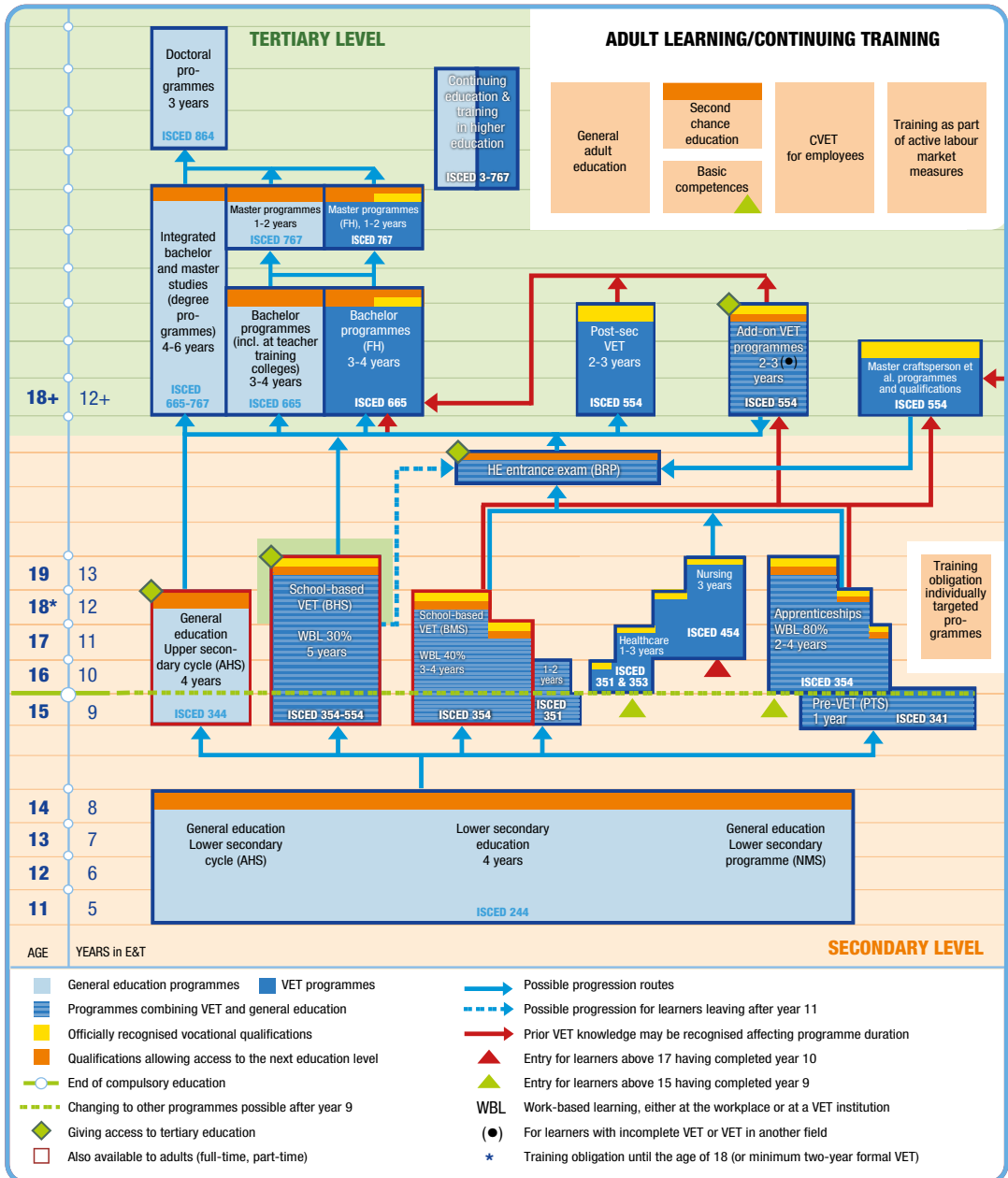
- apprenticeships (dual track training) (ISCED 354, EQF 4) in some 200 occupations for learners from age 15 onwards, after compulsory education. They lead to qualifications at medium level. Graduates can progress to qualify, for instance, as master craftsperson or, following additional exams, access tertiary level training in a related field. By completing the *Berufsreifeprüfung* or an add-on programme they can also obtain general access to higher education;
- training for occupations in the health sector: access to programmes preparing for care and medical assistant professions (ISCED 351 and 353) and other occupations in the health sector (ISCED 351) requires completed compulsory education, being of minimum age, and/or a specific qualification. Training to become a specialist and general care nurse (ISCED 454) is being upgraded to bachelor level. This process will be completed by 2023.

Tertiary level

Universities of applied sciences (FH) provide practice-oriented bachelor (EQF 6) and master programmes (EQF 7) in different fields. Several of these include a mandatory work placement. Many are open to, or cater for, people in employment. Some are based on the dual principle, where theory and practice in enterprises alternate. University studies are generally pre-professional; some, such as medicine, law or engineering/technology, have a strong vocational focus. Initial training for primary and secondary school teachers is a joint responsibility of universities and teacher education colleges.

Adult learning/continuing VET

Adults can acquire the same qualifications within formal education and training as those open to the young. A diverse range of institutions offers continuing training and progression opportunities to complement or upgrade people's initial qualifications. These include programmes awarding or preparing for tertiary/post-secondary vocational qualifications, such as industrial master and master craftsperson certificates, certified accountants, or for law enforcement services. They also provide training within active labour market measures.



NB: Simplified. ISCED-P 2011.

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