



Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–19

AUSTRIA



Cedefop monitoring of vocational education and training policies and systems

Progress towards the medium-term deliverables
of the Riga conclusions

Country chapter

AUSTRIA

Developments in vocational education and training policy
in 2015-19

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Introduction

In June 2015, the ministers in charge of vocational education and training in the EU Member States, the candidate countries and the European Economic Area countries, convened in Riga, agreed on objectives for vocational education and training (VET) policies for 2015-20⁽¹⁾.

Cedefop has been entrusted with monitoring the countries' policies implemented towards reaching these objectives.

This country chapter is part of the monitoring process. It was drafted based on input from the national ReferNet team. It presents an overview of the major policy developments that have taken place in the country in 2015-19, in the areas covered by the Riga medium-term deliverables (MTDs).

The country chapter is structured as follows:

- (a) the introductory section Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015 briefly sketches the VET context in the country in 2015, highlighting selected figures and major policy initiatives that were just being adopted or started at that time. This introductory section is targeted at setting a baseline to put in perspective the policy choices and developments that have taken place since the beginning of the Riga cycle;
- (b) five thematic chapters then follow, devoted to the five respective MTDs outlined in the Riga conclusions. Each thematic chapter also begins with a 2015 baseline, more specifically addressing the MTD-related topics. The baseline is followed by the presentation of the major policy developments in the MTD since 2015;
- (c) the country chapter ends with a conclusion summarising the main lines of the 2015-19 policy developments and highlighting possible priorities for the future.

This country chapter is part of the information which the European Commission used to prepare the European Semester exercises⁽²⁾ in 2017-19. It also informs the work of Cedefop and the European Training Foundation (ETF) in

(1) *Riga conclusions 2015 on a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of VET for the period 2015-2020, as a result of the review of short-term deliverables defined in the 2010 Bruges communiqué:*

https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions_2015.pdf

(2) European Semester: https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en

preparing a joint monitoring report on the implementation of the Riga conclusions. Both the joint report and the country chapter are aimed at informing the work of EU Member States' Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVTS) and Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT) on taking stock of the outcomes of the Riga conclusions and preparing the next steps for the EU VET policy for the next few years.

Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes in Austria was well above the EU average: 70.2% in 2013 (European Commission, 2015), against 48.9% in the EU; 69.8% in 2014 compared to 48% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 105); 70% in 2015 compared to 47% in the EU ⁽³⁾. At 47%, the number of upper secondary initial vocational education and training (IVET) students following work-based programmes in 2014 was also higher than the 34% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 105). The employment rate of recent upper secondary graduates was higher than in the EU: 86% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015) and 83.7% in 2015 (European Commission, 2016) compared to 70.8% and 74.1% on average in the EU in respective years. Adult participation in lifelong learning was also above the EU rate: 14.2% in 2014 (European Commission, 2015) and 14.4% in 2015 compared to 10.7% on average in the EU in both years (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 105) (Table 1).

Modernisation of the VET system was under way and a competence-oriented semester-based model of upper-secondary programmes was being prepared. In the preceding years, expansion of work experience in programmes and the learning outcomes approach in curricula (including apprenticeships) had been started; standardised competence-based leaving exams had been piloted; and initiatives such as the *Lehre mit Matura* (completing an apprenticeship in parallel with studying for higher education entrance) had been introduced.

⁽³⁾ Eurostat, data for 2015.

Table 1. **Framework data: score on VET indicators in Austria and in the EU: 2010-15**

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)		
	AT ^f	EU ^f	Yr	AT ^f	EU ^f	Range	AT EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility							
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	69.8 ^b	48.0 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ -0.4 ▪ -0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	47.7 ^b	34.0 ^b _{E2}	'13-'14	▪ -0.4 ▪ 0.1
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14	95.9	69.2 ^{E3}	'13-'14	▪ 0.0 ▪ -1.4
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	33.0	38.0 ^e	'10	33.0	38.0 ^e		
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	12.0	20.0 ^e	'10	12.0	20.0 ^e		
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	13.8		'15	14.4	10.7 ^b	'13-'15	↗ 0.2 → 0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	87.0	66.0 ^e	'10	87.0	66.0 ^e		
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	65.4 ^b	42.7 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ -0.5 ▪ -1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	26.0	25.0 ^e	'10	26.0	25.0 ^e		
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	35.5 ^b	33.0 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 1.2 ▪ -0.3
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	8.1	5.3	'15	8.8	6.9	'10-'15	↗ 0.1 ↗ 0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	4.6		'15	4.5 ^c	4.3 ^b _C	'13-'15	↘ -0.1 ↘ -0.1
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	19.8		'15	16.6	9.5 ^b	'13-'15	↘ -2.5 ↘ -0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	7.7 ^B	9.5 ^e _B	'11	7.7	9.5 ^e		
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	76.7 ^B	80.2 ^e _B	'11	76.7	80.2 ^e		
Skill development and labour market relevance							
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13	0.75 ^b	0.56 ^b _{E4}	'12-'13	▪ 0.00 ▪ -0.03
IVET public expenditure per student (1 000 PPS units)			'13	11.2 ^b	6.4 ^b _{E5}	'12-'13	▪ 0.2 ▪ 0.0
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.8	0.8 ^e	'10	0.8	0.8 ^e		
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14	1.2 ^b	1.0 ^b _{E6}	'13-'14	▪ 0.0 ▪ 0.0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14	28.7 ^b	30.0 ^b _{E7}	'13-'14	▪ 0.6 ▪ -0.4
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14	42.4	9.3 ^{E8}	'13-'14	▪ 2.2 ▪ 0.4
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)	59.1	41.5 ^{E9}	'12	60.7	41.6 ^{E9}	'10-'12	▪ 0.8 ▪ 0.0
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)			'15	86.8 ^b	77.2 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 0.5 ▪ 0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'15	8.9 ^b	5.3 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 2.2 ▪ -1.0
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15	29.6 ^b	23.7 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 0.7 ▪ -0.1

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)			Trend in 2011-15 (per year)		
	AT ^f	EU ^f	Yr	AT ^f	EU ^f	Range	AT	EU
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15	83.2	83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	58.5	55.2	'15	46.3	57.3	'10-'15	▪ -2.4	▪ 0.4
Overall transitions and labour market trends								
Early leavers from education and training (%)		13.9	'15	7.3 ^b	11.0 ^c	'14-'15	▪ 0.3	▪ -0.2
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)		33.8	'15	38.7 ^b	38.7 ^c	'14-'15	▪ -1.3	▪ 0.8
NEET rate for 18- to 24-year-olds (%)	9.1	16.6	'15	9.3	15.8	'10-'15	↗ 0.1	↘ -0.1
Unemployment rate for 20- to 34-year-olds (%)	6.7	13.1	'15	7.4	12.9	'10-'15	↗ 0.3	↗ 0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	88.0	77.4	'15	86.9 ^c	76.9 ^c	'10-'15	↘ -0.5	↘ -0.2
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	17.6	27.3	'15	15.4 ^c	23.5 ^c	'10-'15	↘ -0.4	↘ -0.8
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds (%)	73.9	68.6	'15	74.3	70.0	'10-'15	↗ 0.1	↗ 0.3
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	54.9	53.4	'15	53.1 ^c	52.6 ^c	'10-'15	↘ -0.5	↘ -0.2
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	86.2 ^d	82.8 ^d			

(*) The data in this column are the data available in 2016. Where 2015 data were not available, data from previous years were used.

(^A) UOE (UNESCO OECD Eurostat) back reconstruction of 2010 values based on ISCED (international standard classification of education) 2011 not yet available.

(^B) AES (adult education services) 2011, used as proxy for 2010 baseline.

(^C) 2014 b flags in Eurostat online tables ignored on the basis of other relevant Eurostat metadata.

(^D) Forecast made in 2016.

(^{E1}) Based on 28 countries; partial information for NL.

(^{E2}) Based on 25 countries (missing: ES, PL, RO); partial information for NL.

(^{E3}) Based on 27 countries (missing: NL); partial information for EL, IT.

(^{E4}) Based on 19 countries (missing: BE, DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT, SK).

(^{E5}) Based on 21 countries (missing: DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT).

(^{E6}) Partial information for NL.

(^{E7}) Based on 25 countries (missing: HR, IT, UK).

(^{E8}) Based on 23 countries (missing: BE, IE, FR, CY, UK).

(^{E9}) Based on 22 countries (missing: DE, IE, EL, NL, SI, UK).

(^b) Break after 2010, therefore baseline data not included.

(^u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(^z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

(^e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

NB: EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified. Arrows ↗ or ↘ signal a positive or negative trend based on more than two data points and of magnitude 0.1 per year or more. Trends based on more than two data points but of smaller magnitude are indicated by →; trends based on two points only are marked ▪. Trends are estimated by means of regression models.

Source: Cedefop, 2017a, p. 105.

CHAPTER 1.

MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships

1.1. Baseline 2015

Austria has a longstanding tradition of work-based VET, including apprenticeship. At the beginning of the reporting period ⁽⁴⁾, work-based VET was regulated by the standard regulations applying to all schools in general ⁽⁵⁾, along with the Vocational Training Act – *Berufsausbildungsgesetz*, introduced in 1969. Sectors and social partners were involved in the apprenticeship policy, especially in the analysis of needs, the review of training programmes and the introduction of new apprenticeships. The regulations on apprenticeship programmes had national scope, however VET institutions were entitled to some leeway to adjust the curricula to local needs.

Companies needed to apply to the respective competent Apprenticeship Office of the Federal Economic Chamber, which examined (in collaboration with the Chamber of Labour) whether the company met the prerequisites to offer apprenticeship training. Companies which wanted to offer apprenticeship training but could not offer the full extent of the job profile had the option to enter a training alliance with another suitable company. The companies would sign an apprenticeship contract with the apprentice. Modularisation of apprenticeship (core and specialisation) had been introduced since 2006.

Alternance training (*überbetriebliche Ausbildung* – ÜBA) was introduced in 2008. It addressed young people who did not manage to either get a place in an upper secondary school or find a company-based apprenticeship. ÜBA was an alternative pathway allowing for taking apprenticeship training in a training workshop funded by the Public Employment Service. The school-based part of the training would be carried out at a regular vocational school. ÜBA apprentices

⁽⁴⁾ This introductory section presents the 2015 state-of-play in the MTD as a baseline for the monitoring exercise. Most of the situation it describes has remained unchanged over the reporting period and is therefore still in place at the end of the reporting period. The next sections in this MTD focus on what has changed with respect to this 2015 baseline, and how.

⁽⁵⁾ The School Organisation Act – *Schulorganisationsgesetz*, introduced in 1962; and the School Instruction Act – *Schulunterrichtsgesetz*, introduced in 1986.

would complete their training with the apprenticeship-leaving examination and would thus have the same qualifications as company trained apprentices.

End of 2013, a survey on internships and traineeships showed that the duration of the mandatory internships for learners in school-based VET programmes (that led to skilled workers' level) was too short. Also, the number of apprentices was decreasing and a trend towards school-based VET programmes and higher general programmes had been observed. Attractiveness measures that were taken included promotional initiatives such as the price of 'State-honoured training company' ⁽⁶⁾, the price of the 'Best training companies – Fit for future' ⁽⁷⁾, and skills competitions among apprentices.

1.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

The country's priorities in this area for 2016-20 are:

- (a) for apprenticeship:
 - (i) integrate migrants into dual VET;
 - (ii) strengthen VET in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through the programme *Coaching and counselling of apprentices and training companies*;
- (b) for work-based learning in school-based VET, ensure that every curriculum in the vocational sector includes mandatory practice during the course (duration from four weeks to three months, depending on the field or profession).

⁽⁶⁾ The price is awarded by the Ministry of Economy. The awarded company has the right to use the Austrian emblem including the indication of the 'State-honoured training company' in all official documents and correspondence:

https://www.bmdw.gv.at/Themen/Lehre-und-Berufsausbildung/Lehrlingsausbildung-Duales-System/StaatlicheAuszeichnunggem_Paragraf30aBAG.html?lang=en

(information in German only).

⁽⁷⁾ The Ministry of Economy awards every two-year the price of the 'Best training companies – Fit for future'. <https://staatspreis-fitforfuture.submit.to/landing/award/?next=/> (information in German only).

1.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19

1.3.1. Improving learner access to apprenticeship places

The pilot project *Supra-regional apprenticeship placement* started in 2016. It was initiated by the Austrian economic chamber in cooperation with the public employment service and the federal ministries responsible for economy and labour. The project is open to all young people, with particular focus on young refugees. It offers an online test (available in different languages) to identify the strengths, competences and interests of learners. Test results form the basis for finding suitable apprenticeship places. A one-week introduction internship can be organised. In 2016, an additional module – *b.mobile - The benefits of skilled labour* ⁽⁸⁾ – was introduced. Given that about three quarters of all recognised refugees live in the eastern part of Austria while over 80% of the vacant training places are in the west or south of the country, the project tries to balance the supply and demand of training places. It offers a preparatory course in subject-specific German, mathematics, practical work and intercultural aspects. During a one-week internship, apprenticeship seekers and companies can check whether a training relationship is suitable for both of them. An apprentices' coach is provided on site to support the training relationship and offer permanent support to the learner, in both occupation and personal issues. This project is being piloted until 2022: by February 2019, a total of around 550 people had taken part. So far, 106 people have been placed in apprenticeships.

Coaching and counselling for apprentices and companies has also been mainstreamed across Austria since October 2015. These services are being evaluated in a pilot project from 2018 to 2019. The aim is to support training progress and to avoid drop out. Results of the pilot project are expected in 2019.

1.3.2. Digitalisation of dual VET

In November 2017, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber issued a call for projects on the use of digital developments and the promotion of digital competences in dual vocational education and training ⁽⁹⁾. The programme is financed by the Federal Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs. It is part of a broader, high-priority strategy for digitalisation of apprenticeship training, including the modernisation of existing apprenticeships and development of new ones. The programme includes the development of new learning methods, tools

⁽⁸⁾ https://www.wko.at/site/fachkraeftepotenzial/b_mobile.html

⁽⁹⁾ Source: <https://news.wko.at/news/oesterreich/digitalisierung-lehre-projektaufruf.pdf>

and measures to accompany digital change. Projects are required to have a maximum duration of five years. The budget is a total of EUR 0.9 million, with a maximum of EUR 200 000.00 per project. Three projects were commissioned in the first half of 2018; the first results are expected in 2019. One of these projects is concerned with the development of a trainer platform through which training companies can share concrete best practice examples of apprenticeship training with concrete instructions for action. The focus here will also be on examples of digitisation in training. The platform is expected to be accessible from the second half of 2019.

1.3.3. Modernising apprenticeship

In 2018, the Austrian Economic Chamber initiated the design work for the initiative *We educate the economy* ⁽¹⁰⁾. The plan is to develop projects in five fields:

- (a) virtual learning platforms, for example for virtual company tours or online career information;
- (b) digital tools for apprenticeship training, such as digital learning worlds for apprentices; online tool for planning and documenting apprenticeship training; digital training and continuing education platform for trainers;
- (c) continuing training, such as new apprenticeship training for adults; competence check of individual skills;
- (d) a Campus of the economy, to support companies in their training abroad; further developing *Erasmus* for apprentices and skilled workers; expanding and professionalising Skills Austria;
- (e) a Business in schools strand, with companies involved in MINT (mathematics, informatics, natural sciences and technology) subjects in schools; and relaunching the *Innovation foundation for education*.

The project aims to improve the competitiveness of the Austrian economy through modern and excellent VET, and promote innovation while supporting social inclusion. It supported by policy-makers and developed in cooperation with the economic chambers of the Länder.

Also, in autumn 2018, the Economic Chamber of Upper Austria started piloting its *Dual academy* initiative ⁽¹¹⁾. The *Dual academy* is intended to make dual vocational training attractive to graduates from secondary general education as an alternative to university studies. In the piloting phase, the concept is limited

⁽¹⁰⁾ <https://www.wirbildenzukunft.at/>

⁽¹¹⁾ <https://www.wko.at/Content.Node/kampagnen/dualeakademie/index.html>

to training programmes in the areas of technology (mechatronics), trade and logistics. The scheme offers in-company training based on a full-time contract with an attractive starting salary; specialist theory training at competence centres of vocational schools; stays abroad during the training; and shorter programme duration (2.5 years). In addition to the State-recognised certificate of apprenticeship, successful trainees will be awarded a new professional dual academy diploma.

1.3.4. Funding to support quality, gender equality and equity in apprenticeship

Since 2016, the Austrian Economic Chambers, on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW), have funded up to 100% of the costs of projects supporting quality, gender equality and social integration in apprenticeships ⁽¹²⁾. The quality strand addresses quality management and quality assurance in apprenticeship training, including training tools, innovative testing methods and competence checks, and quality assurance of dual VET. The gender equality strand addresses projects that support the placement and successful completion of apprenticeships for young women in specialties with a female share of up to 30% and for young men in specialties with a male share of up to 30%. The social integration strand covers projects targeted at introducing disadvantaged young people (migrants, the disabled, young people with learning difficulties) to apprenticeship training, integrating them sustainably, and supporting their successful completion of apprenticeship certificates. The funding has to be applied for by companies which are supported by research institutes or coaching partners. The Chamber of Labour is involved in the action. The opportunity is still underused, however, due to low applicant numbers; more funding is available than is being used.

(12) <https://www.wko.at/Content.Node/kampagnen/projektfoerderung-lehre/start.html?shorturl=projektfoerderung-lehreat> (only in German).

CHAPTER 2.

MTD 2 - Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET

2.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period ⁽¹³⁾, a quality assurance national reference point (QANRP) was in place. ARQA-VET ⁽¹⁴⁾ had been assigned that mission in 2007 and covered publicly funded school-based IVET. A national quality assurance initiative (QIBB) for school-based IVET had been launched in 2004 to support school development. Since 2012, all schools had been legally bound to carry out quality management. External evaluation was possible in the form of peer reviews. Almost all VET providers carried out self-evaluation.

In 2014, social partners launched a comprehensive quality strategy for apprenticeship. The strategy comprised a series of projects addressing several aspects of apprenticeship training, including development of qualifications, trainer training, quality of training and quality of the final exam.

In CVET, quality labels had been introduced. A 2011 agreement between the federal and provincial levels had led to Ö-Cert, a quality framework for adult education institutions ⁽¹⁵⁾, also taken into account for access to public funding.

Data collection surveys covering labour market outcomes by attainment and programme type were in place. Information on transition and employability was taken on board in the decision-making process for the renewal / design of qualifications / programmes / curricula in IVET and CVET.

⁽¹³⁾ This introductory section presents the 2015 state-of-play in the MTD as a baseline for the monitoring exercise. Most of the situation it describes has remained unchanged over the reporting period and is therefore still in place at the end of the reporting period. The next sections in this MTD focus on what has changed with respect to this 2015 baseline, and how.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in VET – ARQA-VET: <https://arqa-vet.at/>

⁽¹⁵⁾ By the middle of 2018, almost 430 institutions had been awarded the Ö-Cert label. <https://oe-cert.at/ueber-uns/statistik.php>

A variety of approaches for skills anticipation and labour market forecast were in use. They provided quantitative and qualitative information on future skills requirements in sectors and occupations. In October 2009 the Administrative Board of the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) had set up a Standing Committee on New Skills, involving relevant stakeholders in identifying current and future skills requirements and designing relevant training curricula for some occupations. However, a coherent system was lacking as regards translating the anticipated needs into changes to the education and training system.

2.2. Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET in 2015-19

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this matter, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are to:

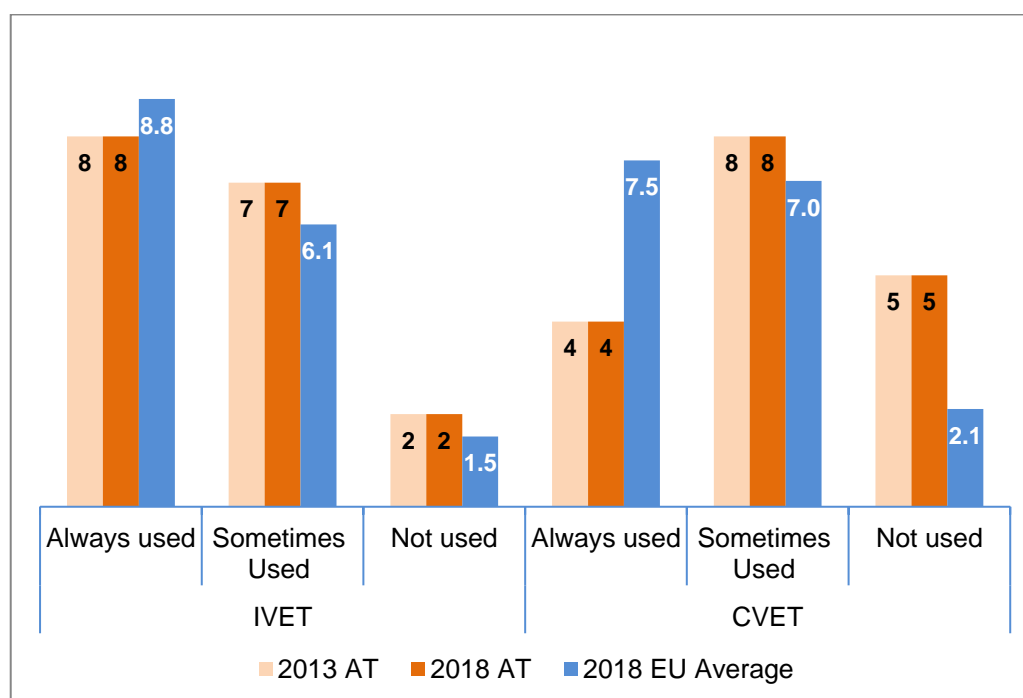
- (a) design a systematic quality management system for apprenticeship training;
- (b) support quality-related measures.

In the reporting period, the QANRP has been using *Erasmus+* funds to run a joint project with the Finnish QANRP to develop a teacher training programme in order to strengthen the involvement of teachers in school quality management. The QANRP is also working on relaunching a website to disseminate EQAVET-related work to relevant stakeholders; it also participates in peer review activities with other QANRPs (including Croatia, Slovenia and Finland).

The regulation for final exams of five-year VET programmes (ISCED 5), granting occupational qualifications and access to higher education, was amended in 2015. The diploma thesis, to be written by a team of up to five students, is now mandatory for all students. The thesis needs to have a practical focus, and cooperation with companies is strongly advised. It is to be checked against plagiarism; assessment is based on scientific standards. The written exams are now partially centralised.

The situation on the systematic use of EQAVET indicators to monitor the VET system ('always used' item in Figure 1), has remained unchanged compared to 2013. Austria was close to the EU average in IVET and below in CVET in 2018. The EQAVET indicators that are not used in IVET are those related to the success rate of disadvantaged groups and on the effectiveness of schemes used to promote better access to VET.

Figure 1. **Use of EQAVET indicators**



NB: Of the 17 indicators suggested by the 2009 EQAVET recommendation, eight were 'always used' in IVET in 2013 and 2018 in Austria, compared to 8.8 in the EU on average in 2018.

EU average was calculated based on available information for 31 out of 35 VET systems.

Source: Cedefop calculations based on EQAVET Secretariat surveys for 2013 and 2018 data.

2.3. Continuous information and feedback loops in IVET and CVET in 2015-19

The country's priority for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to design a systematic quality management system for apprenticeship training.

A study concluded early 2016 analysed data on the outcomes of apprenticeship training to understand better the transition and employability of VET graduates and the effectiveness of Austria's funding system for companies offering training.

As of March 2016, data from the labour force survey on early school leavers have been made accessible for use by researchers and stakeholders. The Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK) developed this database in cooperation with Statistics Austria and public employment service Austria (AMS).

In 2017, an expert group within the framework of the Association Industry 4.0 Austria ⁽¹⁶⁾ started reflection on how the qualifications and competences required for industry 4.0 can be developed in initial and continuing education and training ⁽¹⁷⁾. The topic was discussed in two expert workshops; participants included companies, research institutions, training and further education institutions, and social partner representatives). Recommendations were issued for the education system and vocational education and training. The recommendations were published in a final report at the end of 2017. Seven fields of action were identified: combination of new with 'old' learning content, diversity of learning locations, access to learning, framework conditions, cooperation, promotion of women, and continuing education strategies. From this, 81 recommendations were derived, which are addressed equally to politics, administration, companies and educational institutions.

The Education Reform Act, which came into force in September 2017, laid the foundation for a restructuring of quality management (QM) in schools ⁽¹⁸⁾. The current QM systems – QIBB ⁽¹⁹⁾ for VET schools and SQA ⁽²⁰⁾ for general education schools – are to be gradually merged into a QM system for all types of school. An important step in this direction was taken on 1 January 2019 with the establishment of the new boards of education which will play a major role in the quality management and education controlling in schools. The boards (one per

⁽¹⁶⁾ The Association Industry 4.0 Austria is an initiative of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology together with several social partners to shape Austria's digital future. The association was founded in 2015. Since then, various expert groups have been working on different topics in relation to Industry 4.0 and have been developing recommendations to policy makers as well as concrete proposals for action.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Sources:

- Online platform: <https://plattformindustrie40.at/?lang=en>
- Paper on recommendations: https://plattformindustrie40.at/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/WEB_Industrie4.0_Ergebnispapier-Qualifikation-und-Kompetenzen.pdf

⁽¹⁸⁾ See:

- Education Reform Act 2017: https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2017_I_138/BGBLA_2017_I_138.pdf
- Information letter from the Ministry of Education to the school directors: https://www.qibb.at/fileadmin/content/QIBB/QIBB-News-Dokumente/QIBB_im_SJ_2018-19_Schreiben_an_SL_BMBWF-20.300_0060-III_5_2018_17.12.2018.pdf
- And <https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/zrp/bilref/ap.html>

⁽¹⁹⁾ Quality initiative for vocational education and training.

⁽²⁰⁾ School quality in general education.

Land) are the administrative authorities for the entire education sector, responsible for the enforcement of school law. This includes quality assurance, school supervision and education controlling.

In fall 2018, the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) initiated the review (*Lehrberufsscreening*) and update of the content of apprenticeship programmes. The review is carried out by the two educational research institutes, ibw and öibf ⁽²¹⁾. It serves as the basis for introducing updated and new apprenticeship training contents. Seven new apprenticeship programmes were established in 2018, and eight existing ones modernised. Digitisation was introduced as necessary, which also increases the attractiveness of apprenticeship training for young people. The modernisation work is expected to be completed by 2020. Challenges include the time pressure for processing the numbers of different apprenticeship training regulations, and the collection of reliable statistical data for small-sized apprenticeship schemes. The Austrian Economic Chamber, the Austrian Chamber of Labour and the trade unions are involved in the action.

In 2018, the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) started the design work for Guidelines for the development of apprenticeship (*Leitlinien zur Lehrberufsentwicklung*). The aim of such guidelines is to create a formal procedure for the development of training regulations. The guidelines are intended to establish a binding reference for all actors at the steering, planning and implementation levels, with a description of the tasks and responsibilities in this process. Practitioners from companies will also be further involved in the design of job profiles and regulations on training and examinations. The Austrian Economic Chamber and the Austrian Chamber of Labour are involved in this action. Implementation of the guidelines is expected to take place as of 2019.

In 2018, the Austrian Chamber of Commerce published the *Skilled labour radar*, a research report prepared on its behalf by ibw Austria ⁽²²⁾. The report presents key indicators on unemployment, employment trends and the job market as well as the results of a survey among 4500 enterprises on the need for, and shortage of, skilled workers. The *Radar* assesses forecasts of skilled labour demand and shortages.

⁽²¹⁾ ibw-internal project information

⁽²²⁾ Sources:

- Webpage of the Austrian Economic Chamber:
<https://news.wko.at/news/oesterreich/fachkraefte.html>
- ibw-research brief No 101 (In English):
<https://www.ibw.at/resource/download/1694/ibw-researchbrief-101-en.pdf>

At the beginning of February 2019, the Board of Directors of the AMS (the Austrian Public Employment Service) held a press conference to present the *New digital skills* initiative ⁽²³⁾, a new development of the AMS *New skills* project ⁽²⁴⁾. Within the framework of the project, a total of 10 company workshops will be held in 2019 with high-ranking representatives of leading Austrian companies in five different clusters (manufacturing industries, trade, tourism, construction and office/administration/IT). The aim of the workshops is to identify the changes to be made in the demands placed on employees and job seekers against the background of the increasing digitalisation of the world of work. The results of the workshops will inform the updating of initial and continuing education programmes and curricula. A guideline is to be developed for companies to adapt the skills of their employees. The results are also to be incorporated in an appropriate way into measures to develop the skills of jobseekers. The Austrian Economic Chamber and the Austrian Chamber of Labour are involved in the project.

⁽²³⁾ Sources:

- Press release of the AMS Austria:
<https://www.ams.at/regionen/osterreichweit/news/2019/02/new--digital-skills-am-arbeitsmarkt--welche-neuen-kompetenzen-br>
- Blog: <https://newdigitalskills.at/>
www.ams.at/newskills

⁽²⁴⁾ The AMS *New skills* project has been running since 2009.

CHAPTER 3.

MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning

3.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period ⁽²⁵⁾, the overall objectives in the MTD at large were to increase the labour market participation of women and older workers. This included further improving child- and long-term care services. In addition, the 2015 European Semester country-specific recommendation on education included a recommendation on taking steps to improve the educational achievement of young people at a disadvantage ⁽²⁶⁾.

The early school leaving rate was below the EU average (7.0% in 2014 compared to 11.1% in the EU) ⁽²⁷⁾ and below the Europe 2020 national target of 9.5%. Measures had been taken to improve the education outcomes of disadvantaged young people. Grants, scholarships, and allowances to support learners were in place. Children and youths were being provided with targeted remedial courses. Since 2014, individualised learning support (learning coach) was offered to youth with learning deficits ⁽²⁸⁾.

An Adult Education Initiative (*Initiative Erwachsenenbildung*) had been launched in 2012. It was supported by the federal and provincial governments and co-funded by the European Social Fund. Within this framework, courses leading to the compulsory school leaving certificate were offered for adults who

⁽²⁵⁾ This introductory section presents the 2015 state-of-play in the MTD as a baseline for the monitoring exercise. Most of the situation it describes has remained unchanged over the reporting period and is therefore still in place at the end of the reporting period. The next sections in this MTD focus on what has changed with respect to this 2015 baseline, and how.

⁽²⁶⁾ Council recommendation of 14 July 2015 on the 2015 National Reform Programme of Austria and delivering a Council opinion on the 2015 Stability Programme of Austria: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015H0818\(24\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015H0818(24)&from=EN)

⁽²⁷⁾ European Commission (2015). *Education and training monitor 2015 – Austria*, p. 3.

⁽²⁸⁾ Federal Chancellery (2015). *Austrian National Reform programme 2015*. https://era.gv.at/object/document/2001/attach/NRP_2015_engl__pdf.pdf

had not obtained it when at school. Modularisation of programmes for adults had started in 2010-11.

Since 2009, career guidance had been a mandatory part of compulsory education in grades 7 and 8 and in prevocational schools. In 2013/14, the ELGPN ⁽²⁹⁾ resource kit for policy makers – which comprised policy advice, practical examples on how to improve access to guidance, ensure its quality, coordinate policies and develop career management skills – had been translated and disseminated. The 2015 amendment to the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgetz – BAG*) ⁽³⁰⁾ promoted coaching and counselling for apprentices and training companies, focusing specifically on young people with migrant background, young women in non-traditional jobs and apprenticeships in SMEs.

At the beginning of the reporting period, ECVET conferences – alternating biannually between national events for practitioners and international experts meetings – were being organised since 2013. In 2014, an ECVET implementation strategy had been published. Its key objectives for 2014-16 were to improve quality of VET mobility and internships, support the recognition of prior learning, support the development of the learning outcomes approach, and improve employability ⁽³¹⁾.

A national qualifications framework had been linked to the European qualifications framework (EQF) and the qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) in 2012.

Austria did not have an overall national strategy on validation of non-formal and informal learning ⁽³²⁾, although elements and regulations existed in different parts of formal education and training.

3.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

The country's priorities in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are two-fold:

⁽²⁹⁾ European lifelong guidance policy network.

⁽³⁰⁾ <https://www.wko.at/service/bildung-lehre/BAG-Novelle-2015.html> and https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2015_I_78/BGBLA_2015_I_78.pdf

⁽³¹⁾ Source: the ECVET users' group member.

⁽³²⁾ Source: European inventory on NQF 2016 and the European inventory on validation 2016. A national strategy on validation was only adopted in November 2017: see Section 3.3.2.6.

- (a) for young people:
 - (i) support the *Lehre mit Matura*;
 - (ii) extend the youth education guarantee to the age of 25 and implement compulsory school or training attendance to the age of 18 (*Education until 18*);
- (b) for adults:
 - (i) support the recognition of already acquired (parts of) qualifications;
 - (ii) enable qualifications of secondary education to be obtained through second chance education courses for adults.

3.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19

3.3.1. Permeability and flexibility

A 2015 Amendment to the vocational training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz – BAG*) ⁽³³⁾ promoted participation in the *Lehre mit Matura* scheme. The scheme was introduced in 2008 by the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. It enables apprentices to take part in preparatory courses for the so-called *Berufsreifeprüfung*, the exam giving access to higher education for those VET graduates enrolled in programmes which did not automatically lead to it. Previous amendments to the law had already provided for an extension of the apprenticeship period in such cases. The 2015 amendment reduced red tape by allowing the apprentice and the training company to agree to extend the training period for the duration of exam preparation without having to ask the consent of the regional apprenticeship advisory board. The amendment was expected to lead to an increase in the share of apprentices opting for the *Lehre mit Matura* path, from under 10% in 2014 to 15% by 2020. Training companies can receive subsidies for the extension period. In May 2018, 9 700 apprentices took part in the *Lehre mit Matura* scheme, which remains below 10% of all apprentices (Dornmayr and Nowak, 2018).

⁽³³⁾ <https://www.wko.at/service/bildung-lehre/BAG-Novelle-2015.html> and https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2015_I_78/BGBLA_2015_I_78.pdf

3.3.2. Transparency, recognition, validation

3.3.2.1. Improving the transparency of partial qualifications

Individuals at a disadvantage (young people who cannot find a regular apprenticeship place or have disabilities or special educational needs; those who could not attain a compulsory school leaving certificate) can usually be provided with training. So far, training has been provided according to individual needs, with the decision on training content being made in coordination between vocational training assistance services (*Berufsausbildungsassistenz*) and school authorities. As no binding standards existed, the partial qualifications acquired were not always transparent to employers. A 2015 Amendment to the vocational training Act provided for standardised forms of partial qualifications. As a consequence, while individualised training is still possible, the Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs can provide guidelines for standardised partial qualifications, to ensure they are recognised on the labour market, and also make it easier for learners to continue training in the corresponding apprenticeship trade. In the meantime, some Austrian provinces have passed State laws regulating the recognition of partial qualifications under the freedom to provide services and the European Professional Card ⁽³⁴⁾.

3.3.2.2. Easing recognition of qualifications acquired in third countries

The federal act on the simplification of procedures to recognise and assess foreign educational and professional qualifications entered into force in July 2016 ⁽³⁵⁾. A federal recognition portal was established, along with information centres to provide comprehensive and consistent information on the possibilities of recognition and procedures ⁽³⁶⁾.

3.3.2.3. Transparency of master craftsperson qualifications

In 2017, under the supervision of the Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs and the Austrian Economic Chamber, the ibw (ibw Austria, Research and Development in VET) was commissioned to define a comprehensive process for aligning master craftsperson qualifications to the requirements of the national

⁽³⁴⁾ Examples of such laws: Oö. Berufsqualifikationen-Anerkennungsgesetz, LGBl Nr. 49/2017; Salzburger Berufsqualifikationen-Anerkennungsgesetz – BQ-AnerG, LGBl Nr 35/2017.

⁽³⁵⁾ https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokument.wxe?Abfrage=BgblAuth&Dokumentnummer=BGBLA_2016_I_55

⁽³⁶⁾ <https://www.berufsanerkennung.at/en/>

qualifications framework ⁽³⁷⁾. The concept includes the definition of learning outcomes, the preparation of training documents, the development of guidelines for the design of examinations, the preparation of examiners, and the provision of information to potential candidates and companies. The approach is intended to ensure compatibility with both the national qualifications framework and the trade regulations (GewO). It is based on the European guidelines for quality assurance in higher vocational education and training developed in the framework of the *Erasmus+* project QA HiVETnet by project partners from Belgium, Germany, Greece, France and Austria with the participation of the European craft and SME employers' organisation (UEAPME). The initiative is expected to improve the visibility, comparability and credibility of master craftsperson qualifications, and better support the mobility of holders. As a first result of the initiative, the master craftsperson qualification was assigned in September 2018 to the Austrian national qualifications framework at level 6, placing it on an equal footing with the bachelor's degree. In a longer-term perspective, the initiative is part of efforts to develop a higher VET strategy.

3.3.2.4. *National qualifications framework* ⁽³⁸⁾

The Austrian national qualifications framework (Austrian NQF) was linked to the European qualifications framework (EQF) and qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) in 2012. It is designed as a comprehensive framework based on learning outcomes, to include qualifications from formal, non-formal and informal learning. At the higher levels, there are two sets of level descriptors:

- (a) the Dublin descriptors for higher education qualifications that follow the Bologna structure;
- (b) EQF descriptors for the non-Bologna strand: qualifications from VET and adult learning.

Since 2012, several actions have been taken: developing a national database for qualifications, fine-tuning procedures, and strengthening dialogue with stakeholders. The Austrian Parliament approved the federal Act on the

⁽³⁷⁾ Sources:

- <https://www.wko.at/service/wirtschaftsrecht-gewerberecht/gewerbeordnungsnovelle-2017.html>
- <https://www.ibw.at/bibliothek/id/266/>
- <https://www.ibw.at/bibliothek/id/356/>

⁽³⁸⁾ Cedefop, 2017b.

national qualifications framework ⁽³⁹⁾ in March 2016, meaning that the work towards full implementation can start ⁽⁴⁰⁾. An important feature of the Austrian NQF is that levels 6 to 8 remain open to VET qualifications acquired outside higher education institutions. A Y-structure was adopted, introducing parallel descriptors to capture differences between higher education and VET qualifications at these levels. A steering group (*NQR-Steuerungsgruppe*) ⁽⁴¹⁾, consisting of 30 members representing all the main stakeholders, was set up in June 2016. The Bologna qualifications bachelor, master and PhD were assigned to levels 6, 7 and 8 of the Austrian NQF by the NQF law in 2016. In 2017, representative samples of VET qualifications were assigned to level 4 (qualifications from apprenticeship training and VET schools), level 5 (qualifications from VET colleges) and level 6 (the engineers qualification). In September 2018 the master craftsperson qualification was also assigned to level 6 and in December 2018 selected psychology-related qualifications were assigned to level 8 (clinical psychologist and health psychologist). All mapped qualifications are included in the national qualifications register ⁽⁴²⁾.

In December 2018, the basis for the future mapping of non-formal qualifications was laid when the national NQF steering group accepted applications from six prospective NQF service centres. The steering group forwarded the applications to the Ministry of Education for formal appointment. The NQF service centres are to support providers of non-formal qualifications in the preparation of mapping requests, ensure the quality of the applications, and submit the mapping requests to the NQF national coordination point (NCP).

⁽³⁹⁾ Published in the Federal Law Gazette 14 of 2016, Part I, issued on 21.3.2016.
https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2016_I_14/BGBLA_2016_I_14.pdf

⁽⁴⁰⁾ The indicators to implement this refer to:
 (a) including major qualifications, such as initial school-based vocational qualifications, apprenticeships and master craftsperson qualifications by 2018;
 (b) alignment of curricula in formal education and training, particularly VET, to learning outcomes orientation by 2020;
 (c) increase in cross-border mobility in VET for 20%.

Source:

<https://www.help.gv.at/Portal.Node/hlpd/public/module?gentics.am=Content&p.contentid=10007.180581>

⁽⁴¹⁾ The key task of the NQF steering group is to provide advice to public authorities responsible for education and training and qualifications at all levels, particularly the two coordinating ministries: the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research and the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs.

⁽⁴²⁾ The Austrian qualifications register is available at:
<https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/>

3.3.2.5. *ECVET* ⁽⁴³⁾

The European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) guidelines on linking theoretical and practical parts of dual training better have been piloted. In 2014, an ECVET implementation strategy was published. Currently, a number of pilot projects are being carried out, the results of which will be used to develop the strategy further. By 2015, 11 training programmes in apprenticeships (corresponding to 31% of all apprentices) were structured in modules, but the concept differs from that of ECVET. Tools are ready to be used but further communication is needed, as employers consider the process to be bureaucratic and may find it difficult to see the added value. The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research is developing tools to support the quality of compulsory work placements in school-based VET using of ECVET instruments. A national coordination point (NCP) for ECVET is in place in the national agency (OeAD) ⁽⁴⁴⁾. A team of experts provides advice and training for the preparation of curricula and training plans.

3.3.2.6. *Validation* ⁽⁴⁵⁾

By the end of 2017, an Austrian national strategy on validation of non-formal and informal learning was decided and published ⁽⁴⁶⁾. The national strategy is expected to serve as the starting point for defining organisational structures, a catalogue of quality criteria (issued in May 2018) and a detailed implementation plan. A future online portal should show all validation and service offers, raise awareness of them and ease access ⁽⁴⁷⁾. Up to now, scattered elements and regulations had existed in different parts of formal education and training. Also, outside the formal system there are regulations and initiatives that allow for recognition of prior learning and validation of learning acquired in other contexts. Validation can be used for 'second chance' completion of lower secondary education, upper secondary certificates that grant higher education access,

⁽⁴³⁾ Source: the ECVET users' group members.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ <https://oead.at/en/expertise/qualifications-and-comparability/>

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Cedefop (2017b); Luomi-Messerer, K. (2017).

⁽⁴⁶⁾ By the Federal Ministry of Education and the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy. https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Strategie_zur_Validierung_nicht-formalen_und_informellen_Lernens.pdf

⁽⁴⁷⁾ The validation strategy provides an overview of existing validation arrangements, serves as a basis for developing new initiatives, assuring their quality, and for training and developing professionals.

professional titles, admission to apprenticeship exams, higher education (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung* for a specific study programme), or regulated professions. The exam granting higher education access for graduates from apprenticeship or school-based VET, not leading directly to higher education (*Berufsreifeprüfung*), also includes validation elements such as work-experience and non-formally acquired language qualifications that can lead to exemption from exam modules.

A new Engineering Act (IngG 2017) came into force on 1 May 2017. Graduates of VET colleges of engineering (HTL) or of VET colleges in the agricultural and forestry/environmental sector (HBLA), who have a minimum of three years of professional experience in activities typically carried out by such VET college graduates, can now apply for certification to obtain the formal qualification *Ingenieur* (NQF/EQF level 6) ⁽⁴⁸⁾.

3.3.3. Training, reskilling and upskilling vulnerable groups, jobseekers and employees

3.3.3.1. Training obligation until age 18 to prevent NEET status

The legislation on training obligation until the age of 18 ⁽⁴⁹⁾ was approved by Parliament in 2016 and entered into force in the summer of 2017. Since July 2017, young people who would otherwise not continue education and training beyond compulsory schooling (age 15) or discontinue a programme they have taken up, will have to undertake some form of training until they have passed age 18. Those who do not get a place in a school or in a company to do an apprenticeship must participate in VET training centre programmes (*überbetriebliche Lehrlingsausbildung*), or attend a so-called production school, or in any other labour market policy measures targeted to this group. The law includes fines for parents should their sons/daughters not comply with this obligation and not attend any programme. Sanctions may (but need not) be imposed, depending on the decision of the municipal administrative authority. The aim is to reduce the number of early school leavers and young people not in

⁽⁴⁸⁾ <https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/public/qualification/43>

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Training obligation Act / Youth training Act (*Ausbildungspflichtgesetz/ Jugendausbildungsgesetz*).
https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2016_I_62/BGBLA_2016_I_62.pdf

education, employment or training (NEETs). Implementation ⁽⁵⁰⁾ will build on coordination and coaching services targeted at supporting and guiding young people and their parents. During the 2016-18 implementation phase, a monitoring system was developed that integrates the data covering all upper secondary education pathways (general upper secondary education, VET, apprenticeship, youth labour market qualification) to drop-outs. If no further training is taken within four months of dropping out, the drop-outs or their guardians will be contacted by the coordination centres of *Training to 18* and a clearing, counselling and coaching procedure will be started. If the legal guardians are not cooperative, sanctions can also be imposed, starting from summer 2018.

For the implementation phase of the compulsory education law, scientific accompaniment was commissioned and carried out by a consortium of two research institutes from February 2017 to January 2019. This monitoring focused on the economic and social benefits of the project; it also examined specific target groups of *Training to 18* as well as essential measures and reforms in the education and training system in terms of their contribution to the achievement of the goal. The results of the monitoring are expected for 2019. The budget is EUR 221 million for 2016-20. The measure will be evaluated in 2021.

3.3.3.2. *Training guarantee extension up to age 25*

In October 2016, the federal government extended the training guarantee up to the age of 25. This is a special scheme from the public employment service that guarantees young unemployed people aged 19 to 25, and with only compulsory education completed, the right to acquire VET qualifications by attending AMS programmes. The AMS already uses established instruments and funding approaches to offer to this target group possibilities for apprenticeship training in companies, alternance apprenticeship training (*überbetriebliche Ausbildung* – ÜBA, see Section 1.1) or other workplace-related qualification measures.

3.3.3.3. *Competence checking and training for refugees*

In 2015, the Vienna branch of the public employment service piloted the scheme *Competence checks for the occupational integration of refugees* (*Kompetenzcheck zur beruflichen Integration von Asylberechtigten*) to assess the educational attainment, skills and competences and prior work experience of refugees. Between August and December 2015, a total of 898 recognised

⁽⁵⁰⁾ BMASK (2016). *Fragen und Antworten zur Ausbildung bis 18* [FAQs about the *Training up to the age of 18* scheme]. <https://www.ausbildungbis18.at/>

refugees took part in five-week assessment courses, led by native-speaking trainers in Arabic, Farsi, French, and Russian in which data on participants' qualifications were collected in collaboration with training firms, enterprises and educational institutions. The aim was to use the assessments to tailor training to the needs of learners and in line with labour market demands. For example, a beneficiary could be offered a mix of German, occupational guidance, mentoring, vocational qualification, and work placement. These competence checks were continued in the following years and around 12 500 people have participated since 2015. The five-week courses were subsequently also offered in the Chechen and Dari languages.

The 2016-18 project *You can do it – The knowledge of refugees is valuable* supports young refugees in identifying their competences as the basis for making their choice of occupation and gaining an apprenticeship diploma. The project has a regional focus on Upper Austria.

The Youth College for refugees ⁽⁵¹⁾ was founded in September 2016 by the city of Vienna. It offers courses to young refugees aged 15 to 21 to prepare for secondary school, VET training or employment. 1 268 adolescents and young adults between the ages of 15 and 21 were counselled during the first year of implementation and classified according to their educational background. In the first year of this project, 153 young people were successfully placed in employment, further training or apprenticeship ⁽⁵²⁾. There are 1 000 places per year for participants.

3.3.3.4. *Compulsory year of integration for refugees*

The compulsory year of integration was decided in May 2017 by the Austrian Parliament ⁽⁵³⁾. It is mainly targeted at unemployed refugees, for whom it is mandatory. Since 2018, asylum seekers from Syria have also been allowed to participate in the integration year if there is a high probability that they will be recognised as entitled to asylum. The opportunity to register for work training during the integration year was extended until the end of March 2019. The year of integration is operated by the public employment service (AMS), with support

⁽⁵¹⁾ <https://www.wien.gv.at/english/social/integration/arriving/youth-college-migrants.html>

⁽⁵²⁾ Source: <https://www.wuk.at/magazin/1-jahr-jugendcollege/>

⁽⁵³⁾ Sources:

- https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/PR/JAHR_2017/PK0416/ and
- <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20009899>

of stakeholder organisations such as the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF), the Austrian Economic Chamber, the Chamber of Labour, trade unions and the Federation of Austrian Industry. The objective is to support participants in integrating into society and work. The mechanism consists of modules offered according to individual needs, such as recognition of existing skills and qualifications, language courses, value courses, vocational guidance, work practice (including community service) and job search training.

3.3.3.5. *Professional scholarships for jobseekers and people in employment*

Since January 2017, professional scholarships have enabled the unemployed and employed (within a form of educational leave) to obtain labour market relevant qualifications to secure their employability; they also cover companies' needs for a skilled workforce ⁽⁵⁴⁾. A list of relevant qualifications was defined by the public employment service, focused on technical occupations in shortage on the labour market. The scheme covers a limited number of vocational training courses. The scholarship ensures participant livelihoods during training periods up to three years. The target group is 6 500 people. A similar measure had already existed between 2013 and 2015 and the 2017 programme was extended until the end of 2020. Trade unions, the Chamber of Labour, the Economic Chamber, and the Federation of Austrian Industry participate in the initiative.

3.3.4. **Supporting VET participation through increased attractiveness**

The Vorarlberger education and training fair is a new exhibition in the province of Vorarlberg which took place for the first time in November 2017 ⁽⁵⁵⁾. Target group are all students in seventh and eighth grades. During three days, vocational schools and companies of the province and from neighbouring regions presented their education and training programmes in an interactive and innovative way. That gave the visitors the opportunity to learn about different vocational education and training possibilities by trying some activities (such as programming industrial robots), discussing with trainers, students from VET schools and colleges and apprentices. Part of the concept is preparation in

⁽⁵⁴⁾ Sources:

- <http://www.ams.at/service-arbeitsuchende/finanzielles/foerderungen/fachkraeftestipendium> and
- <https://www.help.gv.at/Portal.Node/hlpd/public/content/258/Seite.2580000.html>

⁽⁵⁵⁾ <https://www.i-messe.at/>

school before visiting the fair, different customised working materials to support the visit, and a follow-up in school.

CHAPTER 4.

MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

4.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period ⁽⁵⁶⁾, acquisition of key competences was of major importance in upper secondary VET. Historically, autonomous acquisition of learning, decision-making competence and social understanding had been the general objectives of school-based VET ⁽⁵⁷⁾ that aimed to help learners open to the political and ideological thinking of others and to being capable of participating in the economic and cultural life in Austria and beyond. Even though the legislation (SchOG) had not explicitly mentioned key competences, it clearly showed parallels to those interdisciplinary competences defined by the 2006 European framework (Tritscher-Archan and Petanovitsch, 2016).

VET had traditionally been more competence-oriented than general education. Key competences were often integrated in the curricula either as individual subject area, or underlying principles, or intended learning outcomes. They could also be promoted through specific teaching methods. VET programmes (whether school-based or apprenticeship / dual system) aimed to qualify learners for immediate entry to the labour market, which required also interdisciplinary competences such as creativity, the ability to work in teams, social competence, the ability to deal with conflict, etc. These key competences had been increasingly gaining in importance in view of the rapidly changing conditions in the world of work. Therefore, all VET programmes at upper secondary level had for many years encouraged the teaching of key competences (Tritscher-Archan and Petanovitsch, 2016).

Another important reason for promoting key competences in education and training (including VET) has been the need to support the acquisition of key competences by foreign-born students. In 2015, those students were three times

⁽⁵⁶⁾ This introductory section presents the 2015 state-of-play in the MTD as a baseline for the monitoring exercise. Most of the situation it describes has remained unchanged over the reporting period and is therefore still in place at the end of the reporting period. The next sections in this MTD focus on what has changed with respect to this 2015 baseline, and how.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ School Organisation Act: *Schulorganisationsgesetz*, SchOG 1962.

more likely to leave school early than were native-born students (European Commission, 2015). At the same time, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union recommended Austria to take steps to improve the educational achievement of disadvantaged young people ⁽⁵⁸⁾.

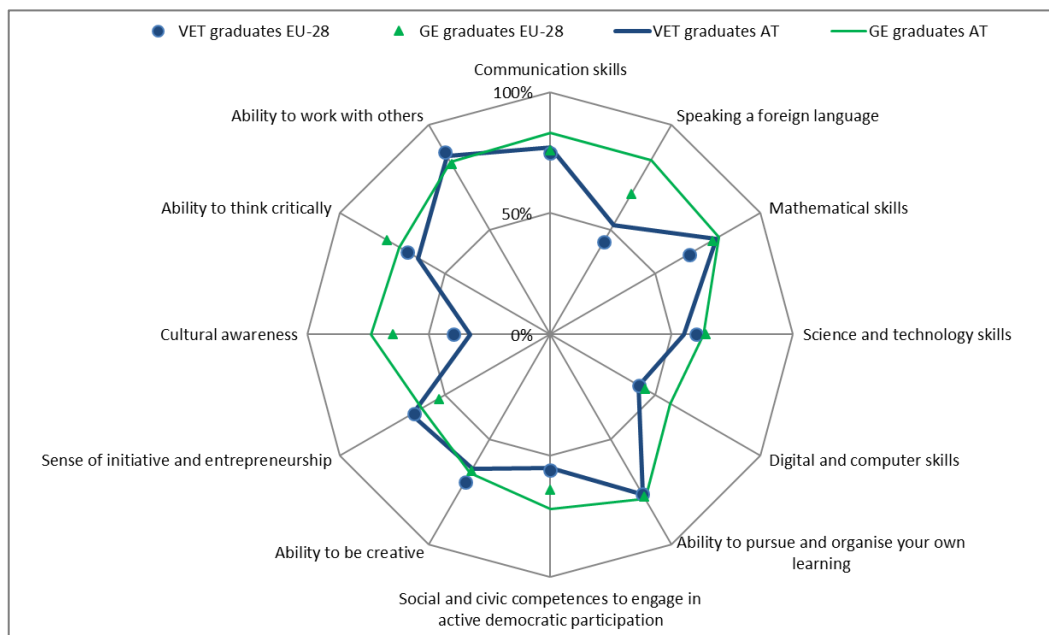
A recent survey ⁽⁵⁹⁾ showed that in 2015, compared with general education graduates, those who completed VET programmes felt they had:

- (a) stronger (ranged by priority):
 - (i) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
 - (ii) ability to work with others;
- (b) weaker:
 - (i) foreign language speaking;
 - (ii) cultural awareness;
 - (iii) social and civic competences (Figure 2).

⁽⁵⁸⁾ 2015 European Semester: country-specific recommendations – Austria:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2015-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-council-recommendations_en

⁽⁵⁹⁾ Cedefop (2017). *Cedefop European public opinion survey on vocational education and training*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 62.
https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5562_en.pdf

Figure 2. **Self-evaluation of acquired skills in general education and VET in 2016**



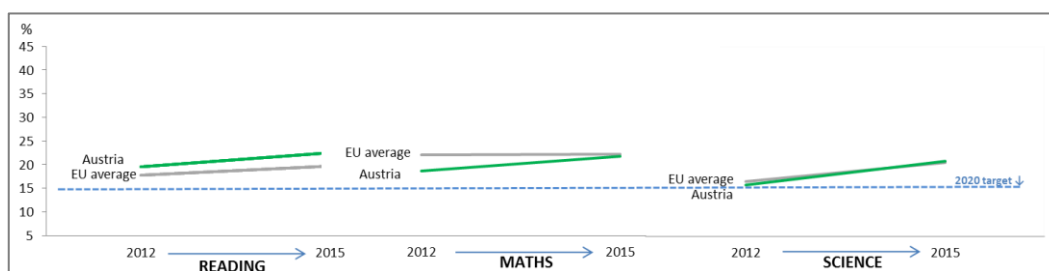
NB: GE stands for general education.

Respondents who attended upper secondary education. Interviewees were asked in summer 2016 about their overall experience in upper secondary education. Aggregated data do not take account of different types and sectors of VET and age groups of respondents.

Source: Cedefop, 2017c.

The context of key competences in 2015 was mainly characterised by an increasing share of young low achievers in reading, maths and science compared with 2012 (Figure 3). The share of low achievers in Austria was lower for maths and higher for reading and science than in the EU on average, where the trend was similar.

Figure 3. **Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science**



NB: Low achievement means failing level 2 on the PISA (programme for international student assessment) scale.

Source: OECD, 2014; OECD, 2016.

As VET enrolled 70% of all upper secondary learners in the country ⁽⁶⁰⁾, this trend was likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes. This was happening against a background where acquisition of key competences had been given a major importance. A series of key policy measures had been introduced in VET, e.g. educational standards in 2004 and continuous revision of curricula since 2008. Measures aiming at competence orientation were also promoting key competences. Following a pilot phase, Austria had introduced partly centralised/standardised competence-oriented final exams at the end of upper secondary education. Mainstreaming of this approach started in general education in 2014/15. In 2015/16, the new approach was being applied at the five-year school-based VET programmes (BHS, ISCED levels 354 to 554). This new exam aimed to ensure that the competences learners acquire have a lasting effect (Tritscher-Archan and Petanovitsch, 2016).

Yet, with one exception (reading literacy), no benchmarks for key competences had been defined at national level. There were also no statistical data which would allow statements about the achievement of interdisciplinary competences among learners at upper secondary level.

4.2. Key competences addressed in the reporting period

Table 2. **Key competences addressed in 2015-19**

	IVET	CVET
Country language(s) and literacy		
Foreign languages		
Digital competence	YES	
Maths		
Science		
Technology		
Social and civic competences		
Learning to learn		
Financial literacy		
Entrepreneurship competence	YES	
Cultural awareness and expression		
Key competences as a package	YES	

NB: The list derives from the 2006 EU key competences framework for lifelong learning; it has been restructured and expanded with additional competences that can be considered key.

Source: Cedefop based on ReferNet input

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Calculated from Eurostat table educ_uoe_enrs04; 2015 data.

4.3. Key competences in initial and continuing VET

For 2016-20, the country's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are to:

- (a) modernise job/training profiles;
- (b) foster training alliances (participation subsidies);
- (c) achieve curriculum reform, ensuring that all VET schools have competence-oriented curricula (already finalised).

In the development of new job/training profiles and the modernisation of existing ones, greater attention will be paid to the competence-oriented formulation of training content. Consideration of cross-occupational and occupation-specific key competences plays an important role here. Training alliances are intended to convey the teaching not only of specific job profile related training, but also of key competences that go beyond specific job profiles. To support such training alliances, participation subsidies are available for the training companies.

Since 2015-16, the partly standardised competence-oriented final exam has been mainstreamed in VET programmes and the *Berufsreifeprüfung* that grant higher education access.

In 2017, the education ministry presented the digitalisation strategy *School 4.0. – Now we are going digital*. It focuses on:

- (a) providing digital and critical thinking competences for learners from primary education onwards;
- (b) digital skills for teachers, through a new course from school year 2017/18 onwards, supported by establishing a national digital learning centre and future learning labs in colleges, where teachers can experiment with digital tools;
- (c) modernising infrastructure and equipment at schools, including tablets and laptop computers for pupils;
- (d) digital learning tools, including open education resources.

Since autumn 2017, all new teachers acquire standardised digital competences including digital subject-specific didactic. They have to prove their competences by a mandatory portfolio which contains a digital competence check (digi.check), completion of a modular course programme and reflection of one's own teaching activities. In order to promote the digital skills of teachers already in service, the course programme is also offered through teacher continuing training.

Entrepreneurship competence is also promoted. Since September 2017, secondary schools may invite successful women entrepreneurs to talk directly in class about their work as entrepreneurs and answer pupils' questions. Within the policy action Women entrepreneurs go to school (*Unternehmerin macht Schule*)⁽⁶¹⁾, women inspire pupils to pursue an entrepreneurial career. Using their own example, they report on the opportunities that entrepreneurship opens up and what can be achieved with the appropriate spirit. As role models, women entrepreneurs particularly motivate schoolgirls to pursue a self-employed professional future. On the accompanying website⁽⁶²⁾, schools can register for a visit by an entrepreneur and find work materials for teachers and pupils to prepare and follow up afterwards (case studies, good practice, worksheets and presentation documents, explanatory videos). With the online test *Do you have entrepreneurial spirit?*, pupils can explore their own entrepreneurial spirit. Women entrepreneurs can register on the website to feature as role models.

In 2019, the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs (BMDW) published the Digital Competence Model for Austria (*DigComp 2.2 AT*)⁽⁶³⁾. The tool is intended to support the assessment and description of personal digital competences and the identification of possibilities for further development. It is based on the *DigComp* reference framework of the European Commission.

In 2019, the Vienna Chamber of Labour started piloting the funding activity *Digitisation Fund Work 4.0* aiming to support the development of digital instruments targeted at improving the world of work⁽⁶⁴⁾. Projects can be submitted by work councils, employee groups (three or more persons), research institutes, trade unions, developers, schools and universities. Submissions were open in 2019⁽⁶⁵⁾.

⁽⁶¹⁾ An initiative of the Austrian Economic Chamber and the Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs, with support of the Ministry of Education, Science and Research.

⁽⁶²⁾ www.unternehmerinmachtschule.at

⁽⁶³⁾ https://www.bmdw.gv.at/Themen/Digitalisierung/Gesellschaft/Digitale-Kompetenz_Arbeitsmarkt.html

⁽⁶⁴⁾ The activity is part of a broader programme *Future Programme 2019 – 2023* of the Austrian Chamber of Labour.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ <https://wien.arbeiterkammer.at/digifonds#>

CHAPTER 5.

MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers and trainers

5.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period ⁽⁶⁶⁾, VET teaching in Austria was faced with the challenge of ageing teaching staff. A policy objective was to ease access to the teaching profession for people from enterprises who did not have teaching qualifications (Cedefop, 2014).

Four main groups of teachers and trainers were at play in upper secondary IVET programmes:

- (a) teachers of general education subjects;
- (b) teachers of occupation-related theory;
- (c) teachers of occupation-related practice;
- (d) in-company trainers of dual programmes (IVET trainers).

5.1.1. Access to VET school teaching: entry requirements and initial training

Initial training of VET school teachers was regulated by the 2002 Universities Act and the 2005 Higher Education Act.

Teachers of general education subjects were trained at university level. Enrolment to teacher training programmes was not subjected to any admission procedure. A one-year teaching practice was compulsory after the study, before entry to school service.

Prospective teachers of occupation-related theory could enrol in university colleges of teacher education (PHs) providing pedagogical training with a strong practice orientation and awarding a bachelor of education ⁽⁶⁷⁾. A prerequisite for

⁽⁶⁶⁾ This introductory section presents the 2015 state-of-play in the MTD as a baseline for the monitoring exercise. Most of the situation it describes has remained unchanged over the reporting period and is therefore still in place at the end of the reporting period. The next sections in this MTD focus on what has changed with respect to this 2015 baseline, and how.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ BMHs teachers (Teachers at VET colleges and VET schools) of occupation-related theory in business subjects had to have an MA degree in business education, while BMHS teachers of theory of agriculture and forestry had to have a bachelor degree from the University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy.

all VET teaching training programmes at university colleges of teacher education (PH) was an employment contract with a school. A two- or three-year professional practice was also requested before starting the pedagogical training.

Teachers of occupation-related practice in engineering and crafts were required to have completed a part-time bachelor programme at a PH (180 credits) and to have undergone two or three years of professional practice before starting their pedagogical training. Teachers of occupation-related practice in agriculture and forestry had to have completed a bachelor's programme at the University College for Agrarian and Environmental Pedagogy (180 credits).

5.1.2. In-company trainers: entry requirements and initial training

Within the framework of the Vocational Training Act, company-based training had been granted a high degree of self-organisation. Companies entitled to train apprentices had to nominate an in-company trainer. The trainer would supervise up to five apprentices on top of his/her own production tasks: trainers in charge of 15 apprentices could be exclusively entrusted with training tasks. The trainer had to be older than 18 years of age and have passed the IVET trainer examination, or a master craftsperson exam, or an entrepreneurial exam, or have completed a part-time industrial master college. The IVET trainer exam was an oral exam based on examples from training practice. IVET trainer courses were offered by adult education institutions of the social partners. They aimed to offer the necessary skills required for the training of apprentices in pedagogy, psychology, training planning, training methods and legal aspects.

5.1.3. VET school and college teachers: main lines for CPD

Teachers at schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education (BMHSs) were, in principle, obliged to attend continuing professional development (CPD) programmes, but there were no legal specifications in terms of duration and frequency. CPD programmes would usually take place during the school year at university colleges of teacher education (PHs). They were planned by the responsible ministry (in coordination with PHs and regional school administration bodies) and announced by decree every spring for the following school year. CPD programmes were mainly focused on subject-specific academic theory, subject-specific didactics, general pedagogy and personal development. Other topics could be e-learning, e-didactics, blended learning, inclusive education and inclusive VET. Additional CPD options were offered in the form of various part-time university-based CPD programmes, which would last four semesters and could lead to a master degree.

5.1.4. In-company trainers: main lines for CPD

IVET trainers could also voluntarily attend CPD programmes offered at adult education institutions. In some cases, in-house CPD programmes were also available. In addition, IVET trainer colleges and IVET trainer forums had been set up in most Austrian provinces aiming to provide CPD specifically for IVET trainers. They were mostly coordinated by the regional economic chambers in cooperation with the respective chamber's CPD institution. Most of them would offer certification. They would also promote experience exchange and networking opportunities. The latter was also the goal of regional and sector-specific get-togethers for IVET trainers.

The Economic Chamber also used to fund CPD measures targeted at supporting interaction with apprentices, such as in the areas of pedagogy, didactics, personal development and diversity.

Training companies were provided with subject-specific and didactic training aids which were either prepared by the representative bodies of the economic sectors or commissioned by the Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs or the Federal Economic Chamber ⁽⁶⁸⁾. Training aids comprised a general section for all apprenticeship occupations and an occupation-specific section including best-practice examples. In addition, the apprenticeship offices provided free-of-charge counselling services on a range of topics: interaction with apprentices; subsidies for training companies; training options for IVET trainers and apprentices; and quality implementation of company-based training.

5.2. Initial training for teaching/training staff in VET schools 2015-19

The country's priority for 2016-20 in initial training of teaching/training staff in VET schools, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to reform the curricula for all teachers including VET.

Following adoption of the teacher training law in 2013 ⁽⁶⁹⁾, the harmonisation of initial teacher training is currently being implemented nationwide. This reform is being carried out in cooperation between universities ⁽⁷⁰⁾ and university

⁽⁶⁸⁾ The website www.qualitaet-lehre.at and the training folder with information for newcomers to apprenticeship training were examples of this aid.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ Federal Act on the new teacher training scheme (*Bundesrahmengesetz zur Einführung einer neuen Ausbildung für Pädagoginnen und Pädagogen*).

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Responsible for training teachers for general academic schools and upper secondary VET.

colleges of teacher education (PHs) ⁽⁷¹⁾. The new programmes for upper secondary teachers are provided by both universities and university colleges. Programmes for teacher training for part-time school in apprenticeship training are provided at university colleges. The colleges had to align their study programme according to the Bologna cycle and started to offer the new bachelor of arts (BA) and master of arts (MA) degree programmes in the academic year 2016/17. It is envisaged that all teachers will have an MA degree.

Competence orientation is at the core of these curricula, with a focus on general pedagogical competence, subject-related and didactic competence, diversity and gender competence, social competence and awareness of the profession. Curriculum development is work in progress, with evaluation scheduled for 2020.

Provisions on getting a teaching post for different types of prospective teachers are also work in progress. Provisions are set for lateral entrants who:

- (a) have successfully completed a relevant higher education programme and have at least three years of relevant professional practice. These can enrol in bachelor studies that aim to impart pedagogical and didactic contents and award credits for subject-specific academic contents;
- (b) have not completed a relevant higher education programme but have a relevant master craftsperson certificate or VET college (BHS) qualification and professional practice. These need to complete a bachelor programme, with credits awarded for recognised parts of the vocational education and training already obtained.

Graduates of specialist and pedagogical tertiary programmes only need to complete the induction period after proving relevant professional practice.

Other major changes are being introduced, particularly entrance tests for prospective students. Also, as of September 2019, all teachers, irrespective of the type and level of school/programme they would like to work in, will be requested to have a master's degree; until then, bachelor graduates can be employed provided that they commit to complete master studies within five years.

⁽⁷¹⁾ In charge of:

- (a) training teachers for primary and lower secondary schools, i.e. *Hauptschule*, now *Neue Mittelschule*;
- (b) teachers for the school-based part of apprenticeships, hands-on practice and VET-related theory in school-based programmes.

In autumn 2017 the Education Reform Act 2017 was adopted. The law allows for more school autonomy in the selection and development of teachers ⁽⁷²⁾.

5.3. CPD for trainers in enterprises 2015-19

The country's priority for 2016-20 in professional development of trainers in enterprises, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to promote the competences of trainers and of examiners for the final apprenticeship examination.

Currently, those seeking a qualification as in-company trainer in dual VET need, in addition to a vocational qualification (apprenticeship-leave exam and several years of relevant work experience), to have completed either a preparatory course of 40 hours per week or a trainer examination, or proof of equivalent examination and training. Special training academies set up for this purpose in some federal States, as well as some large training institutions, offer training programmes for trainers. These training courses receive financial support as part of the qualitative apprenticeship funding.

Since 2013, examiners for the final examination in apprenticeship training (LAP) have had the opportunity to obtain the certificate Certified examiner for final apprenticeship examinations. Certified LAP examiner training, based on the curriculum of the LAP clearing office of the Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs, has to be undertaken. In March 2017, a second part was added to the examiner certification, focused on competence-oriented examination ⁽⁷³⁾.

⁽⁷²⁾ Bildungsreformgesetz 2017 (Education Reform Act).
https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2017_I_138/BGBLA_2017_I_138.pdf#sig

⁽⁷³⁾ <https://www.qualitaet-lehre.at/lehrabschlusspruefung/infos-fuer-prueferinnen/zertifizierter-prueferin-fuer-lehrabschlusspruefungen/?L=0>

Statistical overview: 2019 update

Table 3 updates the figures that were provided in table 1. Although Table 1 may contain data for 2015, these are not systematically repeated here. In some cases, not repeating is due to breaks in time series, which prevent comparability. In other cases, values differ due to methodological changes.

Table 3. **Score on VET indicators in Austria and in the EU: 2015, last available year and recent change**

Indicator label	2015					Last available year					Recent change	
	AT	f	EU	f	Yr	AT	f	EU	f	Range	AT	EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility												
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	69.5		47.3	ce	'17	68.6		47.8	ce	'15-'17	-1	0.5
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	46.8		28.3	ce	'17	45.7		27.9	ce	'15-'17	-1.1	-0.5
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET	95.6		68.1	ce	'17	95.8		68.6	ce	'15-'17	0.2	0.4
Workers participating in CVT courses (%)	45.4		40.8		'15	45.4		40.8				
Workers participating in on-the-job training (%)	29		34		'15	29		34				
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	14.4		10.7		'18	15.1		11.1		'15-'18	0.7	0.4
Enterprises providing training (%)	88.1		72.6		'15	88.1		72.6				
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	65		42	ce	'17	63.6		42.7	ce	'15-'17	-1.4	0.7
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	35.3		30		'15	35.3		30				
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)	35.5		33		'18	35.5		33		'15-'18		0
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	8.8		6.9		'18	9.7		7.3		'15-'18	1	0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	4.5		4.3		'18	5.6		4.3		'15-'18	1.1	0
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	16.6		9.5		'18	16.3		10.7		'15-'18	-0.3	1.2
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)					'16	10.3		11.4				
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)					'16	79.3		79.4				

Indicator label	2015					Last available year				Recent change		
	AT	f	EU	f	Yr	AT	f	EU	f	Range	AT	EU
Skill development and labour market relevance												
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)	0.7		0.5	ce	'16	0.7		0.5	ce	'15-'16	0	0
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)	11.8		7.1	ce	'16	12.2		7.4	ce	'15-'16	0.4	0.3
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.5		0.9		'15	0.5		0.9				
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	1.2		1	ce	'17	1.2		1	ce	'15-'17		0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	29.2		29.2	ce	'17	30.4		29.1	ce	'15-'17	1.2	0
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates	42.2				'17	41.9		14.3	b ce	'15-'17	-0.2	
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)					'16	57.4		37.7				
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds)	86.8		77.2		'18	88.6		80.5		'15-'18	1.8	3.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)	8.9		5.4		'18	8.7		6.6		'15-'18	-0.2	1.2
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)	29.6		23.7		'18	28.5		23.3		'15-'18	-1.1	-0.4
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)	83.2		83.7		'15	83.2		83.7				
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	46.2		57		'15	46.2		57				
Overall transitions and labour market trends												
Early leavers from education and training (%)	7.3		11		'18	7.3		10.6		'15-'18	0	-0.4
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	38.7		38.7		'18	40.7		40.7		'15-'18	2	2
NEET rate for 18-24 year-olds (%)	9.3		15.8		'18	8.1		13.7		'15-'18	-1.2	-2.1
Unemployment rate for 20-34 year-olds (%)	7.4		12.9		'18	6.2		9.4		'15-'18	-1.2	-3.5
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)	86.7		75.9		'18	88		80.6		'15-'18	1.3	4.7
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	15.4		23.5		'18	14.7		21.9		'15-'18	-0.7	-1.6
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)	74.3		70		'18	76.2		73.1		'15-'18	1.9	3.1
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)	53.1		52.6		'18	55.6		56.1		'15-'18	2.5	3.5
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2030 (% of total)					'18	87.6	D	85.8	D			

EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified.

(D) Forecast made in 2018.

(ce) Cedefop estimate based on available country data

(b) Eurostat: 'break in time series'.

(u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

(e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

(d) Eurostat: 'definition differs'.

Source: Cedefop, 2020.

In 2017, 68.6 % of all upper secondary students in Austria were enrolled in IVET. This is 20.8 percentage points above the EU average. It appears, however, that the percentage of upper secondary students in IVET is lower by one point compared to the situation in the country in 2015.

In 2017, 45.7% of all upper secondary IVET students were enrolled in a work-based learning setting which is lower (1.1 points less) than in 2015. In contrast the EU average is 27.9 %.

In 2018, 15.1 % of the adults participated in lifelong learning activities, slightly higher (0.7 points more) than in 2015. The EU average is 11.1 %.

In 2018, the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) was 88.6 %. It appears that the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) is higher by 1.8 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015. The EU average is 80.5 %

Conclusion

Since 2015, Austria has improved its work-based learning and apprenticeship system through further structuring the process for matching supply and demand of apprenticeship places and offering more support and guidance to learners and enterprises. Steps were also taken to standardise the final exam for five-year VET programmes. Measures have been adopted to ease progression from apprenticeship to higher VET and improve transparency and recognition of qualifications. Progress was made in the national qualifications framework and the system for validation of non-formal and informal learning. Groups in need (early school leavers and NEETs, young unemployed, refugees) were provided with additional training opportunities. The development of key competences in initial and continuing VET is being supported. Implementation of the 2013 federal act on teacher training, including VET school teachers, has continued.

Changes in 2017 have taken place in almost all MTDs. In MTD 1, a call for projects on the use of digital developments and the promotion of digital competences in dual vocational education and training was launched (Section 1.3.2). In MTD 2, a working group developed recommendations on how VET can promote the qualifications and competences required for industry 4.0 (Section 2.3). In MTD 3, a decision was made on setting up a comprehensive and integrated national strategy for validation of non-formal and informal learning (Section 3.3.2.6). Professional scholarships to support unemployed and employed people in acquiring qualifications in shortage were reintroduced (Section 3.3.3.5). A compulsory year of integration targeted at unemployed migrants was set up (Section 3.3.3.4). Work to align master craftsperson qualifications to the national qualifications framework was started (Section 3.3.2.3). In MTD 4, the initiative *Women entrepreneurs go to school* was launched (Section 4.3).

Compared to 2015-17, changes in 2018-19 have taken place in MTDs 1, 2 and 4. In MTDs 1 and 2, a range of initiatives was launched to support the updating, running and framing of apprenticeships (Sections 1.3.3 and 2.3), particularly in light of digitisation. New boards of education, responsible for school quality management at province (*Land*) level were established (Section 2.3). The *Skilled labour radar* was developed to assist the anticipation of skilled labour shortages (Section 2.3). A *New digital skills* initiative was launched to support the translation of digitisation-induced changes in employer requirements into training and curricula updates (Section 2.3). In MTD 4, a Digital competence model was set up to support the development of digital competence (Section 4.3). The

piloting of *AK Digitisation Fund Work 4.0* – an initiative of the Vienna Chamber of Labour to fund digital instruments targeted at improving the world of work – was started (Section 4.3).

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions and the country's policy priorities for 2016-20 are being addressed. However, information available to Cedefop suggests that an issue which could benefit from further consideration is that of making more systematic use of EQAVET indicators to monitor developments in continuing VET.

Acronyms

AES	adult education survey
AMS	public employment service Austria
BAG	<i>Berufsausbildungsgesetz</i> vocational training Act
BHS	VET college
BMASK	Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection
BMHS	schools for intermediate vocational education and colleges for higher vocational education
CPD	Continuing professional development
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DGVT	Director General for Vocational Education and Training
ECVET	European credit system for vocational education and training
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
GDP	gross domestic product
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
NCP	national coordination point
NEET	not in education, employment or training
NQF	national qualifications framework
PHs	university colleges of teacher education
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PPS	purchasing power standards
QANRP	quality assurance national reference point
QF-EHEA	qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area
QIBB	national quality assurance initiative
SMEs	small and medium-sized enterprises
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
VET	vocational education and training

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