



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training

EN

Leaving education early:

putting vocational education
and training in centre stage



GERMANY

Introduction

This is one of the 15 country fiches that have been developed as background material to the Cedefop study:

Leaving education early: putting vocational education and training centre stage.

[Volume I: investigating causes and extent](#)

[Volume II: evaluating policy impact](#)

The publication was produced by Cedefop, Department for learning and employability, under the supervision of Antonio Ranieri.

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Country fiches have been developed and drafted on the basis of desk research and interviews conducted between 2014-15 by ICF consulting services with national stakeholders, social partners, companies, VET providers and practitioners as well as learners who provided country-specific information. They have been validated by selected interviewees ⁽¹⁾.

Country fiches are available for: Austria, Belgium-Fr, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal and United Kingdom.

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Please note that this is an unedited version.

⁽¹⁾ The detailed methodology as well as an anonymous list of all interviewees, including information on country, organisation and job position/role, is available on request. Please contact Cedefop expert in charge Irene Psifidou: rena.psifidou@cedefop.europa.eu

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1. Definitions applying in national and regional context

Questions	Answers
<p>What is the national definition(s) of early leavers from education and training?</p> <p>Who are classified as early leavers from education and training?</p>	<p>The national education report 2014 refers to three definitions of early leavers from education and training.</p> <p>(a) The EU 2020 definition including all individuals between 18 and 25, not graduated from higher secondary education and not participating in education and training. It is aimed to reach 10% or less in 2020. Currently, the percentage of early leavers in Germany is at 10.6% ⁽²⁾.</p> <p>(b) The national education report defines school leavers ('SchulabgängerInnen') in general education as the share of leavers from general education after compulsory schooling who have not attained the Certificate of lower Secondary Education (CSE, 'Hauptschulabschluss'), as compared to the resident population of the same age. This definition includes students who continue in VET (i.e. who did not drop out of education and training), e.g. those who start an apprenticeship programme or a VET school after leaving general education without the CSE (Arbeitsgruppe Bildungsbericht, 2015, 92).</p> <p>(c) The second widely applied national definitions is about the dual system in VET: the contract dissolution rate is defined as the rate of apprenticeship training contracts which are prematurely terminated ('Vertragsauflösungsquote'). This is also not a dropout definition since it includes trainees who continued training with another employer, changed their training occupation, or changed to another general or school-based VET programme.</p>
<p>What is the national definition of early leaving from VET?</p> <p>Does it include those in apprenticeships?</p>	<p>The national definition of early leaving from VET mainly refers to lower secondary education and learners in the dual apprenticeship system. Early leaving from school-based VET is not defined explicitly.</p>
<p>What are the data used to inform this definition and who is responsible for it? (i.e. which data set(s) provide information that is used to compute ELET indicators and who sponsors the collection and collects these data).</p>	<p>Data on school-based VET are collected by the German Federal Statistics Office, collected by the statistical offices of the <i>Laender</i> per school year, within the educational statistics (Bildungsstatistik). The information used to compute ELET indicators refers to the school leavers, as defined above.</p> <p>Regarding the dual VET system, statistical data are collected within the VET statistics (Berufsbildungsstatistik) of the Federation and the <i>Laender</i>. In relation to early leaving from VET (ELET) indicators, the contract dissolution rate and the success rate of final exams are collected.</p> <p>The NEPS (national education panel study) provides a rich</p>

⁽²⁾ Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung (2015). *Bildung in Deutschland, 2014*.

	dataset on education from early childhood to adult learning based on a longitudinal study. It can be used based on a data use contract only.
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2. Rates of early leaving from VET during last five years

The following table presents the main numbers on ELET in Germany. About 6% of pupils leave from lower secondary education without obtaining a degree. With 7%, there are more male pupils leaving school without a degree than female with 5%.

The contract dissolution rate shows the number of early leavers during apprenticeship training. About 24% of apprenticeship contracts were dissolved in 2011. The dissolution rate among females is slightly higher than among males.

	Type of ELET	2011 and 2012			
		cohort or age range	male	female	total
		e.g. those who started the third year of secondary education in 2004-05	(or other relevant breakdowns)		
Schulen auf einen Blick 2014, Berufsbildung auf einen Blick, 2013	% ELET during lower secondary (less than ISCED3c long)	Those who left lower secondary school in 2012	7%	5%	6%
	% ELET during upper secondary apprenticeships	Contract dissolution rate 2011	24%	25%	24%

3. National and regional strategy to tackle ELET

There are three main strategies in Germany implemented at national level. The more general strategy 'Getting ahead through education' to support lifelong learning, the ELET-specific 'Framework for measures aiming at reducing the number of students leaving school without a first general education qualification, to secure transition from lower secondary school to the next educational level or to vocational education and training in the dual system and to lower the number

of trainee drop-outs' and the even more specific 'Support strategy for weak-performing students').

Scope	Description
National and/or regional strategy/action plan to reduce ELET	<p>Aufstieg durch Bildung - Die Qualifizierungsinitiative für Deutschland ('Getting ahead through education' - the qualification initiative for Germany). Agreed on in 2008 by federal authorities and the <i>Laender</i>.</p> <p>The strategy includes activities to support education and lifelong learning from early education to adult education. It aims for equity, inclusion, gender equality, higher graduation rates and more participation in adult education.</p>
Elements of the strategy are explicitly linked to VET	<p>The strategy includes VET elements, e.g. identifying learning deficits at vocational schools at an early stage, strengthening the training culture of the dual system, facilitating the transition from general education to VET.</p> <p>The strategy aims to combat ELET through measures to improve the transition from general education to vocational education. Moreover, it aims to support learners at risk, create new in-company training places and further develop the vocational education system.</p>
Scope	Description
National and/or regional strategy/action plan to reduce ELET	<p>Handlungsrahmen zur Reduzierung der Zahl der Schülerinnen und Schüler ohne Schulabschluss, Sicherung der Anschlüsse und Verringerung der Zahl der Ausbildungsunterbrecher (Framework for measures aiming at reducing the number of students leaving school without a first general education qualification, to secure transition from lower secondary school to the next educational level or to vocational education and training in the dual system and to lower the number of trainee drop-outs) ⁽³⁾. The strategy was agreed on in 2007 by the ministers of the <i>Laender</i> (Kulturministerkonferenz).</p> <p>The strategy aims to develop measures to reduce early school leaving, ensure transition and reduce the contract dissolution rate in apprenticeship training.</p> <p>School-based and non-school-based measures are listed in the strategy.</p>
Elements of the strategy are explicitly linked to VET	<p>The provision of vocational orientation and counselling is mentioned as a measure to tackle several issues and target groups. Moreover, quality improvement and</p>

⁽³⁾ KMK (2007). *Handlungsrahmen zur Reduzierung der Zahl der Schülerinnen und Schüler ohne Schulabschluss, Sicherung der Anschlüsse und Verringerung der Zahl der Ausbildungsunterbrecher*.
http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2007/2007_10_18-Handlungsrahmen-Schulabbrecher_01.pdf [accessed 6.4.2017].

	modernisation of vocational education are mentioned. Also preparation for vocational education and training to ensure transition is described.
Scope	Description
National and/or regional strategy/action plan to reduce ELET	<p>'Förderstrategie für leistungsschwächere Schülerinnen und Schüler' (Support strategy for weak-performing students) was agreed on in 2010 by the ministers of the <i>Laender</i> (Kultusministerkonferenz).</p> <p>The strategy aims to support weak-performing learners to reduce the number of learners who do not achieve a minimum level of competences. The strategy includes measures to enhance the quality of teaching and to support learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>
Elements of the strategy are explicitly linked to VET	Elements related to VET include vocational orientation and counselling measures, individual support for learners at risk, second chance education, stronger cooperation between schools and the world of work.

4. Recent policy initiatives

Scope and questions	Answer
<p>New policy initiatives being undertaken that include a role for VET to reduce ELET.</p> <p>(a) Reduce ELET from VET</p>	<p>'Allianz für Aus- und Weiterbildung' (Alliance for initial and continuing education) ⁽⁴⁾. The contract was signed in December 2014 by partners from the federal government, the <i>Laender</i>, central associations from the private sector and labour unions. It aims to strengthen dual vocational training in Germany.</p> <p>The goal of the initiative is to provide a pathway leading to a training qualification as soon as possible, for every individual interested in education and training. In-company training is the preferred pathway.</p> <p>The initiative includes supporting measures for individuals, vocational orientation, quality enhancement of VET, including quality standards, easier progression to higher education and the increase of immigrant participation. For example measures as the EQ ('Einstiegsqualifizierung') and the vocational orientation (described in the section on measures below) are measures specifically mentioned in the initiative.</p>
<p>Is the role of VET in reducing ELET assuming greater or lesser importance?</p> <p>Why?</p>	<p>It is assumed that the role of VET to reduce ELET is of greater importance within this initiative. The aim of the initiative includes a clear prioritisation of VET to reduce ELET.</p>

⁽⁴⁾ BMBF (2014). *Allianz für Aus- und Weiterbildung*. <http://www.bmbf.de/de/2295.php> [accessed 6.4.2017].

5. Stakeholder cooperation

Question	Answer
<p>What are and have been the main influences of stakeholders in the development and implementation of VET related policies specifically to reduce ELET</p> <p>Employers</p> <p>Trade unions social partners, VET institutions,</p> <p>Other learning providers (please specify)?</p>	<p>Trade unions and employers associations are partners in the 'Alliance for initial and continuing education', aiming to strengthen dual VET in Germany ⁽⁵⁾.</p> <p>Social partners themselves develop VET related policies, print publications or organise events ⁽⁶⁾.</p> <p>Chambers of commerce and industry support and advise apprentices and employees, mediate in case of problems, determine the suitability of businesses and trainers, register the training contracts, organise examinations and issue certificates.</p> <p>Social partners are members of the vocational training committee, where e.g. qualification profiles are designed.</p> <p>Social partners are involved in final examinations of apprentices within the dual apprenticeship training system as members of the examination committee.</p>

6. Monitoring systems

Question	Answer
<p>What specific early leavers monitoring systems exist?</p>	<p>Name/descriptor: statistics on general and school-based VET which are integrated in the annual 'Berufsbildungsbericht' (national report on VET) ⁽⁷⁾.</p> <p>Aims: comprehensive inventory on vocational education in Germany, the data report provides in-depth insight and analysis.</p> <p>Year introduced/planned: 1977</p> <p>Coverage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) school based VET and apprenticeships with a focus on apprenticeships at upper secondary level; (b) national level; (c) contract dissolution rate is measured; (d) Data are collected by the regional governments (Länder) and published by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB).
<p>What information is monitored/collected?</p>	<p>Numbers of drop outs: yes</p> <p>Reasons for dropping out: yes, but no detailed information. It is discussed that drop-out rates differ by sector (e.g. drop</p>

⁽⁵⁾ BMBF (2014). *Allianz für Aus- und Weiterbildung*. <http://www.bmbf.de/de/2295.php> [accessed 6.4.2017].

⁽⁶⁾ For example: each year the DGB issues a training report (DGB Ausbildungsreport).

⁽⁷⁾ BMBF (2015). *Berufsbildungsbericht 2015-*

Question	Answer
	outs in tourism are significantly higher than in administration). Background characteristics of drop outs/those at risk (i.e. gender, age, language, migrant status, etc.): yes in relation to migration status, parenthood and disability.
What are the data used for? How it is used by VET institutions/providers?	Information for stakeholders and policy development. The yearly report on the collected data is supported by a data report. Both together are discussed by the national government and inform future policy development in the area of vocational education and training.
How is the monitoring system linked with offering support measures? (i.e. is it being used to contact those who have dropped out to provide support to find employment, education or further training?)	The published report provides information on measures in the area of vocational education and training. However, the statistical data does not provide any data on measures. Therefore, the report is not directly used at provider level.
What role is/ has the monitoring system played in the design, development or implementation of the policies, strategies and initiatives?	The monitoring reports provide evidence on actual trends (e.g. contract dissolution rates, sectoral specifics) which are taken into account for the development of policies, strategies and initiatives at national and regional level, as for example the Alliance for initial and continuing education.
What specific early leavers monitoring systems exist?	Name/descriptor: monitoring data on education in Germany, published in the annual 'Nationaler Bildungsbericht' (national report on education) ⁽⁸⁾ . Aims: comprehensive inventory on education in Germany. Year introduced/planned: Coverage: (a) school based VET and apprenticeships; (b) national level; (c) contract dissolution rate (dual VET), early school leaving: (i) it covers school based VET and apprenticeships; (ii) level implemented: national; (iii) what is measured: contract dissolution rate, early school leaving.
What information is monitored/collected?	Numbers of drop outs: yes Reasons for dropping out: yes, the reasons for the contract dissolution rate are discussed. A high number of individuals who quit their apprenticeship contract do not drop out, but

⁽⁸⁾ Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung (2015). Bildung in Deutschland 2014.

Question	Answer
	transfer to another company or another educational setting. Background characteristics of drop outs/those at risk (i.e. gender, age, language, migrant status etc.): yes, migration, gender, disability, socio-economic background
What are the data used for? How it is used by VET institutions/providers?	The national report on education is discussed at national level by the parliament. It informs policy makers and stakeholders about main trends in education. Therefore, it is used to develop policies. It is not directly used by providers.
How is the monitoring system linked with offering support measures? (i.e. is it being used to contact those who have dropped out to provide support to find employment, education or further training?)	The monitoring system is not directly linked to support measures. It also does not provide detailed and/or regional data on ELET.
What role is/ has the monitoring system played in the design, development or implementation of the policies, strategies and initiatives?	Offers information for policy development at national and regional level. It does not provide information, to be directly used by providers.
What specific early leavers monitoring systems exist?	<p>Name/descriptor: ‚Bildungsmonitor der Initiative Soziale Marktwirtschaft‘ (Education Monitor by the Initiative for Social Market Economy) ⁽⁹⁾.</p> <p>It is a monitoring system provided by the ‘Initiative for a social market economy’, supported by the Chambers of Commerce.</p> <p>Aims: to provide information for the development of social market economy through research on educational indicators</p> <p>Year introduced/planned: 2003</p> <p>Coverage: it covers school based VET and apprenticeships, as well as other educational sectors.</p> <p>It includes national and regional data (<i>Laender</i> monitoring).</p> <p>It measures: contract dissolution, early school leavers, rate of immigrant early school leavers, percentage of young adults between 20 and 30 without vocational education.</p>
What information is monitored/collected?	<p>Numbers of drop outs: yes</p> <p>Reasons for dropping out: no</p> <p>Background characteristics of drop outs/those at risk (i.e.</p>

⁽⁹⁾ INSM (2014). *Bildungsmonitor*. <http://www.insm-bildungsmonitor.de/> [accessed 6.4.2017].

Question	Answer
	gender, age, language, migrant status etc.): partly yes: only in relation to migrant status.
What are the data used for? How it is used by VET institutions/providers?	Information for stakeholders and policy development.
How is the monitoring system linked with offering support measures? (i.e. is it being used to contact those who have dropped out to provide support to find employment, education or further training?)	Not linked at all.
What role is/ has the monitoring system played in the design, development or implementation of the policies, strategies and initiatives?	Monitoring offers regional reports to inform regional policy development.

8. Effect of the economic crisis

Question	Answer
<p>In what ways has the role of VET in reducing ELET been influenced by the economic crisis: (please consider):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) supply of VET places; (b) demand for VET places; (c) qualifications of VET students (increasing/decreasing); (d) popularity and perception of VET; (e) increase/decrease in public resources for VET; (f) access to 'second chance' VET opportunities 	<p>Dual VET: in 2009 the economic crisis affected the number of training contracts. The number of in-company vocational training places decreased by 52 000 from 616 000 to 566.000 contracts, which is an overall decrease by 8.2%. At the same time, demographic change leads to a decreasing number of school graduates. However, the number of those searching for a training place was still higher than the supply of VET places and could only be covered by alternative pathways ⁽¹⁰⁾. Since then, the demand for VET places decreased, more than the supply of VET places. Therefore, the ratio between demand and supply is decreasing. While in 2013, 91.1 VET places were offered for 100 individuals, in 2014 92.7 VET places were offered for 100 individuals; there are regional differences. In East-Germany, the supply of VET places is often higher than the demand and the ratio is up to 103 in the region of Thüringen ⁽¹¹⁾. However, during the last years, a new issue arose: there is often a mismatch between the demand and supply of VET places. Therefore, a number of individuals do not find a suitable VET place, while VET places are vacant ⁽¹²⁾. However, there are large differences across occupational sectors and regions.</p> <p>The decrease in demand for VET places is linked to an increase of individuals' participation in education providing a higher education entrance certification. This includes general education as well as vocational schools. The demographic decrease of young individuals together with the decrease of participation in vocational education are considered as high risk factors for future skills shortages ⁽¹³⁾.</p> <p>The participation in school-based vocational education has been stagnating since 2005, however, the system has</p>

⁽¹⁰⁾ Ulrich, J.G.; Flemming, S.; Granath, R.O.; Krekel, E.M. (2009): *Im Zeichen von Wirtschaftskrise und demografischem Einbruch. Die Entwicklung des Ausbildungsmarktes im Jahr 2009*. BIBB-Erhebung über neu abgeschlossene Ausbildungsverträge zum 30. September. http://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/a21_beitrag_lehrstellenmarkt-2009.pdf [accessed 6.4.2017].

⁽¹¹⁾ Matthes, S.; Ulrich, J.G.; Flemming, S.; Granath, R.O. (2015). *Die Entwicklung des Ausbildungsmarktes im Jahr 2014. Duales System vor großen Herausforderungen. BIBB-Erhebung über neu abgeschlossene Ausbildungsverträge zum 30.*

⁽¹²⁾ Matthes, S.; Ulrich, J.G.; Krekel, E.M, Walden, G. (2014). *Wenn Angebot und Nachfrage immer seltener zusammenfinden. Wachsende Passungsprobleme auf dem Ausbildungsmarkt: Analysen und Lösungsansätze.*

⁽¹³⁾ Matthes, S.; Ulrich, Joachim G.; Flemming, S.; Granath, R.Ol. (2015). *Die Entwicklung des Ausbildungsmarktes im Jahr 2014. Duales System vor großen Herausforderungen. BIBB-Erhebung über neu abgeschlossene Ausbildungsverträge zum 30.*

	<p>changed internally: while participation figures decreased in a number of fields (e.g. business administration), they increased in emerging sectors, such as health and nursing increased ⁽¹⁴⁾.</p> <p>The education undertaken prior to the vocational apprenticeship training influences an individual's chance for successful graduation. 62% of graduates from lower secondary I schools (Hauptschulen) complete apprenticeship successfully, compared to 86% of those holding a higher education entrance certificate ⁽¹⁵⁾.</p> <p>The funding for VET is slightly increasing in total numbers. However, the funding for supporting measures is not counted, as it is decided on by the <i>Laender</i> ⁽¹⁶⁾.</p>
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9. Factors positively contributing to the effectiveness of VET in reducing ELET

9.1. National/regional policy factors

Cooperation with social partners: one positive factor mentioned by the interview partners is the cooperation with social partners, and especially those who are involved in VET, as for example the Chambers of Commerce and the Chambers of Labour. This enables the development of measures based on the experience of labour market stakeholders and also supports the commitment at company level.

Tailored support measures to the target group: Initiatives which provide counselling by different actors (e.g. labour market agency, social policy agency counsellors) at one place (one-stop-shop) are considered very positive by the interviewees, as they allow better organisation between stakeholders and more efficiency to provide tailored support. Moreover, it reduces administrative work because it rationalises the provision of support among organisations.

Implementation of early warning systems: the implementation of early warning systems was considered important for measures to guarantee the success of the counselling at every level, as it allows early and preventive interventions.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Arbeitsgruppe Bildungsberichterstattung (2015). *Nationaler Bildungsbericht*. p.99

⁽¹⁵⁾ Arbeitsgruppe Bildungsberichterstattung (2015). *Nationaler Bildungsbericht*. p.112

⁽¹⁶⁾ BIBB (2014). *BIBB Datenreport 2014*.

<http://www.bibb.de/datenreport/de/2014/19538.php> [accessed 6.4.2017].

9.2. Systemic features of the (VET) education system

Early start of vocational orientation: according to the interviewees, it is a key success factor to start vocational orientation as early as possible at school. Moreover, it is considered as favourable to involve VET institutions in vocational orientation already at lower secondary education level, for example by inviting learners to attend and visit VET classes. Interview partner stressed, that vocational orientation should be based on the competences of individuals and not on labour market demands to support the individuals interests and strengths and therefore prevent him or her from early leaving. A flexible and permeable vocational education and training system, which allows for changes and 'add-ons' from the general education system, without 'losing' classes already taken and having these recognised when recommencing a training later on, was mentioned as a major factor in preventing early school leaving. Students should be given the possibility to change learning/training patterns without having to give up on their overall goal (e.g. access to further training/higher education).

Relationship between coaches/mentors/social workers and young adults: a key factor for mentoring projects is the question whether learners and mentors 'speak the same language'. If they develop a good relationship, the mentoring can be very successful. If they do not have good chemistry it could reduce the motivation. Moreover, in case of mentoring projects, mentors should be professionals. They should be well prepared and trained for their role.

Another factor for success mentioned is the clear definition of the target group, to tailor the measure to the specific needs of the group.

Availability of measures in rural areas: measures are available also in rural areas, to reduce the barrier for some learners to have long (and expensive) travelling routes.

Focus on the individual learner: many measures focus on the individual learner, which interview partners consider favourable. However, it is a success factor not to reduce measures to the individual learner's perspective, but to include the system (environment) around him/her for example in the coaching or mentoring process. This includes for example the sector, the company, the vocational schools, and the training quality.

High qualification of trainers: the quality of the training, and especially the qualification of the trainer is a key success factor. To enhance the quality of training, best practice models are shared and outcomes (e.g. testing results) are monitored. An important part of training quality is related to the training of trainers. Qualified trainers are therefore a key factor contributing to reducing ELET.

Quality management systems and conflict management structures were also indicated as successful strategies to counter early leaving from education and training.

10. Factors constraining the effectiveness of VET to reduce ELET

10.1. National/regional policy factors

High complexity of the system of measures. Germany has a complex multilayer system of measures to reduce early leaving from education and training. It is difficult for individuals to get an overview of the different support measures that exist. More transparent pathways would be helpful.

Overlap between regional and national measures: the large number of measures is also ineffective in a way: *Laender* develop regional initiatives while measures for similar target groups are implemented at national level. This results in overlaps and competition between initiatives. The high number of measures also results from a lack of strategy at national level.

There are gaps in the monitoring system, as it does not enable to track students who transfer from one education system to another (e.g. from VET schools to apprenticeships). New systems are discussed to fill this gap.

10.2. Systemic features of the (VET) education system

Lack of vocational orientation at general education schools: vocational orientation is provided at many schools, however in most *Länder*, at general education schools (Gymnasium), there is often a lack of vocational orientation measures, as it is assumed that all pupils will transfer to university after completing secondary education. Moreover, vocational orientation and counselling at schools is organised in various ways. Some measures lack clear standards and quality assurance, as well as nationwide cooperation between measures.

Focus on training companies: many measures focus on the training companies and do not include vocational schools. Measures should comprise all learning sites, to ensure cooperation among all learning sites and provide support at every needed level.

10.3. Features of the labour market

Quality of training provision in SMEs: a main factor constraining the effectiveness of VET to reduce ELET is the situation in the training company. If companies do not focus on their role as training and learning site, there might be conflicts. This is especially an issue at SMEs, as there might be no person responsible for the training of apprentices. Moreover, if conflicts occur in SMEs, apprentices cannot change the trainer or department, as it might be possible in large companies. Theoretically, there should be a training/VET responsible at the Chambers for mitigating these conflicts, however, policy stakeholders do not have influence over them and depend on their 'good will'.

Sector specific quality of training: early leaving from education and training is related to the occupational sector. This is also related to the interaction within companies in these sectors. Especially in the areas of craft or tourism, the interaction among employees is sometimes 'unkind', which could lead to conflicts or even contract dissolutions. It is important to take this into account and develop measures to enhance the quality of company based training.