

■ VET in Europe – Country Report Austria

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Abstract:

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

1. General context – framework for the knowledge society
2. Modernising VET to support LLL, internationalisation and mobility
3. VET to support recovery from the crisis
4. Historical background, legislative and institutional framework
5. Initial vocational education and training
6. Continuing vocational education and training for adults
7. Training VET teachers and trainers
8. Matching VET provision (skills) with labour market needs (jobs)
9. Lifelong guidance for lifelong learning and sustainable employment
10. Financing - investment in human resources

This overview has been prepared in 2011 and its reference year is 2010. Similar overviews of previous years can be viewed at:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Information-services/browse-national-vet-systems.aspx>

More detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can also be found at:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Information-services/browse-national-vet-systems.aspx>

Keywords:

vocational education and training (VET) systems; initial vocational training; continuing vocational training; lifelong learning; VET policy development; financial crisis and VET policies; VET legislative and institutional frameworks; validation of non-formal and informal education; teachers and trainers; anticipation of skill needs; vocational guidance and counselling; VET financing mechanisms; allocation of national VET programmes; national and international qualification systems.

Geographic term:

Austria

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Introduction

This report provides a comprehensive picture of the **Austrian VET system**. The focus is on VET programmes at the upper secondary level, i.e. on full-time school-based paths and dual vocational training (apprenticeship). In addition, VET programmes at post-secondary and tertiary levels are outlined as well as the available CVET paths. This report does not cover university programmes, which – according to Austrian HE legislation – primarily serve the purpose of pre-vocational qualification. For publications and websites with information about the Austrian HE system please refer to the bibliographical references at the end of this introduction.

This report covers a **wide range of topics**: besides introductory background information about the political and socioeconomic context in Austria, the second chapter discusses major educational policy initiatives and measures, which are mainly connected with developments at European level. Moreover, it addresses the subject of mobility in VET. The third chapter deals with the impacts on the VET sector of the financial and economic crisis which has affected the whole world since 2007. The legislative and institutional framework of VET is discussed in the fourth chapter, which also includes a short summary of the history of the development of VET. In chapters 5 and 6 there is an overview of the IVET and CVET paths provided in Austria. Training of teachers and trainers is the topic of Chapter 7. Instruments and processes to match qualification supply and demand are the focus of the eighth chapter. Chapter 9 deals with educational counselling and career guidance provided at VET institutions, while chapter 10 is dedicated to the financing of VET. The final Chapter 11 includes notes on statistical classifications and VET directions.

The VET sector plays a major role in the **Austrian education landscape**. This is shown, on the one hand, by the high attractiveness of VET programmes for young people: some 80% of all pupils who have completed compulsory schooling opt for a VET path. On the other hand, the major significance of VET also manifests itself in the diversity of programme. A pronounced differentiation both in the school-based and in the dual VET sector ensures that every young person is able to optimally develop their strengths and talents. The success of the Austrian VET system is also reflected in the low youth unemployment rate and the international recognition of Austrian skilled workers.

This report was prepared in cooperation with a number of authors from the **ibw** (*Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft*, Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy) and coordinated with the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*). The authors would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have cooperated with them and given useful comments, above all Ms Sonja Lengauer and Mr Martin Netzer.

This report is part of a **series of country reports** about the VET systems in EU member states, Norway and Iceland. It was drawn up within the framework of ReferNet (<http://www.refernet.at>) – the reference and information network of Cedefop. Information supplementing this report can be found in the **National VET Research Report** and in the **VET Policy Report** (for bibliographical information cf. below).

More information

VET and HE in Austria

Austrian education system: <http://www.bildungssystem.at/>

VET schools and colleges: <http://www.abc.berufsbildendeschulen.at/de/news.asp>

Schools and colleges of social and services industries: <http://www.hum.at>

Apprenticeship – dual vocational education and training in Austria:
<http://www.ibw.at/media/ibw/Apprenticeship.pdf>

Vocational education and training in Austria: <http://www.ibw.at/de/bbs>

Fachhochschule Council: <http://www.fhr.ac.at/>

Wadsack, Ingrid and Kasparovsky, Heinz (2007): Das österreichische Hochschulsystem. (The Austrian HE System) Wien. Download: http://www.bmwf.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/hssystem_07.pdf

ENIC NARIC Austria: http://www.bmwf.gv.at/wissenschaft/international/enic_naric_austria/

Austrian HE legislation 2002 (as amended, BGBl. I Nr. 134/2008). Download:
http://www.bmwf.gv.at/uploads/tx_bmwfcontent/UG_2002_Stand_1_Jaenner_2009.pdf

Reports within the framework of ReferNet

Tritscher-Archan, S. (ed.) (2010): VET Policy Report. Progress in the policy priority areas for vocational education and training. Wien.

Download in DE and EN: <http://www.refernet.at/index.php/publikationen/policy-dokumente>

Neubauer, Barbara und Dér, Krisztina (2011): Auswahlbibliografie "Berufsbildung und Lebenslanges Lernen". Einschlägige Veröffentlichungen aus Österreich im Jahr 2010. Wien. Download: <http://www.refernet.at/index.php/publikationen/bibliographie>

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Download in DE and EN: <http://www.refernet.at/index.php/publikationen/policy-dokumente>

Archan, Sabine und Mayr, Thomas (eds.) (2006) Vocational education and training in Austria. Short description. Cedefop Panorama series 125. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Download in DE, EN and FR

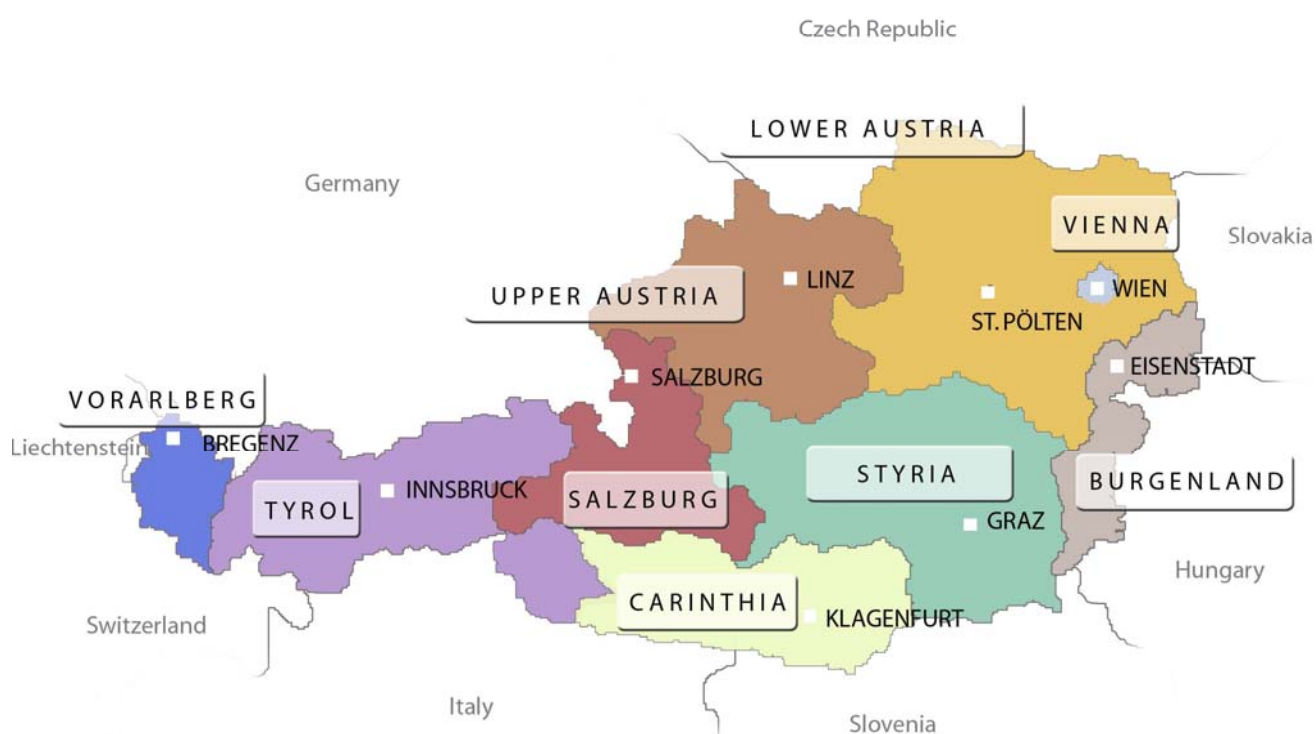
http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Information_resources/Bookshop/publication_details.asp?pub_id=425

1 General context – framework for the knowledge society

1.1 Political and socio-economic context

Austria is a **parliamentary republic** based on the principles of democracy and separation of powers. It comprises **nine federal provinces** (cf. fig. 1), each with its own provincial government. **Vienna** is a province and at the same time the federal capital.

Fig. 1: Austria and its federal provinces



Graph: ibw

The Austrian **Parliament** consists of two chambers: the National Council (*Nationalrat*) and the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*), which share the **legislative power** at federal level. The National Council has 183 members; these are elected through direct vote by the population every five years. The members of the Federal Council are elected and sent by the provincial diets (*Landtage*), the provinces' parliaments. They represent the interests of the provinces with regard to federal legislation.

The **executive powers**, i.e. the enforcement of the laws and ordinances passed by the legislature, are exercised by the **federal provinces**, unless the Federal Constitution stipulates in individual areas that the **Federal Government** is responsible for them. The execu-

tive branch at federal level comprises the Federal President (*Bundespräsident*) as the Head of State and the Federal Government, which is chaired by the Federal Chancellor (*Bundeskanzler*). At provincial level, the executive branch comprises the Governor (*Landeshauptmann/frau*) and the Provincial Government. In principle, Austria is characterised by a relatively high degree of federal structures.

A key role is met by the Austrian **social partnership** – a system of economic and social policy cooperation between the representations of interest of employers, employees, and representatives of the Government. The social partnership is not limited to regulating labour (industrial) relations but encompasses nearly all fields of economic and social policies.

1.2 Population and demographics

Located in Central Europe, Austria covers an **area** of 83,858 km².

In 2003, the **number of inhabitants** was slightly over 8.1 million. According to estimates, it will be more than 8.3 million in 2010 (cf. fig. 1). The continuously rising number of inhabitants since the mid-1980s is mainly due to the increased influx of immigrants.

Fig. 1: Population development

	2003	2006	2009	2010
EU-27	486,647,831	493,226,936	499,723,520(s)	501,105,661 (s)
Austria	8,100,273	8,254,298	8,355,260	8,375,290

(s) = Eurostat estimate

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 19 May 2011

According to the data provided by Statistics Austria, the Austrian population will continue to grow in the future – projections assume a population of some 8.9 million by 2025 (cf. fig. 2). In terms of the **demographic development** it is clear that society is undergoing an ever increasing “ageing” process. Whereas in 2009 only some 17% of the population were 65 or older, this population group’s share in the total population will be around 19% by 2015 and rise to an astonishing 21% by 2025.

Fig. 2: Development of the age structure of the Austrian population

	2009	2010	2015	2025
0 – 24 years	2,274.546	2.261.677	2,219.240	2,180,003
25 – 64 years	4,624.321	4,650.469	4,751.507	4,817,873
65+ years	1,462,381	1,591,142	1,585,746	1,905,693
Total	8,363.040	8,388.478	8,556.493	8,903,569

Source: Statistics Austria, population projection 2009, main scenario (mean fertility, life expectancy, immigration), own calculations, created on 15 September 2011

The number of **people over the age of 65 in relation to those aged between 15 and 64** will amount to about 1 to 4 in Austria by 2010 (cf. fig. 3, 26%). In other words: there will be one pensioner for every four people of working age (15 to 64 years of age). Pursuant to projections, this ratio will change to 1 to 2 within the next 50 years: one pensioner for every two people in employment. The development in Austria is therefore approximately within the EU-27 average.

Fig. 3: Projected old-age dependency ratio, 2010-2060

	2010	2015	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
EU-27	25.90	28.26	31.05	38.04	45.36	50.42	53.47
Austria	26.01	27.37	29.18	38.09	46.03	48.31	50.65

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 19 May 2011

1.3 Economy and labour market indicators

A clear structural change in the direction of tertiarisation can be observed in Austria over the course of the last three decades. This is revealed, in particular, by the distribution of the **gross domestic product (GDP)** and of **people in employment broken down by economic sectors** (cf. fig. 1 and 2). Whereas in 1980 as many as around one tenth of people in employment were active in the primary sector, this share has halved within 30 years to reach just over 5%. In the same period, the share of employees in the service sector grew from about 50% to 70% (2009). The distribution in Austria corresponds approximately to the EU-27 average (cf. Fig. 2).

Fig. 1: Distribution of the GDP (in %) and employees (in 1,000) by economic sectors in Austria

Economic sector	1980		1990		2000		2010	
	GDP	Empl.	GDP	Empl.	GDP	Empl.	GDP	Empl.
Primary sector	5.3	322.4	3.7	368.5	2.0	316.0	1.5	213.0
Secondary sector	35.9	1,233.6	32.2	1,259.5	30.8	1,119.1	29.2	1,024.0
Tertiary sector	58.8	1,490.2	64.1	1,878.3	67.2	2,381.6	69.3	2,859.0

Note: Empl. = Employees

Source: Statistics Austria 2011, Eurostat, OECD, date of extraction: 13 September 2011, own calculations

Fig. 2: Employed persons aged 15+ by economic sector of activity (in thousands and as % of total employment), 2010

	Primary sector and utilities		Manufacturing		Construction		Distribution and transport		Business and other services		Non marketed services	
	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%	Persons	%
EU-27	15,175.8	7.0	33,992.7	15.7	16,573.2	7.7	57,099.0	26.4	38,733.1	17.9	53,694.1	24.8
AT	270.0	6.6	624.4	15.2	340.7	8.3	1,184.7	28.9	742.3	18.1	934.5	22.8

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 19 May 2011

When analysing the **employment rate by age groups** it can be seen that Austria has clearly higher rates among the 15-to-49-year-olds than the EU-27 average (cf. fig. 3, “Total”). Especially in the group of 15-to-24-year-olds in Austria, the employment rate is far above the EU average. This is due to the apprenticeship system. In the group of 50-to-64-year-olds, however, the share of employees is slightly lower in Austria, it has continually approximated the EU average over the years (2003 to 2009). The low rate in this age group is due to the comparatively favourable pension scheme. But with the 2005 pension reform it was attempted to adapt the de facto retirement entry age to the statutory one, which has led to a rise in the employment rate (cf. data from 2010).

When taking the **highest educational attainment** according to ISCED categories into account, the employment rate in Austria in the age categories 15 to 24 and 25 to 49 is (clearly) above the EU-27 average in all three periods of comparison. In the age cohort of 50-to-64-year-olds, the employment rate is however – independent of the educational level – lower than in the average of all 27 EU countries. But the 2005 pension reform has led to an increase in the employment rate: among HE graduates (ISCED 5-6) in this age group, the rate in Austria in 2010 was on a par with the EU average (AT: 75.1% vs. EU-27: 74.5%).

Fig. 3: Employment rates by age groups and highest level of educational attainment (in %)

	ISCED	2003			2006			2010		
		15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
EU-27	0-2	25.1	66.1	41.9	24.8	66.9	43.5	21.5	62.8	43.1
	3-4	47.2	79.1	54.9	48.1	80.5	57.9	45.0	79.7	59.6
	5-6	62.0	88.0	72.4	60.5	88.5	74.2	57.1	87.4	74.5
	no a.	14.9	72.6	39.1	5.1	76.0	5.6	5.2	72.8	62.2
	TOTAL	36.0	77.4	51.5	36.6	79.1	54.4	34.1	78.1	56.7
AT	0-2	33.9	70.5	33.6	38.1	69.0	39.1	38.1	68.8	41.8
	3-4	67.4	86.1	46.5	68.9	86.1	51.0	69.0	86.8	58.2
	5-6	69.1	91.9	66.3	70.6	91.4	71.5	63.3	90.1	75.1
	TOTAL	50.6	84.5	45.3	54.0	84.3	50.0	53.6	85.0	57.0

Note: 15-24 = age group of 15-to-24-year-olds; 0-2 = ISCED levels 0 to 2, no a. = no answer, AT = Austria

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 19 May 2011

An analysis of **unemployment rates by age groups** shows that Austria boasts lower unemployment rates in all age categories than the EU-27 average. Particularly noteworthy is the gap between the 15-to-24-year-olds. Although this value has slightly deteriorated in Austria over time, it is nevertheless clearly below the EU average. The reasons for this relatively low youth unemployment can be found in the wide range of programmes provided by the Austrian (vocational) education and training system, primarily however in apprenticeship training.

Taking into account the **highest educational attainment**, it is striking that in Austria, compared to the EU-27, graduates of upper secondary level (ISCED 3-4) show clearly lower unemployment rates. This is due to the differentiated VET provision on this education level, which is regularly adjusted to the needs of the labour market.

Fig. 4: Unemployment rates by age groups and highest level of education attained (%)

	ISCED	2003			2006			2010		
		15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64	15-24	25-49	50-64
EU-27	0-2	20.2	11.6	7.2	21.2	11.2	7.5	27.4	16.3	10.2
	3-4	17.7	8.4	7.7	15.4	7.3	6.9	18.1	8.2	6.7
	5-6	12.0	4.8	3.7	13.4	4.3	3.6	16.2	5.3	3.6
	no a.	13.9	7.8	7.4	20.1	:	:	:	8.2	:
	TOTAL	18.0	8.3	6.6	17.2	7.3	6.3	20.8	8.9	6.9
AT	0-2	10.1	8.4	8.6	13.4	8.9	5.4	11.8	9.1	3.9
	3-4	6.3	3.7	5.2	6.5	3.7	3.4	7.1	3.6	3.2
	5-6	:	2.5	1.9	:	2.6	:	:	2.5	:
	TOTAL	7.5	4.2	5.3	9.1	4.2	3.5	8.8	4.0	3.0

Note: : = no data available, AT = Austria

Source: Eurostat, , date of extraction: 19 May 2011

Measured by the gross domestic product, **public expenditure on education for the secondary sector** was equal to 2.5%, which is above the EU-27 average of 2.2% in 2007 (cf. fig. 5). In a comparison over time between 2001-2006, a slight relative decline in educational expenditure for the secondary sector can be observed both for the EU-27 average and for Austria measured by GDP (cf. fig. 5).

Fig. 5: Total public expenditure on education as % of GDP, at secondary level of education (ISCED 2-4), 2002-2008

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
EU-27	2.32 (s)	2.35 (s)	2.29 (s)	2.25 (s)	2.23 (s)	2.20 (s)	:
AT	2.66	2.74	2.63	2.53	2.55	2.52	:

s = Eurostat estimate; : = no data available

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 19 May 2011

1.4 Educational attainment of population

The number of 18-to-24-year-olds in Austria who have not acquired any qualification beyond **compulsory schooling** is with 8.7% (related to the year 2009) clearly below the EU average (EU-27: 14.4%, cf. fig. 1). This means that Austria has reached the maximum value of 10% early school leavers that was envisaged across Europe by 2010. This relatively low value is attributed to the wide and differentiated training provision after compulsory schooling, above all apprenticeship training.

Fig. 1: Early school leavers: Share of 18-to-24-year-olds in the population who only have a compulsory school qualification and do not attend any upper secondary programme (in %)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU-27	17.0	16.6 (b)	16.1	15.8	15.5	15.1	14.9	14.4
AT	9.5	9.0 (b)	9.5	9.1	9.8	10.7	10.1	8.7

b = interruption in measuring period

Source: Eurostat; EU Labour Force Survey, downloaded on 30 April 2010

In 2007, more than two thirds of all graduates in Austria at ISCED levels 3 and 4 completed **VET programmes** (cf. fig. 2a). Of the 46.1% graduates at ISCED level 3 the by far largest share falls to graduates of company-based apprenticeship training, for which 40% of each age group at year ten opt. At ISCED level 4 Austria had with 21.6% about three times as many graduates in VET programmes as the EU-27 average (7.6%) in 2009. This share reflects the high importance of VET colleges (*BHS*) at upper secondary level in Austria.

Fig. 2a: Graduates at ISCED level 3 and level 4 by level of education, programme orientation and sex (numbers)

		2007						2009					
		3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC	3 GEN	3 PV	3 VOC	4 GEN	4 PV	4 VOC
E	M	38.7	:	53.0	0.9	:	7.4	39.4	:	53.2	:	:	7.4
	F	48.6	:	42.4	0.9	:	8.2	49.7	:	42.6	:	:	7.7
	T	43.8	:	47.5	0.9	:	7.8	44.7	:	47.7	:	:	7.6
A	M	11.3	19.9	50.9	:	:	17.9	12.3	18.9	52.7	:	:	16.2
	F	17.4	13.8	41.1	:	:	27.7	18.6	13.0	41.1	:	:	27.3
	T	14.3	16.9	46,1	:	:	22.7	15.3	16.0	47.0	:	:	21.6

Note: E = EU-27, A = Austria, M = male, F = female, T = total, : = no data available, GEN = general education, PV = pre-vocational programme, VOC = vocational education and training, 3 = ISCED level 3, 4 = ISCED level 4

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 19 May 2011

In 2009, in a comparison of **post-secondary and tertiary education programmes**, Austria was slightly above the EU average regarding HE first degrees (5A1) (A: 61.3%; EU-27: 58.7%), regarding second degrees (5A2) it was clearly below the EU average (A: 12.9%; EU-27: 21.8%). Austria had almost twice as many graduates of advanced research-oriented programmes (ISCED 6, e.g. doctorate) as the EU average (A: 4.4%; EU-27: 2.4%) in 2009. In addition, Austria had higher shares of graduates in primarily professionally oriented programmes of the tertiary sector 5B, which accounted for more than one fifth of all degrees at ISCED levels 5 and 6.

Fig. 2b: Graduates of ISCED 5 and 6 programmes, by educational programme and gender (in line percent)

		2007						2009					
		5A1	5A2	5B1	5B2	6	5-6	5A1	5A2	5B1	5B2	6	5-6
E	M	58.1	21.4	16.8	0.2	3.5	100.0	59.3	21.2	16.2	0.1	3.2	100.0
	F	57.3	23.2	17.1	0.3	2.1	100.0	58.3	22.2	17.3	0.3	1.9	100.0
	T	57.6	22.5	17.0	0.3	2.7	100.0	58.7	21.8	16.8	0.3	2.4	100.0
A	M	65.0	6.1	21.4	0.5	6.9	100.0	55.8	16.0	23.9	:	5.2	100.0
	F	67.9	4.2	21.5	1.8	4.6	100.0	66.2	11.0	19.2	:	3.6	100.0
	T	66.5	5.1	21.5	1.2	5.7	100.0	61.3	12.9	21.4	:	4.4	100.0

Note: E = EU-27, A = Austria, M = male, F = female, T = total, : = no data available, 5A1 = tertiary sector A/HE/first degree, 5A2 = tertiary sector A/HE/second degree, 5B1 = tertiary sector B (in A e.g. post-secondary VET college (*Akademie*), post-secondary VET course (*Kolleg*), university college of education (*Pädagogische Hochschule*), part-time industrial master college (*Werkmeister-schule*)), /1st qualification, 5B2 = tertiary sector B/2nd qualification, 6 = tertiary sector/HE/advanced research-oriented programmes e.g. doctorate

Source: Eurostat, downloaded on 1 May 2010

The share of those who have a **qualification at least at upper secondary level** in Austria is with 85.8% (2009) far above the EU-27 average of 75.9% (cf. fig. 3). Austria has therefore reached the benchmark value envisaged within the EU by 2010 of at least 85% upper secondary level graduates.

Fig. 3: Youth education attainment level by sex (%)

	2002			2005			2009		
	TOTAL	F	M	TOTAL	F	M	TOTAL	F	M
EU-27	76.7	79.3	74.0	77.5	80.2	74.8	78.6	81.4	75.9
AT	85.3	84.6	86.1	85.9	87.3	84.6	86.0	86.1	85.8

Note: F = female, M = male

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 19 May 2011

Austria has also reached or even exceeded another benchmark value which aimed by 2010 at an EU average of adults in working age who take part in **lifelong learning** of at least 12.5% (Austria: 12.8%, cf. fig. 4).

Fig. 4: Lifelong learning: Adult participation in education and training by sex (%)

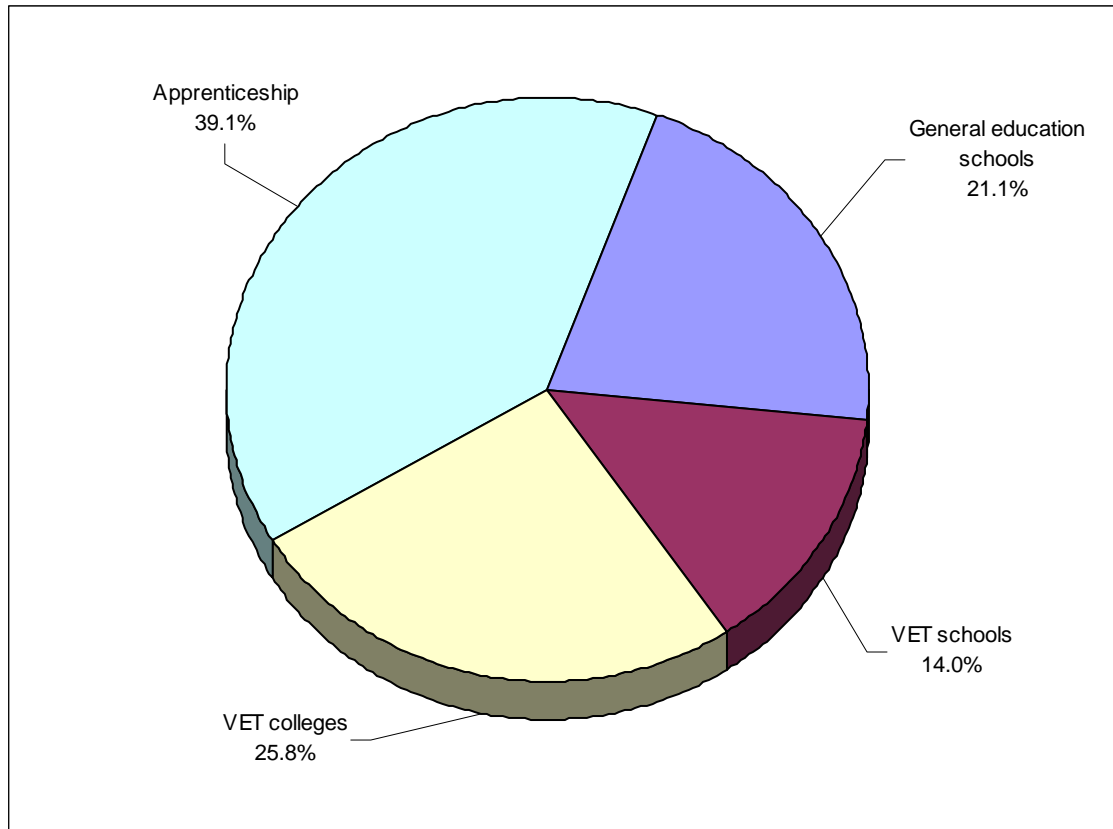
	2002			2005			2009		
	TOTAL	F	M	TOTAL	F	M	TOTAL	F	M
EU-27	7.2	7.8	6.6	9.8	10.5	9.0	9.3 (p)	10.2 (p)	8.5 (p)
AT	7.5	7.3	7.6	12.9	13.5	12.3	13.8	14.7	12.8

Note: p = provisional value

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 19 May 2011

Vocational education and training (VET) is extremely important in Austria. Overall some 80% of all students in the tenth year (upper secondary level) attend a vocationally-oriented programme (cf. fig. 5). Roughly 40% select an apprenticeship (dual training at a company and part-time vocational school), the rest opts for one of the VET schools and colleges (a variant with or without qualifications for higher education).

Fig. 5: Share of learners in the tenth year by educational programmes, school year 2008/09 (in %)



Source: Statistics Austria, own calculations

1.5 Definitions

The **definition of key terms in the field of (vocational) education and training** is largely identical in Austria to those at European level. The following table contrasts the German and English concepts and includes additions from the Austrian perspective and explanations where they deviate from the definitions used by Cedefop:

English term	German term	Explanation
General education	<i>Allgemeinbildung</i>	In Austria, general education schools can be found at lower secondary level (lower secondary school [<i>Hauptschule</i>], secondary academic school – lower cycle [<i>AHS Unterstufe</i>]) and at upper secondary level (secondary academic school – upper cycle [<i>AHS Oberstufe</i>]). Cf. 4.1. General education is also part of VET school and college curricula (cf. 4.3 and 4.4).
Prevocational education	<i>Berufsvorbildung</i>	In Austria, prevocational education and training programmes include the prevocational school (cf. 4.3) and, on the basis of HE legislation, university-based programmes.
Vocational education	<i>Berufsbildung; berufliche Bildung</i>	In Austria, VET starts at upper secondary level and is organised either as dual (cf. 4.4) or full-time school-based (cf. 4.3) programmes.
Technical education	<i>technische Ausbildung</i>	Technical education is a form of VET.
Tertiary education	<i>Tertiärausbildung</i>	In Austria, the tertiary education sector includes universities, university colleges of education, and Fachhochschulen (cf. 4.7).
Higher education	<i>Hochschulbildung</i>	Cf. tertiary education
Further education	<i>Weiterbildung</i>	Further education covers both general and vocational further education and training.
Post-secondary non-tertiary education	<i>Post-sekundäre nicht-tertiäre Ausbildung</i>	In Austria, this sector comprises programmes provided by post-secondary VET colleges and CVET programmes (e.g. post-secondary VET courses, part-time industrial master colleges, etc., cf. 4.6).
Training	<i>Praktische Ausbildung</i>	Practical elements of a training programme comprise e.g. workshop training, work placements at companies, or also the company-based part of apprenticeship training.
Initial vocational education and training	<i>Berufliche Erstausbildung</i>	In Austria IVET covers VET schools (cf. 4.3) and apprenticeship training (cf. 4.4).
Continuing vocational education and training	<i>Berufliche Weiterbildung</i>	CVET (cf. chapter 5) builds on an IVET qualification or supplements it.
School-based programmes	<i>schulische Ausbildungen</i>	These include all education programmes that are mainly held at school-based institutions.
Alternance training	<i>duale Ausbildung</i>	In Austria, the so-called “dual training” or alternance training is used synonymously with the terms apprenticeship or apprenticeship training.

English term	German term	Explanation
Apprenticeship training	<i>Lehre, Lehrlingsausbildung, Lehrausbildung</i>	Apprenticeship training is understood as a specific form of IVET during which apprentices spend some 80% of their apprenticeship at the company and 20% at the part-time vocational school for the relevant occupation.
Curriculum	<i>Lehrplan, Curriculum</i>	The curriculum comprises, among other content, general educational objectives and the syllabi for the individual subjects.
Qualification	<i>Qualifikation</i>	Definition from the EQF recommendation
Skills	<i>Fertigkeiten</i>	Definition from the EQF recommendation
Competences	<i>Kompetenzen</i>	Definition from the EQF recommendation

2 Modernising VET to support LL, internationalisation and mobility

2.1 VET policy developments and priorities in supporting LLL

In July 2011 the Council of Ministers accepted the “**Strategy for Lifelong Learning in Austria**” (cf. http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/20916/lll-arbeitspapier_ebook_gross.pdf), which was formulated in a broad discussion process and with the involvement of major institutions and stakeholders (among other, the social partners). The strategy is based on **five principle guidelines**:

1. **Life-stage orientation:** The Austrian LLL strategy aims to address the individuals’ life plans and realities and to meet the needs and requirements of the huge range of life-cycles by making relevant educational programmes available that are appropriate to the various age groups. Curricula, access and authorisation systems as well as the organisational structures of educational programmes therefore need to be oriented to the individuals’ life situations, focuses and perspectives in different life stages. In addition, relevant financing structures need to be developed that enable individuals to attain specific qualifications independent of their age.
2. **Putting learners at the centre:** LLL should be geared towards individuals. Its goal is, jointly with educational institutions and major stakeholders such as employers’ and employees’ associations, to create new and transparent forms of provision, strengthen the teachers’ professionalisation, set up new counselling services, and support individuals in their participation in LLL by implementing appropriate methodical-didactical approaches.
3. **Lifelong guidance:** Educational institutions and major actors in educational counselling and career guidance should ensure that counselling for learners within the meaning of the lifelong guidance strategy is easily accessible, independent and encompasses all educational providers as well as taking appropriate account, in particular, of groups who are less likely to access education (“difficult to reach”). Especially important is lifelong guidance at the interfaces of the education sector and in the transition stages in employment and life cycles.
4. **Competence orientation:** Educational actors and relevant stakeholders should jointly develop a system in which competences in the sense of learning outcomes can be used to enhance transparency and comparability between the different sectors. Learning outcomes represent the central starting point both for the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the European credit transfer system for VET (ECVET).
5. **Promoting participation in LLL:** The goal of the Austrian LLL policy is, jointly with educational institutions and major stakeholders such as employers’ and employees’ associations, to set up nationwide, needs-oriented educational programmes, promote closer ties and cooperation between the individual educational institutions and with the labour market, and demand mutual recognition of learning outcomes in the public, non-profit and private education sectors including corporate CET.

On the basis of these five principle guidelines **ten action lines** were agreed upon for which a series of measures and benchmarks were defined (cf. http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/20916/lll-arbeitspapier_ebook_gross.pdf). The ten action lines, which should be implemented by 2020, are:

1. Strengthening of pre-school education as longer-term basic requirement
2. Basic qualification and equality in the education system
3. Cost-free second chance education to enable adults to acquire basic qualifications and key competences

4. Further development of possibilities of transition into the labour market for young people
5. Measurements for a better reorientation in education and training, consideration of work-life-balance
6. Strengthening of “community education”-approaches with the help of communal entities and in the organised civil society
7. Strengthening of a learner friendly working environment
8. Further education for securing employability and competitiveness
9. Enrichment of life quality through education in a post-professional life phase
10. Measurement for recognising non-formally and informally acquired knowledge and competences in all education sectors

Current national debates on VET

Governance and financing: The Austrian school governance system is considered inefficient in an international comparison. The main reason for this view is the complex structure of competence distribution (cf. chapter 4). Moves towards governance reforms have been set in the course of the LLL strategy development (cf. 2.1) and debates on a general administrative reform. Reform models aim at an increase of school autonomy, at systemic outcome control, and the streamlining of administrative structures.

Educational counselling and career guidance: One major educational policy objective is the implementation of the lifelong guidance strategy as one of the cornerstones of the comprehensive LLL strategy (cf. 2.1 and chapter 9).

Education and training of teachers: One vital reform step of recent years in the field of teacher training was the conversion of (vocational) teacher training colleges to university colleges of education (cf. 7.1.3). Currently, a new reform of teacher training is under discussion (“*PädagogInnenausbildung Neu*”, cf. 7.1). First results are to be expected by the end of 2011.

Reform of curricula and innovative approaches to teaching and evaluation: One key objective consists in continually adjusting VET curricula to the requirements of the economy. In addition, curricula should provide space for school autonomy with regard to special focuses in order to respond optimally to local or regional framework conditions in the business sphere.

Meeting future qualification needs: Since October 2009 sectoral focus groups (“Standing Committees”) on specific occupational areas (e.g. metal, chemistry and electrical areas, cf. 8.1) have been organised. These focus groups are being coordinated by the Public Employment Service Austria (*Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS*) in cooperation with *ibw (Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft, Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy)*. The aim is to improve coordination between the requirements of the economy and the education programmes of the key players in CVET – the CVET institutions of the social partners (cf. 6.1.2) – and respond to changes more quickly (cf. 7.1).

Validation of non-formal and informal learning: Policy measures on this topic are discussed particularly in connection with the development of a national qualifications framework. In working groups involving relevant stakeholders, proposals are being elaborated on how learning that takes place outside formal settings can be made more visible.

2.2 Implementation of European tools and principles

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The **Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture** (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*) and the **Federal Ministry of Science and Research** (*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung, BMWF*) are responsible for the development of an NQF in Austria.

To coordinate relevant activities, an inter-ministerial **project group on the NQF** was set up in 2006, which strategically plans and administers the NQF development process, and acts as a general point of contact for all involved and affected parties. As well as the project group on the NQF, a **national steering group** comprising 23 members was set up in 2007, in which representatives of major institutions of the Austrian education landscape – such as other ministries, the social partners and federal provinces – are involved. They “steer” the entire NQF development process and take all important decisions (e.g. number of levels, definition of descriptors, allocation process, etc.).

The objective is to create an NQF by early **2012**, which will enhance the **transparency** and **comparability** of qualifications. The Austrian NQF is therefore envisaged to be of an **orienting nature**. It is not foreseen to have a regulating effect. The primary goal as of 2012 is to assign all qualifications of the **formal** education system in the NQF. In a parallel development, work will be launched on preparing approaches to referencing **non-formal qualifications**. Similarly, there will be considerations about how it needs to become easier in the future for **informally acquired skills and competences** to be more clearly visible to assist the acquisition of qualifications and thus facilitate credit transfer.

The Austrian NQF will comprise **eight levels**. The **descriptors** of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) will form the basis for classifying qualifications. Separate Austria-specific descriptors are not planned. Instead explanations were compiled which aim to make the descriptors easier to understand and apply. In addition, reference qualifications were specified for every level which aim to illustrate the requirements associated with the levels.

The qualifications will be assigned on the basis of **learning outcomes**. At present Austrian curricula, training and study plans only partly include formulations with learning outcome orientation. Therefore, activities in a number of working groups will focus on the concept of learning outcome orientation and the stronger orientation of curricula towards this concept.

To give, as far as feasible, all stakeholders of the education sector the possibility of co-determination and co-design, a **consultation process** was launched by the two coordinating ministries in January 2008, which lasted until the end of June 2008. The evaluation of the 265 statements received has made the range of opinions and partly contradictory positions on the NQF project among stakeholders visible. This applies in particular to the question of a possible classification of higher VET qualifications to Levels 6 to 8, at which higher education (HE) qualifications of the Bologna architecture are classified via the European framework. In late 2009, following an almost one-year discussion, an NQF structure was proposed which was also endorsed by the Austrian Council of Ministers. According to this structure, the Austrian NQF will comprise two paths at levels 6 to 8. On the one hand, all qualifications of the Bologna process will be allocated via the already existing Dublin descriptors. On the other, it will be possible to reference all the other qualifications to the relevant levels via the EQF/NQF descriptors. Levels 1 to 5 will comprise all qualifications.

Parallel to the consultation process, BMUKK and the Federal Ministry for *Health (Bundesministerium für Gesundheit, BMG)* commissioned **sectoral pilot projects** (construction, electro, tourism, and health), within the framework of which the referencing of selected qualifications to the NQF (on the basis of the EQF descriptors) was tested. In a number of workshops with participation of representatives from educational, business and social partner institutions, both the practical approach to referencing was piloted and challenges highlighted that should be considered in the NQF development process. It is also planned that the results of these pilot projects are included in the first **referencing report**, which is expected for mid-2012.

European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET)

Austrian curricula and training plans, in particular for IVET, meet only partially the requirements for implementing **ECVET** at present. On the one hand, curricula are not fully defined in terms of **learning outcomes**. On the other hand, most of them are **not** divided up **into learning outcome units or modules**. In addition, there is **no credit system** either in Austria which would enable the crediting of learning outcomes in the event of a (temporary) transfer from one learning context to another.

Nevertheless there are regulations governing the **crediting** of learning outcomes if learners change between training institutions and/or training levels. Most of these regulations refer to the crediting of **learning times** and are based on a **comparison of curricula or training plans**.

For the implementation of ECVET, which will be implemented in Austria with a focus on **transnational mobility**, a scientific study was conducted in 2008 to analyse the **“ECVET-readiness” of the Austrian VET system**. In this process, the authors of the report concluded that for the implementation of ECVET adjustments are necessary, both in legal (creation of a clear legal framework) and in organisational terms (stronger orientation of curricula and training plans to learning outcomes, more pronounced structuring of qualifications into smaller units). In 2010, **ECVET guidelines** were developed which should make it easier for practitioners from full-time VET schools and companies to handle ECVET within the framework of mobility stays. At the moment (September 2011), an ECVET website (www.ecvet-info.at) is being set up that should cover the ECVET guidelines, information about ECVET tools and best practice examples of mobility exchanges in which ECVET principles were used.

The overall goal of ECVET is to promote and facilitate **qualifying mobility**. Already at present, mobility stays within the framework of VET programmes are frequently conducted. But most of them tend to be shorter (some two to four weeks) and focus primarily on the acquisition of social and personal skills and competences (e.g. developing self-confidence, adaptability to new situations, teamwork, capacity for conflict, etc.). The evaluation, validation and certification of learning outcomes acquired in the course of mobility stays therefore play a fairly minor role. It is important to make the experience and acquired specialist competence visible in the **Europass Mobility** document, which is well accepted and in widespread use in Austria.

Europass documents

The five **Europass documents** are being used more and more in Austria, as can be seen by the current data. The number of monthly visits to the Europass homepage has risen from around 30,000 in 2007 to 43,000 in 2009 (latest data available). With the **Europass Mobility documents** the number of total registrations is currently at 7,270 (at the end of October 2009). There were 2,097 registrations here from January to the start of November 2009. This is already more than in the whole of 2008, when around 1,800 people registered for a mobility document. The database on **Europass Certificate Supplements** con-

tains 1,550 documents. This figure has increased by around 100 compared with 2008 because a series of supplements on qualifications were added to the database, and although these can no longer be obtained (e.g. apprenticeship occupations and specialisations in VET schools and colleges which have expired) they are still recognised. A survey at Austrian higher education (HE) institutions revealed that 97% of the HE institutions hand out a **Europass Diploma Supplement** to the graduates when they complete their studies. From 2010 all Austrian HE institutions are going to provide this document. At 85% of the HE institutions the Diploma Supplements are issued both in English and in German, at 10% solely in English, and at the remaining 5% only in German. In 37% of the HE institutions other Europass documents are also used, with the **Language Passport** indicated as the most common here.

2.3 Internationalisation and transnational mobility in VET

2.3.1 Policy framework for internationalisation and transnational mobility in VET

There is **no explicitly formulated policy framework** for internationalisation and transnational mobility in VET. However, VET students have many options to gather international experiences, e.g. within EU-funded mobility stays or within bilateral cooperations and school partnerships (cf. <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/europa/lla/index.xml>).

Strategic cooperations exist with countries of eastern and south-eastern Europe. The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*) has been involved in educational cooperations with CEE countries since 1992, in which the non-profit organisation *KulturKontakt Austria* (cultural contact) was established. The central concern of these cooperations is to support the education reform process in eastern and south-eastern Europe, particularly with regard to the modernisation of education systems and their integration in the European education system. Activities include

- ▶ projects and cooperations of VET schools, e.g. „ECO NET – a southeast European network of vocational practice firms set up for promoting practice-oriented economic training and entrepreneurship learning“
- ▶ reciprocal school visits of young people in training in neighbouring districts
- ▶ projects in school management, e.g. “European School Development – Managing the Challenges of Autonomy” – cooperation of experts from five countries to develop training modules concerning school management/school development

As regards the **legal and administrative obstacles** that prevent transnational mobility, an amendment to the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG*, cf. 4.2) was made in 2010 increasing the time apprentices can spend in a foreign training company from four to six months per apprenticeship year (§ 27c BAG). Within VET schools it is possible to spend five months or the whole academic year in a non-German speaking country (according the “ 25 (9) of the School Instruction Act [*Schulunterrichtsgesetz*], cf. 4.2). Then access to the next school year is automatically possible. However, discussions are underway to amend this passage and include also German speaking countries, like Germany and Switzerland. By and large, however, the legal regulations in Austria are rather favourable towards learner’s mobility.

In Austria mobility is mainly **financed** by EU funds. Although there are also national, regional and local programmes, there is hardly any centrally accessible data on their finances or the number of mobilities supported by these programmes (cf. Tritscher-Archan and Lenger 2010, p. 21ff). The total of subsidies applied for from the Leonardo da Vinci programme has risen between 2000 and 2009 from just over 2.3 million euros to around 4.3 million euros, so an increase of 87%. The total amount of used subsidies increased correspondingly from 1.32 million euros in 2000 to 2.5 million euros in 2009, a rise of 89%

(cf. OeAD 2009, p. 10). No measures are planned to shift funding towards specific target groups.

2.3.2 Transnational mobility programmes and schemes in VET

Data on the mobility of students and teachers in Austria is available centrally only for mobilities which are supported by EU programmes (cf. OeAD 2009). Since there are also mobilities which are not financially supported by the EU programmes but this data is hard to discover, no precise statements are possible on the actual extent of mobility movements in Austria. Thus

On the basis of the data on the EU funding programmes, between 2000 and 2009 in **IVET** there was an overall increase from 1,262 to 2,011 stays abroad. The distribution according to training types is interesting here. While the mobility of pupils, with an increase from 846 in 2000 to 1,742 in 2009, meant more than twice as many applications, this figure fell among apprentices from 413 in 2000 to 269 in 2009. The figures for stays abroad which were actually taken up are meaningful only up to 2006 because corresponding projects since 2007 are not finished yet in some cases. Between 2000 and 2006 the number of mobilities among apprentices rose only slightly from 227 to 244, among pupils the figure was more than doubled from 471 to 1,084.

Among **young skilled workers** in 2000, 224 mobilities were applied for and 32 were successfully carried out. After this the number of applications fell considerably, in 2001 there were only 81 applications and in 2006 there were 90 applications. The number of stays abroad that were actually taken up rose from 32 in 2000 to 45 in 2006. The data up to 2009 shows – after a recent decline in the number of applications in 2007 to only 76 – a rise to 123 in 2009. With the actual mobilities there was continuous growth from 58 in 2007 to 92 in 2009.

Among the **trainers** there have been fluctuating application figures since the year 2000 (between 100 and 300 applications). The number of stays abroad that were actually taken up rose from 154 in 2000 to 173 in 2009, however.

The **Europass Mobility** is widely used in Austria (cf. 2.2). For all mobility participants who receive fundings from Leonardo da Vinci it is obligatory to fill in the Europass Mobility. There is no information available on how knowledge, skills and competences acquired abroad are recognised in schools and training companies. With the implementation of ECVET qualifying mobility should be promoted and facilitated (cf. 2.2).

2.3.2 Transnational mobility programmes and schemes in VET

There are **no financial and non-financial incentives** available in Austria to encourage companies to participate in transnational mobility in VET as host or sending organisation. In mobility events, mainly organised by the National Agency for Lifelong Learning, companies are encouraged to take part in mobility activities by being presented examples of best practice. Moreover, with the International Young Workers Exchange (*Internationaler Fachkräfteaustausch, IFA*) an intermediary organisation exists in Austria that supports companies (but also schools) in the organisation of mobility stays by taking care of all administrative issues (search for adequate companies/schools abroad, application of funding, organisation of accommodation, etc.). IFA also supports incoming learners to find suitable companies in Austria. No database exists, however, of companies willing to accept mobility participants.

As regards **recognition** of the periods of work placement abroad, the Vocational Training Act (cf. 2.3.1) allows a period of six months per apprenticeship training year to be spent abroad.

3 VET to support recovery from the crisis

3.1 Overview

The banking, financial and economic crisis, which started in 2007, had severe global impacts on economies and labour markets. Although it seems that the economy has now turned around and the economic parameters again point at a recovery of the economic and employment situation, the medium- and long-term consequences of the crisis for the individual economic sectors, training systems and the various groups which are represented on the labour market cannot yet be properly appraised.

3.2 Effects of the crisis on VET and corresponding measures

3.2.1 Trends in learners' behaviour

As far as the **formal education system** is concerned, there is no evidence for any significant declines or subject-specific changes in access and graduation figures.

In the field of **full-time VET schools** (cf. 5.3), participant figures have not been declining since 2007, nor have there been any changes in the choice of specialisations. Even in technology-focused specialisations (such as construction, electronic engineering, mechatronics, etc.), where skilled workers are qualified for branches of industry which were more affected by the crisis, student figures have remained on the level of the previous year.

In the field of **dual training** (apprenticeship, cf. 5.4), there has been a slight drop in apprenticeship entrants' figures from 2008 to 2009 but a minor increase from 2009 to 2010 (cf. Apprenticeship Statistics of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber: 2008: 40,265; 2009: 39,605; 2010: 39,761). The decline from 2008 to 2009 could also have been due to the crisis. The lack of available empirical studies, however, does not allow to establish a clear correlation with the crisis. It could have been the "normal fluctuation" that apprenticeship participant rates are always subject to.

3.2.2 Trends in the enterprises' behaviour

The companies' training activities are always closely connected with the anticipated economic development, the companies' order situation, staff utilisation and longer-term corporate development strategies. Company closures due to the crisis and measures such as short-time work (cf. 3.2.3) which had become necessary due to production and order losses have also led to a slight decline in training company figures (by 5.1%): whereas according to the Apprenticeship Statistics of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber there were still 39,606 training companies in 2008, their number decreased to 37,564 in 2010. The number of those that started an apprenticeship training dropped less in the same period however (by 1.3%, cf. 3.2.1).

3.2.3 Measures taken to address the negative effects or as a result of the crisis (by public authorities at national, regional, local and by social partners)

Measures to cushion the effects caused by the crisis have been taken both in the **formal** and the **non-formal** VET segments. They were all introduced by public authorities, in close cooperation with the social partners.

Formal VET segment

Training guarantee until the age of 18

One measure for the formal education system is the so-called **training guarantee until the age of 18**. Even though this scheme was introduced within the framework of the 'Youth employment package' in June 2008 – and thus before the economic and financial crisis – it could be applied more intensively in the future due to the crisis. This will depend particularly on the training companies' future willingness to provide training (cf. 3.2.2).

'Training guarantee' means that all compulsory school graduates who do not have a place at an upper secondary school or cannot find a company-based apprenticeship place are given the opportunity to learn an apprenticeship trade at a supra-company training institution financed by Public Employment Service Austria (*Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS*) (the so-called 'training workshops'). Thus **supra-company apprenticeship training** has been set up as an equivalent part of dual VET alongside the regular company-based variant (cf. 5.4).

The **target group** of this measure are young people who cannot find a company-based apprenticeship place despite every effort. Following placement by *AMS*, the young people are trained at training workshops, which take over the company-based part of training. The school-based part of apprenticeship training is provided at regular part-time vocational school.

The young people are employed via training institutions, which also conclude the training contract, coordinate the training, register them for vocational school and bear the costs arising due to attendance of vocational school.

In 2009 some 9,000 young people attended supra-company apprenticeship training. This means that the number of training places remained at about the same level from 2008 to 2009. Should the number of apprenticeship post seekers grow in the next years, an increase of supra-company training places to 15,000 is possible.

Non-formal segment

Whereas hardly any effects caused by the crisis could be observed in the formal VET segment, these have been and still are felt more clearly in the **non-formal segment**. In this field it is primarily important to offer and promote training measures for people who have been/still are affected by short-time work or unemployment. Year on year, the number of training participants increased by 9% in August 2010, according to *AMS*. Overall, almost 63,000 people were enrolled in programmes organised within the so-called 'active labour market policy' in August 2010.

With an unemployment rate of 4.3% (August 2010) according to Eurostat, Austria boasts the lowest figure in an EU comparison (cf. EU-27 average: 9.6%). The number of people registered unemployed with *AMS* as of late September 2010 was 2% higher than in the reference month of the previous year. The economic sections especially affected by the crisis such as material goods production (– 31%), construction (– 12%), hiring-out of labour

(– 12%), retail and wholesale trade (– 10%) and tourism (– 2%) in particular demonstrate clearly declining unemployment figures, however.

In a move to mitigate the consequences of the crisis for companies and their employees, the federal ministry has initiated a series of measures connected with **learning and qualification**. The ‘qualification in the crisis’ scheme aims at maintaining companies' adaptability and increasing the opportunities of employees affected by labour shortage for sustainable employability. These measures mostly affect the **non-formal field of learning**.

Extended educational leave

Already before the crisis, employees had the possibility to interrupt an employment relationship for CVET purposes for a specific period of time, within the framework of the **educational leave** (*Bildungskarenz*). With the crisis intensifying, this option has been extended into the so-called *Bildungskarenz Plus* scheme, enabling companies to offer their staff the opportunity to undertake CVET measures rather than making them redundant.

Within the framework of educational leave, on the basis of an agreement concluded with their employer, employees are entitled to take some time out from their job for a period of three to twelve months within a total period of four years. The prerequisite is that this period is preceded by at least one-year of uninterrupted employment with the same employer. In addition, they have to furnish proof of attendance of at least 20 hours a week of educational measures. The employee on leave of absence is paid the so-called CVET benefit (*Weiterbildungsgeld*) by AMS, which is as high as notional unemployment benefit, and is also paid sickness, accident and pension insurance.

As a consequence of the crises, an extended form of the education leave measure was introduced between 2009. In the *Bildungskarenz Plus* scheme the costs for the CVET measure were borne by the company, but in turn partially reimbursed by the province where it was based. The amount of subsidisation ranged from 25% to 50% depending on the province. This measure expired in late 2010, when signs of economic recovery were visible.

The number of employees on educational leave (including extended educational leave) increased sharply from 2008 to 2009. Whereas in the annual average for 2008 there were 1,551 people on educational leave, this figure tripled in 2009 to an average of 4,894.

Short-time work with obtainment of a qualification

As of February 2009 new regulations for short-time work (that had existed before) entered into force. **Short-time work** is understood as a reduction of working hours and earnings of limited duration (between six and 18 months) as a result of economic difficulty. This measure aims at temporarily reducing labour costs and, at the same time, keeping employees who will again be needed after the crisis has been overcome.

In the course of the new regulation of short-time work, the possibility was created to use qualification grants in addition to short-time work grants. These qualification grants aim to create incentives to attend qualification (skills training) measures to bridge lost working hours.

Before a company is entitled to apply for short-time work and subsequently use grants, it has to meet certain preconditions. Thus, it must be able to prove in a demonstrable manner that it is in temporary, non-seasonal, economic difficulties that have been caused by external conditions which can only slightly or not at all be influenced by the company (e.g. loss of orders, drops in turnover connected with the business cycle, etc.). In addition, the company is obliged to prove that the overcoming of these difficulties is foreseeable in time and that resumption of full employment is possible following the expiration of this period.

Also, the company must have already tried all in-house options in an attempt to resolve its problems (e.g. alternative working-time arrangements, reduction of overtime, etc.).

Once these preconditions have been met, it is necessary to conclude a short-time work agreement between the company, the works council (if applicable), and the bodies with competence to take part in collective bargaining (the social partners). This agreement must include, in particular, the duration of the period of short-time work, maintenance of the number of employees during that period, the subsequent retention period, and the extent of loss of working hours. In addition, the agreement must state the amount of short-time work benefit paid by the employer to the employees affected by short-time work in addition to the reduced earnings. This benefit is intended to – partly – offset the loss of earnings incurred due to short-time work. The amount of this benefit equals the notional unemployment benefit for the hours lost. The employer is entitled to apply for a short-time work grant with the AMS for the short-time work benefit. AMS has fixed flat rates for the amount of this benefit. The flat rate paid out will depend on the employee's earnings and number of children.

In the event that, within the framework of **short-time work** schemes, **qualification measures** are conducted, the employer is obliged to pay a qualification benefit to the employee taking part in these measures of at least the amount of a fixed flat rate. To partly cover its costs incurred in this connection, he/she is entitled to apply for qualification grants with AMS, which will be 15% above regular short-time work grants. The prerequisite is that the agreement on short-time work contains precise information about the designing of these skills training schemes as well as the training concept. The concept needs to establish that the measures are useful in terms of labour market policy. This means that they are 'general training measures', which do not exclusively or primarily affect the employee's current and future place of work in a company that has implemented short-time work, but rather impart the skills and qualifications that can, to a large degree, be transferred to other companies and fields of work. Consequently, the following are not eligible for grants: meetings, conferences, congresses, mere product-related training, hobby courses, measures providing pure semi-skilled qualifications for simple tasks, standard training programmes, etc. In addition, training needs to comprise a minimum of 16 hours. Participation on the training course must take place at times when the employee would otherwise (i.e.: if the company had not introduced short-time work) be obliged to perform his/her work.

In the annual average for 2009 roughly 42,900 people in some 400 companies were on a short-time work scheme. When analysed by economic sector, it was primarily the automobile industry and its supplier enterprises as well as the machine engineering industry which took advantage of short-time work. Since April 2009 however short-time work has been gradually declining due to the improved economic situation. According to AMS data, 8,312 people in 99 companies were still in short-time work in Austria in July 2010.

The entire expense volume for the short-time work grant in 2009 amounted to 113.52 million euros, in 2010 it dropped to 54.97 million.

4 Historical background, legislative and institutional framework

4.1 Historical background

The introduction of general compulsory schooling in 1774 by Maria Theresia marks the beginning of the public school system during the Habsburg monarchy. As early as in 1758 the first vocational training school was set up in Vienna under the name “*k.k. Commercial Zeichnungsakademie*” (“Imperial Royal Commercial Academy of Drawing”). In 1770 the Bohemian tradition of “industrial schools” was adopted, which served as a school qualification in the emerging early capitalist period.

In the 19th century, following the liberal trade regulation (1859), in addition to traditional craftsmanship “*Realschulen*” (secondary schools) were set up, which offered commercial education on a broad basis. Due to further differentiations of subjects, by 1865 business schools, various technical and commercial “drawing schools”, and the Imperial Royal “*Polytechnikum*”, the later University of Technology, had been founded in Vienna.

From the 1870s onwards, economic liberalism showed increased interest in the VET sector, which up to that time had been neglected by the state’s school bureaucracy and was given further impetus thanks to increasing demand for qualified skilled workers below the “*Ingenieur*” level.

As of 1880 the liberal school politician Armand Freiherr von Dumreicher introduced a comprehensive reform programme that was oriented towards the French commercial schools and became decisive for the further development of the VET school sector in Austria.

By World War I (1914-1918) a well-organised, centralised system of vocational training had been established, the essential features of which have remained almost unchanged with its classification into higher and intermediate vocational schools, part-time industrial master colleges as well as schools for apprentices.

In the First Republic (1919-1938), school administration was strongly federalised, important framework conditions were introduced for the protection of apprentices (prohibition of night work etc.) and a representation of interest for apprentices was also created with the establishment of the Chambers of Labour.

With the beginning of the Second Republic (from 1945) a fundamental reorganisation of the Austrian education system was envisaged without essentially putting the existing system of apprenticeship training and school-based VET into question.

In 1962 the so-called “school compromise” was achieved, which until today has decisively shaped Austrian school legislation with the School Organisation Act (*Schulorganisationsgesetz, SchOG 1962*, cf. 4.2). The *SchOG* managed to harmonise the entire education system of the Austrian federal territory. In the field of school-based VET, the division into “part-time vocational schools”, “VET schools” (technical schools and business schools) and “VET colleges” (engineering colleges [*höhere technische Lehranstalten, HTL*], colleges of business administration [*Handelsakademien, HAK*], colleges of management and services industries [*höhere Lehranstalten für wirtschaftliche Berufe, HLW*], etc.) was introduced. In the curricula, the principle of linking vocational and general education was consistently integrated.

The basic principles of the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG*, cf. 4.2), which entered into force in 1969, still apply today. The implementation of the *BAG* is incumbent on the apprenticeship offices of the regional Economic Chambers; these are

assisted by the advisory boards on apprenticeship (*Berufsausbildungsbeiräte, BAB*), which comprise members of employers' and employees' representatives.

Whereas during the stage of educational expansion in the 1960s general education schools were the focus, as of 1970 the nationwide establishment of VET schools and colleges was encouraged more strongly by educational policy-makers.

The latest step to achieve the objective of a general inclusion in education, which had been envisaged since the 1990s, and to tackle the transition problem from compulsory schooling to employment was the development of the novel concept of the "training guarantee up to the age of 18" (cf. chapters 3.2.3 and 5.5).

4.2 Legislative framework for IVET

IVET is regulated by a number of laws and regulations. In the following, the major legal bases are listed and their contents outlined. (N.B.: The German abbreviation "BGBl." stands for Federal Law Gazette.)

School-based VET at the upper secondary level

One of the most important pieces of legislation in the school-based VET sector (cf. 4.3) is the **School Organisation Act** (*Schulorganisationsgesetz, SchOG*, BGBl. no. 242/1962 as amended). This Act regulates the responsibilities and structures of the school types within the sphere of competence of the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BMUKK). Its content includes the following items: the structure of the Austrian school system; general accessibility and exemption from tuition fees at public schools; the structure of curricula; provisions related to school pilot projects and special provisions concerning school organisation (individual school types and their tasks; organisation forms; admission prerequisites, curricula and training times; qualifications; number of schoolchildren per class; teachers and principals/head teachers).

Another important act is the so-called **School Instruction Act** (*Schulunterrichtsgesetz, SchUG*, BGBl. no. 472/1986 as amended), which regulates instruction and teaching at the schools to which the SchOG applies. It comprises provisions about the following areas, for example: admission, assessment of schoolchildren, repetition of school grades, cooperation of teaching staff, schoolchildren and legal guardians, etc.

Apart from these two important framework laws, **curricula** represent major parts of the legal framework. They are regulations issued by BMUKK on the basis of the SchOG. All curricula provide for special focuses that can be selected autonomously by schools. This not only enables schools to define special focuses within a given framework but also to develop their own school profiles.

The named school-related acts do not apply to some fields of school-based VET at upper secondary level. For schools in agriculture and forestry, separate legal regulations have been enacted, such as the **Federal Act governing schools in agriculture and forestry** (*land- und forstwirtschaftliches Bundesschulgesetz*, BGBl. no. 175/1966 as amended), and the legal basis for training in non-medical health professions can mainly be found in the **Federal Act on healthcare and nursing professions** (*Bundesgesetz über Gesundheits- und Krankenpflegeberufe, GuKG*, BGBl. no. 108/1997 as amended).

Dual VET (apprenticeship) at upper secondary level

Company- and school-based training within the framework of an apprenticeship training (cf. 4.4) are regulated by different acts and regulations. For the school-based part, **SchOG**, **SchUG** and the decreed (**framework**) **curricula** apply (cf. text above). The company-based part of training is regulated by the **Vocational Training Act** (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG*, BGBl. no. 142/1969 as amended), which is within the sphere of competence of the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend, BMWFJ*). Excepted from this are apprenticeships in agriculture and forestry, which are subject to the **Vocational Training Act for agriculture and forestry** (*land- und forstwirtschaftliches Berufsausbildungsgesetz, LFBAG*, BGBl. no. 298/1990 as amended).

The concrete contents of company-based training are regulated for every apprenticeship in a **training regulation** (*Ausbildungsordnung*), which includes the in-company curriculum (*Berufsbild*) – a type of curriculum for the company-based part of apprenticeship training. Also included in the training regulation are provisions concerning the apprenticeship-leave examination.

In the field of apprenticeship, **collective bargaining agreements** (CBAs) also play a major role. They are the result of negotiations between representatives of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the unions. The majority of CBAs refer to entire sectors and are binding on all companies of the respective sector. Some large companies have their own CBAs. Regarding apprenticeship training, CBAs specify minimum remuneration to be paid to apprentices during their apprenticeship period.

Post-secondary non-tertiary VET

The school-related acts **SchOG** and **SchUG** (cf. text above) apply to the overwhelming majority of post-secondary (non-tertiary) VET programmes in Austria. This applies to the following forms of training: post-secondary VET courses (*Kollegs*), add-on courses (*Aufbaulehrgänge*), preparatory courses (*Vorbereitungslehrgänge*), part-time industrial master colleges (*Werkmeisterschulen*), building craftsperson schools (*Bauhandwerkerschulen*), master craftsperson courses (*Meisterschulen*), and post-secondary VET colleges (*Akademien*) (cf. 5.6 and 6.1.2).

Tertiary VET

The major legal basis for studying at Austrian polytechnics (*Fachhochschulen*, cf. 5.7) is formed by the **Fachhochschule Studies Act** (*Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz, FHStG*, BGBl. no. 340/1993 as amended). It regulates, among other factors, the accreditation and evaluation of Fachhochschule study programmes as well as the responsibilities and tasks of the Fachhochschule Council.

The legal basis for university colleges of education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen, PHs*, cf. 5.7) is formed by the **Federal Act on the organisation of university colleges of education and their study programmes** (*Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Pädagogischen Hochschulen und ihre Studien*, 2005 University Act or *Hochschulgesetz*, BGBl. no. 30/2006 as amended). It regulates, among other factors, the tasks, structure and bodies of PHs and the designing of studies and awarding of academic degrees.

4.3 Institutional framework for IVET

According to the Federal Constitution (*Bundesverfassung*), various **national and regional institutions** share competences in VET.

School-based VET at the upper secondary level

National level

- a) The **Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture** (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*) is the supreme supervisory authority for the entire primary and secondary school sector, which comprises both general education and VET schools. It is responsible, among other tasks, for the elaboration of important school-related acts (cf. 4.2), the maintenance of schools, the preparation of framework curricula (cf. 4.2), the payment of teachers (cf. 10.1) and their in-service education and training (cf. 7.2 and 7.3). The execution of legal regulations is incumbent on the regional education boards (*Landesschulräte*).
- b) The **Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management** (*Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft, BMLFUW*) is responsible for the construction and maintenance of colleges of agriculture and forestry, as well as the selection and payment of teachers. The costs for teaching staff at schools of agriculture and forestry are borne equally by the BMLFUW and the provinces.
- c) The **Federal Ministry for Health** (*Bundesministerium für Gesundheit, BMG*) is responsible for creating the legal bases for programmes for non-medical healthcare professions (e.g. healthcare and nursing occupations, advanced-level medico-technical services, etc.) and in this connection for teaching content, scope, conditions of practical training, examinations and the specification of teaching staff.
- d) The **social partners** are entitled to comment on drafts of school-related acts, curricula and other regulations.

Regional level

- a) School supervision is incumbent on the respective **regional education board** (*Landesschulrat*). It is conducted by regional school inspectors, each of whom are responsible for a specific school type. The most important body within the regional education board is the Board, whose tasks include the submission of proposals for appointing principals/head teachers on behalf of BMUKK. In addition, the Board is entitled to issue statements on draft legislation and draft regulations (e.g. on curricula) and adopt regionally applicable provisions.
- b) The **federal provinces** are responsible for the construction and maintenance of schools of agriculture and forestry and bear 50% of personnel costs for teachers (cost sharing between the federal government and regional government, cf. 10.1).
- c) The maintenance and construction of educational institutions in the field of non-medical healthcare professions is largely taken over by **provincial governments** on behalf of the federal government.

Dual VET (apprenticeship) at upper secondary level

National level

- a) Company-based training is within the sphere of competence of the **Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth** (*Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend, BMWFJ*), which, among other tasks, elaborates the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG*, cf. 4.2) and adopts the training regulations for the in-

- dividual apprenticeship occupations (cf. 4.2). For the company-based part of training in agriculture and forestry, cf. regional level below.
- b) The BMUKK is responsible for the school-based part of training (e.g. the elaboration of draft legislation, the preparation of framework curricula). For the payment of teachers, costs are shared with the federal provinces (cf. 10.1). The school-based part of training in agriculture and forestry falls under the responsibility of the Federal Governments.
 - c) The **Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship** (*Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat, BBAB*) is a body foreseen by the BAG. It comprises representatives of social partners and part-time vocational schools. The BBAB submits proposals in the form of expert opinions, e.g. about the introduction of new or modernisation of existing apprenticeships, to the Ministry of the Economy.

Regional level

- a) **Apprenticeship offices** (*Lehrlingsstellen*) for engineering, industry and trade, which are located at the Economic Chambers, are responsible for the administration of apprenticeship training (examination of the training companies' suitability jointly with representatives of the Chamber of Labour, the recording of apprenticeship contracts, the organisation of apprenticeship-leave examinations, etc.).
- b) The **Regional Advisory Boards on Apprenticeship** (*Landesberufsausbildungsbeirat, LBABs*) elaborate proposals and suggestions on apprenticeship training in the respective province. Their members (representatives of social partners and part-time vocational schools) are appointed by the provincial governors.
- c) School supervision is incumbent on the respective **regional education board** (*Landesschulrat*). Supervision is conducted by regional school inspectors.
- d) The **federal provinces** are responsible for the construction and maintenance of part-time vocational schools (*Berufsschule*) and take over 50% of personnel costs (cf. 10.1).
- e) **Apprenticeship bodies and specialist training offices for agriculture and forestry** are responsible for the company-based part of training in agriculture and forestry; they are located at the Chambers of Agriculture in the respective federal provinces. Essentially they have the same tasks as the apprenticeship offices in the field of engineering, industry and trade.
- f) The **federal provinces** are responsible for the construction and maintenance of schools of agriculture and forestry and bear 50% of personnel costs for teachers.

Post-secondary non-tertiary VET

The same institutional framework conditions as in the field of school-based VET at upper secondary level (cf. text above) apply to the post-secondary (non-tertiary) programmes in Austria, to which also the school-related acts SchOG and SchUG apply.

Tertiary VET

- g) The **Fachhochschule Council** (*Fachhochschulrat, FHR*) ensures external quality management (accreditation and evaluation) of Fachhochschule institutions (FHs).
- h) The **BMUKK** finances a major part of the costs of every study place; the remainder is paid by the provider (cf. 10.1).
- i) **Fachhochschule providers** (e.g. municipalities, federal provinces, social partners) initiate FH study programmes and are responsible for their installation and maintenance.
- j) The **development teams** set up by Fachhochschule providers develop the study programmes and study plans (cf. 8.2).
- k) Many FHs pass on their study plans to the **social partner institutions** so these deliver their opinions, which is not compulsory.

- l) University colleges of education (PHs) are within the competence of the **BMUKK**, which lays down the framework curricula for the programmes.
- m) The payment of teaching staff is taken over by the **BMUKK** and **provincial governments**. Teachers at PHs for agriculture and forestry receive their salaries from the **Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (BMLFUW)**.

4.4 Legislative framework for CVET

In Austria, CVET is not regulated by any specific law. Although one major framework law has been in force since March 1973 in the form of the **Financing Act on the financing of adult education and public libraries from public funds** (or short: Adult Education Promotion Act, *Erwachsenenbildungs-Förderungsgesetz, EB-FG*, BGBl. No. 171/1973 as amended), a wide array of legal rules are laid down in various **school, university, tax and labour market laws**. A number of **collective bargaining agreements**, which are negotiated between representatives of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and trade unions, also include hints on CVET within the framework of employment relationships. Such provisions are not mandatory, however, and are the subject of negotiations.

The EB-FG lays down the authorisation of the Federal Government to promote CET (e.g. by way of subsidies to institutions or financing of innovative projects). Funds only go to institutions whose activities are non-profit-oriented. The amount of subsidisation is not specified (cf. 10.2). The EB-FG does not include any organisational specifications for CVET (CET vs. CVET cf. 5.1.1). The Federal Government undertakes not to interfere with programme or curriculum design. In addition, the provider of funds has no competence for imposing conditions regarding the methods or employed staff. This ensures the associations' independence.

4.5 Institutional framework for CVET

Institutional responsibilities in CVET are widely distributed between various institutions:

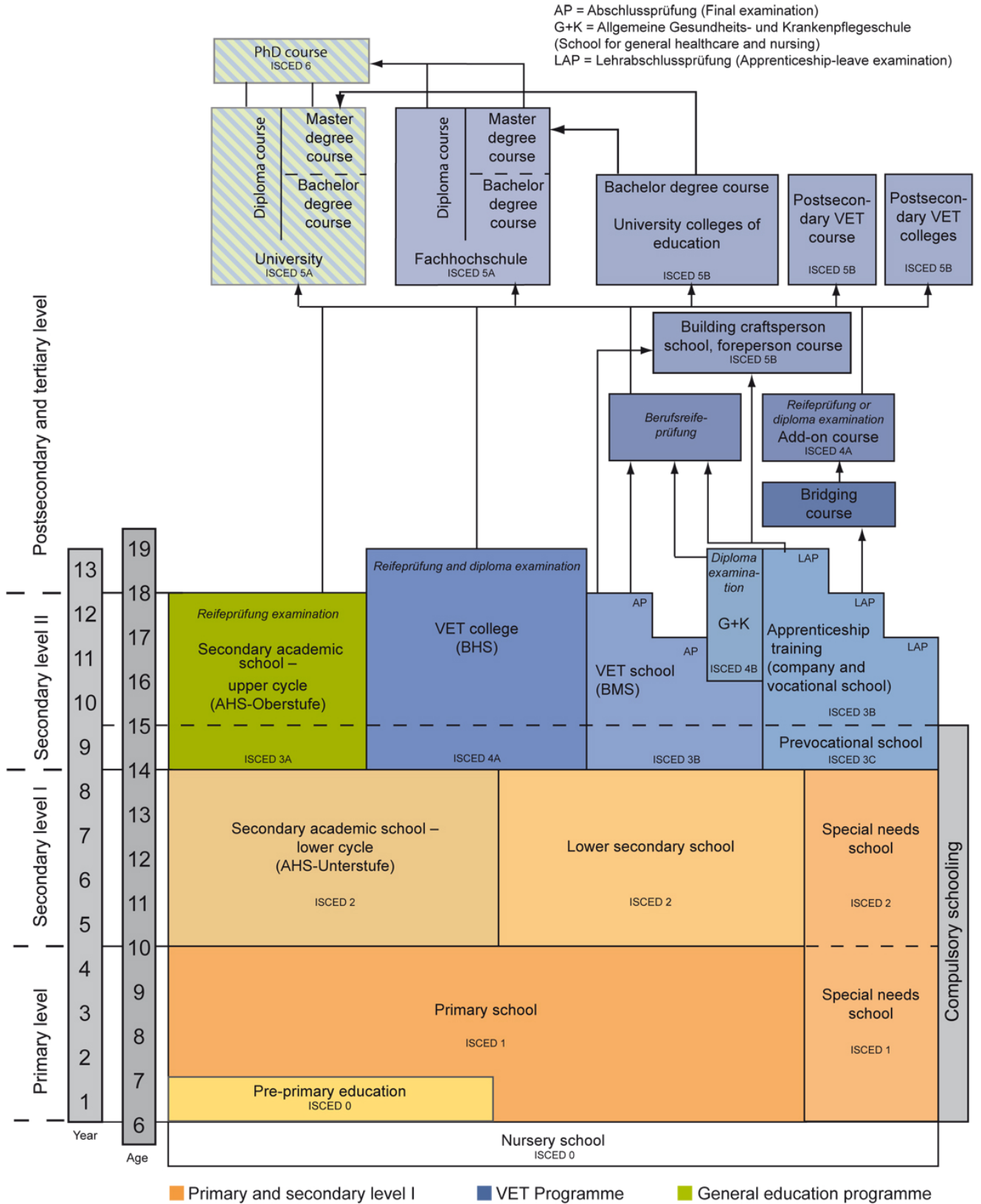
- a) Apart from the **Federal Government** – according to the Adult Education Promotion Act (cf. 4.4) – also **provincial governments** and **municipalities** promote CVET in private and non-profit CVET institutions.
- b) CVET provided at schools and higher education (HE) institutions is incumbent on the **Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture** (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*, cf. 6.1.2), in so far as it is not within the autonomy of the HE institution. Fachhochschule providers are also entitled to install courses for CET in the specialist branches of the FH programmes accredited at their institution.
- c) Depending on the type and subject of CVET, also other ministries are involved, such as the **Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (BMLFUW)** and the **Federal Ministry for Health** (*Bundesministerium für Gesundheit, BMG*).
- d) For CVET, the **Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMSG)** is primarily also responsible – for example for the CET of older workers and people with disabilities. Also labour market-related skills training and qualification measures provided by Public Employment Service Austria (*Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS*, cf. 10.3) are within the political sphere of competence of this ministry.
- e) For CET provision outside schools and HE institutions in Austria – as well as other CET providers – the **social partners** with their educational institutions are largely responsible. They include the Economic Promotion Institute (*Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI*) on the employers' side, the Vocational Training Institute (*Berufsförderungsinstitut, BFI*) on the employees' side.

institut, bfi) on the employees' side and the *Laendliches Fortbildungsinstitut (LFI)* of the Austrian Chambers of Agriculture (cf. chapter 6.1.1).

For tax-related issues (cf. 10.1) the **Federal Ministry of Finance** (*Bundesministerium für Finanzen, BMF*) is in general responsible.

5 Initial vocational education and training

Graph 1: The Austrian education system



Source: ibw

5.1 Background to the initial vocational education and training system and diagram of the education and training system

The Austrian education system is characterised by an **early differentiation of VET paths** from lower secondary level onwards and a **broad VET provision** at upper secondary level. Thus, one major objective of Austrian VET policy is to continue to enhance **permeability** between different education and training paths. As well as teaching recognised VET qualifications, all VET paths that are longer than two years provide general access to higher education (cf. 5.7) – either directly by taking corresponding final exams or indirectly by taking additional exams (cf. 5.1.2).

Austria has a **qualification-oriented VET system**, which imparts a number of professionally relevant skills via the combination of an apprenticeship system with a comprehensive school-based VET system (at upper secondary level). The **great importance of VET within the education system** and the educational expansion since the 1970s has led to a higher qualification of the labour force. Some 80% of all employees have a vocational and/or HE qualification.

In Austria, children aged 3 and over can attend a **nursery school** (*Kindergarten*). Nursery school is used by the overwhelming majority of the population as a preschool educational provision: some 90% of five-year-olds attend public or private nursery schools. Nursery school is not part of the school system, however, attendance is voluntary. Since autumn 2010 the nursery school year has been compulsory in all provinces for the school year before the child's school entry.

In Austria, **compulsory schooling** starts at the age of six and lasts for nine years, therefore until the age of 15 years (cf. graph 1). There are private and state schools; the number of private schools is fairly low. In state schools, no tuition fees are charged. The Austrian school system provides for a variety of education and training options which are designed to meet the needs and interests of children and their parents.

Primary level

In Austria, every child's educational career starts with the four-year **primary school** (*Volksschule*) at **primary level**. Pre-primary education is foreseen for children who have reached compulsory school age (i.e. the age of six) but are not yet mature enough for school (e.g. because they have difficulties following instruction). Primary schools impart comprehensive general education to all pupils with the objective of fostering their social, emotional, intellectual and physical skills and abilities. Children with special educational needs can attend either a special needs school (*Sonderschule*) that is tailored to their needs or primary school classes that are run in an integrative (inclusive) scheme.

Lower secondary level

At the age of ten, when children transfer to lower secondary level the first differentiation into two school types takes place: some 66% of all schoolchildren (in the school year 2008/09) change to **lower secondary school** (*Hauptschule, HS*), the remainder enter the **lower cycle of secondary academic school** (*allgemeinbildende höhere Schule* or *AHS-Unterstufe*). In large cities, where HS and AHS-Unterstufe are equally easy to reach, the school type AHS is chosen more frequently. In Vienna e.g. less than half of children attend HS. Both school types last for four years.

The change from primary school to lower secondary school or *AHS-Unterstufe* requires a positive final certificate at the end of the fourth grade; for entry to AHS, additional performance requirements (e.g. certain marks in the main subjects) need to be met. Pupils with

special pedagogical support needs can attend the fifth to eighth grade at a special needs school.

Lower secondary schools (*Hauptschule, HS*) provide schoolchildren with basic general education, preparing them for transfer to the upper secondary level and for working life. Ability groups in German, mathematics and the foreign language taught serve to support the pupils' different learning needs. Career guidance classes in the seventh and eighth grade enable them, for example, to complete taster apprenticeships at companies for a few days. HS can also define special focuses within the framework of school autonomy (e.g. in foreign languages, sports, informatics).

Secondary academic school (*allgemeinbildende höhere Schule, AHS*) consists of a four-year lower cycle (*Unterstufe*) and a four-year upper cycle (*Oberstufe*). AHS aims to impart a broad and advanced secondary general education. In the fifth and sixth years, curricula for lower secondary school and the lower cycle of AHS are identical. As of the seventh year, AHS programmes are divided into three branches with different focuses:

- classical secondary academic school (*klassisches Gymnasium*) with Latin,
- secondary academic school specialising in mathematics and geometry (*Realgymnasium mit Schwerpunkt auf Mathematik und Geometrischem Zeichnen*),
- secondary academic school specialising in economics, chemistry and handicraft (*wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium mit Schwerpunkt auf Wirtschaftskunde, Chemie und Werkerziehung*).

Career guidance classes are integrated into the curricula of all three AHS branches in the seventh and eighth years.

Upper secondary level

The **final year of compulsory schooling** corresponds to the first year of the upper secondary level. At this point, the school system's differentiation increases (cf. graph 1). As well as the upper cycle of academic secondary school (*AHS-Oberstufe*) and the one-year prevocational school (*Polytechnische Schule, PTS*, cf. 5.3), there is a choice between the following VET paths at this point, which lead to different qualification levels (cf. 5.3 and 5.4):

- VET schools (*berufsbildende mittlere Schulen, BMS*),
- VET colleges, (*berufsbildende höhere Schulen, BHS*),
- Schools for general healthcare and nursing (from year 11 onwards), and
- Dual VET (apprenticeship, *Lehre, Lehrlingsausbildung* – from year 10).

This **diversity of paths** reveals the special importance of VET in Austria. Another proof is the high **attractiveness** of VET, which manifests itself in the large participant figures. Some 80% of young people in the tenth grade attend a VET path (cf. 1.4, fig. 5). All stakeholders and decision-makers consider it important to maintain this high importance of VET. These mainly include the continual further development of training content and structures as well as the extension of the differentiated range of paths. Particularly in the field of apprenticeship, financial incentives are also granted mainly for companies (cf. 10.2) in order to counteract the declining training commitment. Social partners, which exert a considerable codetermination on the structure and content of apprenticeship training (cf. 4.3 and 5.4), are making efforts to increasingly gain young people for this VET path by launching advertising and information campaigns.

Another major aspect to maintain the level of attractiveness of VET is safeguarding the **quality of VET paths**. Quality development processes have been ongoing in all school areas over the past few years. The goal of all of these activities – such as of the VET Quality Initiative (*Qualitätsinitiative Berufsbildung, QIBB*) – is to safeguard and further develop the quality in teaching and administration by applying recognised methods. In addition, educational standards have been defined for general education and vocationally specific

core subjects over the last few years in order to safeguard comparability and quality of training. In company-based training within the framework of apprenticeship, quality assurance is mainly conducted within the framework of the apprenticeship-leave examination, in which an external exam committee comprising social partner representatives examines the apprentices' performances vis-à-vis an Austria-wide valid standard.

5.2 IVET at lower secondary level

There are no IVET programmes at lower secondary level in Austria.

5.3 IVET at upper secondary level (mainly school-based)

At **upper secondary level**, students can choose between different (pre-) vocational paths (cf. graph 1 and fig. 1):

Fig. 1: IVET paths at upper secondary level

Education and training programme	Sectors of the economy	ISCED	Ratio GE – VET	Ratio school – practice	Duration of programme	Further qual. options
(Pre-)vocational schools						
Prevocational school	AF, mat. goods, construction	3C	40% GE, 60% VET	60% school 40% practice	1 year	Upper secondary schools
VET school (BMS)*	AF, mat. goods, construction, transport, bus.-related services	3B	40% GE, 60% VET	90% school 10% practice	3 to 4 years	BRP (cf. 5.1.2), direct entry into LM, self-employment
VET colleges (BHS)*	AF, mat. goods, construction, transport, bus.-related services	3A/4A; 5B post-sec. VET course	40% GE, 60% VET	90% school 10% practice	5 years	HS, direct entry into LM, self-employment
Schools for general healthcare and nursing	Non-industrial sector	4B	80% VET, 20% GE	50% school 50% practice	3 years	Direct LM entry, BRP (cf. 5.1.2)
Dual vocational training						
Dual vocational training (apprenticeship)*	AF, mat. goods, construction, transport, bus.-related services, non-ind. sector	3B	90% VET, 10% GE	20% school 80% practice	2 to 4 years	BRP (cf. 5.1.2), direct entry into LM, self-employment

Notes: AF = agriculture and forestry; mat. goods = material goods production; bus.= business; non-ind. = non-industrial; GE = general education; VET = vocational education and training; qual. = qualification; LM = labour market, BRP = *Berufsreifeprüfung* (cf. 5.1.2)

* Schools and apprenticeships in forestry and agriculture are not listed separately as they correspond to the other VET schools, colleges and apprenticeship trades in length, structure, pedagogy, etc. The difference lies within the legislative and institutional frameworks (cf. chapters 4.2 and 4.3).

The acceptance of (pre-) vocational paths is proven by the **high number of participants** (cf. also 1.4). Some 80% of all learners at upper secondary level are enrolled in a (pre-) vocational education and training programme (cf. fig. 2). Participation rates in Austria are thus far above the EU-27 average.

Fig. 2: Students enrolled in lower secondary education by programme orientation (values and share of the total), 2009

	Total ISCED 3	ISCED 3 GEN	in %	ISCED 3 PV	in %	ISCED 3 VOC	in %
EU-27	20,633,767	10,946,188	53.0	:	:	9,687,579	47.0
Austria	390,882	88,835	22.7	24,044	6.2	278,003	71.1

Note: GEN = general education, PV = pre-vocational programme, VOC = vocational education and training

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 19 May 2011

Prevocational school (Polytechnische Schule, PTS, 15 years, ISCED 3C)

The one-year **PTS** offers **prevocational VET** following the eighth school year. Every student must choose one of the following specialist areas: metal, electro, construction, wood, trade-office, services, or tourism. Within the school autonomy framework, additional specialist areas can be added (e.g. information technology, mechatronics). In this process, the career entry opportunities in the respective region as well as the students' interests are taken into consideration. Due to the variety of subjects, company visits and days of practical work experience at training workshops, students are offered tailored guidance for their future career decision. PTS offers students a number of options to get acquainted with the world of work to prepare them, above all, for apprenticeship training. But PTS graduates can also enter other vocational and general-education schools.

Overview of VET schools and colleges (BMHS – BMS & BHS)

Acquisition of vocational skills and qualifications, as well as well-founded general education, is at the centre of **VET programmes** at BMHS. In this way, graduates can enter working life directly or opt for a wide range of further education and training, CET and higher qualification programmes.

To be **admitted to a BMHS** it is necessary to furnish proof of successful completion of the eighth school year. Depending on previous qualifications (e.g. lower secondary school or the lower cycle of secondary academic school, cf. graph 1), the envisaged school type (BMS or BHS), and school place supply, previous performances and/or an admission exam represent additional selection criteria. For artistic or pedagogical/social areas of specialisations, an aptitude test and/or entrance interview are also required.

For attendance of a BMHS no **tuition fees** are paid.

The major **characteristics** of BMHS include the following:

- **Differentiation:** In accordance with their abilities and interests, students can select from among a variety of specialist areas and training focuses (cf. 11.2). Within the framework of school autonomy, schools can change the number of hours within a certain range, offer new subjects, or specify training focuses and area specialisations. Within an area specialisation, the curricula of most programmes in the first two years (ninth and tenth year) have a common core area, with final specialisation defined from the eleventh school year.

- **VET content and methodology:** BMHS curricula provide for a combination of general education and intensive specialisation training in theory and practice, with BMS putting more weight on practical elements. Action-oriented teaching is a basic principle at BMHS; the work at workshops, laboratories, in kitchens, training firms, etc. and mandatory work placements in business constitutes an integrated part of training.
- **Curriculum development:** The objectives and content of education and training at BMHS are laid down in framework curricula. They are regulated by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*). Initiatives towards curricular reforms and/or the introduction of new subjects or area specialisations are launched by the educational institutions themselves or the BMUKK. In so-called curriculum committees, teachers and experts of BMUKK and the economy develop draft curricula for the respective subjects. As well as a number of other institutions, the social partners also receive the drafts to issue their statements. In the implementation of the framework curricula, schools are entitled to change the number of lessons of individual subjects autonomously or develop their own focuses, taking account of (regional) economic requirements. Current curricula are largely formulated with input-orientation. In the process of developments regarding a National Qualifications Framework, work is ongoing to achieve a more pronounced outcome orientation.
- **Key skills:** Entrepreneurial competence is both an interdisciplinary principle and the subject of special focuses. Depending on the school type, up to three foreign languages, at least one, are compulsory. The foreign language is also used increasingly as the working language in specialist areas. Computer skills are a *conditio sine qua non* in all BMHS forms; a number of programmes and focuses target the information and communication technology sector.
- **Business projects:** When working on projects or diploma theses with concrete tasks from the business sphere or technology (also as a part of final exams), students gather fundamental subject-related experiences and learn to apply project management methods. They test their key skills and set up initial contacts for their later entry into the world of work.
- **Teaching staff with business experience:** For a number of subjects, BMHS teachers are required to prove subject-relevant business practice (cf. chapter 7).
- **National Qualifications Framework:** The development of an NQF is currently (date: September 2010) ongoing (cf. 2.2). It is not yet finally decided what levels BMS and BHS will be assigned to.

VET schools (berufsbildende mittlere Schulen, BMS, 14-18 years, ISCED 3B)

BMS (which is also termed *Fachschule* in German, except for commercially oriented VET, cf. 11.2) mostly lasts for three or four years and combines general education with a VET qualification for specific occupations. BMS is completed with a final exam. Graduates acquire VET qualifications entitling them to immediately exercise relevant occupations and giving them access to specific regulated professional activities.

Following completion of additional exams, e.g. *Berufsreifeprüfung* (cf. 6.1.2) or attendance of add-on courses (cf. 6.1.2), graduates have access to programmes in the post-secondary and HE areas. BMS also offers the prerequisite for a later activity as entrepreneur.

One- and two-year BMS, mostly in the social sphere, combine general education with pre-vocational training. They mostly serve as “bridges” to programmes in the healthcare or social sector for which a minimum age of 17 is laid down.

VET colleges (berufsbildende höhere Schulen, BHS, 14-19 years, ISCED 4A) – double qualification

Five-year BHS provides in-depth general education and high-quality specialist training that combines theory and practice. It is completed with the Reifeprüfung and VET diploma exam (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*), viz. a double qualification. Graduates are awarded general access to higher education, acquire the qualification for senior occupations and obtain access to regulated professions.

BHS also provides the basis for later self-employment, i.e. the starting-up of new businesses. The high level of education and training at BHS is also reflected in their recognition at European level. The inclusion of BHS in Annex II of Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications confirms that graduates of BHS programmes acquire professional qualifications for which in the majority of other member states they need to complete programmes at post-secondary level. A reduction of the study duration at *Fachhochschule* (cf. 4.7) can be achieved due to the competences acquired by BHS graduates who want to continue their studies.

Schools for general healthcare and nursing (Schulen für allgemeine Gesundheits- und Krankenpflege, GuK, ISCED 4B)

GuK schools hold a special position among VET schools and colleges. It takes students ten grades to complete their programmes successfully. GuK schools must be set up at hospitals or in connection with hospitals. At least half of the entire training time of 4,600 hours needs to be dedicated to practical training and at least a third to theoretical instruction. Students are entitled to monthly pocket money, which the school provider is obliged to pay. After preparing a written subject-specific piece of work (*Fachbereichsarbeit*) and taking a diploma exam at the end of their training, graduates are entitled to hold the occupational title “Qualified nurse” (*Diplomierete Gesundheits- und Krankenschwester / Diplomierter Gesundheits- und Krankenpfleger*).

5.4 Alternance training (incl. apprenticeship)

As well as VET full-time schools (cf. 5.3), **dual VET** (also termed apprenticeship training, in German: *Lehre, Lehrausbildung or Lehrlingsausbildung*) constitutes a particularly practice-oriented variant of VET: training takes place at **two places of learning**: at the training company and at part-time vocational school (*Berufsschule*, therefore also termed “dual” system). Some 40% of young people take up dual training in one of the approximately 220 apprenticeships at the end of compulsory schooling (cf. fig. 5 in 1.4). Of all students in VET at the upper secondary level, 45% are in apprenticeship training, while 55% are in a school-based VET institute (VET school or college, cf. 5.3 and fig. 1). Austria has, together with the Czech Republic, the fourth highest rate of “combined school- and work-based programmes” in Europe (following Denmark, Hungary and Germany, cf. fig. 1).

	BE	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	ES	FR	DY	LV	LU	HU	NL	AT	PL	SI	SK	FI	SE
School-based	96	55	1	26	99	94	96	72	N	N	77	43	70	55	88	N	60	80	N
Com-bined	4	45	99	74	1	6	4	28	:	:	23	57	30	45	12	:	40	20	:

: = not available

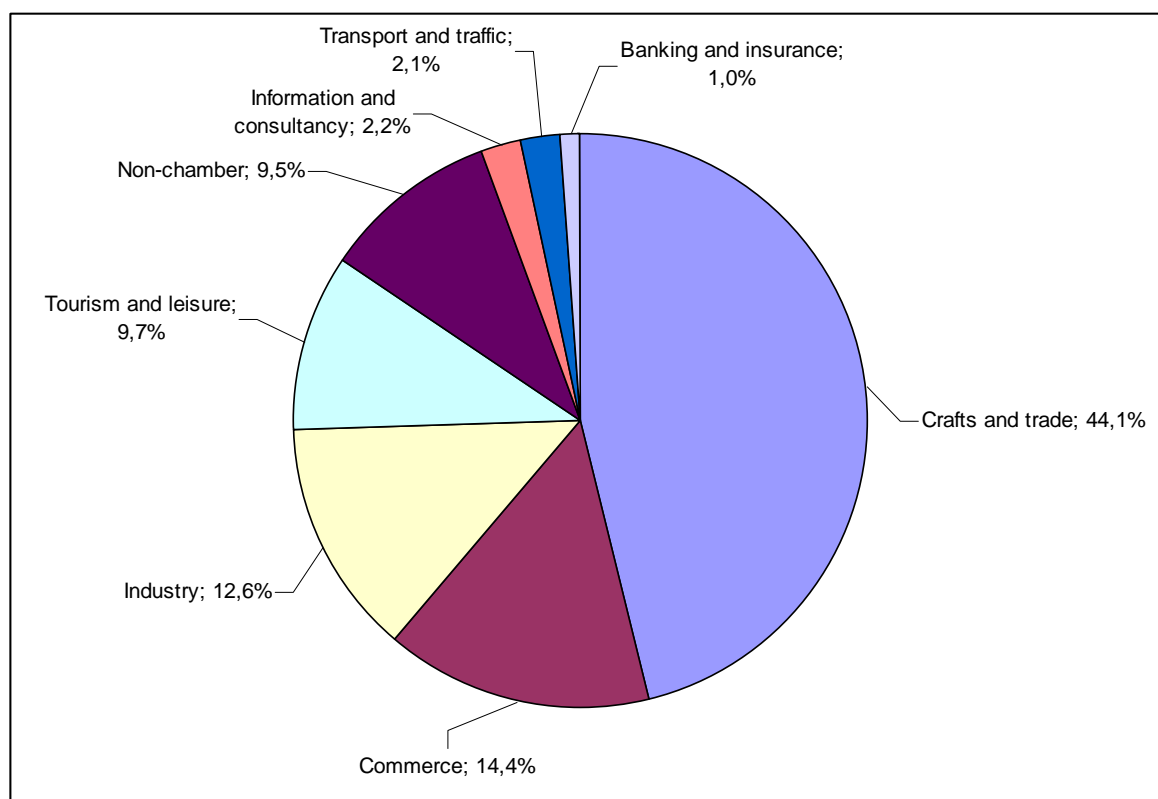
Source: Cedefop’s calculation based on Eurostat, UOE data collection on education systems, date of extraction: 25 July 2010

Traditionally, apprenticeship training is strongly anchored in the crafts and trade sector, which train about half of all apprentices (cf. fig. 1). Also in commerce, industry and in the tourism and leisure industry sector, apprenticeship training is widespread. In December 2010 the apprenticeship statistics of the Federal Economic Chamber detailed some 37,500 training companies, which were training ca. 130,000 apprentices.

Companies that want to train apprentices are obliged, before recruiting them, to submit an application for determination of suitability for apprenticeship training (request for declaration) to the respective competent apprenticeship office of the Federal Economic Chamber. The apprenticeship office is obliged by law to examine in collaboration with the Chamber of Labour whether the company meets the prerequisites for apprenticeship training. If that is the case, the company will be issued a so-called “declaration”, certifying that the company is entitled to recruit apprentices.

The company meets the prerequisites if it is equipped and managed in a way that it is in a position to impart to the apprentice the knowledge and skills included in the occupational profile. Those enterprises that cannot fully impart this

Fig. 1: Apprentices by sectors in 2010 (n = 129,899)



Note: non-chamber = companies that are not members of the Economic Chamber (e.g. lawyers, municipal administrations, etc.); non-chamber §§ 29 and 30 of the Vocational Training Act (BAG) = establishments pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act (*Jugendgerichtsgesetz*) and homes for the care and upbringing of young persons at risk as well as in independent IVET establishments

Source: Apprenticeship statistics of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (not counting agriculture), 2010

Costs and benefits of dual training

The provision of apprenticeship places by companies depends on the companies' requirements and the individual company's cost/benefit ratio.

The main **benefit of apprenticeship training** for training companies is the training of future skilled workers who, due to the close connection of training contents with real-life work contexts, meet the company's and sector-specific practical requirements in the best possible way. Equivalent workers would sometimes not be found on the labour market at all or only with the risk of a wrong personnel decision and cost burden following external recruitment and induction training.

Furthermore the company can continue to employ the best suited apprenticeship graduates after they have acquired their diploma, thus strengthening their loyalty to the company and avoiding staff fluctuation. Company-based IVET and CVET therefore offers young people a personal future and development prospects in the region. This fact is reflected not least in a very low youth unemployment rate in an EU comparison (cf. 1.3).

In a medium-term cost-benefit calculation, in many apprenticeships the apprentice's productive work must be assessed higher than training costs as the apprenticeship time progresses because corresponding employment of apprentices can save on unskilled and semi-skilled labour.

Wherever training companies record net costs of training at the end of the apprenticeship period it is important to design the economic and legal framework conditions in a needs-oriented and flexible way and relieve the burden on companies to keep their willingness to train.

This fact is taken into account with a differentiated support system, which ranges from an apprenticeship training bonus and integrative IVET to reductions of non-wage labour costs (cf. 10.1).

As **factors inhibiting** apprenticeship training, lack of flexibility of legal framework conditions, administrative costs and the high degree of specialisation of company-based training curricula are mentioned in particular. In addition, the previous qualifications and entry qualifications of applicants for apprenticeship posts do not always meet the companies' expectations.

General information about the apprenticeship system

The **prerequisite** for taking up an apprenticeship is the successful completion of nine years of compulsory schooling. Most apprentices complete compulsory schooling by attending a one-year prevocational school after lower secondary level (cf. graph 1 and 5.3) and then start an apprenticeship. Depending on the occupation, training lasts between **two and four years**, as a rule three years. Those who have already acquired apprenticeship or school qualifications in the same or a similar specialist field (be it in Austria or abroad) can train for a shorter amount of time.

Young people themselves are responsible for finding an **apprenticeship post**. Support is offered by job ads in newspapers and online databases (such as the online apprenticeship exchange of Public Employment Service Austria [*Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS*] and the Federal Economic Chamber [*Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, WKO*], www.ams.at/lehrstellen), Public Employment Service matches candidates with job openings. Apprentices are taken on as trainees by their training company on the basis of an **apprenticeship contract**, but are also **students** of a part-time vocational school.

At the end of the apprenticeship period, every apprentice can sit for an **apprenticeship leave examination (ALE)**. This exam determines whether the candidate is able to carry out the activities necessary for the occupation himself/herself appropriately. The ALE consists of a **practical** and a **theory examination**. The theory exam is waived under certain conditions, e.g. if the exam candidate can prove successful completion of the final grade of part-time vocational school. The exam committee comprises employer and employee representatives.

Following successful completion of the ALE, apprentices have several options of obtaining **further qualifications**, such as taking the master craftsperson exam for a craft (cf. 5.3) and *Berufsreifeprüfung* or *Studienberechtigungsprüfung* as prerequisites for enrolling for an HE programme (cf. 5.7). For many, an apprenticeship also forms the basis for a self-employed career. Almost 40% of leading economic figures have completed an apprenticeship.

Company-based training

Company-based training comprises some 80% of the apprenticeship period. For every apprenticeship occupation, there exists a **training regulation** (*Ausbildungsordnung*), which is valid across Austria and includes the **in-company curriculum** (*Berufsbild*). This is a type of **curriculum** for the company-based part of training and lays down the minimum knowledge and skills to be taught by companies to apprentices. This aims to ensure a **uniform level** in every apprenticeship occupation. The **competence profile** (*Berufsprofil*), which is also specified in the training regulation, formulates the competences apprentices should have at the end of their training in a learning-outcome-oriented form.

The **social partners** are essentially in charge of decisions about what in-company curriculum and/or competence profile an apprenticeship occupation is based on and they exert a decisive impact on the structure and content of apprenticeship training via their work in advisory councils (cf. 4.3).

Companies that are not able to provide the full range and variety of training (according to the in-company curriculum and competence profile) in an apprenticeship occupation can nevertheless train apprentices by joining forces with other companies in a **training alliance**. In some branches, there are also supra-company training centres (e.g. training construction sites in the construction sector).

The apprentice is involved in the production or service-provision process and acquires the necessary skills under real-life conditions of working life. The **IVET trainer** who boasts specific subject-specific and pedagogical qualifications is responsible for planning and implementing training.

In-company training is largely financed by **companies** themselves. Young people receive an **apprenticeship remuneration** from their employer; this is usually regulated in the (sector- or company-specific) collective agreement (cf. 4.2 and 10.1). However, there are also a number of public subsidies to support training companies (cf. 10.1).

School-based education

As well as company-based training, the apprentice is obliged to **attend part-time vocational school**. Their task is to impart fundamental theoretical subject-related knowledge, support and complement company-based training, and expand general education.

The focus of education at part-time vocational school is on occupation-oriented specialist instruction (with about 75%), general subjects make up one quarter of the school period (e.g. German, mathematics, one modern foreign language, political education). In the fore-

ground are personal development, deepening social skills, and promoting communication skills. Specialist instruction also includes training in workshops or laboratories. The **curriculum** of vocational school is prepared in analogy to the training regulation of the respective apprenticeship occupation by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*, cf. 4.3).

Classes at vocational school are organised differently in the federal provinces:

- in full-time blocks, where part-time vocational school instruction interrupts company-based training for some weeks, usually for between eight and twelve weeks, or
- on one or two days every week.

Financing of vocational school (teachers, school maintenance) is conducted by the federal provinces. The Federal Government refunds 50% of the costs for the teaching staff (cf. 4.3 and 10.1).

5.5 Programmes and alternative pathways for young people

In June 2008 a youth employment pact that had been elaborated by the social partners and the Federal Government entered into force. It introduced, among other things, the **training guarantee for young people up to the age of 18** (*Ausbildungsgarantie bis 18 Jahre*, cf. 3.3.2).

Training guarantee means that all compulsory school graduates who do not have a place at an upper secondary school or cannot find a company-based apprenticeship place are given the opportunity to learn an apprenticeship trade at a supra-company training centre (the so-called training workshops, *Lehrwerkstätten*) financed by Public Employment Service Austria (*Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, AMS*). Thus supra-company apprenticeship training has been set up as an **equivalent part of dual VET** alongside the regular company-based variant (cf. 5.4).

The target group of this measure are young people who cannot find a company-based apprenticeship place despite every effort. Following placement by AMS, the young people are trained at training workshops, which take over the company-based part of training. The school-based part of apprenticeship training is provided at regular part-time vocational school.

More than 100 apprenticeships are currently offered within the framework of supra-company apprenticeship training. In 2010/11, 10,278 young people have attended a supra-company apprenticeship scheme.

Young people are employed via training institutions, which also conclude the training contract, coordinate the training, register them for vocational school and bear the costs arising due to attendance of vocational school.

According to information of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (*BMASK*) roughly 60% of youths could be placed from supra-company apprenticeship training into a company-based apprenticeship or employment relationship in the last training year.

Another alternative VET measure is **integrative IVET** (*Integrative Berufsausbildung, IBA*). This measure was anchored in 2003 in the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG*, cf. 4.2) with the goal to provide a VET qualification to disadvantaged young people and integrate them into working life.

Integrative IVET mainly targets young people with special pedagogical support needs at the end of compulsory school, for young people without a lower secondary school qualification, as well as for young people who cannot complete an apprenticeship training programme without special support.

Integrative IVET can be implemented in **two variants**:

- a. IVET provision in an apprenticeship can be prolonged by one or two years.
- b. IVET can also be restricted to sub-areas of an apprenticeship occupation. The duration of training can be between one and three years, depending on the training content.

Young people who are trained within the framework of variant a (integrative IVET over a prolonged period) are obliged to attend part-time vocational schools for apprenticeship. Also in case of variant b (partial qualifications), they are obliged to attend this type of school depending on the specified training objectives.

The training relationship must be facilitated and supported by **vocational training assistance**. It has the task of advising and supporting the training companies and young people before and during the training. It also acts as a contact point for all parties involved and takes over coordination of training.

In principle there exist two options of concluding a integrative IVET depending on the two variants:

- Variant a: apprenticeship-leave examination
- Variant b: final exam about the acquired knowledge and skills in the last twelve weeks of training. The qualification obtained is determined by professional experts and a member of the vocational training assistance.

5.6 Vocational education and training at post-secondary (non tertiary) level

Educational institutions considered as post-secondary

- implement courses accounting for at least 180 ECTS credit points (three-year programme) and
- require general access to HE (cf. 5.7) or, if appropriate, proof of artistic aptitude.

In Austria, IVET programmes at this education level are provided within the framework of **post-secondary VET colleges** (*Akademien*) (ISCED 5B). The number of post-secondary VET colleges is declining, however, as more and more of them are transformed into Fachhochschulen, i.e. tertiary sector educational institutions (cf. 5.7). Some programmes, mainly in the healthcare and social sphere, are however (still) offered at post-secondary VET colleges. In 2007 there were more than 66,000 learners in this education segment (cf. fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Students enrolled in post-secondary non-tertiary education by programme orientation (values and share of the total), 2009

	Total ISCED 4	ISCED 4 General education	in %	ISCED 4 (Pre-) voca- tional training	in %
EU-27	1,501,995	173,928	11.6	1,328,067 (s)	88.4
Austria	66,087	0	0.0	66,087	100.0

Note: s = Eurostat estimate

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 19 May 2011

Post-secondary VET colleges for healthcare professions (Akademien für Gesundheitsberufe)

There are a number of highly qualified healthcare professions, including that of doctor, whose qualifications and activities are regulated separately. Academies are only allowed to set up post-secondary VET colleges in this field in connection with hospitals; practice-oriented qualifications are provided for the following occupations: midwife; physiotherapist; biomedical analyst; radiology technologist; dietologist; occupational therapist; speech therapist; and orthoptist. Before being admitted to a course at a post-secondary VET college for medico-technical services, an aptitude test must be taken.

Post-secondary colleges for social work (Akademien für Sozialarbeit)

Courses include a comprehensive mandatory work placement and enable graduates to exercise senior occupations in the social field (e.g. youth and family bureaux, crisis centres, educational guidance, street work). Graduates are awarded the professional title "Graduate Social Worker" (*Diplom-Sozialarbeiter/in*).

5.7 Vocational education and training at tertiary level

Tertiary educational institutions where IVET is offered include **Fachhochschulen** and **university colleges of education** (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*). Attendance of these institutions requires university entrance qualifications. These can be obtained by successfully completing the

- upper secondary school-leaving exam at secondary academic schools (cf. 5.1) – *Reifeprüfung*
- upper secondary school-leaving exam at VET colleges (cf. 5.3) – *Reifeprüfung* and VET diploma (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*),
- *Berufsreifeprüfung* exam (cf. 6.1.2)
- *Studienberechtigungsprüfung* exam (see 6.1.2).

In addition, access requirements can be met on certain conditions by people with relevant professional qualifications (e.g. an apprenticeship diploma) and as a rule after taking specific additional exams, without taking the above-mentioned exams.

Fachhochschulen (ISCED 5B)

The 1993 Fachhochschule Studies Act (*Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz, FHStG*, cf. 4.2) created the possibility of setting up **practice-oriented studies at higher education level**. Fachhochschule programmes (*Fachhochschul-Studiengänge, FHS*) are not developed by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*) but, in their majority, by private providers; they are offered following approval by the Fachhochschule Council (FHR, cf. 4.3). They are subject to a specified accreditation and evaluation procedure that is supervised by FHR (cf. 8.2).

In contrast to universities, FHS have the function of providing a scientifically founded **vocational qualification**. This means they are tailored to concrete occupational fields. Periods of work placement form a mandatory part of the curriculum. FHS are currently established in, among others, the following fields: business, technology, law, tourism, design, sports, information and media, social affairs and pedagogy, journalism, military sciences, etc.

In principle, the **access requirements** for FH programmes are HE entrance qualifications or a professional qualification of relevance for the course. In addition, target-group-specific FHS of reduced duration (six semesters) have been set up for graduates of engineering colleges (cf. 5.3) who have relevant professional practice. As the number of students per

year and course is restricted, all candidates are obliged to take part in a selection process conducted by the FH provider if the number of candidates exceeds the number of available study places.

As well as the eight- to ten-semester diploma study programmes, FHS have since 2002 also been entitled to offer the **Bachelor-Master system** (six semesters plus two to four semesters). Successful completion of an FH master programme or diploma study provides access to subject-related university-based doctoral courses.

University colleges of education (Pädagogische Hochschulen) (ISCED 5B)

The following types of compulsory school teachers (cf. 7.1) are trained at **university colleges of education** (PHs, cf. 7.1.3): primary school teachers, lower secondary school teachers, teachers for special needs schools, vocational school teachers, teachers for specialist instruction in engineering, arts and crafts, teachers for information and office management at upper secondary level.

There are a total of 14 PHs in Austria. Since 2007 they have offered internationally comparable qualifications in line with the Bologna process. PHs not only attach great importance to pedagogical and didactical education but they focus on teaching students the application of pedagogical knowledge in everyday school life. In addition, students complete periods of work placement at selected schools of the chosen school form or at specific training institutions in order to collect teaching experience.

In 2007, the year when (vocational) teacher training colleges and in-service teacher training colleges were transformed into university colleges of education, more than 260,000 people in Austria were enrolled in HE-based programmes (cf. fig. 1). More than 80% of them were in ISCED 5A programmes, i.e. in more theory-oriented programmes, whereas some 9% were in practice-/occupation-specific-oriented programmes of level 5B. 7% were attending programmes that lead directly to further research qualifications, such as the doctorate. The Austrian participation rate in ISCED 6 education programmes is therefore twice the EU-27 average.

Fig. 1: Students at ISCED level 5 by programme destination (values and share of the total) and at ISCED level 6 (values), 2009

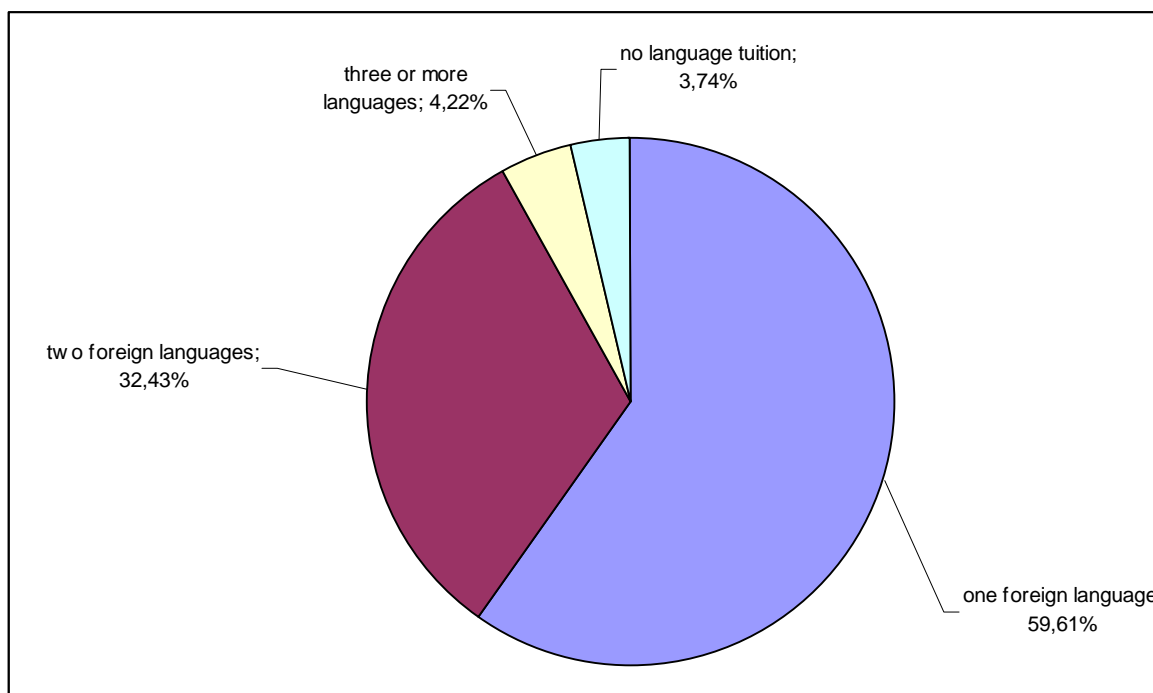
	Total ISCED 5+6	ISCED 5A	in %	ISCED 5B	in %	ISCED 6	in %
EU-27	19,505,749	16,370,782	83.9	2,617,882	13.4	517,085	2.7
Austria	308,150	258,519	83.9	31,160	10.1	18,471	6.0

Source: Eurostat, date of extraction: 19 May 2011; own calculations

5.8 Language learning in IVET

Approximately 60 % of all students at the upper secondary level were taught in at least one **foreign language** in the school year 2004/05 (latest figures available, cf. ÖSZ, p. 2, Fig. 1). One-third of all students at this educational level receive foreign language tuition in two languages, 4 % in three or more languages. Only 4 % have no language tuition at all.

Fig. 1: Language tuition at upper secondary level, school year 2004/05



Source: ÖSZ 2005, p. 2

Of all languages taught, English is learned by 96 % of the students across all types of schools at primary and secondary levels, followed by French (11 %) and Italian (4 %, cf. Fig. 2). As regards the VET sector, English is likewise the language that is most often taught (94 %), followed by French (20 %) and Italian (9 %, cf. Fig. 2). The languages of the ethnic minorities in Austria play a minor role: On average, only 0.3 % of the students learn Slovenian, 0.2 % Croatian and 0.1 % Hungarian. Even fewer students learn these languages in the VET sector.

The Common European framework (CEF) for languages has played an important role in the Austrian language policy discussion since 2001. Curricula, textbooks and tests have been designed in line with the level descriptions of the framework. Several Austrian initiatives, e.g. the educational standards for English or the Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages, are based on the CEF.

CLIL, the content and language integrated learning approach, is used in Austrian schools, even though no data as to its extent exist.

Fig. 2: Number of students receiving foreign language tuition, by school type and selected languages, 2003/04

Schools	No. of students	English	French	Italian	Spanish	Russian	Slovenian	Croatian	Hungarian
Obligatory schooling	686,397	662,420	11,705	12,594	443	52	3,157	2,011	439
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>96.5</i>	<i>1.7</i>	<i>1.8</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>0.1</i>
Primary schools	386,212	369,974	4,136	3,691	235	34	2,931	1,815	311
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>95.8</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>0.1</i>
Lower secondary school	266,783	266,128	6,832	8,344	208	18	200	196	128
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>99.8</i>	<i>2.6</i>	<i>3.1</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.0</i>
Special needs schools	13,793	6,796	9	-	-	-	9	-	-
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>49.3</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
Pre-voc. school	19,609	19,522	728	559	-	-	17	-	-
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>99.6</i>	<i>3.7</i>	<i>2.9</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
GE schools	183,045	181,927	53,734	17,554	9,290	2,810	85	391	199
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>99.4</i>	<i>29.0</i>	<i>9.6</i>	<i>5.1</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.1</i>
Sec. academic school – lower cycle	108,876	108,453	12,262	2,147	387	1,175	24	264	120
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>99.6</i>	<i>11.3</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>0.4</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.1</i>
Sec. academic school – upper cy.	74,169	73,474	41,472	15,407	8,903	1,635	61	127	79
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>99.1</i>	<i>55.9</i>	<i>20.8</i>	<i>12.0</i>	<i>2.2</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.1</i>
VET sector	298,496	279,843	59,253	27,129	6,897	903	217	124	199
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>93.8</i>	<i>19.9</i>	<i>9.1</i>	<i>2.3</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.1</i>
Part-time VET sch.	130,597	123,434	10,908	1,402	-	-	-	-	-
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>97.5</i>	<i>8.4</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
VET schools	47,335	41,866	1,740	1,857	15	6	21	1	9
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>88.4</i>	<i>3.7</i>	<i>3.9</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.0</i>
VET colleges	120,564	114,543	46,605	23,870	6,882	897	196	123	190
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>95.0</i>	<i>38.7</i>	<i>19.8</i>	<i>5.7</i>	<i>0.7</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.2</i>
Colleges for nursery school teachers	9,114	8,271	114	69	13	-	32	17	18
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>90.8</i>	<i>1.3</i>	<i>0.8</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>0.4</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.2</i>
All school types	1,177,052	1,132,461	124,806	57,346	16,643	3,765	3,491	2,543	855
<i>in %</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>96.2</i>	<i>10.6</i>	<i>4.9</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.1</i>

Source: Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur 2004

6 Continuing vocational education and training

6.1 General background

In Austria, CET (continuing education and training) differs from IVET (initial vocational education and training) mainly due to the **participants' age** and the **type of educational programmes previously completed**: as soon as someone has completed a VET programme (e.g. in the form of successful completion of an apprenticeship or a *Fachhochschule* programme) and as soon as he/she takes up another educational stage afterwards, this is usually termed CET. In most cases, the participants' age is over 20.

In Austria, CET is frequently used as synonymous with the term **adult learning** or **adult education**. This is understood as the adults' comprehensive attendance of courses provided at educational institutions and in their sphere of work. This wide interpretation reveals that adult education is an extremely heterogeneous sector. The following forms can be differentiated between:

- Continuing vocational education and training
 - enterprise CVET (at own company, parent/associate companies, manufacturers', CVET institutions, or other external providers; informal learning on the job);
 - external, institutionalised CVET (at schools, HE institutions, CVET establishments), including obtainment of qualifications later in life;
 - qualification and skills training measures as an instrument of active labour market policy: these include courses and employment promotion schemes set up by Public Employment Service (AMS).
- General adult education and public education

CVET primarily aims to deepen and extend vocational competences and skills and/or obtain qualifications. Furthermore, skills training and qualification measures as an instrument of active labour market policies can be summarised under this heading. The main reasons for participation in CVET are the following: the employee's preservation of gainful employment, improvement of his/her position at work, and/or re-integration into the labour market. **General adult education** mainly focuses on expanding knowledge and enhancing awareness, without primarily professional reasons being behind it.

Depending on the institution where CVET is provided and on the defined educational objective as well as the certificate to be acquired, a distinction is made between **formal and non-formal CVET**:

- **Formal CET** is held at institutions of the formal education system, i.e. schools and HE establishments. But it is also understood as a form of CET that, although provided outside schools and HE institutions, is oriented towards acquiring a formal qualification or certificate. In addition, this term also covers obtainment of educational qualifications at a later stage in life (cf. 6.1.2).
- **Non-formal CET**: This form of CET is offered at CET institutions but does not lead to a formal qualification. It can be geared towards CVET but also general adult learning (cf. 6.2).
- A **mixed form** combining qualification and skills training initiatives as an instrument of active labour market policy (cf. 6.3). These measures can lead to a formal qualification – in which case they would be classified under formal CET – or deepen and extend skills and competence without the participant obtaining a certificate, i.e. thus coming under non-formal CET.

In Austria, CVET is **not regulated by any specific law**. Although one major framework law has been in force since March 1973 in the form of the Financing Act on the financing of adult education and public libraries from public funds (or short: Adult Education Promotion Act, *Erwachsenenbildungs-Förderungsgesetz, EB-FG*), a wide array of legal rules are laid down in various school, university, tax and labour market laws (cf. 3.3).

Responsibilities for CET in Austria are widely distributed between various institutions:

- As well as the Federal Government (on the basis of the above-mentioned federal act EB-FG), provincial governments and municipalities also promote CVET.
- CVET provided at schools and higher education institutions is incumbent on the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*), in so far as it is not within the autonomy of the HE institution. Fachhochschule providers are also entitled to install courses for CET in the specialist branches of the FH programmes accredited at their institution.
- The tasks related to in-house CET and labour market-related skills training and qualification measures provided by Public Employment Service Austria (*Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, AMS*) are within the political sphere of competence of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (*Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz, BMASK*).
- For CET provision outside schools and HE institutions in Austria – as well as other CET providers – the social partners with their adult education institutions are largely responsible. They include the Economic Promotion Institute (*Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI*) on the employers' side, the Vocational Training Institute (*Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi*) on the employees' side and the *Laendliches Fortbildungsinstitut (LFI)* of the Austrian Chambers of Agriculture. These institutions are represented together with eight other institutions in the Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions (*Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs, KEBÖ*), an independent forum of cooperation of Austrian adult education institutions.

But depending on the type and subject of CVET, other ministries are also involved, such as the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (*Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft, BMLFUW*) and the Federal Ministry for Health (*Bundesministerium für Gesundheit, BMG*). For tax-related issues (education bonus, training allowance, cf. 10.2) the Federal Ministry of Finance (*Bundesministerium für Finanzen, BMF*) is in general responsible.

The **financing** of CET depends on what type of programme is attended. The majority of CET activities organised at schools, partly at HE institutions, and CET aiming at labour market skills is financed by the public, other forms of CET are paid by participants and/or companies. There are, however, a series of measures (e.g. educational leave) and financial subsidies (e.g. in the form of grants and tax relief) for which it is possible to apply to help support the CET institutions and (partly) cover the participants' and companies' expenses (cf. 10.2). All these initiatives aim to serve as incentives to take part in CET in order to improve the companies' economic situation and strengthen the CET participants' position in the labour market. Aiming at facing up to the current **financial and economic crisis** by means of education, skills training and acquisition of qualifications, already existing measures have since the autumn of 2008 been restructured and extended as an incentive to take part in CET. For more detailed information about these measures, refer to chapter 3.2.

The Austrian CET landscape is characterised by a large **institutional variety** combined with a **wide range of provisions**. Apart from the public sector (schools, HE institutions), which makes up a minor part of CET, a strong commitment by social groups can be observed. Primarily the social partners, but also religious communities and associations substantially co-design the CET landscape via their institutions.

6.2 Formal learning in CVET

The main **characteristics** of formal CET programmes include the following:

- **Institutions/providers:** Formal CET is held both at state institutions (schools, HE institutions) and non-state (for-profit and non-profit) establishments. Ten of the most important non-profit providers have joined forces and set up the Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions (*Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs, KEBÖ*). KEBÖ is not an organisation of interest in the classic sense but rather a working group. It does not offer CET itself. The events held by the individual KEBÖ institutions differ greatly in form and duration, ranging from individual lectures to courses with a curricular structure.
- **Curricula and quality assurance:** The curricula of formal CET at schools are developed by teaching staff and experts of the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*) and, where there is a day-form, are equivalent to the curricula of these educational programmes (cf. 4.3 and text below). The curricula of CET programmes at HE institutions are designed by these autonomously. The curricula of formal CET programmes at non-state institutions are also formulated by providers themselves. Where relevant acts and/or exam regulations concerning qualifications exist, curricula are defined in analogy to them. Quality assurance of teaching is ensured, on the one hand, via the results of final exams, on the other also via regular evaluations and participant surveys.
- **Entrance requirements:** There are no general entrance requirements to CET courses or programmes. They are geared towards the respective measure's content and can refer e.g. to certain exams, professional practice, etc.
- **ISCED/NQF:** Formal CET at schools and partly at HE institutions is classified in ISCED, whereas CET at non-state institutions is not. For the future, however, it is planned to reference formal and non-formal programmes to the levels of the National Qualifications Framework. As discussions about a possible referencing are still ongoing, no precise statements can be made to date about outcomes.

Fig. 1a: Participation rate in formal education and training by highest level of education attained (%), 2007

	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6	Total
EU-27	2.7	6	12.7	6.6
Austria	1.0	4.1	8.1	4.2

Source: Eurostat, extracted on 24 May 2011

The focus of vocational qualification in Austria within the formal training system is on the age group below 20 years of age. In 2008 more than 85% of all young people in Austria between 20 and 24 boasted a first vocational qualification degree at upper secondary level (cf. chapter 1.4).

Fig. 1b: Participation rate in formal education and training by labour status (%), 2007

	Employed	Inactive population	Unemployed	Total
EU-27	6.6	6.3	7.1	6.6
Austria	3.0	7.3	5.8	4.2

Source: Eurostat, extracted on 24 May 2011

In the following please find a short description of the most important **formal CET programmes** at schools and HE institutions (cf. item A) and non-state institutions (cf. item B).

A. CET at formal educational institutions (schools and HE establishments)

Secondary academic school (Allgemein bildende höhere Schule, AHS) for people in employment (ISCED 3A)

Secondary academic school for people in employment lasts for four years, is offered as an evening class and requires successful completion of compulsory schooling. Its curricular content is the same as in the full-time form for young people (cf. 5.1). It is completed with a certificate of secondary education (*Reifeprüfung*), which grants access to post-secondary and tertiary education (cf. 5.6 and 5.7). Students do not pay any tuition fees for the secondary academic school for people in employment, which means that this form of CET is paid by the public.

VET college (Berufsbildende höhere Schule, BHS) for people in employment (ISCED 4A)

The VET college for people in employment lasts four to five years and also requires successful completion of compulsory schooling. Its curriculum and the specialisations provided there correspond to the main forms of this school type (cf. 5.3). It is completed with a certificate of secondary education and VET diploma (*Reife- und Diplomprüfung*), thus granting unrestricted access to post-secondary VET colleges, study courses at university and universities of applied sciences. Students enrolled in VET colleges for people in employment do not pay any tuition fees.

Post-secondary courses in VET (ISCED 5B)

The main target group of post-secondary VET courses are graduates of secondary academic schools (cf. 5.1), i.e. people who have no IVET qualification. Therefore post-secondary VET courses represent entry to VET for this group. The prerequisite for admission to post-secondary VET courses is successful completion of a certificate of secondary education (*Reifeprüfung*). Post-secondary VET courses are offered in a two-year day-time form with a modular design or a mostly three-year evening form; they are completed with a diploma examination (*Diplomprüfung*). In this way, graduates acquire the qualification for senior occupations (depending on the specialisation of the respective post-secondary VET course; their specialisations are identical to those of the *BHS* main form) and are given access to regulated trades (cf. 5.3).

Foreperson courses, part-time industrial master colleges (Werkmeisterschulen) and building craftsperson schools (Bauhandwerkschulen) for people in employment (ISCED 5B)

These special forms of VET school (*berufsbildende mittlere Schule, BMS*) have curricula governed by public law but are offered at not-for-profit adult learning establishments (cf. item B). They enable students to acquire higher vocational qualifications upon completion of a VET programme (apprenticeship, VET school, cf. 5.3 and 5.4) in the field of engineering, industry and trade. They last for two years and are completed with a final examination before an exam committee. Graduates are entitled to train apprentices and, following four years of relevant activity, to exercise a relevant trade in a self-employed capacity.

Add-on courses (Aufbaulehrgänge) and preparatory/bridge courses (Vorbereitungslehrgänge) (ISCED 4A)

Add-on courses usually last for three years and lead VET school graduates (cf. 5.3) to the respective VET college's certificate of secondary education and VET diploma. They can

also be attended by apprenticeship graduates (cf. 5.4) who have previously attended a one- to two-semester bridge or preparatory course. Add-on courses have a modular design and are often offered in combination with post-secondary VET courses.

Berufsreifeprüfung and Studienberechtigungsprüfung

Learners who do not acquire their HE access qualification on the 'regular' path (cf. 5.3) can either take the *Berufsreifeprüfung (BRP)* or the *Studienberechtigungsprüfung (SBP)* exam.

The BRP is open to graduates of apprenticeships, of VET schools of at least three years' duration, schools of healthcare and nursing, specialist paramedical courses of at least 30 months, and graduates of the skilled workers' exam in agriculture and forestry. The exam content itself is oriented towards the curriculum of a secondary school (cf. 5.1 and 5.3). It comprises four sub-exams: German, mathematics, one modern foreign language and a specialisation from vocational practice or from IVET. Sub-exams can also be taken in a modular form. Some of the exams can be replaced by already obtained certificates (e.g. language certificates).

For the individual exams, preparatory ('bridge') courses are offered at CET institutions against charges, attendance of which is not compulsory though. In addition, candidates have to pay exam fees. Participants in preparatory courses are entitled to apply for subsidisation, the amount of which will differ between provinces. For apprentices who prepare for the BRP exam parallel to their VET attendance or already complete a sub-exam during apprenticeship, costs for preparatory courses, exam material and the exam itself will be borne by the state.

In contrast to the BRP, the SBP exam opens up access to a specific area of specialisation in post-secondary and tertiary institutions. It requires applicants to furnish proof of previous knowledge acquired through job-specific programmes or non-occupational paths in relation to their desired study course. Should they not be able to prove such previous knowledge, they can take additional exams.

Acquisition of Hauptschule qualifications (ISCED 2A)

Another form of formal CET is acquisition of a positive final report of the fourth grade of lower secondary school (lower secondary level, cf. 5.1). This qualification is necessary for attending an upper secondary school. In addition it increases the holders' chances to obtain an apprenticeship post (cf. 4.4), even though – from a purely formal viewpoint – it would not be necessary. Several CET institutions offer preparatory courses for the final exam of lower secondary school, which must be taken before an external committee at a school. Some of these courses are offered against tuition fees, and most of them are organised as evening courses. Young people until the age of 18 are entitled to take the *Hauptschule* qualification free of charge. Courses aiming at the acquisition of the *Hauptschule* qualification are mainly financed by the Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture (BMUKK) with ESF funds or, using labour market funds, by the Public Employment Service (AMS).

CVET university courses (Universitätslehrgänge) (ISCED 5A)

Universities provide CET and higher qualification in special university courses both for postgraduates and for non-HE graduates who fulfil other access requirements (e.g. professional practice). These courses, which are designed like a Master study course, lead to the Master degree, otherwise to the title "*Akademische/r...*" ("Graduate...") if the curriculum awards at least 60 ECTS points. Participants have to pay a fee, which is fixed taking into account actual course costs. The events are mostly held in the evening or on weekends. Very frequently, these courses also comprise e-learning elements.

Programmes at Fachhochschule for people in employment (ISCED 5B)

Fachhochschule programme providers have the possibility to offer specific programmes for people in employment taking into account their time resources in the organisation of programmes (evening and weekend provision). Also elements of distance study are applied; professional practice, which is mandatory in the day form, can be waived if applicants can furnish proof of relevant professional activity. In addition, providers of Fachhochschule courses have had the possibility to offer so-called 'courses for CET' since 1st February 2004.

B. CET outside schools and HE institutions to acquire formal qualifications

CET at institutions of the social partners

The Austrian social partners each have their own establishments for CVET, thus decisively co-shaping the CET landscape. Courses range from provisions leading to formal certificates (such as degrees as accountants, qualifications for life counsellors and social welfare advisers, foreign language certificate courses, etc. – for some of them the institutions are specifically accredited by the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Economics) to lectures and information events (non-formal CET, cf. 6.2).

The education and training events of **Economic Promotion Institute** (*Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI*, employers' side) of the Economic Chambers primarily address apprentices, skilled workers and executives. Course topics range from management and corporate leadership, personal development and languages, to training for specific sectors. The WIFI also acts as a provider of Fachhochschule programmes (cf. 5.7), part-time industrial master colleges (foreperson courses) for people in employment (cf. item A), courses preparing for exams (e.g. for the BRP, cf. item A), and in-house CET.

The **Vocational Training Institute** (*Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi*, employees' side) is the CVET institution of the Chambers of Labour and of the Austrian Trade Union Federation. Its programmes mainly include personal development and management, EDP courses, office and business administration, languages, courses for social and healthcare occupations, preparatory courses for officially recognised exams (*SBP, BRP*, cf. item A) and educational measures for unemployed people and those threatened by unemployment (cf. 6.3). In addition, bfi also provides Fachhochschule programmes.

Laendliches Fortbildungsinstitut (LFI) is the education company of the Chambers of Agriculture. The education and training programmes provided by LFI not only comprise classic CVET in all specialist branches of agriculture and forestry but also the fields of environment and nature, personal development, health and nutrition, EDP, construction, energy and agricultural engineering, services and income combinations. Its educational range includes courses, seminars, lectures and discussion events, as well as working groups and company visits. LFI also offers preparation courses for the *Berufsreifepprüfung* exam.

In-company CVET

In-company CVET is of major importance. But this term is used in different ways: in the majority of cases, it is understood as the entire range of internal measures financed and organised by the company as well as external courses where employees take part; forms of cost-sharing with enterprises paying course fees and sometimes also the organisation of courses during the employees' free time are widespread. Different surveys show that in-company CVET constitutes the most frequent form of organised learning of the workforce.

6.3 Non-formal learning in CVET

Non-formal CET takes place in non-state CET institutions. It can be geared to CVET aiming at strengthening or securing the employees' job position. It can also relate to general adult education and thus primarily serve to expand knowledge and enhance awareness. Concrete figures and data on participation in non-formal CET programmes are not available.

Regarding the **legal regulation** and **financing** of non-formal CET, incl. **financial support** as an incentive mechanism to take part in this form of CET please refer to chapters 6.1.1 and 10.2.

The main **characteristics** of non-formal CET programmes include the following:

- **Institutions/providers:** Non-formal CET like formal CET (cf. 6.1.2) takes place in non-state (for-profit and not-for-profit) institutions. In Austria there is a dense network of education and training institutions of the large non-profit providers that have joined forces in the Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions or KEBÖ (cf. 6.1.2). The events held by these institutions range from individual lectures to courses with a curricular structure.
- **Status:** The lack of data on the motivation to take part in general adult education measures has the result that the status of non-formal CET can only be specified imprecisely. Adults have a huge range of motivations to engage in education and training activities. Job-related and non-job-related motives (more or less explicit benefit expectations) are of relevance and often hard to distinguish between. In the fields of Electronic Data Processing (EDP) and foreign languages, for example, job-related and other expectations often overlap. It can, however, be assumed that a large portion of non-formal CET is due to personal learning interest. Seen from that perspective, non-formal CET is particularly important in the education landscape.
- **Curricula:** The curricula are developed by the CET institutions themselves. In most cases, the course material is elaborated by the course leaders themselves.
- **Recognition of non-formal and informal learning:** In Austria there are various possibilities to have non-formal and informal learning recognised in order to attain a formal qualification. Thus, for example, the apprenticeship diploma (cf. 5.4) can also be obtained via the option of a so-called 'exceptional admission to the apprenticeship-leave examination'. For that purpose, relevant periods of professional practice and attendance of relevant course events are credited as substituting formal apprenticeship training. Within the framework of the *Berufsreifeprüfung* (BRP, cf. 6.1.2), certain certificates (e.g. language certificates) can replace parts of the BRP exam.

Fig. 1a: , 2007 (in %)

	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6	Total
EU-27	15.6	31.4	51.5	31.3
Austria	18.3	39.6	64.8	39.8

Fig. 1b: , 2007 (in %)

	Employment	Inactive Population	Total	Unemployed
EU-27	38.8	12.4	31.3	19.5
Austria	47.1	19.4	39.8	37.5

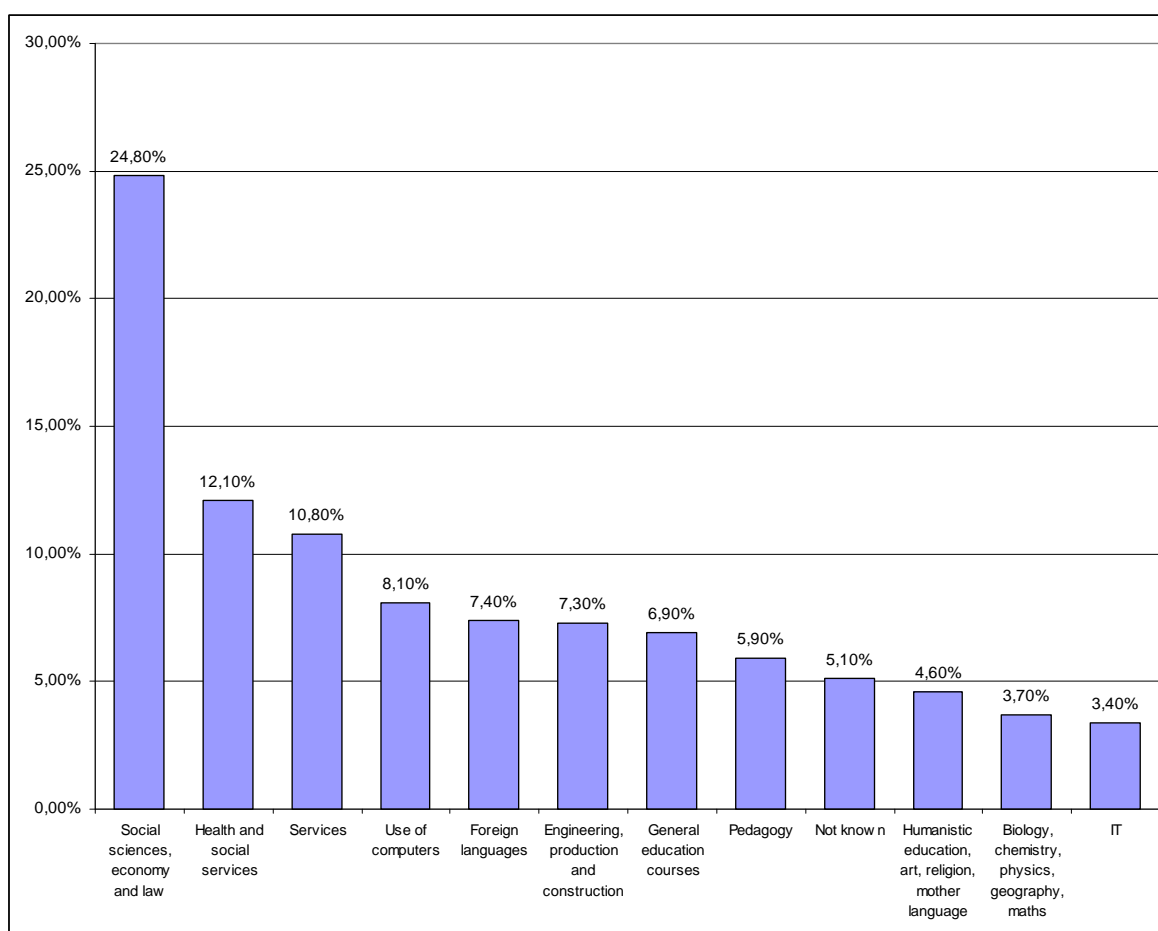
Source for both figures: Eurostat, downloaded on 24 May 2011

6.4 Language learning in CVET

7.4 % of all CVET activities in 2006/07 concerned **languages** (cf. Fig. 1). In the absence of concrete data, it cannot be said which languages are most often learned in CVET courses. However, since English is the most important language on the labour market, it can be assumed that English courses are most often sought after.

The Common European framework for languages is also important for CVET language courses. All courses are marked with the CEF level to give potential participants some orientation about the level. The final exams of these course are also based on the description of the CEF levels.

Fig. 1: CVET activities in 2006/07 by contents



Source:

http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bildung_und_kultur/erwachsenenbildung_weiterbildung_lebenslanges_lernen/weiterbildungsaktivitaeten_der_bevoelkerung/index.html

6.5 Training programs to help job-seekers and people vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market

The aim of skills training and qualifications for the labour market is to enhance the employability of already employed people and of **target groups** who are either facing the threat of unemployment or already unemployed. Thus, for example, there are specific courses for career break returners, older workers, people with difficulties finding a placement because of health problems, retraining for people affected by the changing economic structure, and specific measures for young people who have left the school sys-

tem without acquiring any final qualification (cf. acquisition of *Hauptschule* qualifications, 6.1.2, item A) or those who cannot find a school or apprenticeship place after compulsory schooling.

The central **actor** to implement the labour market policy is the Public Employment Service Austria (*Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, AMS*). The AMS itself is not an education and training provider but finances participation in relevant measures. If insufficient provision is available, the AMS is entitled to commission suitable institutions (either for-profit or non-profit CET providers) with the implementation of such measures. In this context the AMS is responsible for the needs assessment, planning, implementation and efficiency.

The following concrete measures are conducted within the framework of active labour market policy:

Educational leave

Within the framework of the educational leave, on the basis of an agreement concluded with their employer, employees are entitled to take some time out from their job for a period of three to twelve months within a total period of four years to take part in CET (e.g. to acquire school and study qualifications, foreign language training, higher qualification, etc.). The prerequisite is that this period is preceded by at least one-year of uninterrupted employment with the same employer. In addition, they have to furnish proof of attendance of at least 20 hours a week of education and training measures. The employee on leave of absence is paid the so-called CVET benefit (*Weiterbildungsgeld*) by AMS, which is as high as notional unemployment benefit, and is also paid sickness, accident and pension insurance.

As a result of the economic and financial crisis, the educational leave was extended to the so-called *Bildungskarenz Plus* scheme (cf. 3.2.3). Companies will be partially reimbursed the costs for their employees' CVET measure by the province where they are based.

Qualification grant for employment within the framework of the ESF (Objective 2)

Another measure to promote education and training that is managed by the AMS is the **qualification grant for employees in short-term work** (cf. 3.2.3). This grant can be obtained by employers who also bear the costs of CVET. Eligible are educational activities by employees attending skills training measures within the framework of a short-time work agreement. The amount of funding is 60% of course fees. Half of the financing comes from AMS and ESF funds each. The application for funding needs to be submitted before the start of training measures.

Where qualification and skills training grants for employees are applicable **outside an agreement on short-time work**, they apply to specific **groups of people**, namely: employees over the age of 45 years; women whose highest educational attainment is an apprenticeship diploma or VET school; and re-entrants (career break returners).

Within the framework of this 'regular' qualification promotion, participation in skills training measures is also eligible for funding. The employer, in consultation with the employee, is entrusted with selecting the measure. Funds will only be granted upon presentation of an educational plan and if the selected qualification and skills training measures can be rated as useful in terms of labour market policy and the request is submitted before the beginning of the measure. The amount of subsidisation is two thirds of course fees. Where measures for women over the age of 45 years are funded, the amount of subsidisation is three quarters of course fees. The maximum subsidisation is EUR 10,000 per participant and application. Also in this case, half of the financing comes from AMS and ESF funds each.

Labour foundations

Labour foundations (*Arbeitsstiftungen*) constitute an innovative model aiming to solve regional economic problems in structural and labour market respect. They are characterised by an intensive involvement and co-financing of the local players in labour market issues and the respective companies. A distinction is made between outplacement foundations and implacement foundations.

Outplacement foundations serve the purpose of an early reorientation and skilling of employees threatened with staff cutbacks; activities in this connection include a preliminary phase for defining objectives, providing career orientation, customising VET and CVET measures, as well as providing support in the active job-hunt. During participation in the foundation measure, extended periods apply during which they are eligible for unemployment benefit (the so-called *Stiftungsarbeitslosengeld* or foundation unemployment benefit): for a maximum of 156 weeks or, for persons over the age of 50, for up to 209 weeks.

Implacement foundations aim to cover urgent staff needs of one or several enterprises by implementing needs-oriented and job-matching skills training measures of unemployed people. Participants in measures who are entitled to draw unemployment benefit (*Arbeitslosengeld*) receive *Stiftungsarbeitslosengeld* like those in outplacement foundations; participants in an implacement foundation who are entitled to draw unemployment assistance (*Notstandshilfe*) and those who are not entitled to any benefit receive a subsistence allowance.

Training guarantee until the age of 18

Another measure geared towards young people under 18 as a target group is the so-called **training guarantee until the age of 18** (*Ausbildungsgarantie bis 18 Jahre*, cf. 3.2 and 5.5). This measure was introduced within the framework of the 'youth employment pact' in June 2008.

'Training guarantee' means that all compulsory school graduates who do not have a place at an upper secondary school or cannot find a company-based apprenticeship place are given the opportunity to learn an apprenticeship trade at a supra-company training institution financed by AMS (the so-called 'training workshops'). Thus **supra-company apprenticeship training** has been set up as an equivalent part of dual VET alongside the regular company-based variant.

The **target group** of this measure are young people who cannot find a company-based apprenticeship place despite every effort. Following placement by AMS, the young people are trained at training workshops, which take over the company-based part of training. The school-based part of apprenticeship training is provided at regular part-time vocational school.

The young people are employed via training institutions, which also conclude the training contract, coordinate the training, register them for vocational school and bear the costs arising due to attendance of vocational school.

7 Training VET teachers and trainers

7.1 Priorities in training VET teachers and trainer

With the Federal Act on the organisation of university colleges of education and their study programmes (*Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Pädagogischen Hochschulen und ihre Studien*, cf. 4.2) in 2005, the education of vocational school teachers and teachers of certain subjects at VET schools and colleges (BMHS, cf. 5.3) was reoriented. Until September 2007, these teachers obtained their qualifications by attending vocational teacher training colleges (*Berufspädagogische Akademien*), which were post-secondary institutions without tertiary degrees. As of the 1st of October 2007 these vocational teacher training colleges were transformed into **university colleges of education** (PHs). PHs are tertiary institutions whose graduates are awarded the “Bachelor of Education (BEd)” degree. If graduates want to go into greater depth or specialisation they can enrol on Master degree courses directly at the PH or a university.

The setting up of university colleges of education was, however, only the first step in the reform of teacher training in Austria. In a second step a new interlinked curriculum architecture is to be put in place for all educational professions (BMUKK 2010). Thus, in 2008 an expert group was established by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*) and the Ministry of Science and Research (*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung, BMWF*). This expert group should craft a **modern training system for all teachers** (“*PädagogInnenausbildung NEU*” – “INNOVATIVE Teacher Training”). The first recommendations of this expert group were issued in December 2009, the final report was submitted in March 2010. Since then the actors and institutions concerned have had ample opportunity to voice their opinions at large-scale information and discussion rounds. The qualifications and skills to be acquired under the teacher training programme should correspond to a standardised national concept, with both permits and ensures transition between individual institutions by designing joint programmes, bridging courses, etc. First final results of the discussion process are to be expected by 2012, the implementation of the new curriculum architecture should take place between until 2013.

As regards **IVET trainers**, IVET trainer colleges (called *Ausbilder-akademien* in Austria, i.e. IVET trainer academies) have been set up in the last six years to increase the professionalisation. These are neither physical training institutions (as suggested by the name “academies”), nor CET at post-secondary level. This is rather a concept for initiatives aiming to structure and promote in-service training of apprenticeship trainers and thus contribute to their professionalisation. IVET trainer colleges are mostly coordinated by the regional Economic Chambers in cooperation with the chamber-specific CET institution, the Economic Promotion Institute (*Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI*). All CET activities are open to IVET trainers, attendance is voluntary.

7.2 Teachers and trainers in IVET

People who teach in IVET at full-time VET schools at upper secondary level, part-time vocational schools (as a part of apprenticeship training), at post-secondary VET institutions, and in the tertiary sector, are as a rule termed **teachers** (*Lehrer/innen*). In company-based training within the framework of apprenticeship training, they are called **IVET trainers** (*Ausbilder/innen*) (cf. fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Teachers in IVET

VET institution	Teaching staff	Formal qualification	Functions
VET full-time schools – upper secondary level			
VET schools (<i>berufsbildende mittlere Schulen, BMS</i>) and VET colleges (<i>berufsbildende höhere Schulen, BHS</i>)	Teachers of general-education subjects (e.g. mathematics, German)	Teacher training course (incl. pedagogical courses) at a university in the respective subject and one-year teaching practice at a school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection of teaching content on the basis of framework curricula ▪ Selection of teaching method ▪ Cooperation in the development of curricula within the framework of curriculum committees ▪ Evaluation and validation of learning outcomes (LOs) ▪ Adoption of teaching tasks in social and societal fields
	Teachers of occupation-related theory (e.g. electrical engineering, mechanical engineering)	Subject-specific university study and professional practice of between two and four years plus part-time pedagogical training at a university college of education (<i>Pädagogische Hochschule, PH</i>)	
	Teachers of occupation-related practice (e.g. laboratory, workshops)	Completion of studies at a PH or subject-specific university study with professional practice and part-time pedagogical training at a PH; or master craftsperson qualification, professional practice and part-time pedagogical training at a PH; or HTL qualification, professional practice and part-time pedagogical training at a PH	
Schools for general health-care and nursing (<i>Schulen für allgemeine Gesundheits- und Krankenpflege, GuK</i>)	Teachers	GuK school and university programme “ <i>Akademische/r Lehrer/in für Gesundheits- und Krankenpflege und Lehrhebammen</i> ” (Graduate teacher for healthcare, nursing and midwifery) plus professional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection of teaching content on the basis of framework curricula ▪ Selection of teaching method ▪ Cooperation in the development of curricula within the framework of curriculum committees ▪ Evaluation and validation of LO

Dual vocational training (apprenticeship) – upper secondary level			
Company (company-based part of training)	IVET trainers	IVET trainer exam or 40-hour IVET trainer course plus an expert interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection of training methods ▪ Planning of the training at the company ▪ Preparation and implementation of training
Part-time vocational school (school-based part of training)	Teachers of general-education subjects (e.g. political education, German and communication)	Completion of studies at a PH; upper secondary school-leaving certificate (<i>Reifeprüfung</i>) plus three-year professional practice and part-time pedagogical training at a PH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection of teaching content on the basis of framework curricula ▪ Selection of teaching method ▪ Cooperation in the development of curricula within the framework of curriculum committees ▪ Evaluation and validation of learning outcomes ▪ Adoption of teaching tasks in social and societal fields
	Teachers of occupation-related theory (e.g. informatics)	Completion of studies at a PH; upper secondary school-leaving certificate (<i>Reifeprüfung</i>) plus three-year professional practice and part-time pedagogical training at a PH	
	Teachers of occupation-related practice (e.g. laboratory assignments)	Completion of studies at a PH; master craftsperson qualification plus part-time pedagogical training at a PH and part-time pedagogical training at a PH	
VET at the post-secondary non-tertiary level			
Post-secondary VET colleges	Teachers	Subject-specific university study or subject-specific post-secondary VET college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection of teaching content on the basis of framework curricula ▪ Selection of teaching method ▪ Cooperation in the development of curricula within the framework of curriculum committees ▪ Evaluation and validation of LOs

VET at tertiary level			
Fachhochschule	Fachhochschule lecturer	Subject-specific academic education plus specialist professional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection of teaching content ▪ Selection of teaching method ▪ Evaluation and validation of learning outcomes
	Fachhochschule professor	Scientific qualification in the specialist field, specialist professional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection of teaching content ▪ Selection of teaching method ▪ Evaluation and validation of learning outcomes
University college of education	Teachers	Subject-specific university study or PH and four- to six-year teaching practice in the respective school type where teaching at PH is intended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection of teaching content on the basis of framework curricula ▪ Selection of teaching method ▪ Cooperation in the development of curricula within the framework of curriculum committees ▪ Evaluation and validation of learning outcomes

Teaching staff in IVET are essentially trained in two institutions in Austria: at **university colleges of education** (*Pädagogische Hochschulen, PHs*) and **universities**.

PHs fall within the sphere of competence of the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*), which lays down the framework curricula for related programmes. The payment of teaching staff is taken over jointly by the BMUKK and provincial governments. Teachers at PHs for agriculture and forestry receive their salaries from the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (*Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft, BMLFUW*). Regional school inspectors and principals are responsible for assessing and appraising the teaching staff of PHs.

Universities are within the sphere of competence of the Federal Ministry of Science and Research (*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung, BMWF*). Curricula for the individual study programmes are laid down autonomously by universities. They also take on quality assurance as well as payment of teaching staff. For tenured university teachers (civil servants), universities are refunded salaries by BMWF.

VET full-time schools – upper secondary level (cf. 5.3)

Pre-service training of teachers and trainers

Teachers of general-education subjects, of occupation-related theory and practice teach at those schools with a specific focus on their specialism (e.g. business, technology, tourism).

Teachers of **general-education subjects** are obliged to complete a teacher training course at university (including pedagogical training) for the respective subject as well as one year of teaching practice at a school. At the end of the teacher training course there is a written diploma thesis and a diploma examination. Students are then awarded the “*Magister*” (master) degree.

To teach **occupation-related theory** candidates are required to complete a subject-specific university study plus professional practice of between two and four years – depending on the business sector. At the end of their studies they compose a master’s or diploma thesis and sit a diploma exam. Depending on the course they are awarded one of the following degrees: “Master of Engineering”, “Master of Science”, “Master of Arts”, or “Diplomingenieur/in” (a master degree level roughly equivalent to “C.Eng.” in the UK). To acquire pedagogical skills, they are obliged to attend a relevant part-time pedagogical course at a university college of education (*Pädagogische Hochschule, PH*).

Teachers of **occupation-related practice** are required to hold a PH degree before being entitled to exercise their profession. The “Bachelor of Education” degree is acquired after submitting a Bachelor thesis. People who have obtained a master craftsperson qualification and are able to prove professional practice can also teach subjects of occupation-related practice. To acquire pedagogical skills, they are obliged to attend a relevant part-time course at a PH.

At present, those **schools for general healthcare and nursing** (*Schulen für Gesundheits- und Krankenpflege*) whose courses are not yet offered as a *Fachhochschule* (FH) based Bachelor programme are still in a special position. To be entitled to teach there, individuals need to prove the successful completion of one of the schools for general healthcare and nursing, professional practice, and are required to attend the university programme for “*Akademische Lehrer für Gesundheits- und Krankenpflege und Lehrhebammen*” (“Graduate teacher for healthcare, nursing and midwifery”). They are then awarded the degree “*Akademische/r Lehrer/in für Gesundheits- und Krankenpflege*” (“Graduate teacher for healthcare and nursing”).

In-service education and training of teachers and trainers

Teachers at VET schools and colleges are in principle obliged to take part in in-service training, with no time specified by law. The topics of in-service training range from occupation-related applied scientific theory, subject didactics, general pedagogy and personal development. As a rule, in-service training measures are held during the school year; they are offered at PHs. Specific mobility programmes offered of the European Union are also recognised as in-service training measures.

Upper secondary level – dual vocational training (cf. 5.4)

Pre-service education and training of IVET trainers (company-based part of apprenticeship training)

The formal prerequisite for acquiring the IVET trainer qualification is completion of the IVET trainer examination or a 40-hour IVET trainer course plus expert interview. Both can be completed by people over the age of 18. The IVET trainer examination takes place before an exam committee at the regional economic chamber's master craftsman examination authority. The examination regulation is laid down by the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (BMWFJ). The legal basis regulating the activity of IVET trainers is the Vocational Training Act (BAG, cf. 4.2). The IVET trainer course is usually held at a CET institution of the social partners (Economic Promotion Institute – *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI* or Vocational Training Institute – *Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi*, cf. 6.1.2).

In-service training of IVET trainers (company-based part of apprenticeship training)

Attendance of in-service training is not compulsory for IVET trainers. It can be held at so-called "IVET trainer colleges" (*Ausbilderakademien*, cf. 7.1.3) as well as at every other CET institution.

Pre-service training of teachers at part-time vocational schools (school-based part of apprenticeship training)

Depending on the subject(s) they teach, teachers at part-time vocational schools require either a qualification from a PH or an upper secondary school-leaving certificate, three years of professional practice and a part-time pedagogical training at a PH. Master craftsmen can likewise teach occupation-related practical subjects at part-time vocational schools if they have acquired a part-time pedagogical training at a PH. Upon completion of a PH course, teachers are awarded the "Bachelor of Training" degree after submitting a Bachelor thesis. The entry requirement for the PH is the general HE access qualification (*allgemeine Hochschulzugangsberechtigung*, cf. 5.7) or the *Studienberechtigungsprüfung* exam (cf. 6.1.2).

In-service training of teaching staff at part-time vocational schools (school-based part of apprenticeship training)

Teachers at part-time vocational schools are obliged to attend 15 hours of in-service training events a year. Like BMHS teachers, topics of in-service training range from occupation-related applied scientific theory, subject didactics, general pedagogy and personal development. The events are held at the PH.

Post-secondary (non-tertiary) VET (cf. 5.6)

Pre-service training of teachers and trainers at post-secondary VET colleges

The number of post-secondary VET colleges is declining in Austria, because they are increasingly being turned into institutions offering *Fachhochschule* programmes (cf. 5.7). At present courses for advanced-level medico-technical services are (still) being offered at post-secondary VET colleges. To be entitled to exercise their profession, teachers at post-secondary VET colleges require a subject-specific qualification from an HE institution or *Fachhochschule*, or from the respective subject-specific post-secondary VET college where they teach. Graduates of subject-specific post-secondary VET colleges need to take a final exam. An access requirement is the respective general HE access qualification (*allgemeine Hochschulzugangsberechtigung*, cf. 5.7) or the *Studienberechtigungsprüfung* exam (cf. 6.1.2).

In-service education and training of teaching staff at post-secondary VET colleges

Teachers at post-secondary VET colleges are required to attend in-service training measures on a yearly basis. But there is no precise regulation on the number of hours.

Tertiary VET (cf. 5.7)*Pre-service training of teaching staff at Fachhochschule institutions (FHs)*

To be entitled to exercise their profession, FH lecturers require a subject-specific academic qualification in the form of a Master and/or PhD degree and specialist professional practice. Minimum requirements for FH professors are a doctor's degree and a habilitation. Another precondition is didactical skills which they acquire on the job as lecturers.

In-service education and training of teaching staff at Fachhochschule institutions (FHs)

In-service education and training of teaching staff at an FH is not regulated in a binding manner but specified by the respective FH. FH professors, however, are required to publish scientific papers.

Pre-service training of teachers and trainers at university colleges of education

Teaching staff at PHs need a subject-specific university qualification or a PH qualification. In addition, teaching practice for the respective school type where the individual wants to teach at PH is required. For this, university graduates need to furnish evidence of four-year teaching practice, for PH graduates it is six years.

In-service education and training of teaching staff at university colleges of education

Teaching staff at PHs are obliged to attend in-service education and training measures. Like BMHS teachers, topics of in-service education and training range from occupation-related applied scientific theory, subject didactics, general pedagogy and personal development.

7.3 Teachers and trainers in CVET

Non-school-based and non-university-based CVET is conducted, depending on content and programme, by **trainers** (*Trainer/innen*), **coaches** (*Coaches*), **seminar leaders** (*Seminarleiter/innen*) or **course leaders** (*Kursleiter/innen*) (cf. fig. 1).

In the field of **CET**, the teachers' pre-service education and training is not regulated (cf. fig. 2 in 7.1.1). The payment and quality assurance of trainers, coaches, course leaders and seminar leaders are taken on by the respective institution or provider organisation. The content of programmes are mostly prepared by the teachers themselves.

Fig. 1: Teachers in CVET

VET institution	Teaching staff	Formal qualification	Functions
School- and university-based CET			
School-based CET	Teachers of general-education subjects, of occupation-related theory and practice	Equivalent to the qualification for teaching staff in the long programmes of VET schools and colleges (cf. fig. 1)	Identical to the functions of teaching staff in the long programmes of VET schools and colleges (cf. fig. 1)
University-based CET	Lecturers, professors	Equivalent to the qualification of teaching staff in the <i>Fachhochschule</i> type not targeting people in employment (cf. fig. 1)	Identical to the functions of teaching staff in the <i>Fachhochschule</i> type not targeting for people in employment (cf. fig. 1)
Non-school-based and non-university-based CET			
CET institutions, e.g. of the social partners	Trainers, seminar leaders, course leaders, coaches	Not regulated, requirements are specified by the respective CET institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection of teaching content ▪ Selection of teaching method ▪ Evaluation and validation of learning outcomes

School-based CET

Pre-service training of teachers and trainers in school-based CET

Teaching staff in school-based CET are active at VET colleges (BHSs) for people in employment; in part-time post-secondary VET courses; in preparatory and add-on courses; as well as in building craftsperson schools, part-time industrial master colleges, and master craftsperson courses (cf. 6.1.2). By attending these special programmes, people in employment can take day course qualifications at VET colleges or obtain higher/additional qualifications in their professional field. Requirements for teachers who are active in school-based CET are equivalent to those of teachers at VET schools and colleges (cf. fig. 1 in 7.1.1).

In-service education and training of teaching staff in school-based CET

Teachers in school-based CET are obliged to attend in-service education and training measures, with no specifications available for the number of hours.

University-based CET

Pre-service training of teaching staff at Fachhochschule institutions

Teaching staff at *Fachhochschule* institutions (FHs) for people in employment and FHs offering day courses comprise FH lecturers and FH professors. The same qualification requirements apply to both types of teachers (pre-service education and training, cf. fig. 1 in 7.1.1).

In-service education and training of teaching staff at Fachhochschule institutions

In-service education and training of teaching staff at an FH is not regulated in a binding manner but specified by the respective FH. FH professors, however, are required to publish scientific papers.

Non-school-based and non-university-based CET*Pre-service education and training*

Trainers, seminar leaders, course leaders and coaches are active in companies and CET institutions. In principle, no qualifications are specified as mandatory for these people. It goes without saying that they boast relevant know-how in the subject they teach. In many cases these are individuals who exercise a profession and impart relevant specialisations. Commercial and technological courses, for example, are taught by practitioners from business, language classes by native speakers, etc. Didactical skills are not required, but people with teaching practice are preferred. Teaching staff in non-school and non-university CET mainly exercise their profession in a self-employed capacity.

In-service education and training

In-service education and training of teaching staff in non-school and non-university CET is not regulated. The 2003 Adult Education Promotion Act (*Erwachsenenbildungs-Förderungsgesetz*, cf. 4.2 and 6.1.1), however, takes voluntary in-service education and training of teaching staff in this field into consideration. The Federal Institute for Adult Education (*Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung, bifeb*) – an institution of the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*) – accordingly runs general CET events, which mainly enhance knowledge and skills in the field of training.

8 Matching VET provision with labour market needs

8.1 Systems and mechanisms for the anticipation of skill needs (in sectors, occupations, education levels)

Practice-oriented educational objectives, contents and methods as well as their regular **updating (adaptation)** constitute one characteristic of the Austrian VET sector. In the context of a dynamic economic development, adaptation instruments and processes to **future skill needs (anticipation)** are becoming increasingly important.

Instruments and processes supporting the analysis of skill needs are mainly supported by the Public Employment Service Austria (*Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, AMS*). These include:

- **Skill needs studies:** These are mostly conducted for specific sectors and industries (e.g. woodworking, IT), but also for regions (e.g. federal provinces) and education programmes (e.g. colleges of engineering [*höhere technische Lehranstalten, HTLs*], cf. 5.3, apprenticeship training [*Lehre*], cf. 5.4). The main beneficiaries of these studies are the stakeholders in these sectoral/regional areas as well as (curricular) officers in the VET paths that are of relevance for the specialisations.
- **AMS-Qualifikations-Barometer** (AMS-QB, <http://www.ams.at/qualifikationsbarometer>), a skills forecasting tool: This online system, which was set up in 2002, summarises current and foreseeable labour market trends and skill needs and makes them accessible to the general public in a structured format via the internet. For gathering information, existing written data (e.g. from skill needs studies) are used and merged. If necessary, interviews are held with experts from the various occupational areas and fields. Therefore, the AMS-QB primarily constitutes an instrument for presentation rather than a tool for analysis. The findings of the AMS-QB are also published in writing (in a print version) on an annual basis under the title **AMS report on qualification structures** (*AMS-Qualifikationsstrukturbericht*). These reports cover all of Austria but are also available for individual provinces.
- Research network **AMS-Forschungsnetzwerk** (<http://www.ams-forschungsnetzwerk.at>): This platform, which was launched by AMS, serves to exchange information and use synergies between a number of Austrian research institutes, including in the area of skills forecasts. Between 2002 and 2008, via the AMS research network, joint annual events about **qualifications needed in the future** were held with the social partners. They covered specific topics e.g. skill needs in the field of healthcare and social affairs and the skill needs of young people and older workers. In 2009 this series of events was replaced with regular meetings by the so-called **Standing Committee on Skill Needs**. On the proposal of the AMS Supervisory Board (the AMS's highest administrative body), a platform (i.e. the Standing Committee) was set up, which comprises representatives of the AMS (Supervisory Board, Board of Directors, specialist department for qualification issues, Directors of the AMS's Provincial Organisations) as well as representatives of the social partners, relevant ministries, and the major CET providers WIFI (*Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut*) and bfi (*Berufsförderungsinstitut*, cf. 6.1.2). This body makes decisions about the setting up of expert groups (HR and training managers from large key companies) on specific occupational areas (e.g. construction, tourism, electro, chemistry, motor vehicles, etc.). These expert groups exchange their views on employment, skill and qualification developments in a number of focus-group meetings. The direct participation of major CET institutions aims to ensure that the outcomes of these meetings are integrated as quickly as possible into education and training programmes.

8.2 Practices to match VET provision with skill needs

One major goal of the **anticipation of skill needs** is to achieve congruency between VET and employment as well as between qualification demand and supply, by attempting to appraise future developments at an early stage and respond to them proactively. In the Austrian VET sector there are different **anticipation processes** that lead to curricular adjustments. Major stakeholders in this process are the social partners, which can frequently support the matching process between educational provision and qualification requirements and/or make statements on drafts. The outcomes of various analyses of skill needs (cf. 8.1) are considered accordingly in this process.

Full-time school-based VET – upper secondary level

The educational objectives and content of VET schools and colleges (*berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen, BMHS*, cf. 5.3) are laid down in **framework curricula**. They are regulated by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*, cf. 4.3). Initiatives towards curricular reforms and/or the introduction of new subjects or area specialisations are launched by the educational institutions themselves or the BMUKK. In so-called curriculum committees, teachers and BMUKK experts with the involvement of representatives of the economy develop draft curricula for the respective subjects. As well as a number of other institutions, the social partners also receive the drafts to issue their statements. In the implementation of the framework curricula, schools are entitled to change the number of lessons of individual subjects autonomously or develop their own focuses, taking account of (regional) economic requirements.

The designing of programmes on non-medical healthcare professions is effected within the framework of **training regulations** (*Ausbildungsverordnungen*), which are based on the laws regulating the respective occupations. The training regulations are elaborated with the involvement of experts and interest representations of the Federal Ministry for Health (*Bundesministerium für Gesundheit, BMG*) and adopted by the Health Minister. Related curricula are drawn up following the commissioning of the BMG by the Austrian Federal Health Institute (*Österreichisches Bundesinstitut für Gesundheitswesen*) and are seen as recommendations.

Dual IVET – upper secondary level

The training content for every apprenticeship occupation is laid down in training regulations (for the company-based part) and curricula (for the school-based part). The **in-company curriculum** (*Berufsbild*, a type of curriculum for the company-based part) is adopted within the framework of the training regulation by the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth (BMWFJ). Initiatives to adjust existing or introduce new in-company curricula are frequently taken by companies or social partners. The Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship (*Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat, BBAB*, cf. 4.3) also introduces proposals or draws up expert opinions concerning reform proposals. The actual designing of in-company curricula and thus the orientation of qualification requirements is, as a rule, conducted by BBAB subcommittees or the educational research institutes of the social partners: the Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy (*Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft, ibw*) on the employers' side and the Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training (*Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung, öibf*) on the employees' side. The designing of **framework curricula** for part-time vocational school is conducted similarly to VET full-time schools. In the apprenticeship sector, framework curricula are laid down in analogy to company-based training.

Fachhochschule institutions

The demand for a new Fachhochschule programme (FHS, cf. 5.7) or the change of existing education and training content is frequently expressed by the economy. The **study plan**, which is elaborated by a development team (cf. 4.3), must be subjected to a needs and acceptance analysis. This process not only aims to survey the quantitative demand for students expressed by the economy but also to evaluate the developed training and qualification profile by potential employers.

Programmes are authorised for a maximum of five years by the *Fachhochschule* Council (*Fachhochschulrat*). During that time it is possible to implement necessary adaptations by submitting change applications. Upon expiration of the five years, an application for reaccreditation is required. As well as another needs and acceptance examination it also comprises an evaluation report which is based on a peer review. In this way it is possible to ensure a matching of skill needs and VET programmes.

CET

In the CVET sector it is easiest to adjust programmes to qualification requirements. In this sector it is possible to respond to the economy's needs most quickly. The far-reaching lack of legal bases (cf. 6.1.1) as well as competition between providers on the free CET market leads to more flexibility and scope to design **needs-oriented courses**.

9 Lifelong guidance for lifelong learning and sustainable employment

9.1 Strategy and provision

The Austrian **lifelong guidance strategy**, which is still under development, aims to guarantee educational and career information, counselling and guidance that is easily accessible, independent and encompasses all educational providers.

Under the general supervision of the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*), an Austria-wide **platform** involving relevant stakeholders in this field (representatives of ministries, the social partners, the Public Employment Service, etc.) was set up which has elaborated the **strategic objectives** for a lifelong guidance strategy and is introducing them into the public discussion process. Different national and international studies form the basis for this strategy development. The results of this platform are publicly accessible at <http://www.lifelongguidance.at>. At the core of this strategy is the provision of basic skills that enable individuals to aim at educational and professional decisions in a deliberate and responsible manner. These include, in particular, the further development and improvement of existing courses, the professionalisation of counsellors and teachers, and the inclusion of target groups who have yet to be reached.

In Austria there is a **considerable diversity** of institutions, providers and initiatives in the field of information, counselling and guidance on learning and occupations:

Educational counselling and career guidance at lower and upper secondary schools

Educational counselling and career guidance in the **school sector** is in principle within the sphere of responsibility of the BMUKK. From the fifth school year onwards, school counsellors and career guidance officers are available to schoolchildren and parents who have questions about the school and career. They provide information about possible education paths, access requirements, as well as qualifications acquired with certificates and diplomas; and they provide a basic overview to young people about CET options. Guidance is conducted by teachers with relevant qualifications who are termed, depending on the school type, school counsellor (*Schülerberater/in*) or educational counsellor (*Bildungsberater/in*) and provide their counselling services in addition to their teaching activity.

In the final years of lower secondary level, in the seventh and eighth school years, **career guidance** is a compulsory subject totalling 32 hours a year. These lessons particularly aim to strengthen the schoolchildren's decision-making competence, social skills, determination and perseverance. Short periods of work placement at companies and personal contacts to people from different occupations aim to help schoolchildren examine their career aspirations and take independent decisions.

At **prevocational schools** (*Polytechnische Schulen, PTS*, cf. 5.3) career guidance plays a particularly important role, as this school type is at the interface between compulsory and further schooling. Career guidance aims to inform schoolchildren and parents about regional possibilities in apprenticeship training (cf. 5.4) and, in vocational guidance classes, prepares them for so-called real-life encounters (e.g. days of practical work experience) and important information events and job information fairs, etc..

Also at **VET schools and colleges** (*berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen, BMHS*, cf. 5.3) teachers with specialist qualifications work as career guidance officers. Students at BMHSs have already taken their first decision about their professional career. But thanks

to the good level of general education provided at schools the entire range of professional development options is also open to them. Therefore, educational counselling and career guidance at these schools always includes in-depth reflections on the career choice made.

Educational counselling and career guidance in the tertiary sector

The majority of **universities** offer both Psychological Counselling Offices (*Psychologische Beratungsstellen*), which help students in issues related to study organisation and problems during the course, and Career Planning Centres, which support students with their entry into the world of work. These institutions are within the sphere of responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Science and Research (*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung, BMWF*).

The **Federal Ministry of Science and Research** (*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung, BMWF*) operates websites (e.g. <http://www.studienwahl.at>) and publishes brochures with information about courses, offers information and legal assistance for students by phone. Career Planning Centres of several universities also organise career fairs.

The BMWF in cooperation with the BMUKK and AMS holds Austria's largest **educational fair** *BeSt* (<http://www.bestinfo.at>) – job, study and training fair – at several locations each year.

CET sector

Educational counselling and career guidance is becoming increasingly important in the **CET sector**. This is particularly evident in the establishment of comprehensive educational databases (<http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at>, <http://www.eduvista.com>), an Austria-wide platform for educational counselling, and the merger of institutions, to guarantee independent and supra-institutional information and guidance services.

Larger adult learning institutions, such as the Economic Promotion Institute (*Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut, WIFI*, cf. 6.1.2), Vocational Training Institute (*Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi*, cf. 6.1.2) or the adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen, VHS*) frequently provide their own guidance and counselling.

Counselling by Public Employment Service Austria (AMS)

Across Austria, at more than 60 sites, the Career Guidance Centres (BIZ) of **AMS** offer comprehensive information about occupations, their contents and requirements, about initial education and training, CET paths, the labour market and employment options.

Apart from information material in the form of brochures, information leaflets, videos, etc. AMS also develops information databases on occupations and on initial and continuing education and training programmes for different target groups, which are accessible online at <http://www.ams.at/berufsinfo>.

For apprenticeship post seekers, AMS operates the apprenticeship post platform <http://www.ams.at/lehrstellen> jointly with the Federal Economic Chamber. In addition, the EURES advisers who are employed at AMS, supported by the EURES database, provide information about job offers and working conditions in other countries of the European Economic Area.

Counselling by social partner institutions

The **Chambers of Labour** and **Trade Unions** mainly offer educational counselling and career guidance via their joint adult learning institutions: the Vocational Training Institutes

(*Berufsförderungsinstitute, bfi*, cf. 6.1.2). In addition, they publish information material and organise information events.

The counselling services of the **Economic Chambers** and their adult education institutions, the Economic Promotion Institutes (*Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitute, WIFI*, cf. 6.1.2), focus in particular on IVET and CVET. These services are offered across Austria at several locations at the so-called Career Guidance Centres (*Berufsinformationszentren, BIZ*). With the BIC.at career guidance tool (www.bic.at), the Economic Chambers have their own web portal where job descriptions, VET and CVET options, tips on career choice and job applications, as well as a large variety of service materials are offered, in some cases even in several languages.

Additional counselling services

A number of counselling institutions also offer counselling on education and career issues for **special target groups** in addition to other services. In all federal provinces, counselling offices for women of all ages have been set up, for example, which provide advice on gender-specific career and learning issues, as well as on many other topics. Comparable aims are pursued by the information and counselling services for people with disabilities and for immigrants.

In addition, there is a growing number of private, non-profit or commercial counselling centres and agencies in Austria which, depending on their objectives and target groups, offer counselling services on education and training, occupational orientation and career guidance, frequently combined with job exchange platforms, training for job interviews and other services.

9.2 Target groups and modes of delivery

Educational counselling and career guidance at schools

Counselling services in the school sector mainly target **schoolchildren** and their **parents**. School counsellors and career guidance officers, which are located at the regional education boards and in bigger cities in each federal province, conduct one-on-one talks, provide information e.g. in lectures before classes or at parent evenings, organise excursions and visits to events, and pass on information material.

School psychology-career counselling is open to **schoolchildren, teachers** and **parents** who seek advice and expert assistance to prevent possible or reduce and resolve actual problems. As well as psychological (possibly also psychotherapeutic) counselling and support, its competence also comprises the publication of information documents and keeping of lectures. In addition, it is active in the pre-service and in-service education as well as specialist support of school and educational counselling.

Since the 1998/99 school year, compulsory career guidance classes have been held in the third and fourth years of lower secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*, cf. 4.1), new secondary school and in academic secondary schools – junior cycle (*Unterstufe der allgemeinbildenden höheren Schule, AHS-Unterstufe*, cf. 4.1). The curriculum enables schools to offer career guidance optionally as a separate subject or integrated into other compulsory subjects, e.g. as project oriented classes.

Career guidance teachers support schoolchildren with class conversations, role plays and group work, etc. in reflecting on their own interests, abilities and skills and developing concrete plans for their personal and professional future. They jointly visit information events and companies and organise days or weeks of practical work experience (so-called taster

apprenticeships). In addition, schoolchildren are encouraged to take advantage of non-school-based counselling services.

Tertiary sector

Psychological student counselling services at universities and Fachhochschule institutions offer general course guidance, psychological counselling, psychotherapy, aptitude diagnostics, coaching, supervision, etc. to **holders of the upper secondary school-leaving certificate** and **students**.

Career planning centres at universities offer students and university graduates one-on-one counselling, information events e.g. on topics such as job applications and CVs, as well as individualised career planning. In addition, the centres organise seminars on presentation techniques, rhetoric and EDP, as well as events such as career fairs and company presentations.

Counselling by Public Employment Service Austria (AMS)

Anyone who is interested can use the information and services offers provided by the AMS's Career Guidance Centres (*BIZ*) free of charge. Print media, videos and PCs are available for customers to obtain information themselves. For **youths in need of guidance** there exists a selection of career guidance tools (e.g. the compass for apprenticeship occupations, interest test). The advisers working at *BIZ* provide support in information research and are available for one-on-one information and counselling talks to assist in career and educational decisions. In addition, *BIZ* also provides services for specific target groups (e.g. schoolchildren, teachers, parents) and on specific topics (e.g. career guidance, presentations of occupations, job applications, days of technology for girls).

AMS offers one-on-one counselling talks for **people registered unemployed**. These talks aim to match the jobseekers' personal requirements, strengths and intentions with the situation on the labour market. Furthermore there exists the possibility to take part in training programmes and courses (e.g. vocational guidance courses, training for job applications, job trials, skills training and qualification courses, etc.). In special cases, (young) women can take advantage of assistance in career choice, skills training and qualification.

AMS also supports **school-based information activities** by means of a large number of brochures, career guidance films, occupational information and CET databases on the Internet, and organising events and trade fairs.

Counselling by social partners

The employee representation's counselling services are accessible both to **young people** and **adults**. As well as individualised counselling incl. psychological tests, they also comprise information events and materials.

The target groups for the Economic Chambers' counselling services range from **young people, adults, parents, teachers** to **entrepreneurs**. The Economic Chambers' Career Guidance Centres make comprehensive information material available on a self-service basis and organise events geared towards the world of work such as sector presentations, school and information events, as well as training for job applications. As well as information for groups (such as school classes), one-on-one counselling talks are also offered. In addition, the Economic Chambers' career guidance officers offer individualised counselling services on the basis of comprehensive psychological testing procedures.

Other counselling providers

Counselling institutions for specific target groups such as girls and women, people with disabilities, older workers, or immigrants often offer educational counselling and career guidance in addition to other services, using a wide range of target-group-oriented methods.

Quality assurance

In the Austrian lifelong guidance strategy it has been laid down explicitly that information and counselling services should be evaluated to systematically analyse and further develop quality. To date, quality assurance methods have primarily been taken by the respective institutions themselves by conducting regular in-house evaluations.

9.3 Guidance and counselling personnel

There is no generally valid legal regulation governing the skills and professional qualifications of educational counsellors and career guidance officers in this country. Solely the pre-service and in-service education of those counsellors who report to the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*) or the Federal Ministry of Science and Research (*Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung, BMWF*) is regulated by ordinances or decrees.

In addition, various efforts have been made to make the qualification of educational counsellors and career guidance officers transparent by way of certification. Two of these approaches are the Austrian CET Academy (*Weiterbildungsakademie, wba*, <http://www.wba.or.at>) and the ECGC (European Career Guidance Certificate, <http://www.ecgc.at>) project.

Educational counsellors and career guidance officers at lower and upper secondary schools

Educational counsellors at schools are teachers with a teaching diploma and several years of teaching practice. The principal is responsible for selecting teachers for the tasks of educational counsellors. Pre-service and in-service education of these teachers is provided in a course at university colleges of education (cf. 6.1). In-service education events are organised by specific working groups of teachers to ensure that knowledge is regularly updated.

The qualification of career guidance teachers is not regulated by law. On the one hand, there is the possibility to enrol on relevant courses while studying at university, on the other hand, teachers whose employment relationship is still valid can acquire the relevant qualifications by completing specialist in-service education measures. The BMUKK is developing a framework curriculum with the aim of standardising the qualifications of career guidance teachers.

School and student psychological career counsellors

School psychology/careers advice counsellors and student psychological counselling officers hold university degrees, preferably in psychology. When taking up their work (they are employed by the BMUKK), they commit themselves to start basic training for school or student psychological counselling and complete it within four years. This training provides counsellors with the required knowledge, skills and experience for successful work in psychological counselling. It comprises three areas:

1. on-the-job training;
2. self-study about the development of topics relevant for school psychology; and
3. participation in a part-time training programme offered by the *Pädagogische Hochschule*.

The training measure is completed with an in-service qualification examination.

Counsellors of Public Employment Service Austria (AMS)

The qualifications of AMS staff have to be regulated internally. Staff need to have at least the upper secondary school-leaving certificate (*Reifeprüfung*) or an apprenticeship diploma with professional experience as well as AMS in-house training. In the basic AMS in-house training, course modules can either be completed by personal attendance or e-learning interchange with supplementary practical training over several weeks. To ensure that participants are supported holistically over the entire time of training, so-called “training and subject coaches” are appointed, whose tasks include the monitoring of the participants’ training level.

AMS in-house training lasts for 40 weeks and is completed with a final exam. The contents of the AMS staff’s CET options are planned on the basis of systematic surveys of training requirements, which are carried out every two to three years.

Counsellors of social partner organisations

Educational counsellors and career guidance officers who work for employers’ and employees’ representations as well as in their CET institutions receive in-house training, which is partly held supra-institutionally together with other providers. Counselling provided in the counselling offices of the social partners is mainly provided by psychologists, social pedagogues or similarly qualified employees.

Educational counsellors and career guidance officers of the Economic Promotion Institutes and Economic Chambers meet at least twice a year to exchange experiences and organise in-service training on specific topics. This also holds true for the counsellors of the Chambers of Labour, Vocational Training Institutes and trade unions, who meet in regular working groups.

Other qualification options

The Federal Institute for Adult Education (*Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung, bifeb*) regularly offers the university CVET programme “Educational counselling and career guidance”, which addresses all people active in the field of educational counselling and career guidance. The topics covered in the programme include: client-centred counselling, information management, instruments of educational counselling, grants and subsidies, systemic counselling, counselling for learning, etc.

10 Financing: Investment in human resources

10.1 VET financing policy

While IVET is primarily financed by the state (cf. 10.2), CVET is financed by companies, the Public Employment Service and CVET participants (cf. 10.3). In the IVET sector changes in funding have occurred in the apprenticeship system (cf. 10.2) with the introduction of a new scheme in 2008. Generally, the funding scheme in the IVET sector has remained unchanged over the last few years. The same applies for CVET. However, during the financial and economic crises (cf. chapter 3) budgets for qualification schemes were raised to reduce the negative effects of this crises.

10.2 Funding for initial vocational education and training

In the IVET sector (cf. chapter 5) a fundamental distinction needs to be made between financing the education and training institution and supporting learners. The financing of the educational institution (school maintenance, teachers' pay) is a matter of **direct financing** by the public sector or by private school providers. Support for learners in the form of free travel, free supply of textbooks, family allowance, etc. is a form of **indirect financing**. Indirect financing is primarily effected through the Family compensation fund (*Familienlastenausgleichsfonds, FLAF*), which serves to redress the balance of financial burdens between families with children and those without. This Fund, which is financed mainly from a levy on employers, is within the scope of responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (*Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz, BMA SK*).

VET full-time schools – upper secondary level

In principle, **no tuition fees** need to be paid in Austria for attending a public VET school or college (*berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen, BMHS*, cf. 5.3). This means that private households only have to meet the cost of their children's subsistence, apart from small contributions in specific areas (cf. Table 1). Besides the public schools, there are various private schools that levy tuition fees, most of which are run by legally recognised churches and religious communities.

The **school provider** of most public BMHS is the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*) (cf. 4.2). The **costs for teaching staff** both in public and, to a certain extent, also in private schools are met by the BMUKK. Maintenance of education and training institutions in the healthcare sector is mostly taken over by the provinces.

Pupil support (*Schulbeihilfe*, designed to support pupils with social needs who can prove school success) and the accommodation grant (*Heimbeihilfe*, for pupils who attend a school outside their place of residence) are awarded by the BMUKK to pupils from the tenth school year onwards, subject to fulfilment of certain statutory conditions.

In all school types, textbooks and transportation are largely financed by the government from the FLAF. Since 1996, learners have had to pay a user contribution of 10%. Likewise, a yearly user contribution of some EUR 20 per pupil has been payable since 1996 towards the cost of transport between home and school.

Tab. 1: Financing of BMHS: Summary

	Public BMHS	Private BMHS
Direct financing		
School maintenance	BMUKK*	Private school provider
Teaching staff	BMUKK	BMUKK, where a contract has been concluded under the Private Schools Act
Pupil support and accommodation grant	BMUKK	BMUKK
Tuition fees	---	Private households
Indirect financing		
Textbooks	BMWFJ/FLAF + private households (contribution)	BMWFJ/FLAF + private households (contribution)
Free travel	BMWFJ/FLAF + private households (contribution)	BMWFJ/FLAF + private households (contribution)
Indirect financing within the framework of family policies (e.g. family allowance)	BMWFJ/FLAF	BMWFJ/FLAF

* or the BMLFUW and provinces in the case of schools of agriculture and forestry;
or the provinces in the case of VET institutions for non-medical healthcare professions

In current debates, major attention is on the Austrian school system's ability to undergo modernisation and reform. These debates have been triggered by the only average results of Austrian pupils in international comparisons of pupils' performance (PISA, TIMMS). The Austrian school system is accused of being excessively regulated, excessively hierarchical and excessively input-controlled. Reform proposals are moving in the direction of integrating the philosophy and principles of New Public Management (NPM) into the structure of school administration. This is expected to produce a more efficient use of public funds and, as a consequence, tangible cost reductions without having to cut funds for the education sector at the same time. As is shown by the adoption of the Education Documentation Act (*Bildungsdokumentationsgesetz*), the introduction of the flexibilisation clause (*Flexibilisierungsklausel*), and first measures towards increasing school autonomy, these proposals are slowly becoming part of the educational policy agenda.

Dual IVET (apprenticeship training) – upper secondary level

Financial resources for the **school-based part** of apprenticeship training (school maintenance, teachers' pay) are provided by the provinces (cf. 4.3). The Federal Government refunds 50% of the costs for teaching staff. Like BMHS students, apprentices in their part-time role as learners at vocational school pay a small contribution to the cost of textbooks and travel permits.

The **company-based part** of apprenticeship training is mainly financed by the training companies. Apprentices receive a remuneration (*Lehrlingsentschädigung*) for their work, which is usually laid down in the collective agreement concluded between the social partners (cf. 4.3) and increases with every apprenticeship year.

There are a number of **public subsidies** to support training companies:

A new **support scheme** for training companies entered into force on the 28th June 2008 with an amendment to the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsausbildungsgesetz, BAG*, cf. 4.2). This scheme is primarily intended to enhance the quantitative situation on the appren-

ticeship post market. This support scheme is administered by the Apprenticeship Offices (*Lehrlingsstellen*) of the Economic Chambers.

Within this subsidisation system, there are various **types of support**:

- **Basic support (*Basisförderung*):** Every company that trains an apprentice is entitled to so-called basic support. This comprises three gross apprenticeship remunerations pursuant to the collective agreement in the first apprenticeship year, two in the second year, and one each in the third and fourth years. The training company can apply for basic support at the end of the respective apprenticeship year. All companies who started training an apprentice before the entry into force of the BAG amendment and thus before the introduction of the new support scheme (i.e. before the 28th June 2008) are still entitled to claim the annual **apprenticeship training premium (*Lehrlingsausbildungsprämie*)**. The premium is EUR 1,000 for each apprentice per year and can be claimed through the tax return. However, this amount is not paid out directly to the company but credited to its fiscal charge account.
- **New apprenticeship posts – Blum-Bonus II:** Instead of the Blum-Bonus (named after the former Government Commissioner for Youth Employment and Apprenticeship Egon Blum), which was in force until June 2008 and provided for the subsidisation of additional apprenticeship posts by Public Employment Service Austria (*Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS*), new apprenticeship posts in new start-ups, in companies where apprentices are trained for the first time, and in companies that re-enter apprenticeship training following a break of at least three years are now granted a premium of EUR 2,000 each post. This scheme will expire at the end of 2010.
- **Training alliances:** Some 75% of the costs of inter-company and supra-company training measures as well as the acquisition of skills that exceed the in-company curriculum (*Berufsbild*, cf. 5.4) are subsidised up to a total amount of EUR 1,000. Preparatory courses for the apprenticeship-leave exam (*Lehrabschlussprüfung*, cf. 5.4) are also eligible.
- **CET for IVET trainers:** Under this scheme, the cost of CET measures for IVET trainers are 75% subsidised up to a total amount of EUR 1,000 a year.
- **Excellent and good performance in apprenticeship-leave exams:** Companies, the apprentices of which pass the apprenticeship-leave exam (cf. 4.4) with distinction or success, can apply for a grant of EUR 250 (distinction) or EUR 200 (success).
- **Measures for apprentices with learning difficulties:** Tutoring courses in case a vocational school class needs to be retaken and preparatory courses for re-sitting exams at vocational school are eligible for support. The support covers 100% of costs for tutoring up to a total of EUR 1,000 per apprentice or 100% of costs for the apprenticeship remuneration in case of leaves of absence.

Apart from the above-mentioned types of support, there are additional **benefits regarding non-wage labour costs**:

- In the first and second apprenticeship year, both the company's and the apprentice's **health insurance contributions** are waived.
- The contribution to **accident insurance** for apprentices is waived throughout the entire apprenticeship.
- Contributions to **unemployment insurance** are only payable in the last year of the apprenticeship, the obligation to pay them is waived during the remainder of the apprenticeship period.

The **Public Employment Service Austria (*Arbeitsmarktservice, AMS*)** also runs subsidisation schemes for apprenticeship posts designed to integrate problem groups into the labour market. Companies receive a flat-rate grant towards the costs of an apprenticeship. This grant is payable for the following categories of apprentice, for example:

- **young women** in apprenticeship trades with a low share of women (share of female percentages in the total number of apprentices amounted to less than 40% in the previous training year);
- **particularly disadvantaged apprenticeship seekers:** e.g. young people who have physical disabilities, mental or emotional deficiencies or learning difficulties or who are socially maladjusted;
- participants in **integrative IVET schemes** (*Integrative Berufsausbildung, IBA*, cf. 5.5);
- **people aged 19 or over** whose employability problem resulting from a lack of qualifications can be solved by means of an apprenticeship (these also include holders of the certificate of secondary education from secondary academic school, cf. 5.1).

Tab. 2: Financing of dual IVET (apprenticeship): Summary

	Company-based and school-based training
Direct financing	
School maintenance	Provinces
Teaching staff	50% Federal Government, 50% provincial governments
Pupil support and accommodation grant	Provinces
Company-based part of training	Training companies (support from Federal Government and Public Employment Service)
Direct financing	
Textbooks	BMWFJ/FLAF + private households
Free travel	BMWFJ/FLAF + private households
Indirect financing within the framework of family policies (e.g. family allowance)	BMWFJ/FLAF
Special subsidies	Public Employment Service Austria (AMS)

Financing of education and training at Fachhochschulen (FHS)

One feature of the *Fachhochschule* sector is the system of mixed financing based on standard costing. The cost of establishing and maintaining FHS are met by the Fachhochschule provider body (province, municipality, social partner, etc., cf. 4.3). The running costs per study place are shared between the Federal Government and the provider. In the light of annual staff and running operating costs, the costs of one student place are calculated for each year (standard cost). This amounts to some EUR 7,600 p.a. in technical subject areas and about EUR 6,400 in commercial/business subject areas. The Federal Government meets about 90% of annual standard cost of a student place. The number of student places co-financed by the Government is the subject of an agreement laid down in the respective Fachhochschule development and funding plan. The remaining costs are met by the provider.

With a decision taken by the National Council on the 23rd November 2000, providers are entitled to levy a tuition fee of EUR 363.36 per semester. The provider decides on the way the tuition fees levied are used. FH students are entitled to student support on certain conditions (e.g. low parental income, good student performance).

10.3 Funding for continuing vocational education and training, and adult learning

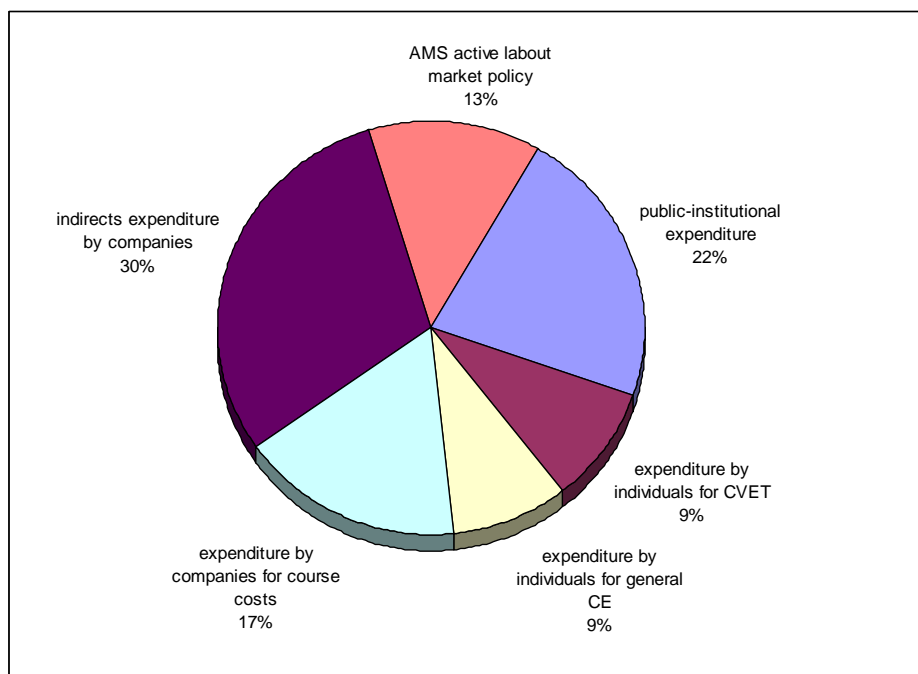
Continuing vocational education and training (CVET) in private and non-profit CVET institutions (cf. 10.2.1) and within companies (cf. 10.2.2) is chiefly funded by **employers** and **participants in CVET** themselves. **Support** is available from the Federal Government, provinces, municipalities, and social partners.

Due to the lack of complete and continual reporting on the subject of CET, **no overall picture of the financing** of CET (comprising CVET and general adult education, cf. 6.1.1) can be given (cf. Schlögl, Schmid, Neubauer 2008). Therefore it is only possible to furnish a **rough estimation** of the finance distribution on the Austrian CET market.

In addition, the **categories** on which this report is based – viz. non-company (public) CET vs. in-company CET – cannot be distinguished clearly in the **Austrian classification**. In the majority of cases, ‘in-company CET’ is understood as the entire range of internal measures financed and organised by the company as well as the external courses where employees take part. The latter are usually held in non-company, public CET institutions. In addition, forms of cost-sharing – with companies paying course fees and sometimes also the organisation of courses during the employees’ free time – are summarised under ‘in-company CET’ (cf. Schneeberger, Petanovitsch 2004).

It is estimated that an approximate total of **2.8 million euros** a year flow into CET across Austria (cf. Schmid, Schlögl, Neubauer 2008). The (direct and indirect) costs for this CET are distributed among companies, individuals and the public as follows:

Fig. 1: Distribution of the CET volume in Austria



Source: Schmid, Schlögl, Neubauer 2008

10.3.1 Public funding schemes and mechanisms to finance CVET

One major legal basis for **public funding of CET** is the Federal Act on the financing of adult education and public libraries from public funds (*Bundesgesetz über die Förderung der Erwachsenenbildung und des Volksbüchereiwesens*, cf. 4.4). This Act regulates the tasks that are eligible for funding (VET, acquisition and extension of school qualifications by adults, etc.), how funding is effected (in the form of loans, grants to borrowed capital, etc.), and what institutions can obtain subsidies on which conditions. Funds only go to education and training institutions whose activities are non-profit-oriented. For the CET provider, however, there exists no legal entitlement to funds. Financial support is organised by the Department for Adult Education of the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*). The majority of education and training institutions funded by the BMUKK are represented in the Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions, which was founded in 1972 (*Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs, KEBÖ*, cf. 6.1.2).

As well as support at federal level, **provinces** and **municipalities** also act as providers of funds, either directly or in the form of separate companies and funds. For that purpose, municipalities and provincial governments mainly apply demand-driven funding instruments (education vouchers, educational accounts, and similar). Preferred target groups of funding are employees, young people, and those at a disadvantage on their respective regional labour markets.

The **social partners** also act as providers of funds for CVET for their respective clients. Similarly to municipalities and provincial governments, social partners also tend to use demand-driven funding instruments (e.g. the educational voucher or *Bildungsgutschein* of the Chambers of Labour).

The **Public Employment Service Austria** (*Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, AMS*) finances skills training, qualification and retraining measures within the framework of active labour market policies (cf. 10.4).

10.3.2 Public-private cost-sharing

In recent years, a large number of instruments to promote VET have been introduced in Austria. The following distinction is useful in this respect:

- Training-time schemes such as the training leave (*Bildungskarenz*)
- Tax incentives schemes
- Accumulation schemes such as educational vouchers (*Bildungsgutscheine*) or educational accounts (*Bildungskonten*)

Regarding **training time schemes**, interested people in Austria can opt for the training leave, scholarship for individuals earning their own livelihood, and 'special aid for pupils'.

- The **educational leave** (*Bildungskarenz*) is an employee's leave of absence where he/she waives income from employment for the purpose of CVET. During the time of the educational leave, employees are entitled to the so-called CVET benefit (*Weiterbildungsgeld*). Its amount depends on the respective employee's entitlement to unemployment benefit. The educational leave can last up to twelve months. As a result of the economic and financial crisis, the educational leave was extended (cf. 3.2.3).
- The **scholarship for individuals earning their own livelihood** (*Selbsterhalter/innenstipendium*) is a special form of study grant. Such a scholarship is only open to people who can furnish proof of a specific period of previous employment (cf. www.schuelerbeihilfe.at).

- The '**special aid for pupils**' (*Besondere SchülerInnenbeihilfe*) is intended for those who are attending an upper secondary school for people in employment to prepare for the upper secondary school-leaving exam (cf. www.stipendium.at).

Demand driven **accumulation schemes** aim at short- or long-term provision of financial resources for CET activities. In Austria, frequent accumulation schemes include

- **educational vouchers**,
- **educational accounts** and
- **training loans**.

10.3.3 Collective (employer, employee) investment to finance CVET

Employees and employers have a number of options to **put forward CVET expenses for tax purposes**. Expenses and cost for CVET, inasmuch as they are connected with the exercised occupation, can be written off from taxes as business expenses or advertising expenses. Also the employed workforce has the possibility to write off costs for occupationally relevant CVET measures from taxes as advertising expenses. Self-employed can write off pure training expenses as business expenses from taxes inasmuch as they are connected with the exercised or a related occupation. This also includes attendance of Fachhochschule programmes (cf. 5.7 and 6.1.2) or VET colleges (*berufsbildende höhere Schulen, BHS*, cf. 5.3 and 6.1.2).

The **training allowance** (*Bildungsfreibetrag*) is geared towards companies. It opens up the possibility to use an exempt amount of 20% of VET and CET expenses that are used for the staff in the business interest. This training allowance applies both to external and in-house CET measures. Alternatively to the training allowance, companies can also take advantage of an **education bonus** (*Bildungsprämie*) of 6% for expenses they would be entitled to for external training allowance.

Another pillar of the financing of company-based CET are **direct subsidies**. They are offered, for example, by the federal provinces, municipalities, professional bodies, organisations of interests, or the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS).

10.4 Funding for training for the unemployed

Labour market policies and training measures for the unemployed (cf. 6.3) are essentially tasks of the public sector and financed primarily from employers' and employees' contributions to unemployment insurance. Financial resources from provincial governments and municipalities as well as private initiatives (particularly from the churches) for the training of unemployed people account for a considerably smaller share of the total amount devoted to these measures.

The 1994 Public Employment Service Act (*Arbeitsmarktservicegesetz, AMSG*, BGBl. 313/1994 as amended) formally separated the administration of employment services from the federal administration. For what concerns employment services, a distinction needs to be made between passive and active labour market policy. The former comprises a wage substitute payable to unemployed people from the unemployment insurance fund, whereas the latter covers not only counselling, placement and support but also training to upgrade skills, qualifications and retraining.

The Public Employment Service Austria (*Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, AMS*) is funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (*Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz, BMASK*), and it shapes the guidelines concerning the support of active labour market policy on its own responsibility. In other

words, the Federal Minister of Labour is only responsible for laying down labour market policy objectives and exercising his/her supervisory powers by verifying that these objectives are being effectively pursued.

The federal provinces also pursue active labour market policies and finance support funds. One relevant example is the Vienna Employee Promotion Fund (*Wiener Arbeitnehmer/innen Förderungsfonds, WAFF*), which was set up at the initiative of the representations of employees' interests by the Vienna City Government in 1995. As well as promoting CET of Vienna employees, the Fund also supports job-hunting and is tailored towards people at a disadvantage such as career break returners, apprenticeship post seekers or immigrants. The Fund is largely financed by the Municipality of Vienna.

11 Report information

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Statistik Austria: <http://www.statistik.at>

Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, Abteilung für Statistik: <http://wko.at/statistik>

11.3 List of acronyms and abbreviations

Abbreviation	German term	English term/explanation
abf-austria	Arbeitsgemeinschaft Berufsbildungsforschung	Austrian Working Group on VET Research
AHS	allgemeinbildende höhere Schule	Secondary academic school (higher general education school) – junior cycle and senior cycle
ALE	Erwachsenenbildung	adult learning
AMS	Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich	Public Employment Service Austria
ARQA-VET	Österreichische Referenzstelle für Qualität in der Berufsbildung	Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
BAG	Berufsausbildungsgesetz	Vocational Training Act
BBAB	Bundesberufsausbildungsbeirat	Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship
BFI	Berufsförderungsinstitut	Vocational Training Institute
BHS	Berufsbildende höhere Schule	VET college
BIC	Berufsinformationscomputer	database containing career information, job descriptions etc.
<i>Bifie</i>	Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation und Entwicklung des Bildungswesens	Federal Institute of Educational Re- search, Innovation and Development of the Education System
BildokG	Bildungsdokumentationsgesetz	Education Documentation Act
BIZ	Berufsinformationszentrum	Career guidance centre
BMF	Bundesministerium für Finanzen	Federal Ministry of Finance
BMG	Bundesministerium für Gesundheit	Federal Ministry for Health
BMHS	Berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schu- len	VET schools and colleges
BMLFUW	Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft	Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
BMS	Berufsbildende mittlere Schule	VET school
BMASK	Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz	Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection
BMUKK	Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur	Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
BMWFJ	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend	Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth

BRP	Berufsreifeprüfung	examination providing access to higher education for skilled workers and graduates of three- and four-year full-time VET schools
CET	Weiterbildung	continuing education and training
CVET	berufliche Weiterbildung	continuing vocational education and training
CVTS	Continuing Vocational Training Survey	Continuing Vocational Training Survey
ECHP	European Community Household Panel	European Community Household Panel
ECVET	Europäisches Lernkreditsystem	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EQR / EQF	Europäischer Qualifikationsrahmen	European Qualifications Framework
ESF	Europäischer Sozialfonds	European Social Fund
EU-SILC	Gemeinschaftsstatistiken über Einkommen und Lebensbedingungen	Community Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
FH	Fachhochschule	university level study programmes of at least three years' duration with vocational-technical orientation
FHR	Fachhochschulrat	Fachhochschule Council
FHStG	Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz	Fachhochschule Studies Act
FLAF	<i>Familienlastenausgleichsfonds</i>	Family compensation fund
GE	Allgemeinbildung	general education
GewO	Gewerbeordnung	Trade, Commerce and Industry Regulation Act
HE	Hochschulbildung	higher education
IHS	Institut für Höhere Studien	Institute for Advanced Studies
IBA	Integrative Berufsausbildung	integrative vocational education and training, integrative VET
ibw	Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft	Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education	International Standard Classification of Education
IVET	berufliche Erstausbildung	initial vocational education and training
JASG	Jugendausbildungssicherungsgesetz	Youth Training Guarantee Act
KEBÖ	Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs	Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions
LAP	Lehrabschlussprüfung	apprenticeship-leave examination
LBAB	Landesberufsausbildungsbeirat	Regional Advisory Board on Apprenticeship

LFI	Ländliches Fortbildungsinstitut	Institute for further education in rural areas
LFS	Labour Force Survey	Labour Force Survey
LLG	Lifelong Guidance	Lifelong guidance
LLL	Lebenslanges Lernen	Lifelong learning
MZ	Mikrozensus	microcensus
NEC	Nationales Europass Zentrum	National Europass Centre
NQR / NQF	Nationaler Qualifikationsrahmen	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation für wirtschaftliche Ko- operation und Entwicklung	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ÖGB	Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund	Austrian Trade Union Federation
öibf	Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung	Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training
PTS	Polytechnische Schule	prevocational school
SBP	Studienberechtigungsprüfung	higher education entrance examination
SchOG	Schulorganisationsgesetz	School Organisation Act
SchUG	Schulunterrichtsgesetz	School Education Act
VET	Berufsbildung	vocational education and training
WB	(berufliche) Weiterbildung	continuing (vocational) education and training
WIFI	<i>Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut</i>	Economic Promotion Institute of the Economic Chambers

