



## VET in Germany

Vocational education and training (VET) is based on close cooperation between the State, companies and social partners. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is responsible for general VET policy issues and has a coordinating role for all training occupations. The BMBF works closely with the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB). BIBB conducts research, moderates the process of developing the training regulations and plays a crucial advisory role for VET policy. The federal states (*Länder*) are in charge of the school-based part of VET. Social partner contribution is important at different levels.

### Upper secondary VET

Apprenticeship programmes (dual system) are the pillar of upper secondary VET. They are mostly offered at EQF level 4 and cover 325 occupations. Programmes usually last three years and combine two learning venues, companies and vocational schools: the work-based learning share is approximately 75%. Enterprises bear the costs of company-based training and pay learner remuneration. Those passing the final examination carried out by the chambers are qualified as certified skilled professionals.

In parallel, upper secondary VET programmes are offered in vocational schools at EQF levels 2 to 4. These include:

- school-based VET programmes, duration one to three years, leading e.g. to a qualification in the health sector such as a nurse;
- general education programmes with vocational orientation, duration two to three years, leading to the general higher education entrance qualification.

Young people with learning difficulties, handicap or insufficient German language skills have the possibility to attend different transition programmes.

At post-secondary level, specialised programmes are offered at EQF levels 4 to 5, lasting one to three years and leading to entrance qualifications for universities.

### Tertiary VET

At tertiary level, those with vocational qualifications and professional experience can acquire advanced vocational qualifications at EQF levels 5 to 7. At EQF level 6 (bachelor professional, e.g. *Meister*) the qualifications entitle graduates to exercise a trade, to hire and train apprentices, and to enrol in academic bachelor programmes. Graduates can continue at EQF level 7 (master professional). These qualifications support the acquisition of middle and top management positions in companies. Preparation courses are offered by chambers or schools.

Advanced vocational programmes are offered at EQF 6, lasting one and a half to four years. Entrance requirements include specific vocational qualification and work experience. They lead to an advanced qualification (such as technician, educator) and give access to the relevant field of study.

Dual study programmes are offered at EQF levels 6 to 7 by different higher education institutions. They provide a blend of academic and vocational training, in which in-company training is an important element (share of at least 40 to 50%). Enterprises bear the costs of company-based training and pay learners a wage.

### Continuing VET

Continuing training is playing an increasingly important role in improving employability by upskilling and reskilling in line with the digital and ecological transition. It is characterised by a wide variety of training providers and a low degree of State regulation. State incentives are in place to increase participation in CVET.

### Distinctive features of VET

Germany's VET is a successful model, largely based on the dual system (apprenticeship) leading to high-quality vocational qualifications, valued on the labour market. Apprenticeship enables smooth education-to-work transitions, contributing to low youth unemployment: in 2019 this was 5.8% of those aged 15 to 24, versus 15.1% in the EU-27. About 50% of upper secondary school learners are enrolled in a VET programme; of those, 70% participate in apprenticeship. A growing share of apprentices has a higher education entrance qualification (29.2% of apprentices starting their training in 2017). The success of the German apprenticeship system was also the main driver for implementing the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

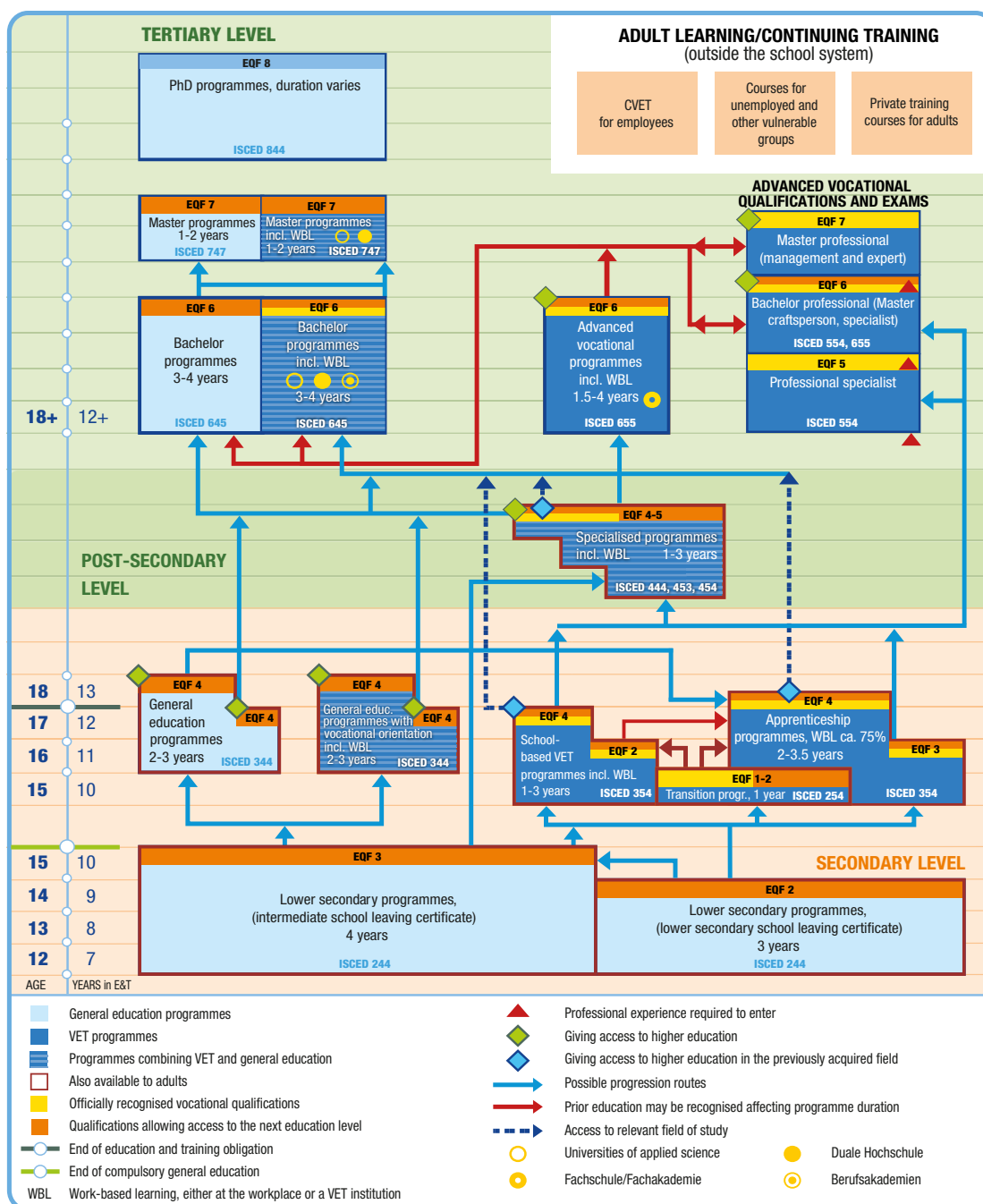
National standards and training regulations (curricula for in-company and school-based components) ensure the quality of the dual training programmes. Companies provide apprenticeships in accordance with the training regulations, developed by the four stakeholders (Federal and State governments, companies and trade unions). These regulations allow for flexibility to agree on company training plans with apprentices. Regular revisions to training regulations guarantee keeping pace with rapid technological and organisational changes.

Social partner contribution at different levels is important. As vocational training must respond to labour market needs, employer organisations and trade unions have a major influence on the content and form of IVET and CVET. At national level, they are represented in the BIBB board and participate in its vocational training committees. At regional level, the chambers play a crucial role in VET, such as in examinations. The initiative for updating or developing new occupational profiles comes mainly from social partners.

### Challenges and policy responses

Increasing the attractiveness of VET to secure a future skilled workforce by promoting:

- vocational educational pathways up to EQF levels 6 and 7 and underlining the equivalence to academic education through new designations of bachelor professional and master professional;
- excellence in VET with the funding scheme *InnoVET*, which supports cooperation between learning locations, for the transfer of new developments (including artificial intelligence) from research institutions via VET into company practice;
- training for care and nursing occupations, by broadening the qualification, abolishing school fees and introducing remuneration for trainees.



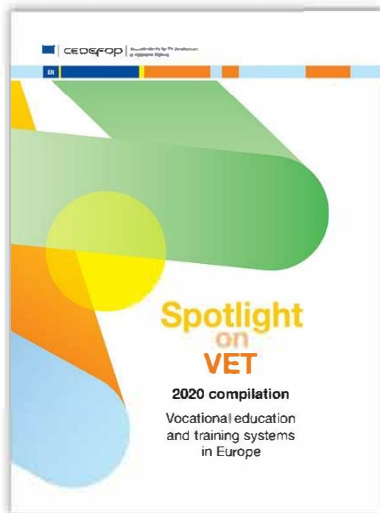
NB: ISCED-P 2011. This is a simplified chart, based on the unified approach used for the spotlights on VET in all EU-27 countries plus Iceland and Norway. Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Germany, 2020.

Modernising IVET and CVET to prepare for digital and ecological transition:

- IVET: the VET 4.0 initiative investigates the effects of digitalisation on qualifications and competences requirements of skilled professionals;
- CVET: the Qualification Opportunities Act introduces the right of employees to access CVET funding, if they are affected by structural changes. The National skills strategy responds to the challenges of the increasing digitalisation of the world of work. The overall goal is understanding occupational CVET as a lifelong necessity.

Providing guidance and coaching to reduce matching problems and support inclusive VET:

- the number of unfilled training places shows a need for reconciling supply and demand while taking into account regional and branch-specific differences. Employment agencies play a major role in matching SMEs and applicants;
- the Alliance for initial and further training has committed to integrating all interested learners in a VET programme; pre-VET measures and support during training are offered to migrants, refugees and other disadvantaged groups to facilitate their transition to VET and successful completion.



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