

Quality assurance of company-based training in the dual system in Germany

An overview for practitioners and VET experts

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Preface



Quality assurance in vocational education and training is an important item on the educational policy agenda and will certainly remain so. It is a classical cross-sectional task that encompasses all aspects of VET from the development of national training standards at the system level to the company training plan at the provider level. Quality together with its assurance and development also constitutes an ongoing remit for all those involved in the training process.

The topic of quality assurance in vocational education and training is also receiving impetuses from European initiatives. Transparency and comparability of qualifications and enhanced mobility have been introduced with the aim of creating a joint European Education Area and a common labour market. Within the scope of this Copenhagen Process, which has been running since 2002, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the EQAVET Recommendation in 2009. This contains the EQAVET Reference Framework itself (EQAVET = European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training).

The various elements of quality assurance in vocational education and training in Germany have thus far not been perceived and communicated via the term “quality assurance”, either primarily or as an overall concept. These elements have their basis in traditional processes, procedures and regulations which are stipulated across several laws and documents and can only be mapped by the EQAVET Quality Framework to a limited extent (see Part II of this brochure). At a national level, therefore, the tendency is to make reference to regulatory policy rules, basic legal principles or standards applicable across the country rather than to quality assurance instruments. This does not serve the interests of thematically-related dialogue and networking within Europe.

The aim of this brochure is to make it easier to understand the central quality assurance mechanisms which underlie the company-based part of initial training in the dual system in Germany. It contains a structured overview of the most important regulations, procedures and stakeholders which secure and pursue the further development of training quality at the company as

a learning venue. Quality assurance at vocational schools is given a much lower degree of coverage since this falls within the area of responsibility of the federal states. In addition, it is not our intention to expound upon the way in which the dual system functions as a whole. This has already been explained in a large number of other publications and representations.

This brochure has been prepared in German and English and is aimed at education and training experts from the fields of academic research, policy making and practice in Germany and Europe. The objective is to contribute towards achieving greater transparency between the member states in this thematic area. In light of the joint European Education Area and labour market, this is the only way of creating the additional trust and mobility which in turn facilitates lifelong learning.

Prof. Dr. Friedrich Hubert Esser

President of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training

Introduction

What is quality in vocational education and training? And how can it be assured? These issues have been occupying both experts and practitioners ever since VET came into being. Quality is an opalescent concept that, in the educational system, is characterised by multiplicity and vagueness. Quality expectations of participants vary according to their own perspective. The expectations and aspirations that a trainee has with regard to company-based learning are, for example, different to those of the skilled workers providing training. The interest of the state is to retain the efficiency and competitiveness of the economy as a whole and to integrate young people into society. This takes place via qualification in an occupation and via socialisation processes within the company. In their capacity as representatives of the companies, the employer associations are keen to secure a sufficient supply of skilled workers. Finally, the focus of the trade unions is to protect the rights and prospects of these future skilled workers. Criteria for “good” initial and continuing vocational education and training are therefore an object of negotiation between the parties involved and need to be agreed at various levels in the VET sector.

One matter which is not in dispute is that training quality needs to be secured in a reliable manner. At the statutory level, mechanisms for quality assurance are stipulated in the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) and the Craft and Trades Regulation Code (HwO). These regulate both the development of training regulations, the execution of training and its monitoring by the chambers. The reform of the Vocational Training Act in 2005 required the VET committees located at the chambers and the Federal State Committees for Vocational Education and Training to work towards achieving continuous further development in the quality of vocational education and training. The set of instruments thus created firmly anchors quality assurance and development of VET as a permanent task within the dual system.

Within the area of the vocational school system, most federal states stipulate in law that quality management systems should be in place. It is also frequently the case that state-specific variants of the usual models have been developed. These will be outlined in the introduction to Part III.

Three overarching principles are significant in terms of gaining an understanding of quality assurance in vocational education and training. These

are the dual principle, the occupation principle (Berufsprinzip), and the principle of consensus. The dual principle combines learning in the work process with learning at a vocational school and at the same time facilitates the acquisition of occupational experience. The occupation principle (Berufsprinzip) is based on certification which is binding and recognised across the country. It affords the opportunity to exercise a multitude of occupational activities. The principle of consensus guarantees proximity to the labour market and transparency and acceptance of training occupations via the involvement of the social partners, the Federal Government and the federal states in the development of national training standards. Laws, ordinances and recommendations stipulate nationally-binding minimum standards for company-based training.

Numerous communication pathways and possible spheres of influence (horizontal, top-down and bottom-up), in particular via representation of the social partners in the VET committees, enable a continuous and interactive process of agreement to take place between the social partners. This networking ensures that specific company realities and longer term requirements are accorded due consideration in the structuring of system elements. Thanks to “participative” quality assurance, the dual system remains a reliable route for vocational training that is aligned to the person. It is also of benefit to Germany as a location.

Quality has several dimensions. These include input (equipment available at the training venue, qualification of the trainers, training plans etc.), process (learning methods, motivation of trainers etc.), output (successful learning, final mark etc.) and outcome (transfer of what has been learned, utilisation of the qualification etc.). The input and output dimension of quality is at the heart of the minimum standards mentioned. The prerequisites for and results of successful training are standardised. In the training process at a local level (provider level), companies offering training are provided with areas of scope in which they can operate whilst the chambers ensure that proper execution of training is monitored. Process quality is thus expressed in terms of interaction between trainees and parties providing training. The formal regulations primarily described in the present brochure need to act as a vehicle for constant re-achievement of quality at the company level.

In order to explain the mesh of areas of responsibility, interactions and processes between the various quality assurance stakeholders in vocation-

al education and training, DEQA-VET has identified eleven cornerstones for quality assurance in company-based training (see Figure 1). These cornerstones have emerged following a process of compaction and as a result of dialogue with vocational education and training experts. The statutory stipulations (Vocational Training Act, Act for the Protection of Children and Young People) and the recommendations made by the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training form the foundation for development. The first stage involved selecting the system-inherent components which are directly relevant to quality assurance. The second part of the procedure was then to reduce these to their essentials. Once the appropriate sources had been collated, an attempt was undertaken to represent the quality assurance mechanisms in a simplified form. This simplification also means that exceptional regulations are addressed to the smallest degree possible.

After a brief description, Part I explains the relevance of each cornerstones to quality assurance. This enables readers to gain a rapid overview of how quality of vocational education and training is ensured.

Part II of the brochure considers quality assurance in the dual system within the context of the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training Reference Framework (EQAVET). Particular characteristics and correspondences are compared and described.

Part III provides a systematic alignment of the mechanisms of quality assurance at institutional levels (company, intermediate and system level). The aim here is to present the structures which define the dual system in a clearer way. This form of mapping is also in line with the differentiation made by EQAVET between the system and provider level whilst also emphasising a particular characteristic of the German system – the intermediate level. This level includes the chambers, which are the main stakeholder and link between the state and the companies. However, the three institutional levels should be seen as a means of dividing up tasks and determining areas of responsibility rather than as a rigid system. Alongside vertical division, there is also a horizontal division of tasks between the stakeholders within the respective level, and this may be viewed as an additional quality assurance characteristic of the dual system.

The citation of sources in the text has been largely avoided in order to make the brochure easier to read. As a consequence of this, the representations

include only terms and generally valid statements which are not directly attributable to any particular author. Further literature, official European documents, the most important federal laws relating to the topic, and the recommendations of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training are listed at the end of the brochure.



Part I: Cornerstones of quality assurance in company-based training

The dual system of vocational education and training is both a tried and tested route to an initial vocational qualification for young people and a guarantor for the securing of a supply of skilled workers across the whole of the economy. Events on the training market are the result of all training places offered by the companies and of all individual decisions made by young people regarding training in a certain occupation or at a certain company. The Federal Government, the federal states, the social partners and other stakeholders endeavour to ensure that training contracts are concluded between companies and young people interested in entering into such arrangements and further seek to ensure that these contracts are successfully completed and culminate in contracts of employment. The aims of quality assurance are to comply with minimum standards in using education and training to integrate young people into society and to qualify them for work within an occupation whilst also covering company requirements for skilled workers. Numerous stakeholders work together in order to achieve this objective. Within the scope of the legal framework, execution of training between the learning venues of the company and the vocational school is monitored by the chambers. The main emphasis is on proper completion of training rather than on the monitoring process itself. For this reason, no cornerstone was developed for the latter aspect.

Companies have various motivations for opting to provide training. The fundamental focuses are on securing a supply of skilled workers in order to retain or enhance competitiveness or on the social obligation of the companies. The basis of quality assurance in the dual system is to support and facilitate decisions to offer training on the part of companies and decisions on the part of young people to enter training in an occupation. The acquisition of occupational proficiency (*berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit*) by the young people at the end of training should not be jeopardised. Although the prerequisites of the companies and young people vary greatly, compliance with minimum standards needs to be ensured. In addition to this, traditional procedures have been established which have an integrative effect in allowing the various interests of the stakeholder groups to inform the system.

In order to facilitate adherence to minimum standards, institutions and programmes are created at a regional and federal level to provide guidance and support to companies and young people interested in using the system. The company providing training needs to take account of the minimum quality

standards from when a training place is offered until the time of completion of training. It does so in the knowledge that numerous partners and institutions are on hand to give direct and indirect assistance.

Part I of the brochure looks at the area between the system level and company level and uses the cornerstones to show how quality assurance functions. After a brief description, the relevance to quality assurance of each cornerstone is outlined. In Part II, these cornerstones are considered in detail. Further quality characteristics are added and distributed by institutional levels – the system, intermediate and company level (Figure 1).

Cornerstones for quality assurance



Source: own representation

Figure 1: 11 Cornerstones for quality assurance

1. The state, the employers and employees act together in accordance with the consensus principle to shape the dual system

Description

Within the dual system, the Federal Government is responsible for the company-based element of training whilst the school-based component falls within the remit of the federal states. The employers and employees are equally represented via their respective umbrella organisations in the management committees at regional and national level. They have equal voting rights in the VET committees at the chambers, in the Federal State Committees for Vocational Education and Training and in the Board, and the sub-committees and working groups of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB).



The VET Committee of the chamber responsible must be notified and consulted on all important matters relating to vocational education and training. The Federal State Committee advises the federal state in question on matters relating to vocational education and training. Pursuant to the BBiG, both committees are required to focus on achieving a continuous development of quality of vocational education and training within the scope of their remit.

The BIBB Board advises the Federal Government in fundamental matters relating to vocational education and training. The purpose of the recommendations the Board adopts with regard to the structuring of company-based training is to achieve uniform application of the BBiG, especially when the focus is on specifying certain procedures on relationships in concrete terms.

Relevance for quality assurance

The interaction that takes place between the state, the trade unions, the employers and the chambers has been firmly established within the BBiG. This has created equal involvement of employers and employees as the foundation of the consensus principle. Legislation and the development of standards in VET does not take place without the participation and consent of the social

partners in their capacity as relevant stakeholders and contractual parties on the labour market. Their involvement guarantees that the reality of vocational education and training practice is identified and taken into account. Their agreement produces an expectation that implementation of laws, regulations and standards will be successful. One-sided enactment of laws or standards by the state or implementation of such instruments without the participation of one of the partners may result in social conflicts or in implementation problems at the companies. For this reason, the state and the social partners work together in accordance with the consensus principle to achieve the stability and further development of the system.

The consensus principle is of central significance to quality assurance because vocational education and training shifts between political, economic and vocational teaching objectives. In some cases, the different group interests are in a situation of competition. The system can only be managed effectively if the state and the social partners adopt a cooperative attitude. The consensus principle states that nothing must take place against the will of the other parties involved. For this reason, the social partners endeavour to reach a consensus which can also be embraced by the Federal Government and the federal states.

2. Vocational education and training planning is based on indicators-aided reporting

Description

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) constantly monitors developments in VET. By 1 April each year, it publishes a “Report on Vocational Education and Training”. This report sets out the current status and probable further development of vocational education and training. It contains information for the previous calendar year on VET contracts that have been concluded and are still in existence, on the number of vacant training places, and on persons registered as training place applicants. Demand for and supply of training places for the respective current calendar year are also forecast.



BIBB also publishes detailed information, data and analyses on vocational education and training on an annual basis in its “Data Report to accompany the Report on Vocational Education and Training”. This presents central indicators relating to initial and continuing vocational education and training and illustrates the developments which have taken place over the course of time.

Pursuant to the BBiG, data relevant to vocational education and training statistics is collected by the Federal Statistical Office with the support of BIBB and the Federal Employment Agency. This data covers aspects such as information on trainees, trainers and training advisors. The data collected is used for the planning and regulation of VET within the scope of the respective areas of responsibility.

The “National Education Report” appears every two years and covers the whole of the educational system. This report is a comprehensive inventory which contains indicators for all educational sectors, including continuing training.

Relevance for quality assurance

The collection of regional and national data and the formation of indicators are central to the observation of demand for and supply of training places and to the identification of imbalances on the training market. If the Report on Vocational Education and Training indicates that a regionally and sectorally balanced supply of initial training places may be at risk, proposals for remedying such a situation are included. The data collected is discussed within the various committees and publicly with the involvement of all stakeholder groups. Specific proposals are also made available via publications, recommendations and official responses from various institutions such as the BIBB Board.

Recording data on the training market and taking account of demographic development and of educational behaviour on the part of young people enable prognoses to be submitted regarding securing a supply of skilled workers for trade and industry in the short and medium term.

The data gathered is made available to the fields of policy making, academic research and practice. It is also used to inform the planning of measures and programmes. This permits the Federal Government and the federal states

to set out main focuses for the funding of vocational education and training and to design projects in areas where measures are required. Differentiation according to characteristics such as gender, school-leaving qualification and migration background enables target groups needing support to be identified during the survey process.

3. Modernisation mechanisms, research and development projects, pilot projects and projects conducted together with practice achieve a continuous improvement of the system

Description

The constituent elements of the dual system are evaluated on an ongoing basis and modernised with consideration of economic, societal and technical developments.

VET research plays a particular role in the modernisation process. This encompasses the clarification of the basic principles underlying vocational education and training, observation of domestic, European and international developments, identification of requirements regarding the contents and aims of VET, preparation of further developments in vocational education and training in respect of changes to economic, societal and technical needs, the promotion of instruments and procedures for the imparting of VET and knowledge and technology transfer.



BIBB plays a central part in this continual process by dint of the position it occupies at the interface between academic research, policy and practice. Given the dialogue that takes place between the social partners and trade and industry organisations, this role is particularly revealed in the area of the modernisation of existing occupations and development of new occupations. The pilot projects financed by the BMBF are an instrument for the experimental development and testing of new and innovative possible solutions which contribute to qualitative improvement in vocational education and training. Their aim is to transfer findings to practice, academic research and policy making.

Relevance for quality assurance

VET research is an area which is open to all stakeholders involved. It is not a monopoly of the state institutions. The employers' associations, the chambers, the trade unions and numerous foundations all make a contribution. Discourse is not limited to the national context. The European and international level is also included. Research results are announced in publicly accessible publications and at specialist conferences.

The system is continuously improved by taking on board and discussing the research results and integrating them into the structure.

Pilot projects act as an impetus provider for innovations in vocational education and training and are evaluated via academic research. They develop evidence-based and practically feasible solutions and provide development tools for modernisation.

The evaluation of existing structures includes all system components, beginning with training standards and extending to encompass institutions such as BIBB. The recommendations made by the Board are revised and updated. The Vocational Training Act, for example, was reformed in 2005 and subjected to evaluation in 2016.

4. The structuring of training regulations is based on the occupation principle (Berufsprinzip)

Description

328 recognised training occupations (as of 2016) are regulated in a nationally standardised way by means of their respective training regulations. These stipulate minimum standards. They include information on the title of the recognised training occupation, duration of training, the training profile (professional skills, knowledge and competences), the general training plan (content and time structure of training) and the examination requirements.



Pursuant to the BBiG, the duration of training should be not more than three years and not less than two years. The focus is on acquiring an oc-

cupation rather than on learning individual work tasks which may offer access to the labour market. Vocational education and training is also required to foster social competence and autonomy as well as professional competence. Social competence and autonomy are extremely difficult to impart in partially qualifying, company- or sector-specific training programmes.

There is flexibilisation within the occupation principle (Berufsprinzip) in that relevant competencies acquired in an occupation or in a training course at a vocational school may be credited towards another occupation. Occupations may also be structured in specific terms via differentiations such as specialisms or main focuses. Occupations which exhibit common core skills, such as the industrial electrical and metal working occupations, can be combined into one occupational group.

Relevance for quality assurance

The occupation principle (Berufsprinzip) secures the opportunity to exercise numerous specific work tasks. The aim is to afford young people the chance to develop their personality and to identify with an occupation within the scope of socialisation processes. A further objective is for them to acquire occupational experience. Broadly based vocational education and training provides a solid foundation for personal development and for life-long learning.

The nationally standardised nature of company-based training offers young people good employment opportunities and a high degree of mobility once they have successfully completed their training. On the basis of the competences they have acquired during training, they are in a position to submit job applications anywhere where suitable jobs are on offer. Employers can be sure about the qualifications of applicants who have completed training in a recognised training occupation, even if they are from a different federal state.

Flexibilisation of the occupation principle (Berufsprinzip) via differentiations is structured in such a way that the occupations still remain recognisable on the labour market. The formation of occupational groups makes it easier to switch to another occupation within the group. Coordination of various training programmes becomes easier for the company.

5. State-recognised training occupations are designed in a practice-oriented way and are updated

Description

The regulation of state-regulated training occupations is agreed in a standardised manner by the Federal Government, the federal states, the employers and the employees.

Training regulations are monitored on a regular basis and, as soon as a specific need arises, adapted to meet developments in society, the economy and technology. These developments may also lead to new training occupations in new fields of employment. A regulatory procedure usually lasts between 12 and 18 months. In order to support the companies, BIBB draws up implementation guides for practice for the purpose of planning and execution of training in accordance with the regulations that have been enacted.



All those involved are free to instigate an initiative to modernise existing occupations or develop new occupations. The re-regulation process begins with the development of benchmarks for the occupation in question. These are drawn up by experts from the field of company practice with the agreement of the social partners. Following instruction from the federal ministry responsible, the experts appointed by the social partners develop the regulatory instruments under the lead management of BIBB. Parallel to this, an appropriate framework curriculum for the vocational schools is drawn up via the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in close conjunction with stakeholders involved on the Federal Government side. After consent has been obtained from the BIBB Board, the training regulations are enacted by the ministry responsible in agreement with the BMBF.

Relevance for quality assurance

The regulatory procedure ensures that qualifications are in line with labour market requirements and are adapted to meet current and future developments in a timely manner. Learning objectives are formulated in a technologically neutral way so as to retain validity as continuous alterations take place in the world of work. Modernisation of training regulations or the emergence of new occupations only takes place in the event

of significant changes. These occupations are aligned to proposals made by the social partners and to the outcomes of vocational education and training research.

Mutual development of the training regulations by the Federal Government and the social partners and coordination with the federal states ensure that training occupations meet the needs of the labour market and that transparency is achieved for all participants. This means that a broad degree of acceptance is achieved. Involvement of the federal states at an early stage ensures coherence of the curricula.

Company reality is incorporated into the training regulations across the whole of the process of their development, all the way from the involvement of experts from company practice for the stipulation of benchmarks to the point where the BIBB Board gives its consent to these benchmarks.

The effect of the consensus principle is exemplarily revealed in regulatory work. The different interests of the social partners, which are divergent in some cases, are negotiated in such a way so as ultimately to produce practice-oriented training standards which enjoy a high degree of acceptance. This principle has proved its worth and enables possible barriers to be removed during the re-regulation process itself.

6. When selecting training, young people receive support from vocational guidance institutions and programmes and from databases

Description

Support with vocational orientation begins whilst young people are still at school. Various approaches in this regard are in place in the federal states. Most schools have practical placement weeks which offer pupils an insight into the world of work. In addition, career entry support workers are available to some schools and are able to provide assistance with matters such as searching for a training place. The BMBF's vocational orientation programme enables pupils to explore their strengths via an analysis of potential and then try out various occupational fields in a workshop.



The Employment Agency provides support with career choice, offers information on training opportunities and helps with the search for a training place. Information materials on training pathways and occupations are available in the vocational information centres. Personal guidance is offered by careers advisors at a local level. The chambers also provide information on the training occupations. They offer online training exchanges and use regional training fairs at which companies are represented as a further vehicle for information. Detailed and systematic information on occupations and career pathways and on training place provision is available in sectoral, regional and national databases and portals.

A diverse range of measures is in place to support young people without a training place at the transition from school to work. The pre-vocational training year and the basic vocational training year, for example, offer vocational orientation and preparation for training. In some cases, later credit can be given for a vocational preparation period.

Relevance for quality assurance

Young people's family and personal environment provides essential career choice impetuses. These are areas in which the subjective views and ideas of parents, friends and acquaintances may have an influence on the opinion formed by those involved. In addition to this, professional support is offered in the form of vocational guidance and orientation. This helps young people to make the right career choice for themselves based on their own preferences, interests and abilities.

If young people make the right career choice, this will increase their motivation and reduce the risk of premature discontinuation of training. Appropriate alternatives are shown to them if they fail to obtain a training place in their preferred occupation. Certain training occupations, such as motor vehicle mechatronics technician for young men and office manager for young women, are more attractive to young people than other occupations and therefore attract more applications for the training places available. Illustrating alternatives may take young people in the direction of training occupations about which they previously knew very little or nothing and which may prove a good match for them even if not considered to be a typical option for their gender.

7. Trainers are personally and professionally suited to impart training contents

Description

Pursuant to the BBiG, trainers must be personally suited. Those deemed not to be suited are persons who are not permitted to employ children or young people or who have breached the BBiG and its relevant provisions.



Trainers are in possession of the necessary occupational and vocational teaching skills, knowledge and competences. They have passed a state-recognised examination in a specialism that is relevant to the training occupation. This examination may have been completed within the scope of dual training or full-time school-based training or at an institute of higher education. Occupational and vocational teaching aptitude is ascertained in an examination. Successful completion of a master craftsman examination is considered evidence of occupational and vocational teaching aptitude.

Trainers also have appropriate occupational experience. Further suitable staff may take on tasks related to vocational education and training under the responsibility of the trainer.

Relevance for quality assurance

Because of the central role in quality assurance that is played by trainers and other skilled workers involved in providing training, the demands placed on such persons are high. They are supported via numerous regional and national networks and portals. The aim of having suitable training staff is to ensure availability of the necessary capacities for execution of training at the company.

Personal aptitude means that the moral attitude and values system of the trainers are not at variance with youth protection or with the need to comply with the relevant regulations. Persons who may jeopardise the implementation of training or provide a risk to the young people themselves are excluded.

Professional aptitude and occupational experience guarantee that trainers are in possession of the skills, knowledges and competences that they need to impart. In addition, they know how the contents of training should best be delivered in pedagogical terms.

Because the training process is linked to specific work tasks and availability of trainers for all trainees at all times cannot be ensured, parts of training may be delegated to other employees who are personally suitable.

8. Training venues are suitable for vocational education and training in terms of their nature and equipment

Description

The process of ascertaining the suitability of the training venue is initiated as soon as a company registers a training contract with the chamber. Suitability is identified only for the training occupation in question and is not valid generally. The relevant training regulations are available to the training venue. The general training plan is used to develop a company training plan which contains information on specific workplaces, phases of training, training contents to be imparted and training times allocated. Training measures which cannot be imparted to their full extent at the company may take place at inter-company vocational training centres or be delivered in cooperation with other partners. In such a case, these measures should be stipulated in the vocational education and training contract.



Company work and business processes ensure achievement of occupational proficiency (berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit) in accordance with the training regulations. The necessary facilities and training materials are in place. An appropriate time is available for training purposes.

In order to ensure normal processing of training, consideration is accorded to both qualitative and quantitative circumstances. The number of trainees remains at an appropriate ratio to the number of training places or to the number of skilled workers employed (guidance value is one trainee to

three skilled workers). There also needs to be an appropriate ratio between the number of trainees and the number of trainers (part-time trainers and skilled workers providing training look after a maximum of three trainees, whilst the maximum for full-time trainers is 16 trainees).

Relevance for quality assurance

Suitability of training venues ensures that the material resources and conditions required for the execution of training are in place and that normal implementation of training can be ensured without causing disruption for any trainee.

Phases of training and relevant workplaces are stipulated at the very outset of training. These are planned in such a way so as to harmonise work and training processes which run in parallel. In individual terms, trainees receive sufficient materials, space and support from trainers so as not to create any disruption for other employees or for one another.

In order to increase the number of companies providing training, there is an option to deliver parts of training at extra-company training centres. These enable companies to work together in various ways and offer cooperative training. Companies may also avail themselves of state-funded extra-company vocational training centres. These extra-company training measures are agreed in the training contract so that all participants are aware of the specific learning venues in advance.

9. Rights and obligations of the training contract are regulated

Description

The conclusion of a training contract and the registration of such a contract with the competent body are a prerequisite for training. The contractual partners are the party providing training (defined as a party which recruits other persons for vocational education and training) and the trainee. Consent from a legal guardian is required for trainees aged under 18.



Trainees are entitled to receive remuneration and paid leave. Training allowances rise annually as the vocational education and training progresses. The probationary period must be of at least one month's duration and may not exceed four months. Notwithstanding this, both parties may give notice of termination for good cause. Trainees wishing to abandon vocational education and training or enter training in a different occupation are required to give four weeks' notice of termination. If premature termination of a training contract takes place, trainees may make a claim for compensation within three months if such a premature dissolution was the fault of the other contractual party.

Certain information, such as commencement and duration of vocational education and training and regular daily training time, must be stipulated in writing in the training contract. Written mention is also made of the collective wage agreements and company and service agreements which are applicable to the vocational education and training contractual arrangements. The content and time structure of vocational education and training must be set out in an annex to the contract. Trainees keep a daily or monthly record to document the progress of training. This must be checked at least once a month by trainers.

Relevance for quality assurance

Training is associated with rights and duties for both contractual parties and may not be discontinued without a valid reason. The contract creates a legal basis for the successful completion of training. Trainees are afforded particular protection regarding their working times or tasks via various provisions contained within the Law for the Protection of Young People at Work. Representation of their interests at the company is governed by the Labour and Management Relations Act.

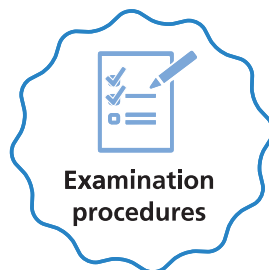
The training contract is a guarantor that trainees are not exploited as cheap labour and that they have sufficient time to attend vocational school without having to give up leisure time or leave. Because they have employee status, all regulations in labour law fundamentally apply to trainees alongside the particular protective provisions that also relate to them. Remuneration is stipulated under the provisos contained within applicable collective wage agreements and cannot be arbitrarily set by the company. For companies, the training contract represents a guarantor that trainees do not prematurely end their training contract without reason and that they fulfil their duties in the company and at vocational school.

The training process is precisely planned and is set out in the company training plan. The actual course of training is documented by the trainee in his or her record of training, which is checked by the trainer. This instrument then serves both as an object of reflection and as a means of monitoring and control.

10. The occupational proficiency (berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit) gained by trainees is identified by an examination board of the competent body following a valid procedure

Description

Final or journeyman examinations identify the acquisition of occupational proficiency (berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit). Candidates are required to demonstrate mastery of the necessary occupational skills, possession of the required occupational knowledge and competences and familiarity with the teaching material imparted via teaching at the vocational school. In order to determine status of training during the training process, an intermediate examination is conducted in accordance with the training regulations. The training regulations may instead stipulate that the final examination takes place in two different parts conducted at different times (extended final examination).



For the purpose of hosting the final examination, the chamber sets up independent examination boards comprising at least three members. These members must be competent within the areas of the examination and be suitable for involvement in the examination system. The examination board must include equal numbers of representatives of employers and employees and at least one vocational school teacher.

The examination board evaluates individual examination performances and the examination in overall terms and decides whether the examination has been passed or not.

The chamber enacts examination regulations which require approval from the supreme federal state authority. Examination regulations must

govern admission to the examination, structuring of the examination, evaluation procedures, the issuing of examination certificates, consequences of breaches of the examination regulations and resitting of the examination.

Relevance for quality assurance

The neutrality of examiners is an essential characteristic of quality assurance in the examination system. The principle is that those who provide training must not participate in the examination. For this reason, organisation of examinations is transferred to the chambers and is not carried out by the companies or vocational schools. Nevertheless, the co-determination of all stakeholder groups is ensured. The employers, employees and vocational schools are all involved.

A further quality characteristic of the examinations is that individual examination performances are evaluated by at least two examiners. This makes a major contribution to the objectivity of the evaluation process.

The intermediate examination or the first part of the extended final examination reflects the status of progress during training. In the case of learning difficulties, they permit compensatory measures to be taken before it is too late. This enables the probability of failure in the final examination to be reduced.

Examiners have numerous support instruments at their disposal, such as advanced VET provision or specialist portals.

11. Companies and vocational schools collaborate in the implementation of vocational education and training

Description

Coordination of the training contents resulting from the training regulations and skeleton curricula for the learning venues of the company and the vocational school is best achieved within the scope of close cooperation between these learning venues. The introduction of learning



fields by means of the framework curricula means that both learning venues are responsible for the acquisition of practical competencies. The learning field concept helps to concentrate cooperation between the learning venues via the joint development of cross-venue training projects for the better linking of theory and practice. Vocational school teachers learn more about the current requirements of company practice. Together with the trainers, they have the scope to increase quality in training. Alongside coordinating training contents and teaching modules, they are also able to exchange information on trainees (attendance, motivation, performance, social behaviour etc.).

Company placements for teachers help them to deepen their knowledge of company procedures, structures and processes and aim to offer insights into a world of work and employment that is constantly changing. Teachers gain greater awareness of the needs of the companies and are able to pass on their newly acquired knowledge to the trainees. Practical placements assist the teaching staff in establishing a personal contact network and open up new opportunities for sustainable cooperation between companies and vocational schools.

Relevance for quality assurance

The competences needed for achievement of occupational proficiency (berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit), such as holistic thinking, the ability to act as a team player and reflectiveness, cannot be developed in an isolated way at a single learning venue. Close cooperation between both learning venues is required. This is the best way of interlinking theoretical learning contents with practical business and work processes.

Rather than stipulating a rigid framework for cooperation between learning venues, legislation at federal level provides for several possibilities which may be used at differing levels of intensity by local stakeholders depending on their requirements and human resources. Indeed, the Federal Government is unable to enforce a particular binding form of cooperation by dint of the fact that this would exceed the competences afforded to it within the German federal system. In their capacity as the bodies responsible for the school-based part of the dual system, the federal states are able to influence matters and firmly establish cooperation between learning venues in school law.

Practical company placements for vocational school teachers are a particular form of cooperation between learning venues which, alongside specialist networking, offers a platform via which the parties can get to know each other and initiate further activities.



Part II: Quality assurance in the dual system within the context of the European Quality Assurance Framework in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)

At a European level, the topic of quality assurance in vocational education and training has been an object of consideration in various institutional formations for more than a decade. This voluntary cooperation was put on a more binding footing following a recommendation adopted by the EU Parliament and Council on 18 June 2009. This also marks the date of foundation of a network of 34 European states (as of 2016) which continues to be active down to the present day under the name of EQAVET (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training).

Germany was involved in the development of joint basic principles for quality assurance in vocational education and training from the outset. In 2008, the BMBF established the “German Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (DEQA-VET)” at BIBB.

1. The tasks of the German Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (DEQA-VET)

The German Reference Point has always sought to help foster the “culture of quality assurance” mentioned in the recommendation cited above. The main focus of its endeavours in this regard is on a networking of VET stakeholders and institutions. In its capacity as a contact point and service agency for topics related to quality assurance in vocational education and training, DEQA-VET operates at a European, national and regional level and assumes a mediating role between the various stakeholders. Its aims are to secure flows of information, instigate initiatives and promote a deeper understanding of quality assurance in VET (see www.deqa-vet.de).

As well as committing to the establishment of national reference points, the European states also agreed in the EQAVET Recommendation on the use and further development of the “European Reference Framework for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training” (EQAVET Reference Framework). This provides the member states with a reference instrument which aims to support them in using joint European values as a vehicle for promoting and monitoring the continuous improvement of their vocational education and training systems. A further objective of the recommendation is to provide a platform for the identification, promotion and networking of tried-and-tested procedures at a local and regional level as well as nationally. The goals of this European initiative are to increase the quality of vocational education within the scope of the Copenhagen Process and to improve transparency and coherence of VET policy between member states in order to foster permeability, mobility and lifelong learning on a basis of mutual trust.

2. The EQAVET Reference Framework

A glance at the EQAVET Framework shows that its core component is a quality cycle containing four phases – planning, implementation, evaluation and review. This cycle also corresponds to the Deming cycle, an established instrument in quality management that comprises the four phases Plan – Do – Check – Act (PDCA). The framework encompasses both a provider and a system level, and quality criteria and descriptors are also attached. In addition to this, the participating countries have drawn up ten quality indicators in order to facilitate conclusions regarding the quality level of vocational education and training. The member states are able to use these in accordance with the tool box principle in order to generate statistical statements for the respective status of national VET systems (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL, 2009).

Agreement on the EQAVET Reference Framework does not, therefore, represent the stipulation of a specific quality assurance system for all member states. Against the background of the heterogeneity of vocational education and training systems in Europe, the emphasis of the framework is much more on affording the European countries a wide degree of scope with regard to the question of how each respective national pathway to quality assurance in VET should be structured. However, all national approaches adopted should have their foundations in the concept of circular planning,

implementation, evaluation and review. The European Network has agreed that this should be a central and joint principle of the Reference Framework.



Figure 2: European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET – quality assurance cycle)

This process-oriented tenet embraced by EQAVET is aligned to the philosophy of well-known quality management systems (such as ISO and EFQM), which were originally devised for industrial production processes and were later adapted to meet the general conditions and requirements of educational processes at schools and other institutions. Full-time vocational school remains the norm in the vast majority of European countries, and the EQAVET Framework is therefore a good fit in this regard. Over the past few years, quality management systems which correspond to the EQAVET Reference Framework have been introduced in many of these European states in which school-based VET structures prevail. According to the Commission Report on the status of implementation of the recommendation of 2009, the design of national systems for quality assurance in VET has been directly influenced by EQAVET in 14 European member states (EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2014).

3. Quality assurance on the basis of social partnership, the occupation principle (Berufsprinzip) and the responsible role played by trade and industry

However, how is VET quality ensured in Germany? The quality debate taking place within the context of the soaring increase in use of quality assurance

systems (ISO 9000 ff. etc.) has been extending to encompass the area of vocational education and training since the 1990s, including in Germany. The use of relevant systems has become established within the field of continuing training, and such systems have also become a management concept in (vocational) education and training. A majority of the federal states in Germany is now working with a defined quality management system, and state-specific variants based on the usual Q2E, ISO and EQFM models have frequently been developed (DEQA-VET, 2015). The nature of quality assurance in vocational schools in Germany is therefore in line with the principles set out in the EQAVET Reference Framework, as is also the case at vocational schools in other European countries.

In Germany, however, the quality of training at companies, the learning venue at which trainees normally spend the most time, is fundamentally ensured in a different way. Although laws, regulations and recommendations stipulate minimum standards for company-based training, they also permit scope for further quality assurance measures. Another characteristic feature of the German system is that these minimum standards are largely the result of negotiation processes in which the social partners, the Federal Government and the federal states are all involved. Despite inherent diverging interests between the employer and employee side, the consensus principle makes it possible to arrive at workable decisions. Experts from practice and policy-making seek amicable solutions within VET, an area in which they are accorded subsidiary responsibility by the state. The proximity of these solutions to practice also raises their acceptance.

Quality assurance in Germany is thus delineated from the process orientation approach adopted in the EQAVET Reference Framework by having its primary basis in the setting of, compliance with and monitoring of minimum standards and in the specific general conditions which apply in the country. These include characteristics which define the system, such as the occupation principle (*Berufsprinzip*), the consensus principle, large-scale assumption of responsibility by trade and industry and the role of the so-called “competent bodies”, which act as intermediate institutions by taking on central monitoring and support tasks in company-based training (see Part III, Chapter II). In order to illustrate the main function of the competent bodies within the German quality assurance system, this brochure makes reference to an “intermediate level”. The conceptual approach used here accordingly addresses the two levels (system and provider) which exist in the EQAVET Reference Framework and adds a third level that lies between them (see Figure 3).

4. The idea of continuous improvement processes

Although the maxim of continuous endeavours to bring about improvement encapsulated in the quality cycle is reflected within the whole of the German quality assurance system, this does not represent its main design principle. The development and modernisation of training regulations may, for example, be aligned to the four phases of the quality cycle (see Figure 7), and the concept of “occupational proficiency” (berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit) (see Figure 5) can be related to the philosophy behind the PDCA cycle in terms of the idea of the self-contained action. The circular concept of quality assurance is inherent within vocational education and training, but is mostly not explicit. This means that although planning, implementation, evaluation and review processes are fundamentally carried out, these are initiated and pursued via procedures which have established themselves historically rather than along the lines of the process descriptions which are typical of quality management systems.

Over the past few years, it has been possible to observe that, under the influence of the dissemination of quality management systems, traditional procedures have been retrospectively described and standardised in the form of a type of catch-up development. In 2008, for example, the BIBB Board adopted a recommendation for quality assurance and quality management in regulatory procedures. This presents an ideal case scenario for the processing of development and modernisation of training regulations following instruction from the specialist ministry responsible in the style of quality management systems, a procedure which up until this point had been multifarious in nature.

How and by whom the process of modernisation of training regulations is initiated is, however, not stipulated in written form. Once requirements for modernisation with regard to training regulations have been revealed in practice, revision is usually initiated by the employees, by the employers, by both social partners together, by the ministries responsible or by BIBB.

Contents of the EQAVET indicators and descriptors are also found within the German vocational education and training system. Because these are not oriented towards the German route to quality assurance in VET with regard to system and design, one-to-one alignment is only possible to a very limited extent. Examples of attempts to move in this direction can be identified in the area of VET reporting (see III, 1.1.3) and in the case of data collected on participation in training (EQAVET indicator 3), qualifications (EQAVET indicator 4) and placement rate (EQAVET indicator 5). In Germany, the core points of the EQAVET descriptors, such as the recommendation to integrate

stakeholders in all phases of the quality cycle, are served by the tripartite system, institutionalised social partnership (III, 1.1.1), and representation of the interests of the trainees (III, 3.2.2). Training for training staff would be a further example. In the EQAVET Framework, this is addressed via a descriptor at provider and system level. Aspects relating to this area in the German system include the Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude and the support services provided by the competent bodies (III, 2.1.7 and 3.1.1).

5. Work-based learning requires a binding status and leeway

Consensus has now been reached at a European level that vocational education and training delivered within the scope of the dual system or via other variants of work-based learning may assist in effecting a good transition for young people from school to employment and therefore in reducing the number of unemployed young persons by improving their occupational proficiency (*berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit*) (CEDEFOP 2015). This is very much reflected in the Bruges Communiqué (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2010), in the Riga Conclusions (MINISTERS IN CHARGE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF EU MEMBER STATES, CANDIDATE COUNTRIES, EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA COUNTRIES, 2015) and across the whole of the EU educational policy making level via the New Skills Agenda (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2016). Within this context, the current supplements to the EQAVET Quality Assurance Framework also need to be viewed under aspects such as workplace-related learning.

Experiences in Germany show that teaching and learning oriented to the business process within the scope of the dual system and other forms of work-based learning place particular requirements on quality assurance, especially given the fact that companies in Germany providing training, which number around 430,000 (2016), are highly heterogeneous with regard to size, nature of learning venues and other general conditions typical to the sectors in which they operate.

Against this background, the route of providing quality assurance for the company-based part of dual training via the setting of minimum standards, via the integration of the social partners and via the occupation principle (*Berufsprinzip*) and the consensus principle has proved its worth in Germany by dint of the fact that such an approach is sufficiently binding in nature whilst also offering enough leeway for the diverse types of company. This ensures that small and medium-sized companies and corporate groups can act on their own responsibility in being able to provide transparent and reliable training.

Part III: Quality assurance in company-based training within the multi-level system of vocational education and training

In Germany, quality assurance in company-based training takes place via a broad range of instruments at all three VET levels – the system level, the intermediate level and the company level (Figure 3). At the system level, sets of rules such as basic statutory principles and the training regulations are essentially developed and put in place to stipulate minimum standards for quality assurance in vocational education and training. These are monitored at the intermediate level and implemented at the provider level, i.e. by the companies offering training. Within this process, the companies receive guidance and support from the stakeholders at the intermediate level. In dual training, learning takes place both at the company and at the vocational school. These two learning venues may be supplemented by further venues, such as in the case of extra-company training centres. A multi-level system is thus in place, in which quality of dual training is secured at each level and via interaction between the levels. Quality assurance is characterised by overarching principles such as social partnership and the consensus principle.

Digression: Learning at vocational school

In dual training in Germany, learning takes place at the company and at the vocational school. The way in which quality is assured at the learning venue of the school is briefly outlined below. This brochure is, however, primarily directed at quality assurance mechanisms in company-based training.

Vocational education and training in the Federal Republic of Germany takes account of the particular characteristics of a federal system. The cultural sovereignty of the federal states means that the vocational school system falls within their area of responsibility.

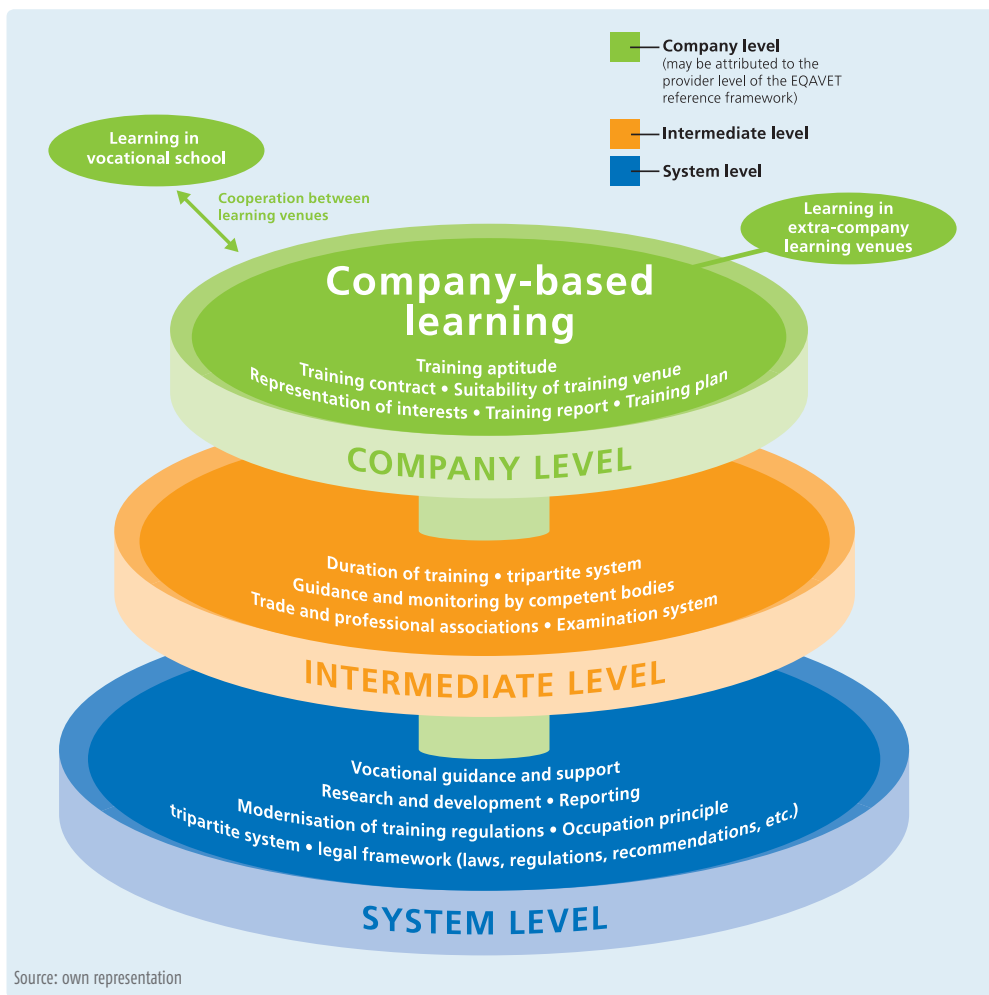


Figure 3: Quality assurance in company-based learning

The main task of the vocational schools is to impart specialist theoretical knowledge for the respective occupation. They also offer general subjects such as foreign languages, German, PE and religious studies.

Teaching at vocational schools takes place on a part-time basis or in phases of scheduled teaching blocks. It usually encompasses twelve hours per week. Part-time teaching takes place on one or two days per week. If teaching only lasts for a few hours on a particular day, the trainees spend the rest of the day

at the company. In the case of scheduled teaching blocks, trainees alternate between phases of school-based learning extending over several weeks and full-time company-based training.

Teaching contents are aligned to skeleton curricula developed for vocational teaching at the learning venue of the vocational school. These recommendations are adopted by the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Federal States (KMK). They are structured according to learning fields and are designed in a way that is sufficiently open so as to allow the federal states to make adaptations. This means that the federal states can decide whether to adopt the skeleton curricula directly and in unchanged form, or draw up modified federal state-specific curricula. The scope of application relates to specialist teaching at the vocational school. There is no KMK framework curriculum for the teaching of general subjects at vocational schools, and the federal states possess a great deal of leeway in this regard. Skeleton curricula stipulate the objectives and contents of teaching in individual subjects. They form the basis for the development of internal school teaching programmes.

School quality is expressed via a multitude of aspects. Many federal states have set out an action or guidance framework in which they define their own areas of school quality. These include aspects such as the following:

- ▶ Teaching and learning processes/teaching quality
- ▶ School culture and climate
- ▶ School management and leadership
- ▶ Professionalisation of teaching staff
- ▶ Quality development
- ▶ Outcomes and impacts

These quality areas provide orientation and represent a central basis of work for all groups that are involved with school quality – teachers, pupils, school SMTs, school monitoring bodies, quality representatives, internal school management groups, ministries and the Schools Inspectorate. The general conditions that apply in the individual federal states, and indeed within the individual schools, differ greatly. The importance and marked extent of individual quality characteristics, for example, vary according to the school.

A wide range of concepts and solutions relating to quality assurance and quality development is thus in place at part-time and full-time vocational schools in Germany. Instruments for external and internal evaluation have been introduced in all federal states and are contained within the school laws of most.

The obligation to carry out school programme work plays a central role in the majority of federal states. Individual schools use their school programme to stipulate the main focuses and objectives of their work. This has its foundations in federal state-specific stipulations.

An instrument is also in place for target agreements between the school and the school monitoring body. The aim of such agreements is to ensure sustainable quality development. Pedagogical support systems have been established with the objective of achieving school quality development goals.



Many federal states take the view that quality can only be generated within the school itself. For this reason, projects to strengthen the self-responsibility and autonomy of schools have been instigated.

Most federal states use a standardised quality management system within the area of the vocational school system. Federal state-specific variants based on the common systems of Q2E (Quality through Evaluation and Development), ISO 9000 ff. and EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) have frequently been developed. The quality management systems make various provisions regarding the possibility of certification. In conjunction with the use of training vouchers, certification of schools in accordance with the Ordinance regarding the conditions and procedure for the accreditation of professional bodies and the admission of employment support providers (AZAV) are under preparation or have already been realised.

1. Quality assurance in company-based training at the system level

1.1 Structuring of company-based training at the system level

Fundamental regulations for company-based training are stipulated at the system level. Minimum standards for the intermediate and company level are set out, and these further encompass the clarification of areas of responsibility and processes. The state, the employers and the employees, each represented by their respective umbrella associations, collaborate according to the consensus principle from the system level onwards. Proposed regulations in this regard are debated and adopted by Parliament or by the ministries responsible.

1.1.1 Quality assurance via cooperation between the social partners

Although regulatory competence for vocational education and training and therefore also for VET quality fundamentally rests with the state, it intervenes in the company-based part of training only to a very limited extent. Participation by stakeholder groups is particularly strongly pronounced in vocational education and training. The nature of this involvement is legally regulated. This is an area where company commitment to training, state regulatory competence, employees' rights of co-involvement and co-determination and the significance of academic research expertise all come together. A further aspect is the fact that the federal states have the right of sovereignty over the educational system and therefore regulate the school-based part of training whilst the Federal Government exercises its competence in the company-based element. Forms of cooperation and provisions for collaboration in the regulation and monitoring of VET are required for this purpose.

The state, the employer and the employees are at the core of the corporatist German model of vocational education and training (see Table 1). The state is represented by the ministries responsible at federal and federal state level, by the joint committees of these ministries and by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB). The joint committees of the state stakeholders are first and foremost the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Federal states (KMK) and the

Federal Government/Federal States Coordination Committee for Training Regulations/Skeleton Curricula (KoA). The latter coordinates the curricular foundations for training in the dual system – the skeleton curricular for the school-based part and the general training plan for company-based learning.

Table 1: The tripartite system in vocational education and training

Participants	Statutory committees (BBiG):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► State: Federal and federal state ministries, Federal Employment Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (federal level)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Employers: Employers' associations, chambers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Federal state committees (federal state level)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Employees: Trade unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► VET committees, examination boards (level of the regions/chambers)

Source: own representation

On the employers' side, the parties involved at federal level are the umbrella and branch associations of trade and industry. At the regional level, we find the umbrella organisations of the chambers, in particular the chambers of crafts and trades and the chambers of commerce and industry, as well as regional trade and industry, employer and professional associations. Employees, who include trainees, are represented by trade unions. Depending on the committee, representatives of the German Confederation of Trade Unions in its capacity as the umbrella association or representatives of the individual trade unions are delegated.

The institutional location for tripartite cooperation between the state, the employers and the employees is formed by committees domiciled at three levels. These are the BIBB Board at federal level and VET committees at federal state level and at the regional level of the individual chambers.

The BIBB Board ensures the standardised application of statutory stipulations for vocational education and training via the recommendations it draws up and adopts within a process of consensus, one such vehicle being model examination regulations. It comprises representatives from the Federal Government, the federal states and the social partners and also includes one person to act in an advisory capacity from the Federal Employment Agency,

local government and BIBB’s Research Council respectively (Figure 4). The work carried out by the Board is supplemented by sub-committees. The Federal State and VET Committees are presented in Chapter 2.

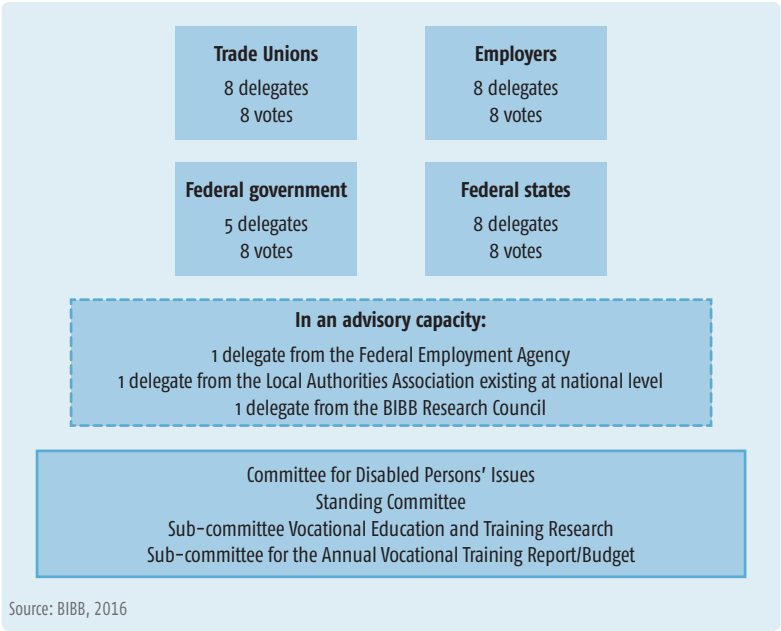


Figure 4: Composition of the BIBB Board

Work in these committees takes place in accordance with the consensus principle. Participants have the right to make their views heard, and the whole focus is on arriving at results that have been jointly developed. Despite divergent interests, the aim, therefore, is to act in a responsible manner and to be prepared to accept compromises whilst negotiating in the best interests of the matters which the social partners are required to address in their capacity as collective wage agreement partners. In the four and a half decades since these committees were introduced, such a culture of consensus has indeed been achieved. The stipulated framework supports this by according each of the social partners equal representation within the committees. In this way, the objective discussions and decisions and the accordance of due consideration to the perspectives and interests of all parties involved guarantee that the outcomes enjoy a high degree of acceptance.

1.1.2 Basic legal principles underlying vocational education and training and quality assurance

The organisation of training in Germany is subject to manifold provisions regarding training contents, the examination system and the rights and duties of the parties involved rather than being merely designed to meet the interests of companies and trainees. These stipulations ensure the quality of training. Pursuant to Section 4 of the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) and Section 25 of the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (HwO), training in a state-recognised occupation in Germany may only take place in accordance with the relevant training regulations.

Provisions for the securing of quality in vocational education and training are contained within a series of normative documents which comprise laws, regulations and recommendations. The statutory foundations comprise the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) and the Law on the Regulation of Craft Trades, also referred to in abbreviated form as the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (HwO). The contents of the Vocational Training Act cover vocational training preparation, vocational education and training, continuing vocational training and vocational re-training. The act also governs the tasks of the stakeholders involved and constitutes the legal basis for BIBB. When the Vocational Training Act was updated in 2005, ongoing development of quality in vocational education and training was included for the first time and was allocated as a task to the Federal and Federal State VET Committees (Sections 79 and 83). Quality assurance is thus placed within the area of responsibility of the tripartite committees (the state and the social partners).

The Crafts and Trades Regulation Code currently (2017) governs 114 occupations in the craft trades sector together with the relevant training programmes. It thus includes provisions relating to the Vocational Training Act as well as detailed regulations dealing specifically with the craft trades. Stipulations contained within employment law, such as the Law for the Protection of Young People at Work and the Labour and Management Relations Act also govern company-based training alongside the Vocational Training Act and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code.

Legal ordinances and recommendations issued by statutorily prescribed committees, such as the BIBB Board in particular, also contain important normative provisions for vocational education and training. Ordinances are enacted by the ministries responsible on the basis of stipulations in the Voca-

tional Training Act and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code. The training regulations and the Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude (AEVO) play a major role in vocational education and training.

The school-based part of VET, which makes up around 30 percent of training time, lies within the area of responsibility of the federal states. This remit includes federal state-specific educational and school laws, vocational school curricula, initial and continuing training for teachers, school quality assurance and specific edicts.

1.1.3 Vocational education and training reporting

Regular reporting is required in order to gain knowledge of the respective status or of the general conditions of achievable quality in company-based training. Section 86 of the BBiG states: “The Federal Ministry of Education and Research shall constantly track developments in vocational education and training and shall submit a corresponding report (Report on Vocational Education and Training) to the Federal Government by 1 April each year. The Report shall describe the current state and probable further development of vocational training. If there are indications that a regionally and sectorally balanced supply of initial training places may be at risk, the report shall include proposals for remedying such a situation.”

BIBB makes essential VET data, information and analyses available for inclusion in the Report on Vocational Education and Training. In 2009, BIBB published its first “Data Report to accompany the Report on Vocational Education and Training”. This presents central indicators relating to initial and continuing vocational education and training and illustrates the developments which have taken place over the course of time. In addition to this, different main thematic focuses are addressed every year.

The information presented in the Data Report is the result of close cooperation with the Federal Employment Agency, with the Federal Statistical Office and the Statistical Offices of the federal states and with a series of further institutions. BIBB carries out its own empirical surveys and evaluates external data sources. The latter include company surveys, surveys of training place applicants and school leavers and VET experts.

In contrast to many other countries in which school-based vocational education and training is the norm, Germany also undertakes a precise con-

sideration of the “first threshold”, i.e. the transition from general education to VET, as a critical point alongside the participation, completion and placement rate. Findings obtained are adopted in a wide ranging way by policy making, academic research and practice. They are used to inform the fields of work within these areas and thus assist with the evaluation of measures, processes and standards in vocational education and training. They are therefore also able to take on the role of early recognition systems.

With regard to the training situation, the main emphasis in vocational education and training reporting is on input and process factors. This involves, for example, collecting information on aspects such as the training participation rate, the proportion of companies providing training, prior learning of trainees, training contract dissolution rate and rate of participation in examinations. However, output-oriented key indicators such as evaluations of the number of examinations passed are also identified.

The National Education Report, which has been published every two years since 2006, is one of the other instruments which contributes to reporting on the national educational system in overall terms. This report uses repeating indicators to deliver a current and comprehensive inventory of all areas of the German educational system (encompassing everything from early years education to continuing training). Aspects covered by the National Education Report include the labour market results of vocational education and training, i.e. transition to employment and employment status following completion of training, work tasks that are in line with level of qualification, and income by occupation.

1.1.4 VET research and development

Every reliable quality assurance system requires ongoing monitoring to ascertain whether modifications are needed because of changes to general conditions. Within this context, continuous research is also necessary within vocational education and training in order to achieve timely recognition of developments in the economy and society and of the resultant requirement for adaptation in the vocational education and training system.

The findings thus gleaned facilitate the development of evidence-based solutions for the challenges in the field of company-based training within the dual system. BIBB has a particular role to play in this regard. Vocational education and training research forms part of its statutory remit (Section 90

Paragraph 2 BBiG). This encompasses the clarification of the basic principles underlying vocational education and training, observation of domestic, European and international developments, identification of requirements regarding the contents and aims of VET, preparation of further developments in vocational education and training in respect of changes to economic, societal and technical needs, the promotion of instruments and procedures for the imparting of VET and knowledge and technology transfer (Section 84 BBiG).

BIBB's academic research tasks are undertaken in the form of research projects or services supported by a Research Council. Pursuant to Section 94 of the BBiG, the Research Council evaluates the quality of research projects and the sustainability of the research programmes. VET research is frequently supported via special programmes financed by the BMBF. BIBB conducts its own ongoing research projects and research projects commissioned and funded by third parties. Pilot projects are an instrument for the experimental development and testing of new and innovative possible solutions which contribute to qualitative improvement in vocational education and training and are of particular importance within this context.

Example from practice

The pilot programme “Developing and securing quality in company-based vocational education and training” was implemented between 2010 and 2013. Its main aims were to increase the quality of training processes at small and medium-sized companies in particular, and to support and professionalise training staff via initial and continuing training concepts and process-oriented support. For this purpose, company-based quality assurance and development



instruments were created, and communication and cooperation structures and training concepts were drawn up for training personnel. It was revealed that high-quality dual vocational education and training can in particular be ensured if large numbers of stakeholders work together in a systematic, continuous and transparent manner at several levels. These levels are designated by general legal conditions, company prerequisites, the qualification of trainers, rights and duties of trainees, the pedagogical process, and cooperation between learning venues and networks. The main focus of the training activities is on the educational process of the young people. Such an approach allows communication and cooperation deficits and premature contract dissolutions to be avoided. Results are accessible via the DEQA-VET website.

Research and development is also carried out by other institutes and organisations, frequently by universities and institutes of higher education. The outcomes they produce are also used to inform the further development of training regulations.

1.2 Development of training standards

Training regulations and the process of development, revision and modernisation of such regulations constitute an important cornerstone for the stipulation and securing of quality standards. The basic principle in this regard is division into individual occupations.

1.2.1 Training regulations and occupational proficiency (berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit)

Training regulations are based on the occupation principle (Berufsprinzip) and set out nationally applicable minimum standards for the quality of vocational education and training. Pursuant to Section 1 Paragraph 3 of the BBiG, the overarching objective of training is to impart “occupational proficiency”: “The purpose of vocational training is to impart the skills, knowledge and capabilities (occupational proficiency/berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit) necessary in order to engage in a qualified occupational activity in a changing world of work within a regulated course of training. It should also enable trainees to gain the requisite occupational experience.”

The aim during training is to familiarise trainees with every aspect of business and production processes so as to foster an understanding of overall correlations within the company and to facilitate competent action which has its basis in experience. A further objective is for this also to be demonstrated in the ex-

amination. The focus, therefore, is on holistic training which is aligned to real company work processes and enables young people to plan, execute and monitor their work in an autonomous way. A second goal is to promote willingness to undertake constant further learning due to the fact that initial professional knowledge gained will not be sufficient for the whole of a working life.

Against this background, the German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (DQR), the national implementation of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) which was adopted in 2013, uses a differentiated definition of competence. The DQR describes competence on the basis of “professional competence” and “personal competence”. These two terms are each divided into two sub-categories (professional competence = knowledge and skills, personal competence = autonomy and social competence). This definition of competence seeks to establish equivalence with the requirements of the self-contained activity, which comprises the six stages of obtaining information, planning, deciding, executing, monitoring and evaluating (Figure 5). Within this context, competence is viewed as constituting comprehensive occupational proficiency (*berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit*) and thus goes beyond the imparting of knowledge and skills which are aligned to a delineated work activity or task in a specific company.

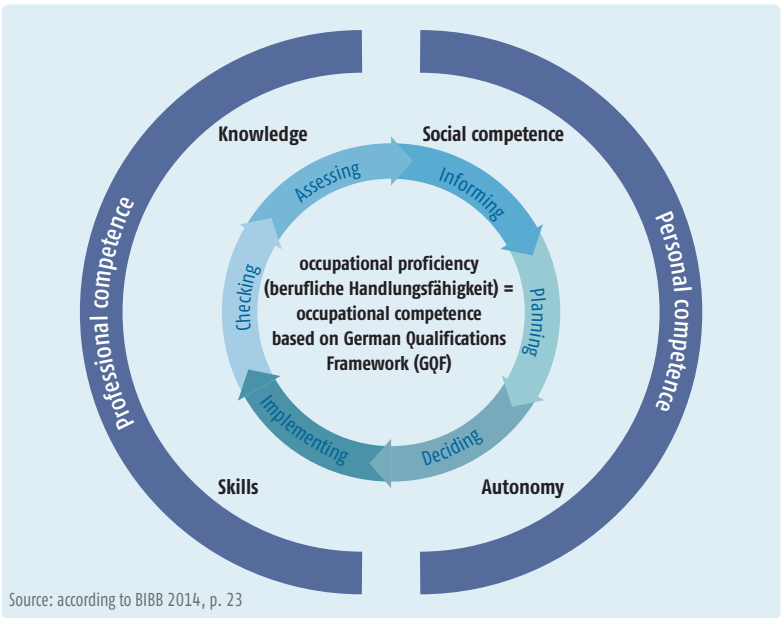


Figure 5: Occupational proficiency (*berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit*) and occupational competence

Compulsory elements

1. Occupational title
2. Duration of training
3. Training profile: skills, knowledge and competences (minimum)
- 4 General training plan: structuring of the way in which these competences are imparted
- 5 Examination requirements

Source: own representation

Figure 6: Compulsory elements of training regulations

Training regulations are developed and negotiated by the social partners, the Federal Government and the federal states on the basis of the so-called consensus principle. Pursuant to Section 5 of the BBiG and Section 26 of the HwO, they include the binding elements depicted in Figure 6 alongside other optional aspects. Training regulations may also contain voluntary elements such as the possibility of staged training, an extended final examination or the acquisition of additional occupational skills, knowledge and competencies which enhance or expand occupational proficiency (*berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit*).

1.2.2 The regulatory procedure for training occupations

A defined process stipulated in BIBB Board Recommendation No. 130 is in place for the development and modernisation of state-recognised training occupations. As shown in Figure 7, the phases contained within the quality assurance control cycle (planning, implementation, evaluation and review) can be aligned to this process.

(1) Preliminary phase (*review*): The initiative for the development of a new training occupation is usually instigated by the social partners. The first crystallisation point is frequently a realisation that it is becoming increasingly difficult to square existing training contents with company realities or indeed that tasks do not even form the object of training regulations.

The need for change is articulated within the scope of (sector-related) conferences, specialist discussions or official statements. On the employer side, the task at hand is taken up and coordinated by the German Employers' Organ-

isation for Vocational and Further Training (KWB) in its capacity as a joint institution representing the umbrella organisations of trade and industry. The corresponding body acting on the employee side is the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB). However, such an initiative may also emerge from the results of research projects or expert reports implemented by BIBB.

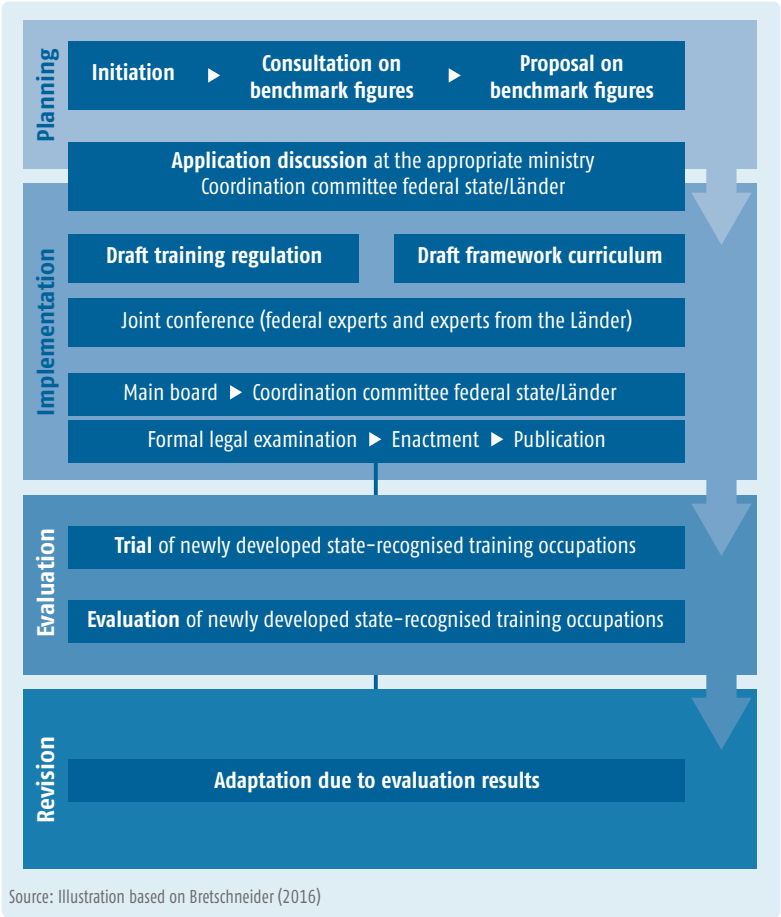


Figure 7: Description of the process for the development of training regulations

Preliminary investigations, which depending on the particular requirements may be broadly based studies or brief expert surveys, are carried out in order to analyse the need for future skills in as precise a way as possible. The outcomes of these then inform the regulatory procedure.

(2) Stipulation of benchmarks (*planning*). The initial specific phase for the re-regulation of a training occupation involves drawing up benchmarks on the basis of the compulsory elements stated in the BBiG (see Figure 6) and coordination of these between the social partners. Benchmarks are aligned to the basic structure of training regulations which applies nationally.

The social partners pass on these benchmarks to the specialist ministry responsible together with a request for a so-called application discussion. Representatives from the employers, employees, the relevant ministry, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the KMK and BIBB are all involved in this discussion. All participants adopt a consensual approach in adopting the benchmarks that will provide the foundation for the development of the training regulations, in an amended form if necessary. BIBB is subsequently assigned the task of structuring and coordinating the process of drawing up the training regulations.

(3) Development and agreement of the training regulations (*implementation*). This process involves drawing up the general training plan for the companies. The general training plan includes the occupational profile, which is sub-divided into the necessary skills, knowledge and competences. The next step is to stipulate the examination requirements.

Within the scope of a parallel and coordinated process, the KMK develops a framework curriculum for the vocational schools. As part of the process, the two committees involved agree contents via a “correlation list”. A “joint meeting” is held to consult on the drafts developed for the training regulations, the framework curriculum and the examination provisions and to reach agreement regarding coordination of content and scheduling. This draft is submitted to BIBB for an official response. If BIBB consents, the draft is forwarded to the federal ministry responsible together with a request for enactment of the training regulations in their present form. If the Board is unable to reach a consensus regarding the training regulations, the contents need to be revised and the process is initially deferred. Once consensus is in place, representatives from the Federal Government and federal states meet in the Federal Government/Federal States Coordination Committee for Training Regulations/framework curricula (KoA) to give their approval.

(4) Enactment and ordinance. Following scrutiny of the draft training regulations by the so-called Standards Monitoring Council, which advises the Federal Government on matters relating to reducing bureaucracy and

achieving better legislation, and technical legal checks carried out by the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection, the minister responsible enacts the training regulations via legal ordinance with the agreement of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). They are published in the Federal Law Gazette and in each case enter into force on 1 August, the beginning of the training year. The framework curriculum adopted by the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs is subsequently published in the Federal Gazette together with the training regulations.

Companies providing training are required to implement the training regulations and the general training plan once these have entered into force. The vocational schools, which fall within the remit of the federal states, are recommended to use the framework curriculum. Training practice is supported in the implementation of the new training regulations via implementation guides which explain the contents of the modernised training and the examination stipulations in greater detail.

If newly developed training regulations enter into force, one example of this being new regulations in the occupation of agricultural services specialist in 2005, these are initially subjected to piloting (*evaluation*) in order to identify any potential weak points. Such a piloting phase usually extends over a period of five years. The investigation takes the form of an evaluation that undertakes a systematic consideration of contents, structures and conditions relating to implementation. Evaluation research is normally conducted by stakeholders of the social partners, the Federal Government and the federal states.

On the basis of the findings gained, the social partners, the Federal Government and the federal states act under the lead management of BIBB to adapt the pilot regulations in line with the procedures described for the development and coordination of training regulations. The regulations are then accorded so-called permanent legal status (*review*).

The setting of minimum standards, the multiple interlinked coordination processes that take place between all stakeholder groups and further quality assurance components are all typical elements of the dual system which secure the quality of vocational education and training and therefore also of company-based training. They also create transparency and acceptance amongst the social partners.

1.2.3 Modernisation of training standards

In an era of advancing technical, economic and societal change, standards once adopted can rapidly lose current validity. The focus needs to be on preventing this. For this reason, training regulations are modernised as soon as the need arises. Maintaining up-to-date training regulations represents a further contribution towards securing the quality of vocational education and training at the company and vocational school.

In practice, the modernisation or realignment of existing occupations is more frequent than the creation of whole new occupations. The training regulations for the occupation of fish technician were, for example, updated by adding new contents relating to circulation systems in aquaculture. Since August 2016, this has given those undergoing training in the occupation of fish technician the opportunity to specialise in the economic sector of aquaculture. In principle, such modernisations and adaptations of training regulations proceed in precisely the same way as if a whole new occupation were being regulated.

So that training regulations do not need to be modernised too often, they are designed to be capable of application by companies of varying sizes in different sectors. This means that content needs to display a certain openness. This is achieved by deliberately not including a detailed description of actions and technologies which rapidly become obsolete in the wake of the rapid developments taking place in the economy and in society. The companies are thus also accorded sufficient leeway to impart further professional contents.

The development and modernisation of occupations does not generally take longer than two years. This guarantees the currently validity of training contents and thus also a high degree of quality.

1.3 Quality via vocational guidance and support

When selecting training, young people receive support from vocational guidance institutions and via vocational orientation programmes. These assume important functions with regard to vocational orientation and in terms of providing assistance to young people without a training place and thus exert an effect on quality of the training status.

1.3.1 Vocational guidance

In order to secure high quality of training and of work performances at a later date, it is extremely important that young people opt for training which is commensurate with their abilities and preferences. This requires timely consideration of these abilities and preferences and of their possible use in various occupations. Valid and undistorted information for this purpose can be collected at the system level and processed in a way that is suitable to the target group to open up the opportunity for guidance provision which commences whilst the young people are still at school. This can also deliver the impetus for orientation and decision making within a search procedure that is becoming ever more challenging given the wealth of possibilities on offer and support this process on an ongoing basis. In order for individual persons to be addressed personally and for possible options to be initiated and facilitated, an interplay is required between secured facts, the way in which these facts are presented and a personalised approach.

The particular aims of provision at the system level are to prevent premature commitments and verdicts regarding individual occupations and training pathways and young people's own aptitude, and to facilitate informed and reasoned decisions. The preferences of young people relate to a small number of occupations which are strongly differentiated by gender. This may be viewed as an indicator that the search for the right occupation is not always conducted in a sufficiently open fashion. For this reason, it is both possible and useful to enhance the quality of the decision-making process by providing guidance. Wrong career choice decisions can lead to dissatisfaction, a lack of motivation, and discontinuation of training pathways. Quality would be not the least of the aspects which would suffer.

The central instruments that are deployed nationwide for this purpose are work experience placements during schooling, career entry guidance at schools, training exchanges on the Internet, training fairs and the vocational information centres run by the employment agencies. Further schemes such as a vocational orientation programme have been added in recent years.

The vocational orientation programme enables year seven and year eight pupils at all school types to take their first steps towards making a career choice. It usually comprises an analysis of potential of two days' duration, followed by two weeks of workshops. The workshops, which are largely

hosted at inter-company training centres, enable the pupils to familiarise themselves with two or three occupations in a highly practical way. In some federal states, participation in this programme is even mandatory.

1.3.2 Support for disadvantaged young people and for young people without a training place

In order to get young people who have not obtained a training place into training, support is offered in the form of a pre-vocational training year and a basic vocational training year. Further support provision includes introductory training, training support measures and assisted training. These provide the foundations for good training, even for young people facing a wide range of problems.

The Federal Employment Agency offers introductory training programmes to young people who have failed to secure a training place. Introductory training consists of company-based practical placements for six months or for a whole year. This gives young people an opportunity to examine their preferred occupation and possibly to familiarise themselves with a company that may provide them with training in the future. They receive an allowance during the practical placement and at the end of the programme are awarded, on request, a certificate showing the skills they have acquired.

So-called training support measures are in place to assist young people with learning difficulties and the socially disadvantaged. Their goal is to provide the young people with personal support so as to enable them to complete training successfully. Assistance comprises measures of a technical nature such as specific remedial teaching to reduce language and learning problems or the provision of socio-pedagogical support to help young people overcome everyday problems. Staff members at the Federal Employment Agency or at local Job Centres act as the contact persons to whom application for support may be made. The measures are delivered by private or not-for-profit training providers, by the chambers of commerce and industry or by the chambers of crafts and trades. These bodies are commissioned and funded by the Federal Employment Agency to implement the measures. This means that no costs are incurred by the companies providing training or by the trainees. Support usually takes place outside working time.

Statutory regulations for assisted training entered into force in May 2015. Assisted training is a model in which a third partner is involved in the training process alongside the company providing training and the trainee. The aim is to bridge the gap between company requirements and the personal prior learning of the young people. The programme is aimed at disadvantaged young people with poor opportunities, from both migrant and non-migrant backgrounds. Such target group-specific provision is frequently delivered by private or not-for-profit training providers. Financing is also provided by the Federal Employment Agency.



2. Quality assurance at the intermediate level

At the intermediate level, the VET committees at the chambers and the Federal State Committees for Vocational Education and Training have the statutory remit to focus on achieving a continuous development of quality of vocational education and training. Many stakeholders closely associated with the regional or sector-specific training system also act at this level. The main bodies involved are trade unions, trade and industry organisations and employers' and professional associations. They are involved in planning the system via surveys, official statements, studies and further quality enhancement measures and assume a function as an intermediate between training practice and the system level.

The chambers play a major role in quality assurance by dint of the tasks they are assigned by the state. These include the provision of guidance to companies and trainees, monitoring the implementation of vocational education and training and organisation of the examinations. They make decisions regarding a shortening or extension of the duration of training as well as contributing to the training of VET staff by organising special advanced training examinations.

2.1 The chambers

2.1.1 The chambers as competent bodies

The chambers, in particular the Chambers of Industry and Commerce and the Chambers of Crafts and Trades, are a key pillar in the organising of economic interests alongside the trade and industry organisations and the employers' associations. The chambers are entities under public law. In their capacity as self-governing institutions within the regional economy, they take on state tasks in some cases, including within the area of initial and continuing vocational education and training. In the BBiG and HwO, they are designated as "competent bodies".

Each company must belong to a chamber in accordance with the requirement for compulsory membership that is enshrined in law. The chambers are organised within umbrella bodies at a federal level – the Association of

German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) and the Association of German Chambers of Crafts and Trades (DHKT). They have joined forces with other umbrella organisations and employers’ associations to form the German Employers’ Organisation for Vocational and Further Training (KWB) in order to bundle and coordinate the interests of trade and industry in VET policy.

In order to enable the chambers to carry out the tasks assigned by the state in an effective manner and to act as reliable partners, their structures and organs have been statutorily stipulated. Chambers are subject to legal scrutiny by a supreme federal state authority, usually the ministries of economic affairs. Some chambers use quality management systems or have obtained certification for themselves or for their training centres pursuant to ISO 9001.

The way in which the organs work together is regulated via articles of association. Members elect a plenary assembly, which in turn elects an Executive Board and appoints a Managing Director. Members of the Executive Board work on a voluntary and unpaid basis, whilst Managing Directors are full-time employees. The chambers may establish various specialist committees to advise the plenary assembly and Management Board. Formation of a Vocational Education and Training Committee is, however, a statutory task.

The task remits of the chambers in their capacity as competent bodies are delineated in a transparent regulatory system by occupational areas as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Designation of the competent bodies

Competent body	Area
Chamber of Crafts and Trades	Occupations governed by the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code
Chamber of Industry and Commerce	Non-craft trade private sector occupations
Chamber of Agriculture	Agricultural occupations
Chambers of lawyers, patent lawyers and notaries, notary insurance funds	Administration of the law
Chambers of auditors and tax consultants	Accountancy and tax consultancy
Medical councils, chambers of dentists, veterinary surgeons and dispensing chemists	Health occupations

2.1.2 The VET Committee

Chambers establish a Vocational Education and Training Committee on the basis of Section 77 BBiG or Section 44 HwO. Within the scope of its remit, this committee is required to focus on achieving a continuous development of quality of vocational education and training. It must be notified and consulted on all important matters relating to vocational education and training.

The VET Committee comprises six employer representatives, six employee representatives and six vocational school teachers with an advisory vote. The representatives of the employers and of the employees are proposed by the chambers and by the trade unions and independent worker associations respectively. The teaching staff are appointed by the federal state authority responsible. Committee members work on a voluntary and unpaid basis. A VET Committee is deemed to be quorate if more than half of the members entitled to vote are present. Decisions are made via a majority of the votes cast.

The BBiG and the HwO stipulate a list of important matters in which the VET Committee is to be consulted. Consultation means that the committee is involved in the decision-making process. Important matters include the enactment of basic administrative principles (regarding issues such as suitability of training venues and the conducting of examinations), implementation of measures recommended by the Federal State Committee for Vocational Education and Training and significant content changes to the sample training contract.

The VET Committee must also be notified of other important matters such as statistics on vocational education and training contracts and examinations, monitoring activity undertaken by advisors, official statements issued by the chamber and the construction by the chamber of its own extra-company training centres.

The extensive competences invested in the VET Committee also mean that it constitutes a scrutinising and decision-making body for the chamber. It adopts the legal regulations to be enacted by the chamber for the implementation of vocational education and training. These legal regulations relate to areas such as examination regulations and general provisions regarding trainer aptitude or monitoring of training venues. The committee's authority relates both to technical and organisational implementation of vocational

education and training and to VET content structure. Representation of the social partners in this central advisory and decision-making body once again shows how the consensus principle is an integral part of the work that takes place at the intermediate level.

Teachers at vocational schools receive voting rights in decisions regarding matters relating to VET preparation and VET itself as long as such decisions have a direct effect on the organisation of school-based vocational education and training. These voting rights may, for example, be exercised if basic administrative principles for the shortening of the duration of training exert a direct impact on organisation of the vocational school.

2.1.3 Guidance for companies and trainees

The chambers employ training advisors in order to carry out their tasks in vocational education and training. These advisors usually work on a full-time basis, although part-time and volunteer staff may also be appointed. Advisors need to fulfil trainer aptitude requirements and demonstrate several years of occupational experience. All interested parties must be notified of their appointment and of their area of responsibility.

A recommendation of 24 August 1973 made by the Federal Committee for Vocational Education and Training (the predecessor of the BIBB Board) defines basic principles for the provision of guidance and the monitoring of training venues by training advisors. The training advisors fulfil their tasks by visiting training venues, holding regular discussions and individual or group guidance sessions and by hosting information events for parties providing training, trainers and trainees. The number of training advisors needs to be set in such a way so as to enable each training venue to be visited and monitored at least once a year. The number of training venues and their geographical distribution and the number of trainees and their dispersal across the training venues must be taken into account in ensuring that there are sufficient training advisors to be able to deal with the guidance and monitoring tasks that arise. All training advisors must use a work plan or schedule to ensure that all training venues within their area are visited on a minimum of an annual basis. This plan needs to take account of the fact that, in the case of complaints, training venues affected must be accorded priority.

Joint main focuses for the guidance of companies and trainees are rights and responsibilities arising from the training contract, shortening and ex-

tension of the period of training, attendance at vocational school, participation in training measures outside the training venue and intermediate and final examinations (registration, admission, requirements and procedure). Companies may also seek guidance on training opportunities within the scope of the statutory framework, suitability for the provision of training, company training plans, and cooperation with parties involved in training. Further main emphases for trainees may include questions relating to upgrading and advanced training and funding opportunities.

Alongside the chambers, trade and industry organisations, employers' and professional associations and education and training departments within trade and industry also support companies and their trainees by providing guidance and cooperation in training and for the execution of training preparation measures.

2.1.4 Monitoring of training

The chambers maintain an index of training contracts for recognised training occupations in which the essential contents of the contract are recorded. These contents include information on the trainee, the trainers, the training occupation, commencement of vocational education and training and probationary period. In order for an entry to be made in the index, the contract needs to comply with the BBiG and the training regulations, and formal prerequisites must be fulfilled. Evidence is provided of personal and professional aptitude and of the suitability of the training venue for recruitment and training. Trainees aged under 18 are also required to submit a medical certificate in accordance with the provisions contained within the Law for the Protection of Young People at Work. Minors are also not permitted to sign the training contract or give notice of termination themselves. These tasks may only be performed by their legal representatives, usually the parents. Parties providing training are required to make an application for entry into the index without delay upon conclusion of the contract. Notification must be provided of any preceding general or vocational training and of the appointment of trainers. Essential changes to contractual contents must also be reported.

Companies are required to provide information necessary for the monitoring process, submit the necessary documentation for this purpose and permit inspection of training venues (Section 76, BBiG).

The monitoring activity carried out by the chambers relates to proper implementation of training. The focus is on aspects such as suitability to provide training, compliance with the training regulations and the company training plan, application of relevant provisions and fulfilment of conditions imposed for the remedying of deficiencies.

The basis for scrutiny is normally specific indications that minimum requirements are not being met. In the event of complaints from trainees or consistently poor examination results, training advisors initially take action by consulting with the company on its rights and duties. If deficiencies are not remedied, the result may be deletion of an existing training contract or a ban on providing training.

Whilst carrying out their monitoring activities, training advisors may experience conflicting objectives between correct implementation of training and the economic interests of the company. For this reason, they enjoy a certain flexibility with regard to their decision-making powers, particularly when the focus is on creating new training places or helping to bring existing training contracts to a successful conclusion. In individual cases, it may be appropriate to tolerate minor deficiencies temporarily and then resolve these via consultation and cooperative solutions.

Pursuant to Section 111 of the Labour Courts Act, the chambers may settle disputes between parties providing training and trainees arising from an existing training contract by forming committees which must contain an equal number of employer and employee representatives. This committee must take verbal evidence from the parties involved. If the decision it arrives at is not recognised by both parties within one week, application may be made to the labour court responsible within two weeks of such a decision. Such a claim must in all cases be preceded by an oral hearing conducted by the committee. Mandatory implementation takes place of compromises concluded by the committee and of decisions made by the committee that are recognised by both parties. The function of the arbitration committee is to endeavour to achieve mutual agreement by the parties.

2.1.5 Organisation of examinations

Final examinations are conducted in the recognised training occupations with the aim of identifying the acquisition of occupational proficiency (berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit). Candidates are required to demonstrate mastery of the necessary occupational skills, possession of the required oc-

cupational knowledge and competences and familiarity with the teaching material imparted via teaching at the vocational school. Both training contents and examination requirements are standardised and thus represent an essential quality characteristic of the dual system.

The neutrality of examiners is of particular importance in terms of quality assurance in the examination system. For this reason, organisation of examinations is transferred to the chambers and is not carried out by the companies or vocational schools. Nevertheless, the co-determination of all stakeholder groups is ensured. The employers, employees and vocational schools are all involved. For the purpose of hosting the final examination, the chamber sets up independent examination boards.

An examination board comprises at least three members. These members must be competent within the areas of the examination and be suitable for involvement in the examination system. The examination board include equal numbers of representatives of employers and employees and at least one vocational school teacher. At least two thirds of the total number of members must be representatives of the employers and employees. The function is a voluntary one. Members have deputies. The examination board is deemed to be quorate if at least two thirds of members and a minimum of three members are present. These regulations help ensure that resolutions are adopted collegially. The expectation is that the collegiality principle will ensure that the various perspectives of the employers, employees and vocational schools are taken into account and considered in a balanced way.

The examination board evaluates individual examination performances and the examination in overall terms and decides whether the final examination has been passed or not. The examination board may obtain expert opinions from third parties for the purpose of evaluation of individual examination performances. Oral examination performances must be conducted by the examination board itself and constitute an exception in this regard. Such expert reports are not, however, legally binding. The examination board has the right to amend marks proposed. The expert reports permit both the vocational schools and training staff at the companies to be involved in the evaluation of examination performances. In companies, the expert report may relate to assessment of practical tasks. The examination board also takes decisions regarding admission to the final examination if the chambers do not consider that prerequisites for entry are in place.

The chamber enacts examination regulations which require approval from the supreme federal state authority. Examination regulations must govern admission to the examination, structuring of the examination, evaluation procedures, the issuing of examination certificates, consequences of breaches of the examination regulations and resitting of the examination.

In order to determine status of training during the training process, an intermediate examination is conducted in accordance with the training regulations. The training regulations may instead stipulate that the final examination takes place in two different parts conducted at different times (extended final examination). In such a case, participation in the first part of the examination is one of the prerequisites for admission to the second part of the final examination.

The quality of vocational examinations essentially depends on the extent to which members of the examination board are prepared for their tasks. A series of approaches is in place for the training of examination staff, and these vary both in terms of content and methodology. The examiner training measures implemented by the trade unions, the chambers and the umbrella associations of the chambers should be mentioned at this point. These comprise programmes such as regional introductory events and seminars for newly appointed examiners, networking between examination boards or the development, and the application of guides for examiners and advisors.

2.1.6 Shortening and extension of the period of training

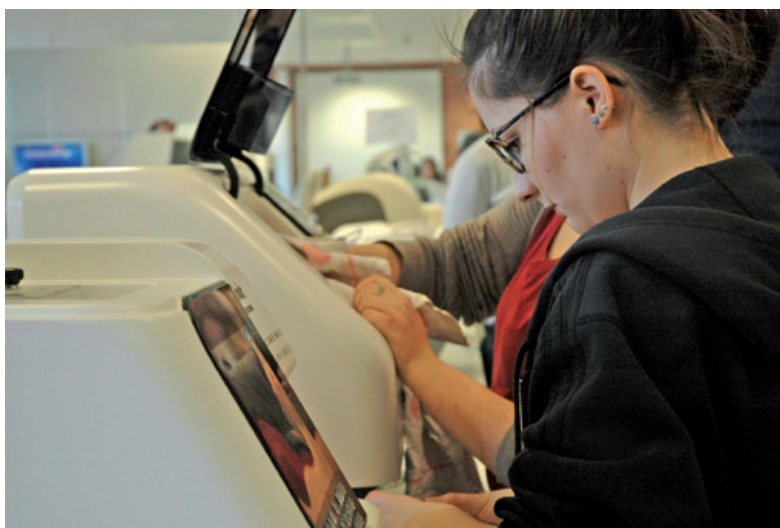
Early admission to the final examination and shortening or extension of the duration of training are possible upon application in order to take account of the particular prerequisites of gifted or disadvantaged trainees. Decisions regarding applications submitted lies within the area of responsibility of the chambers and are made in accordance with the BIBB Board Recommendation of 27 June 2008.

The chamber is required to reduce the vocational training period if the applicant can credibly demonstrate that goal of initial vocational training can be expected to be attained within the shortened period. Such an application must be jointly submitted in writing by the party providing training and the trainee. Application should be made to the chamber at the time of conclusion of contract if possible and no later than one year before the end of the training period. Abbreviation of training may be justified up to a period of

twelve months by prior education and training (general higher education entrance qualification, completion of a programme of vocational education and training etc.). In individual cases, duration of training may be shortened if the trainee is aged 21 or over. In addition, relevant basic vocational training, occupational activity or work experience may also be taken into account. Appropriate certificates and documentation lend applications greater credibility.

If there is a justified interest, reduction of duration of training may also take place in the form of a decrease in daily or weekly working hours upon joint submission of an application by the trainee and party providing training. Examples of such justification may be circumstances where trainees are caring for their own child or for a family member. In order not to jeopardise familiarity with essential company processes, the minimum weekly training period should not fall below 25 hours. Part-time training does not necessarily lead to an extension of the total duration of training in terms of calendar months unless such an increase is necessary in order to achieve the training objective.

Early admission to the final examination is possible following consultation with the trainee and the vocational school if the trainee is able to demonstrate evidence of above-average levels of performance both at the company and in all subjects or learning field that are relevant to the examination. The vocational school certificate, a testimonial or other appropriate certification from



the company providing training and submission of the intermediate examination certificate and of the record of training are all required as evidence. If the chamber believes that prerequisites for entry are not fulfilled, the decision is made by the examination board. The earlier examination should not take place more than six months prior to the original date, otherwise the training period will be deemed to have been shortened. The duration of the training contract should not normally be less than certain minimum periods, especially in the case of multiple reasons for shortening or early admission to the examination. These minimum periods are half of the usual duration of training for two and three-year training programmes and 24 months for training programmes which are of a duration of three and a half years.

In exceptional cases, extension of the period of training is shown to be necessary in order to achieve the training objective. Such an application must be made to the chamber in writing by the trainee. He or she must credibly demonstrate that an extension is necessary. Possible reasons may be identifiable serious deficiencies in training, longer periods of absence or circumstances in which a trainee needs to care for his or her own child.

2.1.7 Training of VET staff

Alongside the provision of specialist and occupationally-specific continuing training courses and arrangement of company placements for teachers at vocational schools, the chambers also participate in the training of vocational education and training staff by organising advanced training examinations for company employees involved in delivering initial and continuing VET at the companies. Ordinances in respect of the examination in two recognised advanced training qualifications have been enacted in this area of training. These are certified vocational educator for initial and continuing training (Bachelor level) and certified vocational educator (Masters level). The chambers are responsible for the implementation of the examinations.

Candidates are admitted to the examination leading to the qualification of certified vocational educator for initial and continuing training if they are able to demonstrate qualification in a recognised training occupation of a minimum duration of three years and at least one year of occupational practice. The examination is also open to those who have successfully completed the final examination in another recognised training occupation and have gained at least two years of occupational practice and to persons who have successfully completed an examination pursuant to the Ordinance on Train-

er Aptitude or are able to provide evidence of a comparable occupational and vocational teaching qualification. In terms of content, occupational practice must essentially relate to the tasks, which must be performed in an independent and responsible manner. These tasks comprise the holistic planning and execution of educational processes in vocational education and training and in company-based continuing training. Certified vocational educators for initial and continuing training are in a position to implement training regulations and plan company continuing training measures. They are responsible for the structuring of learning processes, for the provision of support to learners and for quality assurance and optimisation.

Candidates are admitted to the examination leading to the qualification of certified vocational educator if they are able to demonstrate that they have completed the advanced training qualification of certified vocational educator for initial and continuing training or advanced training leading to the qualification of certified senior clerk, specialist commercial clerk, a master craftsman qualification in an industrial or specialist occupation or in the craft trades or to a comparable advanced training qualification on the basis of the Vocational Training Act or Craft and Trades Regulation Code and who have subsequently acquired at least one year of occupational experience. The examination is also open to those who have successfully completed a course of higher education study or a state-recognised trade and technical school qualification following a two-year programme of advanced training and have gained at least two years of occupational practice, to those who have successfully completed a vocational education and training occupation in a recognised training occupation and who have subsequently acquired at least five years of occupational experience and to persons who have successfully completed an examination pursuant to the Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude or are able to provide evidence of a comparable occupational and vocational teaching qualification. In terms of content, occupational practice must essentially relate to the tasks, which certified vocational educators are required to perform in an independent and responsible manner. Certified vocational educators manage and coordinate vocational teaching and business processes. They plan and organise company-based initial and continuing training processes and human resources and organisational development measures. They identify company and individual skills requirements and develop target group appropriate training provision. They take on an advisory and support function within the company. Their tasks also include quality development.

2.2 Federal State Committees for Vocational Education and Training

The Federal State Committee advises the federal state in question on matters relating to vocational education and training. Within the scope of its remit, it is required to focus on achieving a continuous development of quality of vocational education and training and may make recommendations for content and organisational arrangements and for the improvement of training provision in order to strengthen the regional training and employment situation.

The Federal State Committees for Vocational Education and Training comprises an equal number of representatives of the employers, the employees and the supreme federal state authorities. Half of the representatives of the supreme federal state authorities must have expertise in issues relating to the school system. The representatives of the employers are proposed by the chambers, the employers' associations and the business owner organisations. The representatives of the employees are proposed by the trade unions and independent worker associations. Committee members work on a voluntary and unpaid basis. The Federal Committee is deemed to be quorate if more than half of members are present. Decisions are made via a majority of the votes cast.

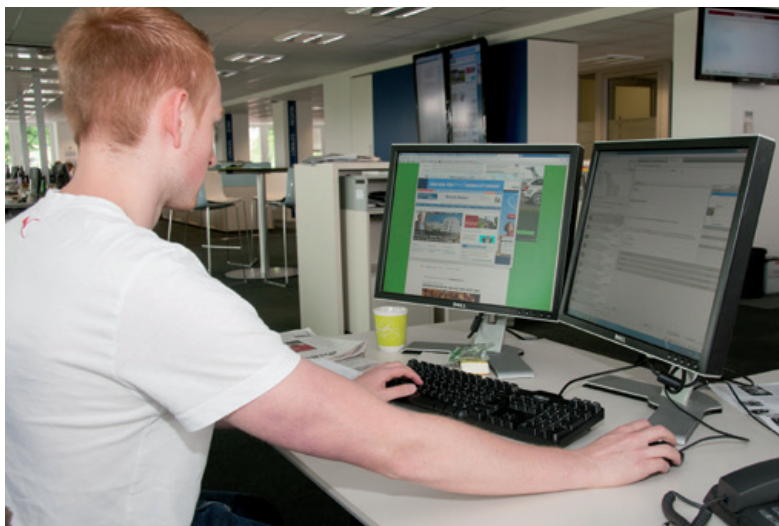
One particular focus of the work carried out by the Federal State Committees is cooperation between school-based VET and vocational education and training pursuant to the BBiG and consideration of VET when re-regulation and further development of the school system takes place.

The Federal State Committees play a role in the promotion of permeability within vocational education and training by opening up the dual system via credit transfer and recognition procedures for the school-based VET system. The BBiG (Section 43, Paragraph 2) affords those who have completed school-based VET programmes to be admitted to the final examination implemented by the chamber if the training course corresponds to vocational education and training in a recognised training occupation. The content and time structure of the training course in question must include an appropriate proportion of practical occupational training and must be equivalent to the requirements contained within the training regulations. Training courses which fulfil these prerequisites are determined by the federal states via legal ordinances. The enactment of these ordinances is linked to

the vocational education and training activities undertaken by the Federal State Committee. Credit transfer to the training period for prior vocational learning is also governed by legal ordinances issued by the federal states following consultation with the Federal State Committee.

Such credit transfer and recognition procedures help to assimilate the school-based training programmes of the federal states and contribute towards their alignment to the national standards of the training regulations. The involvement of the Federal State Committee also integrates the social partners at the intermediate level.

The Federal State Committee may establish sub-committees which are open to external members. Representatives from the federal state authorities, local government, municipal associations and the Employment Agency may take part in the meetings of the Committee and its sub-committees. This enables expertise to be gained for the coordinating and advisory function of the Federal State Committee. In addition to performing its tasks, the Federal Committee may pass on recommendations and official statements relating to the regionally specific findings gained. This type of cooperation between regional stakeholders is particularly conducive to balanced training place supply and optimum organisation of vocational education and training.



3. Quality assurance at the company level

Company participation in training within the dual system takes place on a voluntary basis. Companies make autonomous decisions regarding the training places they offer. There are no sanctions in the form of levies for non-participation. Nevertheless, companies which opt to provide training are required to meet certain statutory minimum requirements. Quality assurance in company-based training thus mainly takes place via laws and ordinances and via recommendations from the BIBB Board.

Companies may themselves stipulate further quality criteria above and beyond the minimum requirements and may also set their own benchmarks within the scope of application of quality management systems. With regard to the contents of training, companies have sufficient leeway at their disposal in respect of the depth and breadth to which these contents are imparted. Depending on possibilities and requirements, additional qualifications may be imparted to supplement the requirements contained within the training regulations.

In specific terms, quality assurance is based on three pillars. These are the suitability of the company to provide training, stipulation of the rights and responsibilities of the parties providing training and of trainees, and cooperation with the vocational schools.

3.1 Suitability of the company providing training

Not every company is permitted to provide training. The prerequisites for successful training need to be examined in advance. A company may only offer training if both the training staff and the training venue are deemed suitable. If necessary, training may take place at an inter-company vocational training centre or in cooperation with other companies and providers. The company training plan must include the content and time structure of training at the respective learning venues. Stipulation of suitability and monitoring of ongoing compliance with the statutory provisions lie within the area of responsibility of the relevant chamber.

3.1.1 Suitability of training staff

Trainers must be personally suitable. Those deemed not to be suited are persons who are not permitted to employ children or young people or who have breached the BBiG and its relevant provisions (Section 29 of the BBiG). These are persons who have been convicted in law of certain criminal acts and misdemeanours. Personal aptitude on the part of trainers ensures that their moral attitude and values system are not at variance with youth protection or with the need to comply with the relevant regulations. Persons who may jeopardise the implementation of training or represent a risk to the young people themselves are excluded.

Trainers must be personally and professionally suited to their role. Professional aptitude, occupational experience and pedagogical competence guarantee that trainers are themselves in possession of the skills, knowledges and competences that they need to impart.

Further suitable staff who are suitable both personally and for the imparting of contents may be involved in training under the responsibility of the trainer. Three categories of training staff are differentiated. These are part-time trainers, full-time trainers and skilled workers providing training. Personal aptitude applies in equal amount to all three categories. Professional aptitude relates to part-time and full-time trainers. Trainers are considered exhibit professional aptitude if they are in possession of the occupational and professional vocational teaching skills, knowledge and competences required for the imparting of the training contents. Whereas occupational competence is directly defined in the BBiG (Section 30), professional aptitude in terms of vocational teaching is an object of separate consideration in the Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude (AEVO).

Final examinations in a specialism which relates to the training occupation provide evidence of possession of the necessary occupational skills, knowledge and competences. The state-recognised examination may have been completed within the scope of dual training or full-time school-based training or at an institute of higher education. Practical exercising of the occupation in question for an appropriate period of time is a further prerequisite.

Professional and vocational teaching aptitude must be demonstrated in an examination which comprises a written and practical part. This examination is the equivalent of Part IV of the master craftsman examination. In terms of content, professional and vocational teaching aptitude encompass-

es the competence to act autonomously in planning, conducting and monitoring vocational education and training.

- ▶ Check training requirements and plan training
- ▶ Prepare training and assist in the recruitment of trainees
- ▶ Conduct training
- ▶ Complete training



These action areas cover all relevant processes of training in the company. They encompass identification of requirements, development of the company training plan, content and organisational arrangements with cooperation partners, selection of training methods and media, individual support for trainees, preparation for examinations, and guidance on continuing education training opportunities. For this reason, trainers play a central role in quality assurance in company-based training.

3.1.2 Suitability of the training venue

The training venue must be suitable for vocational education and training with regard to the nature of the facility and its equipment, and the number of trainees must be in an appropriate ratio to the number of training places or to the number of skilled workers employed. Deviation from appropriate number ratios is permitted if vocational education and training is not jeopardised. Training measures may take place outside the training venue if the

necessary occupational skills, knowledge and competences cannot be imparted to their full extent at the company (Section 27 of the BBiG). These measures must be explicitly agreed in the vocational education and training contract.

Stipulation of suitability of training venues by the chambers ensures that the material resources and conditions required for the execution of training are in place and that normal implementation of training can be ensured without causing disruption for any trainee. This means that every trainee receives sufficient materials, space and support from trainers. Learning and work processes are coordinated in such a way so that trainees do not create any disruption for other employees or for one another.

The BIBB Board Recommendation of 16 December 2015 on the suitability of training venues set out criteria which define requirements in more precise terms and assist with uniform application of the statutory stipulations. The training venue must, for example, be in possession of the relevant valid training regulations for every training occupation in respect of which application is made for registration of a training contract. Minimum information on specific training places, phases of training, training contents to be imparted and training times allocated must be included in the company training plan. Company work and business processes ensure that skills, knowledge and competences can be imparted in line with the training regulations. The facilities and training materials required for the provision of training must be in place, and sufficient time must be available for training purposes.

The recommendation also stipulates appropriate number ratios. The general rule is that a suitable ratio of number of trainees to number of skilled workers is one to three. Part-time trainers and skilled workers providing training should not themselves train more than three trainees on average. Full-time trainers should not be responsible for providing direct training to a group which exceeds 16 trainees. Exceptions are permissible if special training support measures are being implemented.

The competent body monitors the suitability of the training venue and personal and professional aptitude. If deficiencies in respect of suitability are identified, parties providing training are required to remedy these within a deadline set by the competent body. If a deficiency in suitability cannot be remedied, if there is an expected risk for trainees or if a defect is not resolved within the deadline set, the competent body is required to notify the

authority responsible under federal state law. This authority may prohibit a company from recruiting and training trainees if the necessary prerequisites are not or are no longer in place. Verbal evidence must be taken from the parties involved and from the competent body before such a ban is imposed.

3.1.3 Training at inter-company vocational training centres or cooperative training

If a company is unable to impart all training contents at its own training venues, training measures may be conducted at an inter-company vocational training centre or via collaboration with other partners.

Inter-company vocational training centres provide additional support to companies which cannot cover all training contents by dint of their specialisation. This provides a vehicle via which the ability of small and medium-sized companies to provide training can be ensured. Inter-company vocational training centres are funded by the BMBF and the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. The chambers and their organisations usually act as providers. The chambers are also able to set up their own inter-company vocational training centres.

Cooperative training represents a further option for companies which are unable to deliver the full range of training contents on their own. Trainees complete individual phases of training at partner companies or educational establishments. These extra-company training measures help secure the suitability of the training venue itself and thus contribute to the creation of additional training places.

In general terms, the cooperative solution is suited to companies which are conducting training for the first time or providing training in new occupations, to companies which are seeking to share the costs of training, to companies which cannot cover the full range of training because they are too specialised, and to companies which wish to offer their trainees additional qualifications.

Cooperative training helps to raise training quality, in particular via the use of respective company specialisations for the professional qualification of trainees. Gaining experience in different companies and dealing with different people also increases the social competence of the trainees.

There are four possible organisational forms for the establishment of training cooperation.

- ▶ Training at one lead company in conjunction with partner companies: the lead company concludes the training contract and delegates trainees to the partner companies. The partner companies benefit from the training experience, training facilities and laboratories and the equipment of the lead company. This enables them to raise the quality of their own training.
- ▶ Commissioned training: a training provider or another company assumes responsibility for certain phases of training by means of service provision. The training contract is concluded by the main company, which pays for the external training services it has commissioned.
- ▶ Consortium: companies assume equal and joint responsibility for training and exchange trainees in order to foster the quality of training by providing a broader range of topics. Trainees from the companies making up the consortium conclude a training contract with their respective main company, which pays the training allowance even when training is taking place at a partner company.
- ▶ Training association: companies take responsibility for imparting training content whilst the training association acts as a contractual partner. The association regulates the remits of the companies involved in training via a cooperation agreement.

3.1.4 The company training plan

The training process should be based on the training regulations and general training plan and be categorised in such a way so that the time sequence and the content structure of the vocational education and training become visible. The training plan takes account of general company conditions and of individual facts and circumstances. If parts of training take place outside the training venue, they must be arranged so as to ensure that company-based and extra-company measures intermesh in a useful way and build upon each other.

In its recommendation of 28 March 1972 on the content and time structure of vocational education and training, the Federal Committee for Vocational Education and Training emphasised the role of the training plan as an integral part of the training contract. Alongside a duty to itemise training places and training materials, the recommendation also lists criteria for content and time structure.

The content structure needs to contain all skills and knowledge stated in the general training plan. These should be summarised and divided up to create clearly identifiable training units which can be allocated to certain functions (e.g. sales or installation) or to certain departments (e.g. accounts or the apprentice workshop) within the training venue. Special application and consolidation of skills and knowledge imparted should not take place until as broad a learning basis as possible has been established. As already described, the contents of the general training plan correlate with the contents of the framework curriculum for the vocational school.

To the extent that the training regulations stipulate a time sequence, consideration needs to be accorded to the order of the examinations in complying with this requirement. The time structure should follow both logical and pedagogical criteria. It should provide for clearly identifiable phases in accordance with the training content (maximum duration of 6 months) and take periods of leave into account. If possible and depending on the training occupation and year of training, sub-phases should be stated in months or weeks. In justified exceptional cases, divergence from the structure may take place to a limited extent if this does not adversely affect the partial objectives and the overall goal. The training venue is required to record any such divergence, state the reason and notify the competent body.

Example from practice: Moving from training regulations to the company training plan in the training occupation of office manager (extract relating to "customer relationships")

Training regulations

(...)

Section 4: Structure of the vocational education and training, training profile

(1) The vocational education and training is divided into:

1. Joint skills, knowledge and competences making up the occupational profile in the compulsory qualifications
2. Further skills making up the occupational profile (...)

(2) Joint skills, knowledge and competences making up the occupational profile in the compulsory qualifications are:

1. Office processes (...)
2. Business processes:
 - 2.1 Customer relationships,
 - 2.2 Order processing (...)

General training plan:

Content structure (appendix 1)

Section A: Joint skills, knowledge and competences making up the occupational profile in the compulsory qualifications

No.	Part of the training occupation profile	Skills, knowledge and competences to be imparted
(...)		
2	Business processes (§ 4, paragraph 2, number 2)	
2.1	Customer relationships (§ 4, paragraph 4, number 2)	a) Take account of own role as a customer contact service provider b) Collect, process and evaluate customer data c) Provide information and advice in an appropriate and customer-oriented way d) Prepare information in accordance with customer needs e) Recognise and take account of the significance of customer service for customer satisfaction
(...)		

Time structure

A. To be imparted over the whole course of the training period (...)

B. 1st to 15th month of training (...)

C. 16th to 36th month of training

(1) The skills, knowledge and competences relating to the occupational profile items contained in Section 4 should be imparted over a total period of eleven months:

Paragraph 2 No. 2.1 Customer relationships

Paragraph 2 No. 2.2 Order processing and follow-up

Paragraph 2 No. 2.4 Human resources related processes

Paragraph 2 No. 2.5 Commercial management

Paragraph 4 No. 3.2 Communication

Learning fields according to the framework curriculum:

No.	Learning fields	Suggested time allocations in teaching hours		
		1st year	2nd year	3rd year
1	Help shape own role in the company and present the company	40		
2	Structure office procedures and organise work processes	80		
3	Process orders	80		
4	Procure goods and services and conclude contracts	120		
5	Acquire and secure the loyalty of customers		80	
6	Identify and evaluate value flows		80	
7	Structure meeting situations		40	
(...)				

Correlations between the general training plan and framework curriculum:

General training plan			Framework curriculum			
Training profile items	Months of training		School year			Learning fields
	1–15	16–36	1	2	3	
(...)						
2 Business processes (§ 4, paragraph 2, number 2)						
2.1 Customer relationships (§ 4, paragraph 2, number 2.1)						
a) Take account of own role as a customer contact service provider	X		X			3
b) Collate, process and evaluate customer data	X		X	X		3; 5
c) Provide information and advice in an appropriate and customer-oriented way	X		X	X		3; 7
d) Prepare information in accordance with customer needs	X		X	X		3; 7
e) Recognise and take account of the significance of customer service for customer satisfaction	X		X			3
(...)						

Example for a Company training plan:

Content structure

Section A

No.	Part of the training occupation profile	Skills, knowledge and competences to be imparted	Item imparted
2	Business processes		
2.1	Customer relationship processes	a) Take account of own role as a customer contact service provider b) Collect, process and evaluate customer data c) Provide information and advice in an appropriate and customer-oriented way	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
(...)			

Time structure

16th to 36th month of training

(1) The skills, knowledge and competences relating to the occupational profile items contained in Section 4 should be imparted over a total period of eleven months in the following way:

No.	Part of the training occupation profile	Imparting/continuation planned	
		Department	from-to
Para. 2 2.1	Customer relationship processes		
Para. 2 2.2	Order processing and follow-up		
Para. 2 2.4	Human resources related tasks		
Para. 2 2.5	Commercial management		
Para. 4 3.2	Communication		

3.2 Rights and obligations of parties providing training and of trainees

The training arrangements commence with the conclusion of a training contract and registration of the contract with the competent body. The contractual partners are the trainees and the parties providing training. Parties providing training are defined as parties which recruit other persons for the purpose of vocational education and training. They should be differentiated from those who actually deliver the training in practical terms. These may be the parties providing training themselves or trainers to whom they have assigned the task.

The rights and duties of parties providing training and trainees during training are set out in the BBiG. The keeping of a record of training is accorded a particular role with regard to the documentation of the training process and its quality.

3.2.1 The training contract

The conclusion of a training contract and the registration of such a contract with the competent body are a prerequisite for the recruitment of trainees. The contract is concluded between the trainee and the party providing training. Consent from a legal guardian is required for trainees aged under 18. Both parents together are entitled to represent the trainee in this regard. Both the chambers and BIBB (Board Recommendation of 18 July 2005 amended on 7 March 2008) make sample contracts available to interested parties.

The type, content and time structuring, commencement, duration and aim of the vocational education and training must be recorded in writing in the training contract. Training measures outside the training venue and the duration of regular daily training time also form an object of the contract. In legal terms, a training contract is considered to be a contract of employment. This means that the statutory stipulations and basic legal principles which govern a contract of employment are also applicable to a training contract. Trainees are therefore entitled to receive remuneration and paid leave. Training allowances rise annually as the vocational education and training progresses. These are negotiated within the scope of the collective wage agreements concluded between the social partners. Companies not bound by a collective wage agreement are required to pay appropriate remuneration. The training contract must make reference to the relevant collective wage agreements and company and service agreements.

The probationary period must be of at least one month's duration and may not exceed four months. This duration has been designed to afford both the party providing training and the trainee sufficient time to test out the circumstances that apply to the training arrangements. A time frame of up to four months is appropriate for this purpose, even if account is taken of periods of inter-company instruction outside the company itself and of the scheduled block of vocational school teaching that takes place at the start of training.

After the end of the probationary period, both parties may give notice of termination for cause. Trainees wishing to abandon vocational education

and training or enter training in a different occupation are required to give four weeks' notice of termination. This exit opportunity allows young people to undertake a process of vocational reorientation if they feel that the prospects of successful conclusion of training have diminished. If premature termination of a training contract takes place after the probationary period, trainees may make a claim for compensation within three months if such a premature dissolution was the fault of the other contractual party.

The vocational education and training contract ends following completion of the contractually agreed duration of training. Any restriction regarding the exercising of an occupational activity by the trainee after the end of the training contract is thus not permissible. This means that trainees can apply for jobs with other employers. The earliest point at which further employment outside the vocational education and training contract may be agreed is during the final six months of the period of training. If the contractual parties agree, a relevant declaration of will on the part of the trainee should follow. The contract of employment may be concluded on a permanent or fixed-term basis. If trainees are employed following completion of the vocational education and training contract without the conclusion of an express agreement, this is deemed to constitute the formation of a contract of permanent employment.

Companies are under no obligation to offer employment to the trainees after completion of training unless this is stipulated in the applicable collective wage agreements. Numerous collective wage agreements contain provisions for trainees to be taken on as employees following successful conclusion of training. These regulations stipulate different models of employment varying from fixed-term contracts of between six and 24 months in duration to permanent contracts of employment. The agreement usually made is that employment will be offered in principle. This means that companies may diverge from this proviso if there are certain behavioural or personal reasons or in the event of acute employment problems. The same applies if the number of training contracts concluded by a company exceeds its needs.

3.2.2 Obligations of the parties providing training

The party providing training is required to ensure that occupational proficiency (berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit) are imparted to trainees. The process of vocational education and training must be implemented in accordance with the stipulated content and time structure and must be conducted in such a way so as to enable achievement of the training objective in the period

planned. The necessary materials for the vocational education and training itself and for the completion of examinations must be provided free of charge. Trainees must also be issued with a copy of the training regulations free of charge prior to commencement of training. The party providing training is required to insist that trainees attend vocational school and keep a written record of training. Parties providing training further ensure that the character development of trainees is fostered and that trainees are not put at risk either morally or physically. Trainees may only be assigned tasks which serve the purpose of training and which are suitable to their bodily strength. Parties providing training must require submission of relevant certificates relating to the medical examinations conducted prior to commencement of training and before the end of the first year of training for trainees who are aged under 18. Trainees are released for the purpose of attending vocational school teaching, sitting examinations and for participation in any training measures that may take place outside the training venue.

Parties providing training are required to make an application for entry into the index of training contracts managed by the competent body without delay upon conclusion of the contract. A copy of the contract must also be submitted. The competent body must also be notified immediately of any subsequent changes to the contractual content. Parties provided training cannot complete the formalities regarding registration for the scheduled examinations until they have received authorisation to do so from the trainee.

When the training contract ends, trainees receive a written certificate containing information on the nature, duration and objective of the vocational education and training and on the occupational skills, knowledge and competences that have been acquired.

If a company has a works council, this body will monitor compliance with the statutory provisions and collective wage agreement regulations that protect the interests of employees (Section 80 of the German Labour and Management Relations Act – BetrVG). Pursuant to Section 60 of the German Labour and Management Relations Act, companies which have at least five employees under the age of 18 or at least five workers who are completing vocational education and training and are aged under 25 are required to elect bodies to represent young people and trainees. The works council has a right of co-determination with regard to the implementation of company-based training measures (Section 96–98 BetrVG). It must involve the body representing young people and trainees in meetings which take place between

the employer and the works council if matters being discussed affect the group concerned. This representation of their interests enables young people to learn how they can help to shape democracy within working life. Representatives can make a contribution towards quality assurance by drawing the attention of the works council to weaknesses or deficiencies in company-based training.

Companies providing training must abide by the provisions contained within the Law for the Protection of Young People at Work. These stipulate, for example, that young people may not be employed for more than eight hours a day or for more than 40 hours per week. They must also not be assigned to dangerous tasks. Trainees must be released on days when more than five hours of vocational school teaching takes place or during weeks of vocational schooling when scheduled blocks of at least 25 hours of teaching are planned.

3.2.3 Duties of the trainees

Trainees are required to endeavour to acquire occupational proficiency (*berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit*). They are in particular required to exercise due care and attention in executing the tasks assigned to them within the scope of training and to take part in examinations. Trainees must follow the instructions given by training staff and ensure proper order of the training venue. They must handle tools, machines and other equipment carefully and maintain confidentiality in respect of company and business secrets. The written records of training required must be kept properly and submitted on a regular basis.



Trainees must notify the party providing training of any absence from company-based training, vocational school teaching or other training events. In the case of incapacity for work for a period of longer than three calendar days as a result of illness, a doctor's certificate must be submitted to the party providing training. Trainees aged under 18 are required to undergo a medical examination prior to commencement of training and before the end of the first year of training and to submit relevant certificates to the party providing training.

3.2.4 The record of training

The BIBB Board Recommendation of 9 October 2012 stipulates rules for the keeping of training records. This type of documentation of the training process encourages trainees to reflect on the course of training. Time and content sequence of training in the company and at the vocational school becomes transparent and demonstrable for the parties involved and for the competent body.

To the extent that the duty to keep a record of training is explicitly stated in the training regulations, the presentation of such a record to the examination board is a prerequisite for admission to the final examination.

Trainees must take responsibility for completing and signing off their training records on a daily or weekly basis. Records must describe the topics covered in vocational school teaching and the content of company-based training together with duration of tasks at least in bullet point form. Trainees should be afforded the opportunity of maintaining their record of training during training time. The books and forms required must be made available free of charge by the party providing training.

The party providing training or the trainer checks the entries made in the record of training at least once a month and confirms their correctness and completeness by appending a signature. In the case of trainees aged under 18, a legal representative must take note of the entries made in the record of training at appropriate intervals and sign the record to confirm contents. Both the vocational school in its capacity as a cooperating learning venue and the employee representative bodies are entitled to inspect the training record.

3.3 Cooperation between companies and vocational schools

Although the relevant legislation stipulates that learning venues are required to work together in the implementation of training (Section 2 Paragraph 3 BBiG), it does not define the precise form such cooperation should take. The reason for this flexibility is that a federal law is unable to set out binding provisions for vocational schools because of the way in which areas of responsibility are distributed between the Federal Government and the federal states. Vocational schools have various options at their disposal, and these need to be agreed with the companies in the region.

Coordination of the training contents resulting from the training regulations and skeleton curricula for the learning venues of the company and the vocational school is best achieved within the scope of close cooperation between these learning venues. The competences needed for achievement of occupational proficiency (*berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit*), such as holistic thinking, the ability to act as a team player and reflectiveness, cannot be developed in an isolated way at a single learning venue. Close cooperation between both learning venues is required.

The introduction of learning fields via the KMK skeleton curricula replaced the conventional vocational school subjects in order to accord better consideration to company work processes and to activity-related contexts. This removed the traditional division of tasks for vocational schools and companies providing training. Both learning venues are now responsible for the acquisition of practical competences. The learning field concept helps to concentrate cooperation between the learning venues via the joint development of cross-venue training projects for the better linking of theory and practice. Vocational school teachers learn more about the current requirements of company practice. Together with the trainers, they have the scope to increase quality in training.

Cooperation between learning venues needs to be outcome-oriented and imbued with content rather than being an end in itself. Significant factors for the intensity of cooperation are the size of the company, existing training structures, and the training occupation in question. Cooperation between companies and vocational schools can assume different forms depending on requirements. One obvious aspect is the exchange of information about trainees between teaching and training staff on matters such as attendance, motivation, performance, social behaviour etc. Coopera-

tion may also focus on coordination of training contents and teaching time models, the development of didactic materials or the implementation of cross-venue training measures and joint continuing training events. There is a further opportunity for cooperation within the scope of joint projects and regional working groups.

The provision of practical company placements for vocational school lecturers and trainee teachers and of company tours for pupils show the commitment of companies to concentrated cooperation between the learning venues. Company placements for teachers help them to deepen their knowledge of company procedures, structures and processes and aim to offer insights into a world of work and employment that is constantly changing. Teachers gain greater awareness of the needs of the companies and are able to pass on their newly acquired knowledge to the trainees. Such practical placements assist the teacher in establishing a personal contact network and open up new opportunities for sustainable cooperation between companies and vocational schools.

Depending on the federal state, the aim is for these placements to exhibit a specific correlation with the relevant occupational specialism or, if possible, with the general subjects taught by the teacher (as is the case in Bavaria). They may also be directed at aspects such as gaining information on the social environment of the trainees within the company (as in Saxony-Anhalt). If a practical placement has a main focus in areas such as human resources development and management, this may lead to ideas and indications for the preparation of leadership tasks (as in Hamburg).

Some federal states are strongly committed to promoting cooperation between learning venues. In Baden-Württemberg, the senior school authorities and the chambers of industry and commerce have joined forces to appoint cooperation advisors who organise information and continuing training events for trainers and are responsible for the formation of working groups. In some states, cooperation between learning venues is explicitly addressed in school law. In Lower Saxony, for example, cooperation with companies and other institutions involved in initial and continuing training is assigned to training course development and specialist groups at vocational schools (Lower Saxony School Law, Section 35a).

In Hamburg, trainers are able to become members of the boards of state vocational schools, where they act as business representatives to promote the in-

terests of the company and its trainees within the school. Vocational schools are further required to set up occupationally related cooperation groups between learning venues (Section 78a, Hamburg School Law – HmbSG). Alongside staff teaching within the respective training programme, these comprise representatives from the companies providing training, from inter-company training institutions, from the companies offering practical placements and from the relevant guild or professional association. A particular aim of these cooperation agreements between learning venues is to assist with further development of training quality and of training contents and the way in which these are coordinated. They foster knowledge networking between the company and the school and advise the respective school boards on strategic issues. They are also able to develop additional qualifications and support provision for individual groups of pupils.

Example from practice: The KOLIBRI pilot project

KOLIBRI – “Cooperation between learning venues in vocational education and training” (September 1999 to February 2004) was a national pilot project instigated by the Federal Government-Federal States Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (BLK) which had its roots in an expanded understanding of cooperation between learning venues. The 28 individual pilot projects conducted covered the following types of measures:

- ▶ Development of cooperative concepts for the precise definition of “local” curricula and of instruments to support the evaluation of methodological and social competences during the course of training
- ▶ Development of modular concepts that are compatible with regulatory policy and link in with continuing vocational training
- ▶ Integration and didactic design of references to practice in full-time school-based training programmes
- ▶ Cross-learning venue development of funding approaches to secure the training success of particular target groups
- ▶ Development of institutional and human resources conditions to concentrate and consolidate cooperation between learning venues.

The coordination and promotion of cooperation between learning venues took on various forms within this pilot programme. Vehicles included specialist conferences, steering groups and the creation of new institutions. One important finding to emerge was that there can be no one type of “cooperation body”. The respective local conditions which apply are of crucial significance. A coordinator is required to initiate and chair cooperation between learning

venues. This may be an individual person or a cooperation body specially established for the purpose. Nevertheless, cooperation between learning venues cannot be reduced to the individual actions of vocational education and training stakeholders. It is determined by the general political, economic, technical and cultural conditions at the learning venues.



Legal foundations

Laws and ordinances

Ausbilder-Eignungsverordnung (AEVO) – Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude

Berufsbildungsgesetz (BBiG) – Vocational Training Act

Betriebsverfassungsgesetz (BetrVG) – Labour and Management Relations Act

Gesetz zur Ordnung des Handwerks – Handwerksordnung (HwO) – Law on the Regulation of Craft Trades, Crafts and Trades Regulation Code

Gesetz zum Schutze der arbeitenden Jugend – Jugendarbeitsschutzgesetz (JArbSchG) – Law for the Protection of Young People at Work

STÄNDIGE KONFERENZ DER KULTUSMINISTER DER LÄNDER IN DER BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND – Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK) – STANDING CONFERENCE OF THE MINISTERS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS OF THE LÄNDER IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs): Rahmenlehrpläne und Ausbildungsordnungen (*Skeleton curricula and training regulations*). Berlin 2016

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Index of abbreviations

AEVO	Ausbilder-Eignungsverordnung – Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude
ARP	Ausbildungsrahmenplan – General training plan
AZAV	Akkreditierungs- und Zulassungsverordnung Arbeitsförderung – Ordinance regarding the conditions and procedure for the accreditation of professional bodies and the admission of employment support providers
BBiG	Berufsbildungsgesetz – Vocational Training Act
BetrVG	Betriebsverfassungsgesetz – Labour and Management Relations Act
BIBB	Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung – Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training
BLK	Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung – Federal Government-Federal States Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion
BMBF	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – Federal Ministry of Education and Research
BOP	Das Berufsorientierungsprogramm – Vocational Orientation Programme
DEQA-VET	Deutsche Referenzstelle für Qualitätssicherung in der beruflichen Bildung – German Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
DHKT	Deutscher Handwerkskammertag – Association of German Chambers of Crafts and Trades
DIHK	Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag – Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce
DQR	Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen für lebenslanges Lernen – German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
EQF	European Qualifications Framework

HmbSG	Hamburgisches Schulgesetz – Hamburg School Law
HWK	Handwerkskammer – Chamber of Crafts and Trades
HwO	Handwerksordnung – Crafts and Trades Regulation Code
IHK	Industrie- und Handelskammer – Chamber of Industry and Commerce
ISO	Internationale Organisation für Normung – International Organisation for Standardisation
JArbSchG	Jugendarbeitsschutzgesetz – Law for the protection of young people at work
KMK	Konferenz der Kultusminister und -senatoren der Länder – Conference of the Ministers and Senators of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder
KoA	Bund-Länder-Koordinierungsausschuss „Ausbildungsordnungen und Rahmenlehrpläne“ – Federal Government/Federal States Coordination Committee for Training Regulations and Skeleton Curricula
KOLIBRI	Kooperation der Lernorte in der beruflichen Bildung – Cooperation between learning venues in vocational education and training
KWB	Kuratorium der deutschen Wirtschaft für Berufsbildung – German Employers’ Organisation for Vocational and Further Training
Q2E	Qualität durch Evaluation und Entwicklung – Quality Through Evaluation and Development (quality management system for the schools area)
RLP	Rahmenlehrplan – framework curriculum
ÜBS	Überbetriebliche Berufsbildungsstätten – Inter-company vocational training centres



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