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Pro Dual

Improving through Benchmarking

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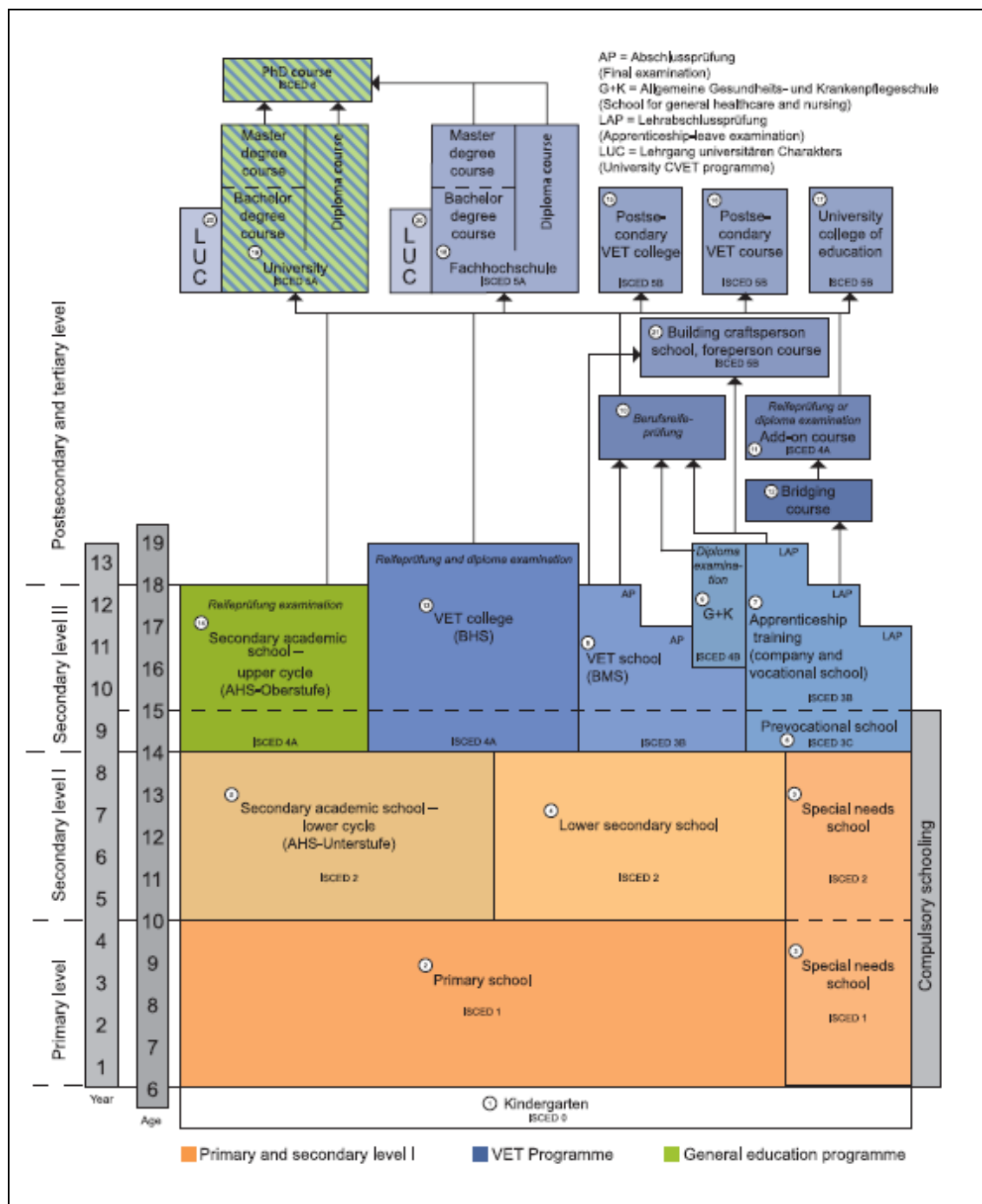
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1 Introduction

The following report covers the topic of the **Austrian apprenticeship training system** (or apprenticeship for short). Apprenticeship programmes are provided at the upper secondary level and open to young people who have completed their nine years of compulsory schooling, side by side with programmes in the upper cycle of secondary academic school and at VET schools and colleges (cf. fig. 1).

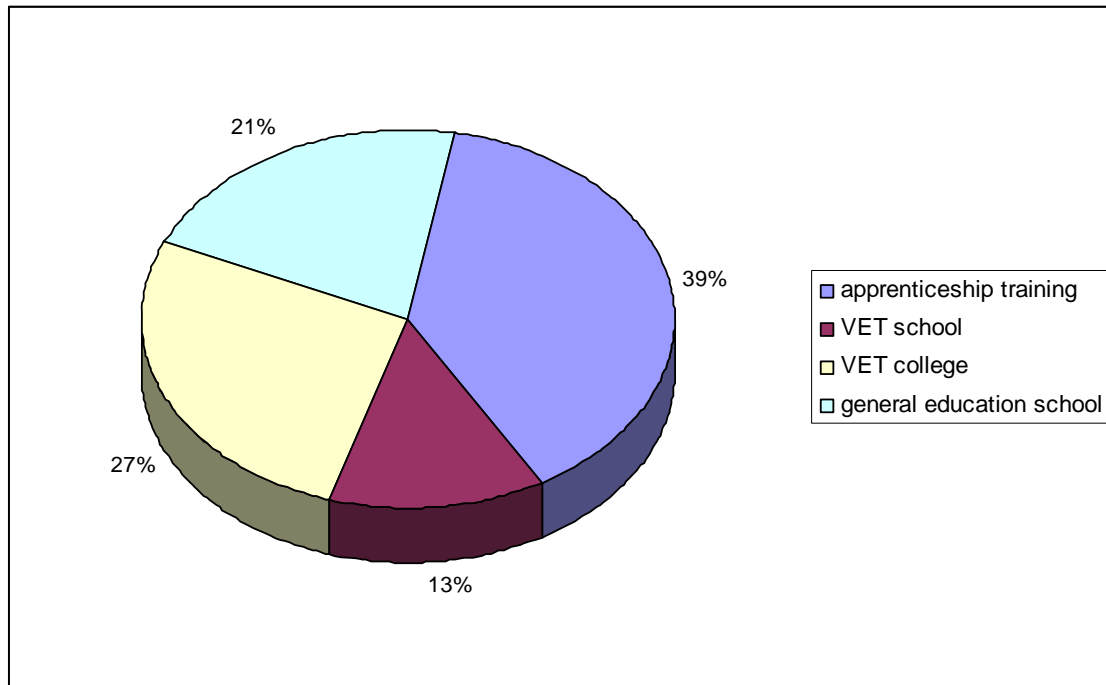
Fig. 1: An overview of the Austrian education system



Source: ibw

In year 10 (i.e. upon completion of compulsory schooling), some 80% of all young people attend a VET programme. Some 40% opt for an apprenticeship as their IVET path (cf. fig. 2).

Fig. 2: Distribution of young people in year 10 by school type (2005/06)



Source: Schneeberger/Nowak 2007

Apprenticeship training is provided at training companies as well as complementary part-time vocational schools. Therefore this training path is also termed the '**dual system**'.

The following information about the apprenticeship training system aims to answer questions formulated within the framework of the **Pro Dual System through Benchmarking** project. Statistical data refers – unless stated differently – to the **entire federal territory**. Wherever available, also facts and figures related to apprenticeship training as provided by the City of **Vienna** have been taken into account.

2 Background questions

2.1 Number of inhabitants

Austria has some **8.3 million inhabitants** (cf. fig. 3). Some **1.7 million** live in **Vienna** (this corresponds to about 20% of the entire population).

Between 2001 and 2007 Austria's population increased only moderately. In Vienna, population growth during that period was clearly higher, however, than on a nationwide average.

Fig. 3: Development of the residential population between 2001 and 2007

	Vienna		Austria	
	absolute	development in % (2001=100%)	absolute	development in % (2001=100%)
2001	1,558,337	100	8,043,046	100
2002	1,562,737	+ 0.3	8,065,146	+ 0.3
2003	1,583,814	+ 1.6	8,102,175	+ 0.7
2004	1,598,626	+ 2.6	8,140,122	+ 1.2
2005	1,626,440	+ 4.4	8,206,524	+ 2.0
2006	1,651,437	+ 6.0	8,265,925	+ 2.8
2007	1,664,146	+ 6.8	8,298,923	+ 3.2

Source: Statistics Austria 2007

2.2 Number of enterprises

Pursuant to the job census, there are approx. **400,000 enterprises in Austria overall** (cf. fig. 4). In their majority, they can be found in the services sector (some 85% or 335,000 enterprises). About 3.4 million employees work in these companies (cf. fig. 4).

The number of **places of work in Vienna** amounts to a total of some **88,000**. This is equivalent to slightly more than one fifth (22.1%) of the total number of companies. Some 90% of them are service companies.

Fig. 4: Places of work and employees 1991 and 2001 broken down by 1995 ÖNACE departments

Classi- fication	1991		2001		1991		2001	
	ab- solute	%	ab- solute	%	absolute	%	absolute	%
	Places of work				Employees			
C / Mining and quarrying	754	0.24	672	0.17	11,774	0.40	8,759	0.26
D – F / Manufac- turing total	55,263	17.58	60,321	15.22	1,034,193	35.26	980,803	28.67
G – O / Services sector total	258,384	82.18	335,275	84.61	1,887,471	64.34	2,431,226	71.07
Total	314,401	100.0	396,268	100.0	2,933,438	100.0	3,420,788	100.0

Source: Statistics Austria 2007

2.3 Number of VET students vs. secondary school students

The relative **distribution of students at upper secondary level¹ across the various school types** has remained largely stable in recent years (cf. fig. 5). Some 40% of students in year 10 (i.e. after completion of compulsory schooling) attend part-time vocational school, in other words: they acquire their IVET qualification within the framework of an apprenticeship. More than one eighth of students opt for a VET school (*berufsbildende mittlere Schule* or BMS), more than one quarter for a VET college (*berufsbildende höhere Schule* or BHS). Slightly less than 21% attend secondary academic school (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule* or AHS).

Fig. 5: Distribution of students in year 10 by school types, Austria total, in a time comparison of recent years (column-percent)

School type	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2005/06	2006/07
Part-time vocational school	41.1	40.4	39.6	38.2	39.9
BMS	13.7	14.2	14.5	14.5	13.7
BHS	26.0	26.6	26.9	26.4	25.5
AHS	19.2	18.8	18.9	20.8	20.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
In absolute figures	101,153	101,190	101,349	104,605	109,555

Source: Schneeberger/Nowak 2007

¹⁾ In Austria, IVET programmes start at the upper secondary level.

2.4 Number of apprentices

In 2007, a total of 129,823 **apprentices** were counted in **Austria**. The number of apprentices in **Vienna** was 17,426, these are about 13% of all apprentices in Austria. Between 2001 and 2004, the number of apprentices in Vienna declined by some four percentage points, but increased again later. In 2007 there were by some six percentage points more apprentices than in 2001.

Fig. 6: Development of apprentices' figures in Austria and Vienna

	Austria overall	development overall in % (2001=100%)	Vienna	Vienna apprentices in % of total number	development Vienna in % (2001=100%)
2001	123,762	100	16,366	13.2	100
2002	120,486	- 2.6	16,040	13.3	- 2.0
2003	119,040	- 3.8	16,043	13.5	- 2.0
2004	119,071	- 3.8	15,772	13.2	- 3.6
2005	122,378	- 1.1	16,202	13.2	- 1.0
2006	125,961	+ 1.8	16,963	13.5	+ 3.6
2007	129,823	+ 4.9	17,426	13.4	+ 6.5

Source: Apprenticeship Statistics of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

2.5 Distribution of apprentices in different branches of business

Nearly 50% of all apprentices in **Austria** are employed in the Crafts and Trade section. The section of Commerce with some 15% of all apprentices comes in the second place, followed by Industry (12.4%) and Tourism (11.4%). This distribution has remained largely stable in recent years (cf. fig. 7). There was an increase of apprentices' figures among non-chamber members (e.g. lawyers, notaries, municipal administrations, etc.) and institutions pursuant to §§ 29 and 30 of the Vocational Training Act.

A similar distribution of **apprentices by economic sectors** can also be observed in **Vienna** (cf. fig. 8). The Crafts and Trade section employs more than one third (36%) of all apprentices of this province. Commerce comes next with slightly less than 17%, Tourism with nearly 11%. Industry ranks fourth with more than 7%.

Fig. 7: Development of apprentices' figures in Austria by economic sectors

Year	Crafts /trade	Industry	Com.	Bank. & ins.	Transport	Tourism	IC	Non-chamb.	§§ 29/30	Total
2001	65,734	14,905	19,566	897	2,318	12,974	-	5,773	1,595	123,762
in %	53.1	12.0	15.8	0.7	1.9	10.5	-	4.7	1.3	100.0
2004	58,494	15,481	18,126	902	2,044	13,748	2,588	6,048	1,640	119,071
in %	49.1	13.0	15.2	0.8	1.7	11.5	2.2	5.1	1.4	100.0
2007	61,503	16,098	19,867	1,115	2,283	14,818	2,984	8,163	2,992	129,823
in %	47.4	12.4	15.3	0.9	1.8	11.4	2.3	6.3	2.3	100.0

Note: Com. = commerce, Bank. = banking, ins. = insurance, IC = information and consulting, non-chamb. = non-chamber member – enterprises that are not members of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (e.g. lawyers, municipal administrations, etc.), §§ 29/30 = periods completed in establishments pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act (*Jugendgerichtsgesetz*) and in homes for the care and upbringing of young persons at risk (*Fürsorgeerziehungsheimen*) pursuant to the Juvenile Welfare Act (*Jugendwohlfahrtsgesetz*) as well as in independent IVET establishments

- = no data available, as the Information and Consulting (IC) section was newly introduced in 2002

Source: Schneeberger/Nowak 2007

Fig. 8: Development of apprentices' figures in Vienna by economic sectors

Year	Crafts /trade	Industry	Com.	Bank. & ins.	Transport	Tourism	IC	Non-chamb.	§§ 29/30	Total
2002	6,621	1,472	2,725	293	703	1,539	575	1,677	435	16,040
in %	41.3	9.2	17.0	18.8	4.4	9.6	3.6	10.5	2.7	100.0
2004	6,128	1,525	2,581	286	662	1,719	555	1,664	652	15,772
in %	38.9	9.7	16.4	1.8	4.2	10.9	3.5	10.6	4.1	100.0
2007	6,277	1,298	2,903	315	878	1,878	823	2,156	898	17,426
in %	36.0	7.4	16.7	1.8	5.0	10.8	4.7	12.4	5.2	100.0

Note: Com. = commerce, Bank. = banking, ins. = insurance, IC = information and consulting, non-chamb. = non-chamber member – enterprises that are not members of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (e.g. lawyers, municipal administrations, etc.), §§ 29/30 = periods completed in establishments pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act (*Jugendgerichtsgesetz*) and in homes for the care and upbringing of young persons at risk (*Fürsorgeerziehungsheimen*) pursuant to the Juvenile Welfare Act (*Jugendwohlfahrtsgesetz*) as well as in independent IVET establishments

Source: Apprenticeship Statistics of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

2.6 Age distribution of apprentices

The majority of apprentices in Austria take up an apprenticeship programme following completion of compulsory schooling, i.e. **at the age of 15** (cf. fig. 9 and 10). Depending on the length of their apprenticeship period, young people complete their IVET between the ages of 17 and 19.

Fig. 9: Apprenticeship beginners and total population of 15-year-olds

Year	Population of 15-year-olds	Apprenticeship beginners	% of age group
2001	94,017	37,371	39.7
2004	97,056	35,938	37.0
2007	100,149	41,176	41.1

Source: Schneeberger/Nowak 2007

Fig. 10: Age of apprentices in the first apprenticeship year by section, 2007

Age in years	Crafts /trade	Industry	Com.	Bank. & ins.	Transport	Tourism	IC	Non-chamb.	§§ 29/30	Total
15	8,228	2,126	2,324	89	258	1,610	183	814	155	15,787
16	6,791	1,707	2,428	103	243	1,581	234	850	282	14,219
17	2,251	501	1,188	74	112	803	200	449	261	5,839
18	897	219	558	31	57	388	133	223	150	2,656
19	368	87	225	20	24	191	75	87	96	1,173
20	201	45	103	15	13	119	41	49	53	639
21+	294	67	123	3	13	159	63	75	66	863
Total	19,030	4,752	6,949	335	720	4,851	929	2,547	1,063	41,716
15+16 in %	78.9	80.7	68.4	57.3	69.6	65.8	44.9	65.3	41.1	72.9

Note: Com. = commerce, Bank. = banking, ins. = insurance, IC = information and consulting, non-chamb. = non-chamber member – enterprises that are not members of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (e.g. lawyers, municipal administrations, etc.), §§ 29/30 = periods completed in establishments pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act (*Jugendgerichtsgesetz*) and in homes for the care and upbringing of young persons at risk (*Fürsorgeerziehungsheimen*) pursuant to the Juvenile Welfare Act (*Jugendwohlfahrtsgesetz*) as well as in independent IVET establishments

Source: Schneeberger/Nowak 2007

2.7 How many enterprises are involved in apprenticeship training?

In 2007, some 40,000 **training enterprises** were counted in **Austria**, approx. 4,700 of them in **Vienna** (cf. fig. 11). This equals slightly less than 12%. In 2001 and 2004, the percentage distribution was similar: Vienna accounted for between 11% and 12% of all training enterprises.

The number of training enterprises in Austria declined by six percentage points between 2001 and 2004. Then this figure rose again and reached approximately its 2001 level in 2007.

Fig. 11: Development of the number of training enterprises in Austria and Vienna

	Austria	development between 2001 and 2007 (2001=100%)	Vienna	development between 2001 and 2007 (2001=100%)
2001	40,152	100	4,653	100
2004	37,726	- 6.0	4,412	- 5.2
2007	39,815	- 0.8	4,740	+ 1.9

Source: Schneeberger/Nowak 2007

2.8 How many vocational schools are involved in apprenticeship training?

Nationwide there are 160 **part-time vocational schools** with slightly less than 6,000 classes and 130,000 students. 27 vocational schools are located in **Vienna**. They run 825 classes (cf. fig. 12).

Fig. 12: Part-time vocational schools 2005/06

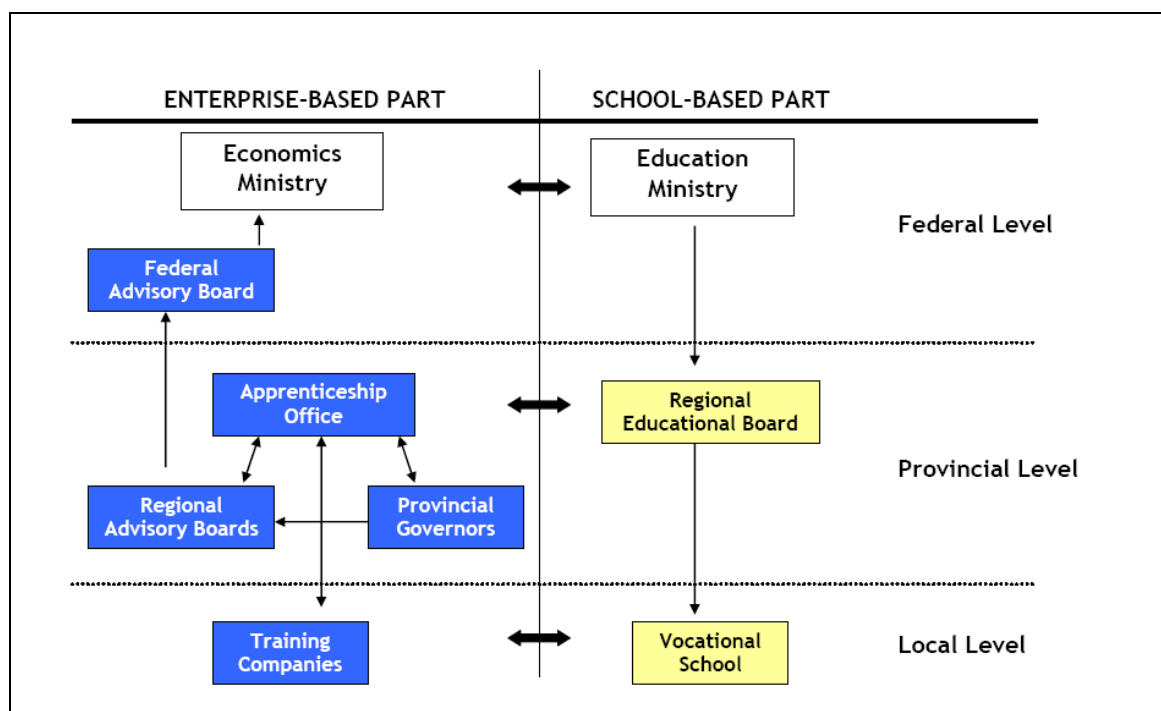
Classification	Austria	Vienna
Number	160	27
Classes	5,835	825
Male students	83,453	11,331
Female students	44,834	6,808
<i>Total</i>	<i>128,287</i>	<i>18,139</i>
Male teachers	3,060	476
Female teachers	1,445	336
<i>Total</i>	<i>4,505</i>	<i>803</i>
Students in year 1	40,093	6,241
Students in year 2	38,746	5,368
Students in year 3	38,049	5,135
Students in year 4	11,399	1,395

Source: Schneeberger/Nowak 2007

2.9 What are the key stakeholders in apprenticeship training and what roles and duties do they have?

The duality of the IVET sector is also reflected in the field of **administration**: The enterprise-based and the school-based parts are determined and administered by **different stakeholders at the national, regional and local levels**. Figure 13 provides an overview of the involved institutions:

Fig. 13: Distribution of competences in apprenticeship training



Source: ibw

Enterprise-based part

- The **Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour (BMWA)** is responsible for the enterprise-based part at the national level. It is also responsible for the Vocational Training Act, which lays down the legal bases for the apprenticeship training system. In addition, the BMWA adopts the training and examination regulations for the individual apprenticeships.
- At the federal level, the BMWA is supported by the **Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship (BBAB)**, which comprises representatives of the social partners and two co-opted members of the vocational school side. The BBAB draws up expert opinions on behalf of the BMWA, e.g. about the restructuring of apprenticeships, the introduction of new apprenticeships, amendments to examination regulations, etc. The social partners therefore exert a decisive impact on the designing of the apprenticeship training system via their membership in the BBAB.
- At the regional level, the **Apprenticeship Offices** of the economic chambers in the provinces act as apprenticeship authorities of the first instance. They examine (in cooperation with representatives of the regional chambers of labour) if training enterprises are suited to provide apprenticeship training (e.g. in terms of equipment, trainers, etc.); in addition, they are responsible for examining and recording apprenticeship contracts. Furthermore they are in charge of the

organisation of the apprenticeship-leave examinations (e.g. appointment of a chairperson). In general, their task is to deal with basic issues in the interest of apprentices and training enterprises and ensure relevant comprehensive counselling.

- At the regional level, the **federal governors** assisted by the respective provincial government offices are responsible for apprenticeship training and act as the apprenticeship authority of the second instance. They decide on appeals in apprenticeship training matters, such as the withdrawal of the authorisation as training enterprise, and on cancellations of illegally registered apprenticeship training contracts. The provincial governors appoint the members of their respective regional advisory boards on apprenticeship (LBABs).
- **LBABs** with representatives of the social partners have been established in all provinces to provide counselling services in all issues related to VET. They are responsible for submitting expert opinions, proposals and suggestions related to the apprenticeship training system in its province. On its proposal, the chairpersons of the apprenticeship-leave examination boards are appointed.
- At the local level, the **authorised apprenticeship trainers** are the people who are responsible for the provision of apprenticeship training. It is in their enterprise that the respective apprentice is trained to become a qualified skilled worker. In this work they are assisted by trainers.

School-based part

- The school-based part of apprenticeship training is within the sphere of competence of the **Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (BMUKK)**. It is responsible for the School Organisation Act and the curriculum frameworks.
- **Regional school inspectors** are responsible for school inspection and fulfilment of all the tasks within their sphere of responsibility as well as for implementation of the federal framework curricula in the form of regional curricula.
- **Part-time vocational schools** form an integral part of the economic life of their respective site. Direct contact with the training enterprises in the region is a key prerequisite to ensure they optimally fulfil their educational task.

2.10 How is apprenticeship training financed?

Financing of the **enterprise-based part** of apprenticeship training is effected via the training enterprises. During their apprenticeship period, apprentices are entitled to receive an apprenticeship remuneration. The amount of this apprenticeship remuneration is regulated by collective bargaining agreements entered into between

the social partners. To support training enterprises and provide an incentive to create additional or new apprenticeship posts, a large number of support instruments have been established, such as bonuses and tax benefits. Also the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) acts as a promoter within the framework of its active labour market policy.

Expenses for the **school-based section** are borne by the public sector. Expenses for the teaching staff at part-time vocational schools are split between the federal and regional governments with 50% each. School construction and equipment costs are borne by regional governments.

3 Questions concerning the process of apprenticeship training

3.1 Application phase

3.1.1 How do people apply for apprenticeship training?

An application for an apprenticeship post follows the same process as an application for any other job. Young people write letters of application to companies offering training places. If invited, they come to the companies personally to introduce themselves. The selection of young people and the recruitment process of apprentices are upon the future employer.

3.1.2 How are training places found?

Young people can either send "unsolicited" applications to companies or reply to a relevant job ad. Job ads are usually published by newspapers, online databases, or especially established apprenticeship job pools (such as of the Public Employment Service Austria [AMS] and the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber [WKO], www.ams.at/lehrstellen). In addition, information about apprenticeship vacancies is passed on by personal contacts and word-of-mouth as well as cooperation ventures between companies and schools (such as within the framework of the work-experience days).

As the decision for one of more than 260 apprenticeships is not always easy for young people, several institutions aim to provide support. In this connection, particularly the

career guidance offices of the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) and of the Austrian economic chambers need to be mentioned. There, future apprentices will not only obtain information about the varied range of apprenticeship programmes but can also take advantage of one-on-one counselling and complete tests aiming to facilitate their decision-making process.

3.1.3 What are the most significant special groups of apprentices?

The following are considered special groups of apprentices:

- young people with disabilities
- young people with learning difficulties
- young people with a migration background

3.1.4 How are training places for the special groups of apprentices found?

The Public Employment Service Austria places these special groups of apprentices into training places.

3.1.5 What kind of support systems are available for special groups of apprentices?

In Austria, the so-called **Youth Training Guarantee Act (JASG)** has been adopted. This Act states that every young person who looks for work for more than three months is entitled to be offered either a workplace or the option of acquiring additional qualifications (pursuant to the "Guarantee of education up to the age of 18"). Training is then held within the framework of the so-called "supra-company apprenticeship system" and organised by the Public Employment Service Austria. The aim is to enable all young people to obtain a full apprenticeship diploma. In addition, the measure aims to place participating youth into a regular training place in the course of the programme.

For young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the **integrative training scheme** has been created to enable them to acquire VET qualifications (cf. the text below).

This option is also open to young people with a migration background if they meet relevant conditions. Furthermore, the Public Employment Service Austria offers

German courses for **young people with a migration background**. In principle, all young people can contact the Public Employment Service Austria and career information centres directly. Several of these centres have been set up in each of the provinces. They aim to provide information and counselling regarding career choice to young people. In addition, labour market policy guidance offices for immigrants exist.

Integrative vocational training (*Integrative Berufsausbildung, IBA*)

For disadvantaged people on the labour market, the so-called "integrative" (or "inclusive") vocational training scheme has been created. This is a flexible scheme enabling people to obtain a vocationally-oriented (partial) qualification. This form of training was developed by the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber in cooperation with the Chamber of Labour and the Austrian Trade Union Federation. It aims to meet the need of these young people for optimal training and the companies' need for well-trained staff.

Eligible for the IBA scheme are young people who could not be placed into an apprenticeship by the Public Employment Service Austria and to whom one of the following **preconditions** applies:

- individuals with special educational needs at the end of compulsory schooling,
- people who did not acquire any qualification at lower secondary level or obtained a negative assessment in the final exam,
- people with disabilities within the meaning of the Act on the employment of people with disabilities,
- people of which it can be assumed for exclusively personal reasons that no apprenticeship post can be found for them in the near future.

IBA affords the possibility of providing training to these disadvantaged or disabled people with the objective of their acquiring a vocational qualification and integrating them into the world of work. IBA is offered in two variants: viz. apprenticeship contracts with the possibility of prolongation, and training in partial qualifications. Both variants can only be offered by the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) and the prerequisite for both is that individuals are foreseen for an IBA programme by AMS.

Prolongable apprenticeship means that it is possible to conclude apprenticeship contracts for which a longer period is agreed on either in the course of the apprenticeship period or right at the beginning. The precondition is that young people

are in principle able to complete the training and pass the apprenticeship-leave exam, but that it will take them longer than others. The apprentices undergoing prolonged apprenticeship are obliged to complete the full compulsory school period at part-time vocational school. Prolongation can be by one year or in exceptional cases by two years. Training is completed with the apprenticeship-leave exam.

Youth who are not expected to pass the full apprenticeship qualification successfully have the possibility to acquire **partial IVET qualifications**. For this purpose, training contracts restricted to certain parts of the job profile are concluded. Such a partial qualification can be obtained in one or several apprenticeship occupations. Compulsory schooling applies to apprentices aiming at a partial qualification only within the limits of the specified training objectives. The duration of training is between one and three years, depending on training contents. The partial qualification is obtained after completion of an exam about the skills agreed on in the training contract.

The **point of contact** for IBA is the **Public Employment Service Austria (AMS)**. The AMS funding guidelines also provide for support for training enterprises that recruit young people within the framework of IBA. As soon as all prerequisites for IBA have been met, the **apprenticeship office** will register the training contracts.

Within the IBA scheme, **vocational training assistants** are employed. These are people who counsel and support youth and training enterprises before and during the training and coordinate all stakeholders. Vocational training assistance is organised differently in the various provinces. In some provinces there is one, in others there are several provider organisations offering vocational training assistance. The providing institutions are social organisations active in the occupational and social integration of young people and young adults with impairments or disabilities. Vocational training assistants boast pedagogical and/or psychological qualifications and longstanding experience in the provision of care and support for young people. Vocational training assistance is financed by the respective provincial offices of the Federal Office for Social Affairs or the Public Employment Service Austria, in some provinces also by the regional government itself.

There is the possibility to switch from a regular apprenticeship to the IBA scheme. Another possibility is to switch from the prolongable apprenticeship to a partial qualification scheme and vice versa, which will require mutual consent and the involvement of vocational training assistance and the competent regional education

board. In addition, there exists the option to complete an apprenticeship following obtainment of a partial qualification in the respective occupation, with credits awarded for the partial qualification to the apprenticeship period.

3.1.6 Are there any entrance qualifications for apprentices?

In Austria, nine years of schooling are compulsory. Following completion of compulsory schooling – in most cases at the age of 15 years – young people are entitled to apply for an apprenticeship post. No specific school qualification is required for access to an apprenticeship. Positive completion of the school qualification is not a precondition but beneficial for the application.

3.1.7 Are there any intake prerequisites for enterprises to become training enterprises?

Before employing the first apprentice, the company is obliged to submit an application with the apprenticeship office in the respective province. The apprenticeship office will examine – in collaboration with representatives of the Chamber of Labour – whether the enterprise meets the legal and corporate prerequisites for providing apprenticeship training. In order to become authorised training providers for apprentices, companies need to be equipped and managed in a way that they are in a position to impart to apprentices the knowledge and skills necessary for learning the apprenticeship in practice. In addition, they have to have a sufficient number of technically and pedagogically qualified trainers available.

Should a company not be in a position to impart all contents included in a job profile, there exists the possibility to train apprentices within the framework of a training alliance. The prerequisite is that the company imparts the main contents of the apprenticeship trade itself. In the case of training in alliances, partner companies and CET institutions take over the teaching of the skills and knowledge that cannot be imparted in the respective training enterprise. This can include contents that are specified in the job profile but also additional contents exceeding the job profile.

Apprentices can be trained not only by enterprises in the crafts but also by freelancers, administrative offices, etc. Enterprises can train apprentices in every apprenticeship occupation for which they fulfil the corporate preconditions. Hence, for example, IT apprentices can be trained in a software company but also in an advertising agency.

The company size is not decisive for apprenticeship training. Also a one-person company can train apprentices if their tutoring is guaranteed.

3.2 Training phase

3.2.1 Is the training based on a work agreement?

Yes. The apprenticeship contract is entered into between the authorised apprenticeship trainer and the apprentice and forms the basis of vocational training in the dual system. The contract must be concluded in writing. The apprenticeship offices issue relevant standardised forms.

3.2.2 Is it a fixed-term or permanent agreement?

The apprenticeship contract is limited to the apprenticeship period, which is between two and four years, in most apprenticeship trades three years. Following completion of apprenticeship, the training provider is obliged to employ the apprentice for three months in his or her trained occupation at the company (the so-called retention period).

3.2.3 How is the salary defined compared to skilled workers in regular employment?

The amount of payment (apprenticeship remuneration) is laid down in the collective agreements and hence differs depending on the occupation. The remuneration increases with every apprenticeship year until, in the final year, it totals an approximate average of 80% of the corresponding skilled worker's wage. Apprentices receive the special payments common in Austria (Christmas salary and vacation pay), they have valid accident, healthcare and unemployment insurance coverage, and their apprenticeship period will be credited as a qualifying period for old-age pension.

3.2.4 Inhowfar can credits be obtained for prior learning?

Credits can be awarded for prior learning content acquired, which will lead to a reduction of the apprenticeship period. This is possible on the following conditions:

- The apprentice has already completed an apprenticeship period in an apprenticeship trade related in terms of specialisation. The list of apprenticeships, which is published by the BMWA, regulates which apprenticeship occupations are "related". The list lays down in detail by what time the apprenticeship period in the new occupation will be reduced (e.g. by half a year, a full year or even two years).
- The apprentice has already completed a subject-specific relevant VET school or college. Also in this case his or her apprenticeship period will be reduced.
- The apprentice has already completed an upper secondary school or college and obtained the so-called Matura (or upper secondary school-leaving) certificate. In this case, his or her apprenticeship period will be reduced by one year.
- The apprentice has already completed training periods abroad. In this case, the respective regional advisory board on apprenticeship (LBAB) will examine whether the training programme abroad is comparable with the one in Austria and will specify the extent of the reduction of his or her apprenticeship period.
- Individuals who have acquired the knowledge and skills of relevance for the apprenticeship occupation will no longer have to complete the apprenticeship period but can take the exam immediately.

3.2.5 If it is possible to obtain credits for prior learning, who is in charge of it?

The credit transfer for apprenticeship periods in case of related apprenticeship trades and completion of a school or college completed with a Matura certificate is regulated by law. This reduction will be considered at the time the competent apprenticeship office records the apprenticeship contract.

For the crediting of learning outcomes acquired abroad, the LBAB has to draw up an expert opinion and submit it to the Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship (BBAB), which will decide on the reduction of the apprenticeship period.

3.2.6 What is the approximate share of on-the-job and off-the-job training?

In dual training, 80% of the apprenticeship period take place at the company and 20% at part-time vocational school. Attendance of part-time vocational school is either organised on a regular basis once a week or in block-form over eight to twelve weeks in every year of training.

3.2.7 How can companies influence what is learned at school?

When an apprenticeship trade is newly introduced, first of all the training regulation is drawn up, which includes the job profile, i.e. a type of curriculum for the company. On this basis, the BMUKK designs the curriculum framework for part-time vocational school. The reason for this chronological order is that part-time vocational school has the task of complementing practical training. Therefore the job profile needs to be defined first. In this respect, the business sphere (i.e. the training enterprises) exert an influence on what is learned at school.

Within the framework of schooling, a large number of cooperation schemes between training providers and vocational schools exist. Trainers and teachers coordinate regularly with each other so that vocational school instruction correlates with practical training. Due to curricular autonomy, enterprises can also codetermine the educational content to some degree.

3.2.8 Who is in charge of supervising the apprentice?

The trainer is in charge of training apprentices in companies. This can be their superior, or also an employee nominated by him/her. The trainer has to have a relevant trainer qualification. This qualification comprises know-how related to the subject-matter, vocational pedagogy and law. There are two ways to acquire this qualification: completion of a forty-hour trainer course or of the trainer examination. There are also many exams recognised as equivalent to the trainer exam, such as the entrepreneurial exam or the master craftsman exam. Individuals who already have such a qualification are also entitled to train apprentices.

At part-time vocational schools, the teaching staff is in charge of supervision. Subject teachers at part-time vocational schools usually boast a master craftsman qualification or a subject-specific professional qualification in the field of the apprenticeship trade and a longer-term work-placement. They acquire their pedagogical qualification in three-year courses at the university colleges of education.

3.2.9 How are the potential problems related to learning tackled and solved?

For people with learning difficulties, integrative vocational training (IBA) schemes have been set up. They afford the possibility of providing training to these disadvantaged or disabled people with the objective of their acquiring a vocational qualification and

integrating them into the world of work. In this context, there are two variants: viz. prolongable apprenticeship training (as a rule, this will be by one year) and training in partial qualifications belonging to one or several apprenticeship occupations. Individuals can only be placed into these two variants by the Public Employment Service Austria. The prerequisite is that individuals are foreseen for an IBA programme by the Public Employment Service Austria (cf. also 3.1.5).

3.2.10 Who is in charge of assessing knowledge, skills and competences (KSC) and how are the tests organised?

Upon completion of the apprenticeship period, which has a duration of two to four years depending on the occupation, the apprentice is entitled to take the apprenticeship-leave examination. The main focus in this examination is on the practical skills and knowledge required for the occupation. Following completion of the exam, the apprentice can take on a qualified occupation as a skilled worker.

The exam comprises a practical as well as a theoretical section. The theoretical section is waived if the apprentice has successfully completed the final year of part-time vocational school. The practical section usually consists of an examination assignment (e.g. production of a workpiece) and the so-called expert interview.

The practical exam is taken before an examination committee comprising one employer representative, one employee representative and the chairperson. The exam is held on the basis of the examination regulation adopted by the BMWA and valid across Austria. This exam regulation lists those standards that the examinee has to prove within the framework of the evaluation procedure in order to obtain the qualification.

3.3 Effectiveness

3.3.1 Who sets the targets to the body in charge of organising apprenticeship training and what kind of targets are there?

The training regulation adopted by the BMWA for the individual apprenticeship occupations contains the job profile, i.e. a kind of curriculum for the company-based section of the training. Hence there exists a nationwide specification of the knowledge and skills to be imparted to the apprentice by the company as a minimum. The activity

description, which is also part of the training regulation, shows the skills and competence the apprentices have upon termination of the apprenticeship period.

When an apprenticeship trade is newly introduced, first of all expert representatives of the social partners prepare a draft of the training regulation together with the job profile and the activity description. In this work they are supported by the Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy (ibw). This draft is then submitted to the BBAB, where it will again be discussed by the social partners. Subsequently the BBAB draws up an expert opinion for the BMWA. This expert opinion includes the proposal for the training regulation and a report on motives why the apprenticeship occupation should be introduced. The BMWA sends the training regulation for review to ministries, social partners, education authorities, etc. Following receipt of all statements and the consideration of feedback, the apprenticeship occupation will be officially adopted.

For school-based training, the BMUKK prepares a curriculum framework, which is also sent out for review, on the basis of the proposed training regulation. Following adoption of any amendments, the curriculum framework will be adopted.

3.3.2 Who does the training organiser report the results to?

In Austria there exists no reporting obligation in the narrower sense of the word. Statements about the course of the training and the apprentice's skills and competence are included in the certificates the young person is awarded at the end of his/her vocational school period and successful completion of the apprenticeship-leave examination (LAP).

The LAP aims to state whether the apprentice is able to carry out the activities required for the occupation in an appropriate, independent and responsible manner. Positive completion of this exam not only shows the individual apprentice's success but also provides information about the quality of training at the respective training enterprises and part-time vocational school. As the share of the training company in apprenticeship training is higher than the share of vocational school, the success of each apprentice in the apprenticeship-leave exam mainly represents a quality control for the enterprise. The training enterprise finds out whether it has supported, assisted and instructed the apprentice sufficiently during the apprenticeship period.

3.3.3 What is the percentage of apprentices in your region passing and failing the qualification?

In Austria, all apprentices can – but do not have to – take the apprenticeship-leave examination (LAP) upon termination of their apprenticeship period. The majority of apprentices takes advantage of this offer. Only with the apprenticeship diploma are the apprentices entitled to call themselves a "skilled worker" in the respective apprenticeship trade.

In Austria, LAPs are taken with excellent success. Since 1970, the success rate has been fluctuating between 80% and 90% (cf. fig. 14). Similarly successful are apprentices from Vienna – the success rate in the LAPs has in recent years also been above 80% in this region (cf. fig. 15).

Fig. 14: Successfully completed apprenticeship-leave examinations (LAPs) in Austria 1970 – 2007

Year	LAPs taken, absolute figures	LAPs passed, absolute figures	LAPs passed in % of all taken LAPs	LAPs failed in % of all taken LAPs
1970	28 767	23,244	80.8	19.2
1975	45 167	40,018	88.6	11.4
1980	61 638	54,426	88.3	11.7
1985	61 700	53,026	86.0	14
1990	57 247	49,347	86.2	13.8
1995	51 618	43,359	84.0	16
1999	47 891	39,797	83.1	16.9
2000	48 597	40,967	84.3	15.7
2003	49 611	41,872	84.4	15.6
2004	50 310	42,210	83.9	16.1
2005	50 046	42,189	84.3	15.7
2006	49 148	40,842	83.1	16.9
2007	51 181	42,583	83.2	16.8

Source: Apprenticeship statistics of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, ibw calculations

Fig. 15: Successfully completed apprenticeship-leave examinations (LAPs) in Vienna 1970 – 2007

Year	LAPs taken, absolute figures	LAPs passed, absolute figures	LAPs passed in % of all taken LAPs	LAPs failed in % of all taken LAPs
1970	3 960	3,200	80.8	19.2
1975	6 449	5,914	91.7	8.3
1980	9 514	8,620	90.6	9.4
1985	9 424	8,265	87.7	12.3
1990	8 483	7,346	86.6	13.4
1995	7 394	6,241	84.4	15.6
1999	6 773	5,547	81.9	18.1
2000	6 831	5,677	83.1	16.9
2003	6 879	5,916	86.0	14.0
2004	7 380	6,199	84.0	16.0
2005	7 476	6,512	87.1	12.9
2006	7 730	6,578	85.1	14.9
2007	8 115	6,833	84.2	15.8

Source: Apprenticeship statistics of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, ibw calculations

3.3.4 What is the dropout rate in your region?

No valid data are available about dropout rates, neither for the entire Austrian territory nor for the Vienna area. In addition, it is hard to differentiate who an "actual" dropout is. Some apprentices change the apprenticeship during their probationary period, others enter the same apprenticeship occupation following a period of interruption, etc.

3.3.5 What are the percentages of apprentices in your region who, after training, continue on to employment, unemployment and further studies?

Apprenticeship training is a practice-oriented form of training, with 80% of the training duration taking place at the company (i.e. in the business sphere). Therefore the transition from training to actual working life is a fluent one. Although there exist no statistical records, it can be said that the majority of skilled workers remain in an employment relationship. Not all apprentices however continue their work at the same company or even the same apprenticeship. But also in this respect no statistical surveys have been conducted allowing to make concrete statements about the further career path of apprenticeship graduates.

A fact is, however, that apprenticeship provides a stable foundation for working life. 40% of the total Austrian labour force have completed an apprenticeship as their

highest formal education (cf. fig. 16). Some 35% of apprenticeship graduates work as corporate managers, nearly 50% are active as managers of small enterprises in the business sphere (cf. fig. 17).

Fig. 16: Formal qualification structure of the workforce in a comparison over time

Highest educational attainment	1981	1991	2001
University, HE institution	3.9	5.4	7.8
Post-secondary VET college	0.8	1.8	2.5
VET college (BHS)	4.0	5.6	8.2
Secondary academic school (AHS)	3.4	4.3	4.8
VET school (BMS)	11.8	13.0	13.1
Apprenticeship training	35.5	40.5	40.5
Compulsory school	40.6	29.4	23.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
In absolute figures	3,411,521	3,684,282	3,986,761

Source: Schneeberger/Nowak 2008

Fig. 17: Managers in the business sphere by formal education, 2001

Formal education	Managers in the business sphere	
	Corporate managers	Managers of small enterprises
Compulsory school	8.5	13.5
Apprenticeship training	35.2	49.3
VET school (BMS)	9.6	14.8
Secondary academic school (AHS)	6.8	6.1
VET college (BHS)	17.1	8.4
Post-secondary VET course	1.5	0.8
Post-secondary VET colleges	1.9	0.4
University / Fachhochschule	19.3	6.7

Source: Schneeberger/Nowak 2008

4 Development targets and best practices

4.1 Please list and describe key issues under development in the apprenticeship training

Apprenticeship training is of major importance in the Austrian education landscape. In order to maintain its attractiveness also in future, current educational policy discussions primarily focus on the topics of quality assurance and quality improvement. In this process, all of the following areas are addressed: further and continuing training of trainers, the definition of standards (particularly in connection with the learning-outcome orientation), and the implementation of the apprenticeship-leave examination.

The following issues are relevant in this connection. Relevant experience from other countries is therefore of major interest to be able to answer the questions for Austria:

1. How can the training of trainers be further improved – mainly regarding current challenges (heterogeneous group of apprenticeship beginners, differing access skills and competence, etc.)?
2. How can the training content be adjusted in a better/quicker/more efficient manner to the requirements of the business sphere?
3. How can the quality of training be safeguarded in an even better way? What measures could be taken to achieve this goal?
4. How could the LAP be oriented even more towards practice? What possibilities of further development are there?

4.2 Please list and describe key issues, which you would propose as your best practice in your apprenticeship training

One key measure anchored in the Vocational Training Act in 2003 is integrative vocational training (IBA, cf. 3.1.5). It opens up an option to young people with learning difficulties to attain partial qualifications or the regular apprenticeship diploma within a prolonged apprenticeship period. The creation of this measure was a response to the heterogeneity of the group of apprenticeship beginners.

Another response to that heterogeneity was the creation of the option to complete an apprenticeship and the upper secondary school-leaving certificate. Young people who want to link a practice-oriented vocational training programme with the acquisition of the HE access qualification have the possibility of completing partial exams of *Berufsreifeprüfung* at the same time as their apprenticeship. Flexible models to

combine the two paths and financial support provided by the State for preparation courses aim to provide access to this scheme to as many interested young people as possible.

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