

Services for Apprenticeships (SERFA)

Erasmus Plus Project

**National report on Apprenticeships in Austria:
Current situation, successful services and SMEs' needs**

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1 Apprenticeship and Work-based learning in Austria – Status quo

1.1 Statistical information¹

In Austria, vocational training is an integral part of the formal education system at the upper secondary level. Vocational training can be differentiated between full-time vocational schools and company-based apprenticeship training. 38% of young people attend apprenticeship, 38% school-based vocational training and 22% high-school secondary school. The apprenticeship training leads to an upper secondary level and is training at the skilled worker level.

The total number of apprentices was around 110,000 in 2015. There is a marked gender difference in participation in apprenticeship training. Only 34% of young women choose to take up an apprenticeship. Apprentice training is traditionally more attractive for young men than for young women, who are disproportionately in full-time vocational schools or in the general secondary school. The average age of apprentices in the first year is 16.6 years. 22% of apprentices are older than 18 years of age.

Although almost 200 professions are available in Austria for apprenticeship, the selection of profession concentrates on a few professions. The most common trained professions with women are retail trade (25%), office clerk (12%), hairdresser and wigmaker (10%), restaurant specialist (4%) and cook (4%). The most common professions with men are metal engineering (15%), electrical engineering (11%), automotive engineering (9%), retail trade (7%) and installation and building technology (6%). The list also shows a clear difference in the gender-specific career choice.

In total, around 29,000 firms can be counted for 2015, which participate in the training of apprentices. 17% of apprentices are trained in micro enterprises (up to 9 employees), 28% in small enterprises (10-49 employees), 20% in middle-sized enterprises (50-249 employees) and 36% in large enterprises (250 and more employees). These figures show that apprenticeship is supported mainly by small and medium-sized enterprises.

This statement is also supported by the statistical distribution of the apprentices by branch affiliation of the enterprises. 43% of the apprentices are employed in enterprises belonging to the trade and crafts sector, 14% in industry, 15% in trade, 8% in tourism and 20% in other sectors.

The long-term observation of apprenticeship offers a fundamentally negative perspective. Since 2010 the absolute number of apprentices has declined by 20,000, also due to demographic change. However, statistics also show that more and more young people are choosing to attend a secondary school. Similarly, since 2007, the number of training companies has declined sharply (2007-2015: -9,000 enterprises). An ever smaller share of the skilled labour needs of companies is covered by the training of apprentices. Small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular, have a disproportionately high impact on apprenticeship training.

¹ Central statistical source: Dornmayr, Helmut & Nowak, Sabine (2016). Lehrlingsausbildung im Überblick. Wien.



1.2 Legal Framework²

The central legal framework for apprentices is the Vocational Training Act, which was introduced in 1969. The Vocational Training Act regulates the structure of the occupational part of the apprentices' training, the rights and obligations of the apprentices and the trainers entitled to apprenticeship training. In addition, the law stipulates the responsibilities and institutions involved in the management of apprenticeship training.

An apprenticeship contract is concluded between the apprentice and the training company. In this, the person responsible for the in-company training is obliged to train the apprentice professionally in a recognized profession. In return, the apprentice may be used by training companies to pursue professional activities which belong to the profession trained. The apprenticeship contract also creates an employment relationship with a training character. Each apprenticeship contract must contain data on the exact designation of the teacher, the duration / start / end of the apprenticeship and the amount of the remuneration.

For the training of apprentices, each company must be able to demonstrate a training qualification acquired through a one-time process. It examines whether the organization is capable of conveying the activities of a profession completely as they are laid down in the training regulation.

The school part of the apprenticeship - about 20% of the training takes place in the vocational school and 80% in the enterprise - is regulated by the school organization law. The task of the vocational school is to provide theoretical knowledge, to promote and supplement in-company training and to expand the apprentices' general education.

1.2.1 Responsibilities

Many actors and institutions are involved in the management of apprenticeship training. In the system of apprenticeship, in order to function successfully, all actors must cooperate closely in a cooperative manner at several levels (federal level, country level, local level).

Federal level: The Federal Ministry of Economics is ultimately responsible for the company part of the training. The Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs is responsible for the regulation of vocational training. Another important actor is the Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship, which is staffed by members of the social partners (the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Labour, and the Union Confederation). The Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship is working on proposals, opinions and concepts for the further development of apprenticeship training to the Federal Ministry of Economics. The Federal Ministry of Education is responsible for organizing the part of the vocational training (organization of teaching, development of framework curricula, etc.).

Country level: An apprenticeship centre is established in each federal state. The apprenticeship offices are responsible for monitoring, managing and documenting apprenticeship training. They determine the suitability of the teaching firms (with the cooperation of the Chamber of Labour), review and document the completed apprenticeship agreements and organize the learner examination. Furthermore, the apprenticeship centres offer consulting services for training companies and handle the subsidizing options / scheme.

² Central information on the legal basis for the training of apprentices can be found on the website of the Federal Ministry of Economics: <https://www.bmwf.gv.at/Berufsausbildung/LehrlingsUndBerufsausbildung> (last visit: 23.03.2017).



Finally, the local level is formed by those actors who actually carry out the training, the training enterprises and the vocational school.

1.2.2 Professions and branches

A total of 198³ training professions are available for young people in Austria. The duration of the apprenticeship varies between two and four years, with the major part lasting three years. The training profession is not restricted to a specific sector or a professional group. Traditionally, apprenticeships are anchored in crafts and trade as in the professional groups of machines / metal / vehicles, construction / building technology, electrical engineering, etc. However, there are also service-oriented training professions (trade, tourism, beauty care) and commercial-oriented professions. Over the last few years, technical change has also been taking place, and jobs in information technology and media have been introduced. An exception is health care, which cannot be learned through apprenticeship training.

1.2.3 Curricula

There is a training regulation for each training profession, which is issued by the Federal Minister of Economics. According to the Vocational Training Act, the training regulations must contain a content-defined vocational profile. In the training regulation, the tasks and activities typical of a particular profession are described in detail. Following the apprenticeship year, it lists the knowledge and skills that must be taught to the apprentices in the course of the apprenticeship.

The contents of the training are formulated in a standardized manner and based on learning outcomes. The enterprises are obliged to train the learning outcomes contained in the training regulation. However, the educational framework does not specify the way in which the learning objectives are to be achieved. Companies can freely choose which methods are used to achieve the learning outcomes and how the professional content is conveyed.

The adaptation or rearrangement of professions is carried out in a complex, intransparent process for outsiders. The initiative for this is usually set by the Federal Ministry of Economics, by the social partners or individual companies. The modernization of occupations does not follow a regular cycle, but is oriented in a demand-oriented manner. All relevant stakeholders then examine whether there is an actual need to modernize the professions. In the case of a positive outcome, a first draft of a new training scheme will be prepared by support of research institutes. In the next step, the draft will be discussed by experts at the Vocational Training Advisory Board and an expert opinion will be prepared for the Ministry of Economic Affairs. In addition to the training regulation, the development of a framework curriculum for the vocational school is carried out by experts from the Ministry of Education. After a further evaluation phase, the training regulation is adopted by the Ministry of Economy and framework curriculum for the vocational school is adopted by the Ministry of Education. The remission is accompanied by a variety of follow-up measures, such as the preparation of guides, preparation of information, evaluations, etc.

1.2.4 Remunerations

The training contract is also a temporary employment relationship for the duration of the training. Companies are obliged to pay an apprenticeship remuneration to apprentices. The minimum level of apprenticeship compensation is determined for the specific sector according

³ Last update: 21.02.2017



to collective agreements and apprenticeship years. The apprenticeship compensation increases every year.

In some sectors, the amount of apprenticeship compensation in the last year of training is up to 80% of the minimum income of a skilled worker.

1.2.5 Formal and qualificatory requirements for trainers

The training of apprentices is either carried out by the certified trainer himself or can be undertaken by pedagogically qualified instructors in the company. Above all, in small and medium-sized enterprises, trainers assume this task in addition to their main professional activities. Full time trainers are mainly found in large companies.

Prerequisites for the function of the trainer are professional, pedagogical and legal knowledge for the training of apprentices. The training qualification can be obtained either by the completion of an instructor's examination or an instructor's course.

The instructor's course consists of 40 exercise units. The aim of the instructor's course is to acquire knowledge about the setting of training targets on the basis of the professional profile, training planning in the company, preparation / implementation / control of the training, correct behaviour towards the apprentice and legal aspects (vocational training law, protection of minors, and protection of workers).

The training qualification must be acquired once and is valid indefinitely. Training of the trainers is not compulsory, but a wide range has been developed. A financial support may be applied for the training of the instructors.

1.2.6 Assessment

A prerequisite for the acquisition of a professional qualification is the positive completion of the final examination. The final examination is carried out once at the end of the company's training period. The purpose of the apprenticeship examination is to determine whether the apprentice has achieved the learning objectives (vocational knowledge and skills) as defined in the training regulation in the course of the apprenticeship and is able to carry them out independently and without instruction on the skilled worker level.

The requirements of the final examination are defined in detail in the examination regulations. The final examination consists of a theoretical and a practical part, with a positive vocational school leaving certificate replacing the theoretical part. The examination regulations are part of the training regulation. The examination procedures used in apprenticeship training vary and are adapted to the respective occupations.

The theoretical part must down in writing. Depending on the training profession, the form of the theoretical examination can be very different varying from answering of questions on professionally relevant theoretical subject areas to the written completion of a comprehensive assignment (e.g. written processing of a business case). Above all, in recent training regulations, attempts are also being made to orient the theory more closely to the principle of action orientation.

In the practical part of the examination, the professional capacity for action will be examined. As a rule, this is achieved by the combination of a test work (for example, the processing of a work order or a work piece) with a professional discussion about the professional activity.

The prerequisite for admission to the final examination is the completion of the company's apprenticeship. In contrast to Germany, the final examination is not an integral part of the



training, but takes place only after completion of the apprenticeship. As a result, a small proportion (about 5 per cent) completes the apprenticeship, but does not take part in the final examination. These persons enter the labour market without a certified vocational qualification and are thus exposed to a higher risk of unemployment. Approximately 81% of the apprenticeship examinations are completed.

In addition, there is the possibility to pursue an extraordinary apprenticeship examination if it can be shown that appropriate professional skills and knowledge have been acquired through other learning pathways (professional practice, learning activity, etc.). This option is intended primarily for adult persons who can "make up" their professional qualifications in this way.

The examination is organized by the apprentice offices in the federal states and held in the premises of the Chamber of Commerce. The examination committee is composed by representatives of the social partners (at least one member of the Chamber of Commerce and one of Chamber of Labour). Due to the constantly occurring quality problems during the examination, various measures were introduced (development of examination tasks, examiner training, etc.) in order to raise the quality.

1.3 Institutional Framework/Involvement of Stakeholders

The institutional structure of apprenticeship training in Austria is complex and is determined by the coordinated co-operation of a multitude of institutions and collective actors with different interests.

1.3.1 National authorities

The Federal Ministry of Economics is responsible for creating the legal basis for the company part of the training as well as for the complex institutional management structure. Essential tasks of supervision and administration are delegated to other bodies (e.g. apprenticeship office) at the regional level. The funding of the system of company apprenticeship promotion is also ensured together with the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The Federal Ministry of Education is ultimately responsible for the creation of the legal requirements for the organization and implementation of the school part of the training.

The actors at the level of the ministries represent the interests of the national legislature or of the national government, which is not always in line with the interests of employers and employees.

1.3.2 Regional/local authorities

The apprenticeship offices, as a vocational training authority in the first instance at the regional level, takes over tasks in subsidiarity of the state. In taking over these tasks, the apprenticeship offices are bound by the Ministry of Economics. The apprenticeship offices are established at the respective regional chambers of commerce.

The tasks of the apprenticeships are various. They have to supervise the proper on-the-job training, in particular the compliance with the existing legislation and ensure the operational condition for the training of apprentices. For this purpose, the apprenticeship authorities are allowed to inspect the operational aspects of the training (e.g. work records). They have the task of assisting the training enterprises and apprentices in the training as well as to support the search for training vacancies and to stimulate further training measures for trainers. The promotion of apprenticeship training (counselling and application) is also handled by the



apprenticeship office. Each apprenticeship must be reviewed and documented by the apprenticeship office in relation to legality.

In principle, the apprenticeship offices should be the first point of contact for all apprentices and those who are interested in education or training.

1.3.3 Social partner institutions (Chambers, Trade Unions)

The close involvement of the social partners (the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Labour, and the trade union) in the control system is often regarded as a central condition for the entire functioning of apprenticeship training. This corporate governance structure is an essential framework for the participation of enterprises in the training of apprentices.

The social partners are strongly involved in the organization of the operational part of the training at all levels. On the federal level, the Federal Vocational Training Advisory Board is occupied by the social partners on a parity basis. Although this body has only an advisory function to the Ministry of Economic Affairs, it is essential for the management of apprenticeship training. The Advisory Board has an important influence on the design of the novelties of the Vocational Training Act, the development of training regulations and the organization of support measures for apprentices and enterprises in in-company training.

At the regional level, there are regional Training Advisory Councils, which are also staffed equally by the social partners, who have the task of controlling the activities of the apprenticeship offices and providing suggestions for the further development of the implementation at the regional level. The examination commissions for the acceptance of the final examination are also set up by the social partners.

In addition, the apprenticeship offices are located in the social partner institution of employers, as already described above.

In summary, it can be said that the social partners in Austria play a strong role in the organization of apprenticeship training, i.e. in the creation of the legal basis, in the content of the professions up to the examination of the learning results. This is at the same time a great strength, but also a great weakness. Further developments in apprenticeship training are only possible with mutual consent.

1.3.4 VET Institutions (Colleges, public or private VET providers)

An essential part of the apprenticeship, 20% of the total training period, takes place at the “Berufsschule” (Vocational School). Vocational schooling can be organized in different forms. The apprentices spend one day a week at the vocational school for the whole year. In the case of the blocked form, vocational schooling takes place over a longer period.

In recent years, non-public education providers have increasingly established themselves as actors in the apprenticeship system. This is achieved, for example, through the financial support of inter-company training. Parts of the profession or additional content can be covered by educational offers at private education providers. Non-public education providers have also developed a comprehensive range of services to prepare for the final examination.

The apprenticeship training is also increasingly taking place in the so-called supra-company training. This offer has been developed in recent years as a special form of apprenticeship training and aims at the group of young people who do not find an apprenticeship in the labour market. Here, an apprenticeship contract is not concluded with a training company as in the



regular form, but with a specialized training institution. As a rule, these training institutions are run by private bodies under public funding.

1.3.5 Companies

Through the apprenticeship contract, enterprises take over the responsibility to provide apprentices with all the knowledge and skills that are laid down in the training regulation of a profession. The training regulation is binding for all training enterprises.

Trainers must obtain training qualifications prior to the initial training of an apprentice. In the course of a decision-making process, a check is carried out to determine whether the training company has all the prerequisites for the full transfer of a profession (for example technical equipment or trainers). If the training requirement is only partially fulfilled, it is possible to form a collaborative training network together with other training enterprises or institutions. A collaborative training network is used to determine who is responsible for the mediation of single job profile aspects.

The training model for the training of apprentices can be freely chosen by the companies. The training regulations merely provide guidelines on the learning objectives of an apprentice in a given profession, but not by any method. The enterprises are allowed to use the apprentices productively according to their professional profile. Apprentices may not be used for the pursuit of non-training activities. The central pedagogical model, which is reflected in it, is systematic learning in the process of work.

Therefore, in the field of vocational training, a wide variety of training models are used and with a strongly differing quality of training. In many enterprises a high-quality training management is carried out, which includes a professional recruitment strategy, a systematic introduction of the apprentices into the enterprise, the use of training plans, a regular assessment of the learning progress. A variety of instruments and guides are available for the enterprises.

However, the use of quality assurance instruments for training enterprises is not obligatory. It is a central requirement of the employee's social partner institutions to put measures in place to raise the quality in the company's training process (e.g. training documentation).

1.4 Financial Implications

1.4.1 Cost responsibility⁴

The costs for the school part are borne by the public authorities; the training costs for the company part have to be borne by the companies themselves. In-company training costs are made up largely of the wage costs of apprentices. The apprentices receive an apprenticeship compensation for the duration of the apprenticeship, the minimum level of which is stipulated in the collective agreements. Other cost factors include the cost of training the instructors, the case of external course costs as well as materials and tools used during the training. However, during apprenticeship the apprentices provide productive work. In a recent study on the basis of a company survey, it was calculated for Austria that the training costs on average between 2,600 and 4,000 euros per apprentice depending on the year of

⁴ Vgl. Schlögl, Peter & Mayerl, Martin (2016): Betriebsbefragung zu Kosten und Nutzen der Lehrlingsausbildung in Österreich. Wien.



apprenticeship. However, there are a significant proportion of companies that can even get a positive return through training.

However, the average cost of apprenticeship training is almost entirely offset by savings in recruitment costs. This is the case when the apprentices are directly taken over by the training firms to cover their own specialist needs after training.

Apprentices also indirectly bear part of the costs of training. The apprenticeship compensation received during the course of the apprenticeship is significantly lower than a salary of unskilled workers. Apprentices therefore forego a higher income in the short term in order to "invest" in a skilled workforce training. This typically results in a higher educational yield at a later stage in the form of higher skilled workers' salaries after training.

1.4.2 Public Funding

In recent years, a comprehensive system of apprenticeship subsidies has been established, which is funded by the Insolvency Fund. This fund is funded by contributions from the employer's own pay costs. This model is thus indirectly a type of training fund (though not referred to as such) based on the principle of a pay-as-you-go system.

The system of apprenticeship promotion is divided roughly into quantitative and quality-related support measures. A total of € 155 million is earmarked annually for company apprenticeship subsidies. The largest volume is attributable to the so-called basic funding (about 135 million euros). In the course of the basic support, each apprentice is subsidized in an apprenticeship. The prerequisite for the use of the grant is only an up-to-date apprenticeship contract. The amount of funding is based on the amount of apprenticeship remuneration due to the academic year. For the first year, the basic funding is three monthly apprentices' compensations, two monthly apprentices' compensations for the second year, and one monthly apprentice compensation from the third year onwards. Funding is, however, highly controversial in the field of education policy, since the claim is not linked to any quality criteria.

In the course of the quality-oriented grants (about 20 million euros), financial support can be applied for measures to contribute to an increase in the quality of the company's training. Examples of this are measures for training groups, additional training courses, preparation for the final examination, training of trainers, equal access of young men and women to various teaching trades, etc.

At the same time, apprenticeship funding is financed through public funds from the Public Employment Service. The total volume of this funding amounts to almost 30 million euros. The measures are aimed primarily at disadvantaged persons on the labour market. Target groups are, for example, women in training professions with a low proportion of women, disadvantaged young people, participants in intercompany training, as well as persons over 18 years of age who do not have a vocational qualification.

1.5 National Trends in apprenticeship and/or work-based learning

The system of apprenticeship training is constantly changing in Austria. Education policy is currently faced with several major challenges. While the model of apprenticeship training is gaining popularity all over Europe, a reverse trend can be seen in Austria. The willingness of companies to train has declined sharply in recent years. An increasing number of young people are opposed to apprenticeship training and tend to higher (higher) school education. Additionally, there is technological change through digitization, which increases the



professional requirements for professional work and apprenticeship training. Regarding these trends education policy is confronted with a variety of requirements. The apprenticeship training is to be made fit for the digital change and the attractiveness of a company training for young people has to be increased. In this context, it is also necessary to increase again the company's willingness to train in industry, or at least to stop the decline. In addition, apprenticeship training has to make an ever-increasing contribution to the labour market integration of disadvantaged young people. These complex requirements for the training of apprentices are difficult to cope with.

Current educational measures are above all a compensatory goal. After a successful implementation of the pilot phase, the national implementation of a coaching offer for apprentices and training companies is currently being implemented. The main focus is on the prevention of dropouts from apprenticeship and professional intervention in the event of training problems. It is free for both apprentices and training companies.

Furthermore, from July 2017 onwards a training obligation for persons up to 18 years will apply. This is a labour market policy measure designed to drastically reduce the number of young people on the labour market without a vocational qualification. To this end, additional capacities in the apprenticeship training may have to be created, which should be covered by the supra company apprenticeship system.

In addition, an initiative is being planned in the new government agreement to adapt training courses to digitalisation.

However, it remains to be seen whether this will help to improve the poor image of apprenticeship training in Austria. The current measures are, however, rather repair measures than active measures to increase the attractiveness of vocational training.



2 Support Services for Companies – Status quo

2.1 Supporting institutions

2.1.1 Public Institutions

Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich (Public Employment Service)

With the Labour Market Service Act 1994, the labour market administration was outsourced from the direct federal administration in the form of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and established as a legal entity public service provider. Objectives of this structural reform were

- to facilitate rapid and flexible interventions in the labour market by decentralizing decision-making competences, making resources more flexible and extending the scope at regional level
- to relieve the Public Employment Service of matters which cannot be attributed to the core tasks of labour market policy (for example, parental allowances)
- the greater involvement of social partner institutions of employers (Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Industrialists) and workers (Chamber of Labour, Trade Union) in decision-making structures and the implementation of labour market policy
- the improvement of active labour market policies, especially for disadvantaged persons (women, elderly, long-term unemployed, disabled, etc.) on the labour market
- the admission of private employment mediators;
- the control by the Court of Auditors.

The PES has three regional levels:

- the Federal Bureau, which is responsible for the implementation of the labour market policy objectives of the Federal Government and which defines the nationwide guidelines for labour market policy measures;
- the state offices responsible for the implementation of the measures at the level of the federal states, which can set specific country-specific priorities within their budgetary possibilities;
- The Regional Offices, which are responsible for advising jobseekers and employers, as well as the placement of workers and the handling of subsidies.

Job placement

One of the core tasks of the PES is the placement of jobseekers in companies offering job vacancies. This also affects the apprenticeship market. The PES assumes the function of a turntable between teaching-looking young people and training-oriented enterprises. Young people can register at the PES will get advice about the possibilities of apprenticeship training. The PES carries out the matching between companies and youngsters looking for apprenticeships.

Subsidies for Apprenticeships

In addition, the PES provides financial support for companies that accept young people from disadvantaged groups as apprentices. These groups include:

- Girls in teaching professions with low female participation
- Young people with disabilities
- Adolescents with social mismatches



- Young people with special educational needs
- young people with learning difficulties for
- School and apprenticeship dropouts
- Over 18-year-olds with qualification deficits

Supra-Company apprenticeship

Within the framework of dual training, the PES also finances "supra-company apprenticeship". Young people who do not find an apprenticeship in the regular apprenticeship market (because there are too few free apprenticeships or because they have not been offered an apprenticeship due to the lack of basic school, social or personal competencies) can take advantage of this form of vocational training in training institutions free of charge.

The supra-company apprenticeship is carried out in two variants.

- The "course model" offers young people an intensive orientation and clarification phase, in which they can elaborate their wishes, aptitudes and inclinations with regard to possible teaching professions, and can compensate for any deficits (in the area of basic school competences) through additional training courses. Subsequently, the training facility, together with the young people, looks for suitable companies, in which the young people complete several months' internships, after which the takeover of the young people into a regular apprenticeship at the company is strived for.
- The "apprenticeship model" allow young people who, due to missing apprenticeships, were unable to take up their apprenticeship in their residential area, to complete the apprenticeship in a training institution which provides all necessary prerequisites (in terms of equipment and training staff) for training the complete professional profile of the respective profession.

In both variants, the young people receive education compensation instead of apprenticeship compensation, which is slightly lower in terms of amount.

Integrative vocational education

If young people are not able to learn a profession within the framework of a regular apprenticeship due to physical or psychological impairments or learning difficulties, they can either learn the desired teaching profession within the framework of an extended teaching (i.e. the required period of apprenticeship is extended up to two years) or a partial qualification within the scope of the regular training period. Both forms of inclusive vocational training can be carried out either in a training company or in a training institution. If the integrative vocational training takes place in companies, the apprentices and the training enterprises are supported by special supervisors during the entire training period.

Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Economy

The Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMWFV), as the last responsible body for vocational training in enterprises, support the training of apprentices in several ways. This includes both financial support and support measures.

Financial support

The BMWFV supports companies financially in a variety of ways:

- It provides the basic funding of apprenticeship training, which comes from the Insolvency Fund. The administration is done by the apprenticeship positions.



- It promotes various forms of inter-company and supra-company training (mandatory training courses to cover the required educational content of the particular profession, voluntary training in the context of the profession which serve to increase the quality of education, vocational training for apprentices going beyond the vocational training, preparatory courses for final examinations, preparatory courses for university entrance examinations for apprentices)
- It promotes the training of the trainers
- Companies whose apprentices complete the final examinations with excellent and good results receive a bonus.
- Companies whose apprentices complete an apprenticeship abroad during their apprenticeship will be refunded by the portion of the apprentices' compensation for the period of the internship. Prerequisite for this monetary support is the application, proof of the completed internship and the payment of the apprentices' compensation for the relevant period. According to the directive, this funding can be carried out by the apprenticeship offices or by organizations dealing with the organization of foreign internships.
- Participation in international professional competitions: Beginning on 1 January 2014, this funding will be used to support companies which send apprentices or apprentices to international professional competitions (WorldSkills, EuroSkills). These establishments may apply to the apprenticeship office for granting apprenticeship compensation or the aliquoted salary as a contribution to the envisaged (external) preparatory period as well as the contest day.

Coaching apprentices and training companies

A central support measure for apprentices and apprentices is the coaching for apprentices and training enterprises financed by the BMWFW, the aim of which is to improve the quality of education and, in particular, to counteract apprenticeship dropouts (see Chapter 3).

Training Guides

In order to be able to provide the companies with practical documentation for the organization of the company's training, training guidance for central apprenticeships has been drawn up since 2012. These guides consist of a general and a specific part for the profession trained, and includes best-practice examples for the formation of training, aids for the reflection and design of the training practices as well as the handling of occupational positions in the enterprise. Training instructors and / or trainers are involved in the development and preparation of the training guides.

Complementary measures to support the quality of in-company apprenticeship training

In addition to existing measures to support the quality of company apprenticeship training, development projects are supported starting in 2014 to support quality management and quality assurance of in-company training. The aim of the measure is to test or further develop system-relevant instruments in pilot projects. The corresponding development projects are defined and decided in detail by the Federal Commission for Vocational Training Advisory Committee.

The development projects can include the following areas:

- Development of tools (e.g. Internet solutions, recruitment aids, training aids, documentation) that can be used by training companies for quality management.



- Development, testing and project implementation of innovative test procedures and creditable competence checks during training.
- Projects related to the ongoing work of the Quality Committee of the Federal Vocational Training Advisory Board, which contribute to an innovative approach to quality assurance in the area of dual vocational training, in particular in sectors with low success rates, measures to prevent dropouts and / or to ensure the educational success.

Implementation can be carried out with the support of scientific institutions / institutes with in-depth experience in the field of VET research. Where this is appropriate, these institutes can be commissioned the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and the Economy in consultation with the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection.

2.1.2 Social Partnership institutions

Chamber(s) of Commerce

The economic chambers are the constitutionally anchored representation of interests of all companies in Austria (a total of around 480,000 members). Membership in the Chamber of Commerce is obligatory. The economic chambers are organized at the level of the federal states. The Austrian Economic Chamber is the umbrella organization of the regional chambers.

The tasks of the Chamber of Commerce are:

- Representation of members in collective bargaining negotiations
- Representation of the interests of the members in the process of participation in the legislative process (negotiations, assessments)
- Participation in the organization of vocational training
- Subsidiary tasks in the area of apprenticeship training and the trade regulations (foundations, etc.)
- Consultancy and support materials in apprenticeship, work and employment
- Development of policy strategies in different areas.

In connection with apprenticeship training, the economic chambers offer a variety of support services:

- General information on the legal and organizational framework of the dual training on the website and in the form of brochures and personal advice
- Information on the recruitment of apprentices
- Information (brochures) on quality assurance measures
- Legal information on the apprenticeship contract and the employment of apprentices
- Information on internships abroad for apprentices
- Statistical information on apprenticeship (apprenticeship statistics)
- Reports on quality management in apprenticeship training
- Forms for training documentation (differentiated by training profession)
- Training folder for training companies (collection of all necessary information and forms)
- Advising for (starting) training companies by apprenticeship counsellors of the apprenticeship offices
- Mediators as contact persons for training companies in the case of training-related problems
- Administration of coaching for apprentices and training companies



- Participation in professional orientation via school visits, information days, professional information measures, competence checks, etc.

However, the broadly diversified offer of the Chambers of Commerce is not equally known to all companies. Small and medium-sized enterprises in particular do not have comprehensive information on the range of services offered and the opportunities for apprenticeship training.

Chamber(s) of Labour

The Chambers of Labour are the constitutionally anchored representation of all employees of Austria (a total of around 3,600,000 members). Membership in the Chamber of Labour is obligatory. In analogy to the Chambers of Commerce, the Chambers of Labour are organized at the level of the federal states; the Chamber for Workers and Employees for Vienna acts as the Federal Chamber of Labour also as the umbrella organization of the regional Chambers. Since the apprenticeship contracts are both training and employment agreements, the Chamber of Labour also represents the interests of the apprentices. The offers of the Chamber of Labour are therefore not aimed at companies.

2.1.3 Private Institutions

In Austria, there are private employment agencies, but these are subject to the same conditions as the PES (voluntary, impartiality, reasonableness of employment, prohibition of mediation to a company affected by strike or lock-out). The private employment agencies are not concerned with the placement of apprentices.

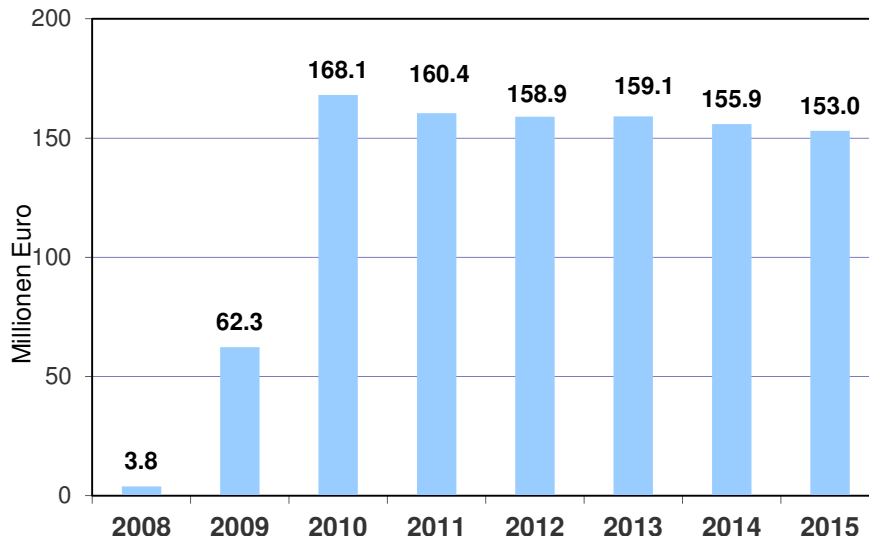
2.2 Statistical data on support services (if available)

In the following, some data on the promotion of apprenticeship training in Austria are presented. The presentations were taken from the latest available report on youth employment and apprenticeship training in Austria, which is drawn up every two years on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and the Economy, and submitted to Parliament.⁵

Figure 1 Amount of annual total expenditures for company apprenticeship promotion in accordance with § 19c BAG (In millions of euros, 2008-2015)

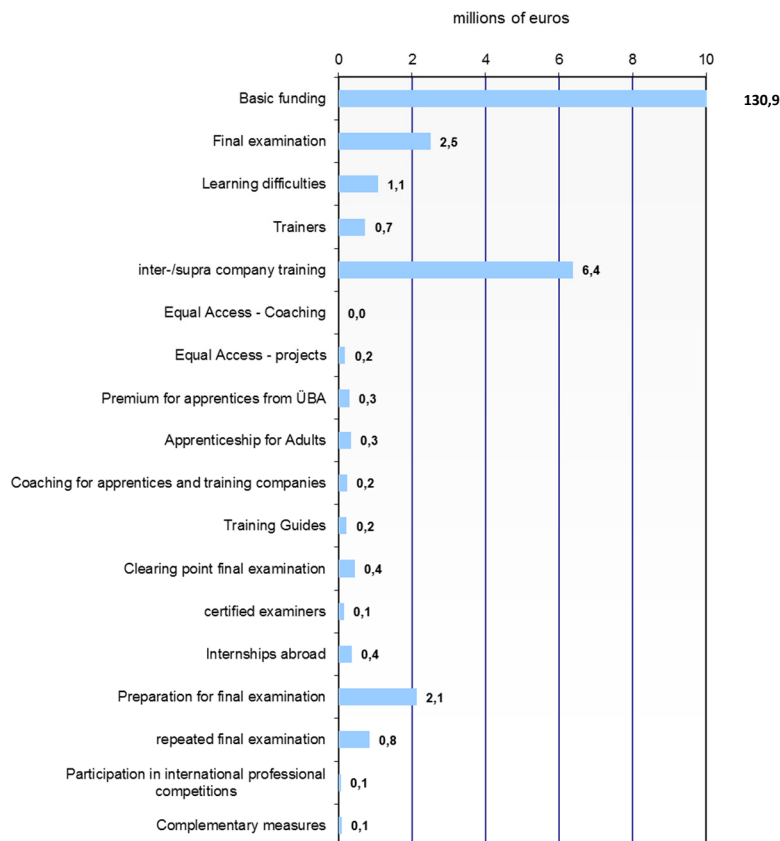
⁵ Dornmayr, Helmut/Litschel, Veronika/Löffler, Roland (2016): Bericht zur Situation der Jugendbeschäftigung und Lehrlingsausbildung in Österreich 2014-2015. Wien: Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft und Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung.





Source: Förderservice (IFS) der WKO Inhouse GmbH + IFS-annual reports + ibw-calculations. Period of time: 1.1. - 31.12. Of the respective year (exception 2008: 1.7.-31.12.2008)

Figure 2 Subsidies for apprenticeship according to § 19c BAG: Paid-up funding volume by type of funding (in million euros)

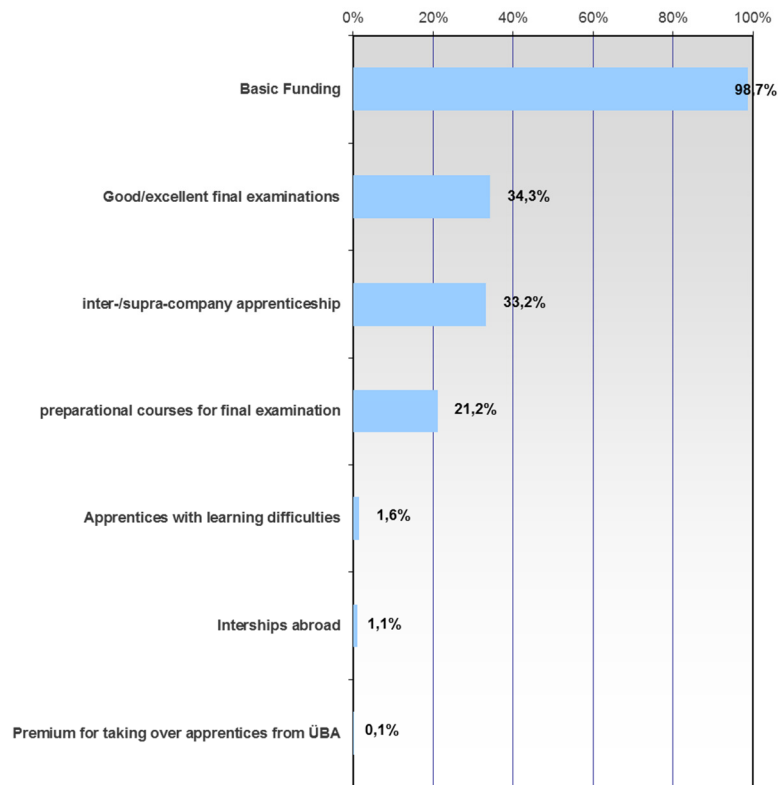


Quelle: Förderservice (IFS) der WKO Inhouse GmbH

Remarks: Including subsidies in the area of activity of the agricultural chambers (<1% of the total amount of incidents and production volumes).

Figure 3 Claim by type of funding (graduates 2014)

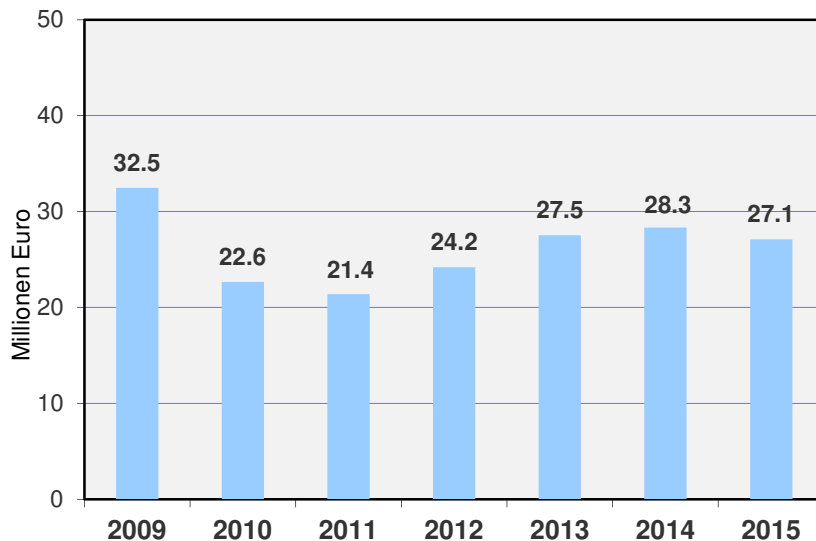




Source: ibw-LehrabsolventInnenmonitoring 2014 (Data Base: WKÖ + ibw-Berechnungen)

Published in: Dornmayr, Helmut / Petanovitsch, Alexander / Winkler, Birgit (2016): Kontext- und Implementationsanalyse der betrieblichen Lehrstellenförderung (gemäß § 19c BAG). Teilbericht (ibw) im Rahmen der ibw-öibf-Studie „Hintergrundanalyse zur Wirksamkeit der betrieblichen Lehrstellenförderung (gemäß § 19c BAG)“, Wien.

Figure 4 Subsidies for training companies by the AMS (total volume in millions of euros, 2009-2015)



Quelle: AMS

Last update: 1.04.2016



Table 1 Subsidies for training companies by the AMS by type of funding (volume in millions of euros, 2009-2015)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
§ 8b BAG (former „Integrative Vocational Training“)	5,0	5,6	6,0	8,6	10,8	11,9	12,2
Girls in training professions with low female participation	3,0	2,8	2,6	2,5	2,8	2,9	2,8
Disadvantaged Youth	10,0	10,6	10,5	10,7	11,1	10,5	9,6
Persons 18+	2,6	2,5	2,2	2,3	2,9	3,0	2,5
Additional apprenticeships ("Blum Bonus")	11,9	1,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0

Source: AMS + ibw-Berechnungen

Last update: 1.04.2016

Table 2 Subsidies for training companies by the AMS by type of funding (Number of grants, 2009-2015)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
§ 8b BAG (former „Integrative Vocational Training“)	1.748	1.986	2.106	2.691	3.256	3.611	3.730
Girls in training professions with low female participation	947	862	807	786	816	848	826
Disadvantaged Youth	4.897	4.935	4.848	4.859	4.815	4.691	4.231
Persons 18+	731	680	656	753	936	942	785
Additional apprenticeships ("Blum Bonus")	9.284	1.091	10	0	0	0	0

Source: AMS + ibw-Berechnungen

Last update: 1.04.2016



3 Examples of best practice

Coaching for Apprentices and Training Companies

The aim of the program is to provide both apprentices and training companies with support during training, in order to improve the quality of teaching and, in particular, to counteract the dropout of training. Accordingly, the focus of the objective is also the positive placement of the final examination and, where appropriate, a university entrance degree for apprentices.

In addition, the Directive has defined priorities - apprentices with a background of migration and ethnic minorities, young women in untypical professions and training in small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition to the positive completion of the apprenticeship exam, the focus is on an increase in the range of company training courses and on the relief of the small-scale structure through external support.

For enterprises, this measure includes the following aspects:

Consulting for training companies

Companies or persons responsible for training can ask for advice on training, quality management, teaching qualification, further education and additional training, subsidies as well as legal questions via the responsible apprenticeship office in the federal state. For this purpose, a quota of up to 23 consultants is available within the framework of the program. This performance is clearly separated from the coaching, but the consultants can recommend a further coaching.

Coaching for training companies

Similar to apprentice coaching, a coaching for all challenges in the course of the training of apprentices can be applied for at the responsible apprentice office. In the same way, those enterprises which fall under the focus can make use of support services by coaches in the run-up to the apprentices' training or in the development of training. This is to remove any obstacles at an early stage and to increase the willingness to train apprentices.

A case management is not provided in the coaching for training companies, the duration of the coaching process is generally not limited. Further co-workers may be involved on a voluntary basis in the coaching process. The participation of the apprentices may only be implemented with the explicit consent of the apprentices.

The goal of coaching for training companies is, among other things, to increase mutual understanding at the level of the employer and the apprentice and to prevent the dissolution of apprenticeship contracts. Training coaches work closely with apprenticeship advisors.

4 Experience and needs of enterprises: results of the company survey

4.1 Target groups chosen for survey

In the context of this project, 284 firms were consulted electronically via e-mail. For this purpose, an address database of companies was used that had been invited to participate in an online survey at least once in the course of previous oeibf projects. The invitations have been addressed to training managers (for large companies) and to training persons (for small



and medium-sized enterprises) as representatives of companies. A total of 34 of the invited companies have accessed the online questionnaire, of which exactly 20 enterprises have finally completed this. Due to the low number, the results of the overlapping SERFA project objectives should be considered as exploratory results.

4.2 Statistical Profile of participants

In Austria, small, medium and large enterprises are represented in the sample. Unfortunately, there are no answers from the smallest companies (up to 9 employees), but they are hardly involved in such surveys.

Table 4: Company characteristics by number of employees, apprentices, interns und sector of business

Number of apprentices		Number of interns	
Answer	Count	Answer	Count
No apprentice	4	No interns	9
1-5 apprentice	5	1-5 interns	6
6-10 apprentices	2	6-10 interns	2
11-25 apprentices	3	11-25 interns	1
26-50 apprentices	4	26-50 interns	1
51-250 apprentices	2	51-250 interns	1
Total	20	Total	20

Number of employees		Sector of business	
Answer	Count	Answer	Count
1 to 4 employees (1)	0	Accommodation and catering	1
5 to 9 employees (2)	0	Education and training	1
10 to 25 employees (3)	2	Health and social services	1
26 to 49 employees (4)	4	Manufacture of computer	1
50 to 99 employees (5)	2	Manufacture of fabricated metal products	1
100 to 249 employees (6)	4	Manufacture of furniture	2
250 to 499 employees (7)	1	Manufacture of machinery	3
500 or more employees (8)	7	Other	6
Total	20	Other manufacturing	1
		Retail trade	1
		Wholesale/ trade/repair of motor vehicles	1
		Wholesale trade	1
		Total	20

Source: SERFA-business survey (Austria: n=20 companies).

Only four of 20 companies in the sample currently do not employ apprentices. Seven companies comprise up to ten apprentices and nine companies between eleven and 250 apprentices. In comparison, the number of trainees employed is lower.

The industry affiliation in the sample is broadly distributed (e.g. accommodation, production of goods, trade). A large number of the companies were not found in the 40 industry categories.

4.3 Reasons for not offering apprenticeships/internships

The vast majority of the companies surveyed (18 out of 20) stated that they had offered at least one company training place during the last five years. Twelve factories have even more training than in the past five years.

Table 5: Have you offered an apprenticeship in the last five years?

Answer	Count
No, I never have offered apprenticeships (1)	2
Not in the last five years, but I had apprentices before that time (2)	0
Yes: 1-5 apprentices during the last five years (3)	6
Yes: more than 5 during the last five years (4)	12
Total	20

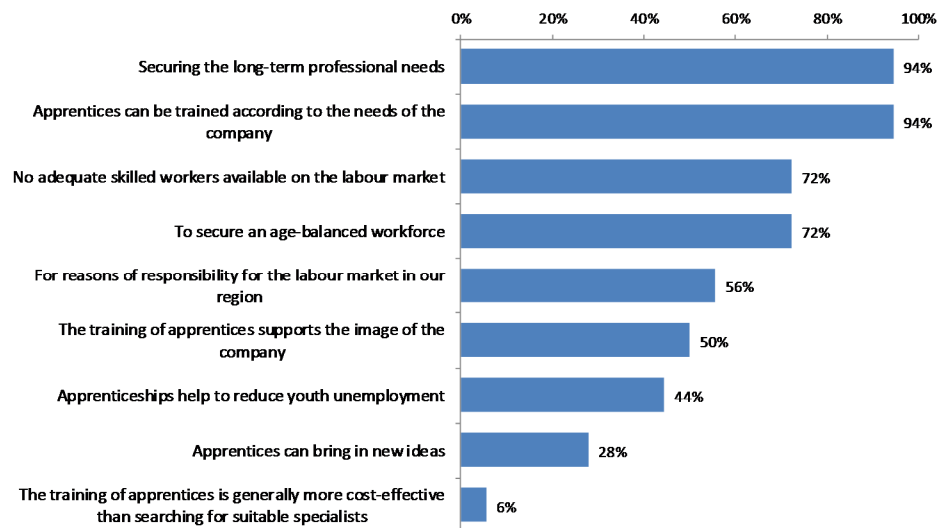
Source: SERFA-business survey (Austria: n=20 companies)



Only two companies in the sample have not offered any training places in the last five years. The stated reasons for the non-training activity of the two companies are that the company's activity is too specialized for the training of apprentices and no suitable training is available. In addition, the professional requirements in the company are lacking for the training (training staff, lack of experience with apprenticeship training).

4.4 Reasons for training apprentices

Figure 5: What are the reasons you have taken on an apprentice before? (Share of categories: “Especially important” and “Very important”)



Source: SERFA-business survey (Austria: n=18 companies, filter question). Answer categories: Especially important, very important, rather important, less important, and not applicable.

In-company training participation and their motives for workplace training are crucial variables for apprenticeship training to function.

The results of the SERFA survey show that the investment motif in Austria is the central educational rationale. In the long term, the training of apprentices enables the company to meet the specific needs of the company in line with individual needs. Investing in company training makes firms more independent from the labour market. In this sense, training activities are of great importance for the company's personnel recruitment and recruitment strategy. For example, the staff can be systematically rejuvenated and a balanced age balance can be achieved.

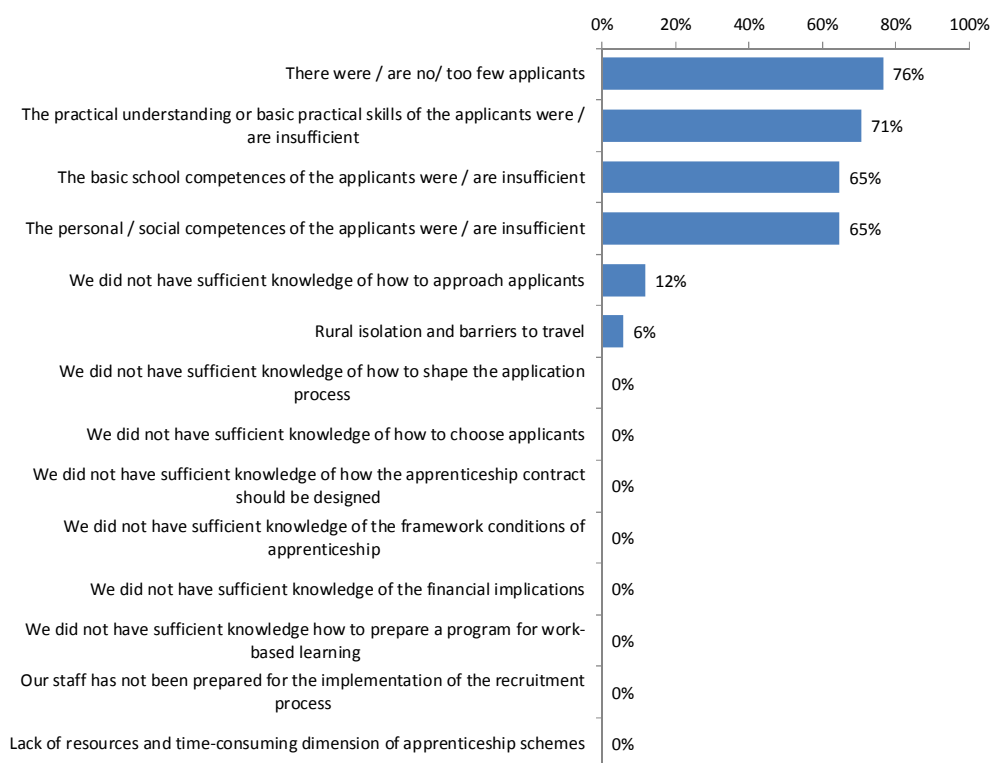
Social motives, such as the securing of the regional special needs as well as the reduction of youth unemployment, play a role in company considerations, but are considered to be less important than considerations of the economy and the HR strategies. If companies are motivated to become active in the field of education, the economic benefits must be emphasized.

4.5 Recruitment of apprentices/interns: Problems, challenges and needs

Almost all companies active in education (17 out of 18 companies) say they have problems with the recruitment of apprentices.



Figure 61: What were these problems with the recruitment process? (Share of categories: “Especially important” and “Very



important”)

Source: SERFA-business survey (Austria: n=18 companies, filter question). Answer categories: Especially important, very important, rather important, less important, and not applicable.

The surveyed firms attribute these problems mainly to the lack of quality of the applicants. On the one hand, they say that there are too small a number of applications in relation to the offered training places. On the other hand, the firms complain about the quality of the applicants, i.e. an inadequate level of basic school competences, practical and social skills.

Interestingly, however, the factories are hardly aware of the lack of knowledge about the implementation of the recruitment process and the functioning of the operational part of apprenticeship training.

The interpretation of this result is difficult. It could indicate that the apprentices are confronted with increasing professional requirements, which are already evident during the recruitment process. However, this could also be the result of the lack of attractiveness of in-company training (low training quality). The low image of apprenticeship has also been shown by many companies in the survey as a reason for this: "Some professions (e.g. operational logistics) are simply not cool - image improvement would help", "raise the status of apprenticeship training", "And not as an alternative if I cannot attend the high school", „improve the reputation and position of the education -> career with teaching!".

Due to the low attractiveness fewer and fewer young people opt for an apprenticeship and, instead, for a higher level of school education. This results in a negative selection of young people in the whole education system. In addition, young people are increasingly applying for a company training place, who formerly would have entered directly into the low-qualified labour market (unskilled workers) without first acquiring vocational training. With the newly introduced training obligation for young people up to 18, it is to be expected that this trend will intensify.

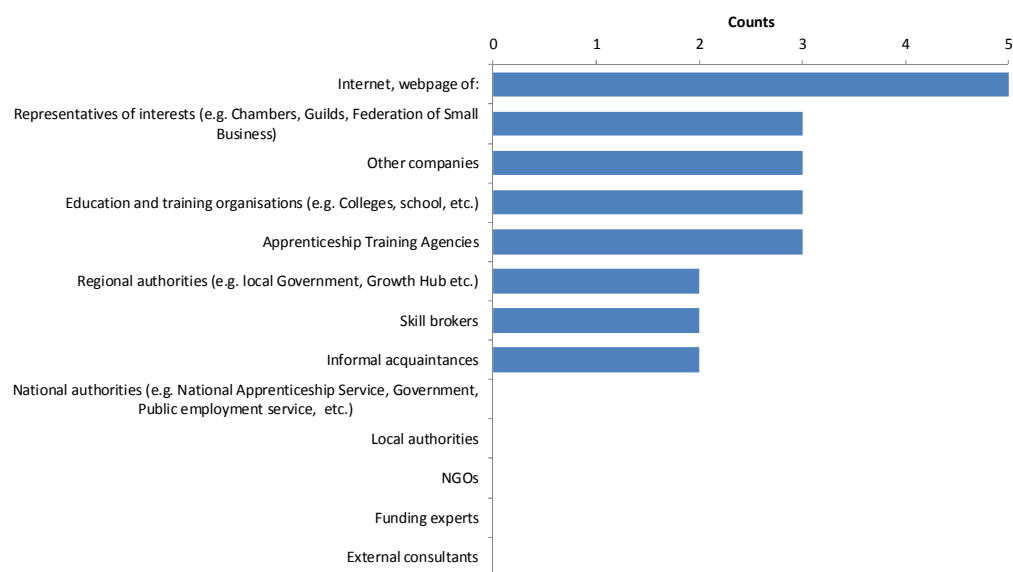


The results also show that companies are not prepared to deal with the new target group appropriately and to exploit their potential. Their recruitment processes and training models do not reflect the changed framework conditions in the training market.

4.6 Support received

Five out of the 17 companies indicated in the survey that they have received support to solve these problems. It is not possible to assess the extent to which the company actively sought support. In Austria as shown above, a well-developed, institutionalized support system is available as an offer.

Figure 7: Did you receive support in dealing with these problems. If yes, please specify:



Source: SERFA-business survey (Austria: n=5 companies, filter question).

The Internet is mentioned as a central source of support in addressing recruitment problems. Portals, which show ways to deal with problems, are the first stop for businesses.

In addition, support is sought at the respective institutions, such as social partner institutions for employers, other training institutions (in this case, above all, the vocational school is to be emphasized as the central actor) as well as the apprenticeship offices whose task is to support enterprises in educational matters. Remarkably, co-operation with other companies is also mentioned as a means to solve recruitment problems. Companies do not see themselves in this sense as competitors, but as a cooperative partner in vocational training. In addition, the regional authorities (employment services), labour brokerage services, as well as friends and acquaintances (informal acquaintances) were mentioned as support sources by two companies each.

NGOs, external consultants, local authorities or experts for funding are not relevant to the companies surveyed.

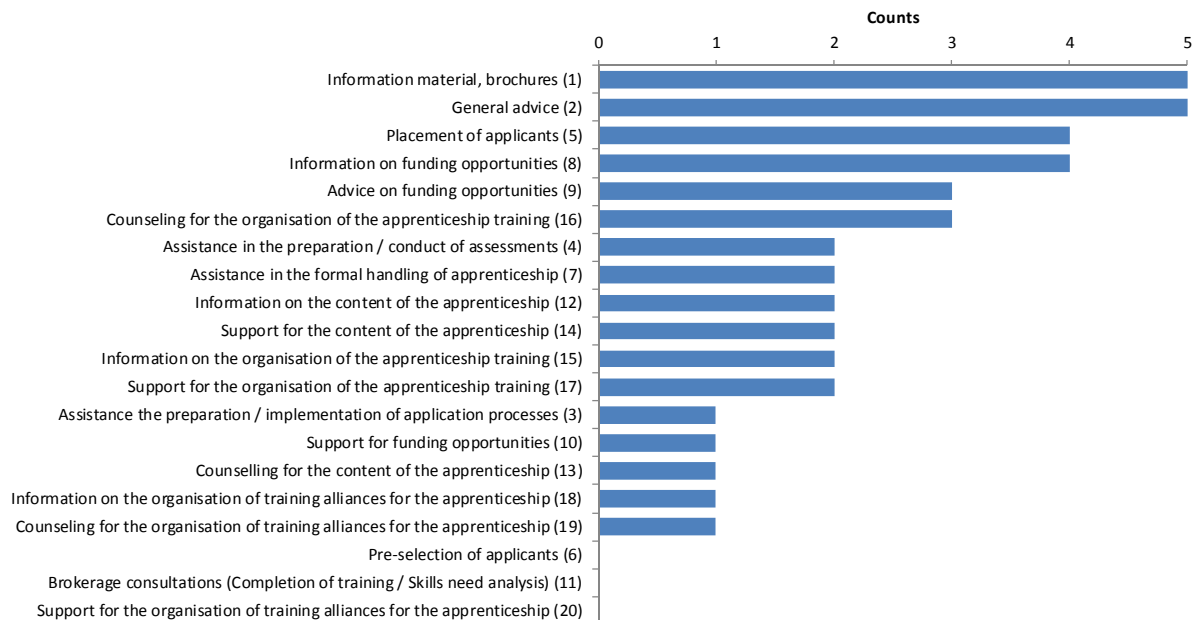
It can be said that aid is being sought and found in the institutionalized support system in tackling recruitment problems in Austria. All companies in the survey (n = 5) who have sought support have indicated that they have benefited from the support.

The most common form (five mentions) of the support is the acquisition of information through information material (1) and general consultancy services (2). Furthermore,



enterprises have used support services for the placement of apprentices (5) and information and counselling regarding the promotion of company apprenticeships (8, 9). Specific support for the organization of recruitment/ selection processes (3, 4) and questions on the organization of apprenticeship training (12, 13, 14, 15, 16) have been mentioned up to three times. Support for the organization of training networks (18, 19, 20) is hardly in demand.

Figure 8: Which support did you receive?



Source: SERFA-business survey (Austria: n=5 companies, filter question).

In summary, it can be said that only a minority of the training-active enterprises can avail themselves of a support service to cope with their recruitment problems. The few companies which have received support have received this in Austria mainly from the institutionalized system. The range of accepted support services is broadly diversified.

4.7 Need for support

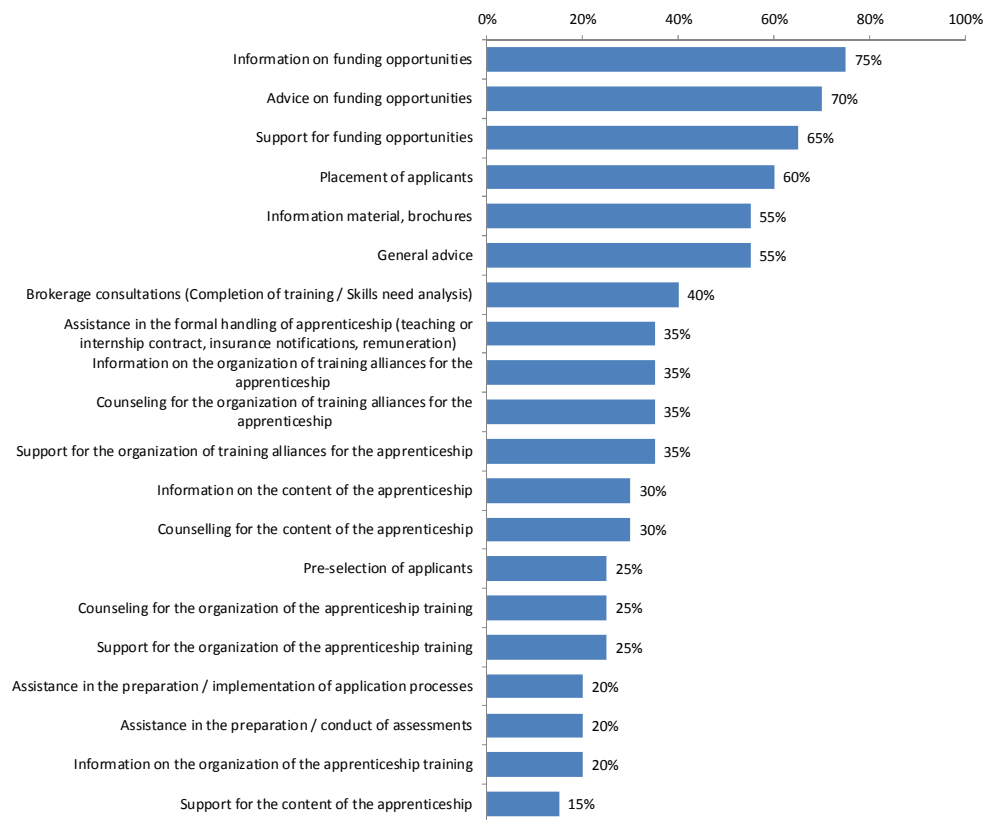
Finally, the participating companies were asked which support services they would like to receive in order to prepare and implement apprenticeship training.

The results are remarkable. The companies want less support for the specific planning and implementation of the apprentices' training in their enterprise, but rather support for the use and consultation of (financial) funding possibilities.

A peculiar tension is that the overwhelming share of the enterprises indicates problems with the recruitment of apprentices, but with the exception of the "mediation of applicants", only few specifically oriented help in recruitment is desired. From this it can be deduced that the implementation of apprenticeship training as well as the formal training requirements for companies - on the basis of their self-image - are not a major challenge. However, this result could also be critically read in such a way that companies have a lack of willingness to adapt their recruitment strategies to the current requirements of the training market. Enterprise-specific support services for the implementation of training - even with more difficult target groups in the training market - are hardly in demand.



Figure 9: What kind of support would you like to receive in the preparation and implementation of apprenticeships? (Share of categories: “Especially important” and “Very important”)

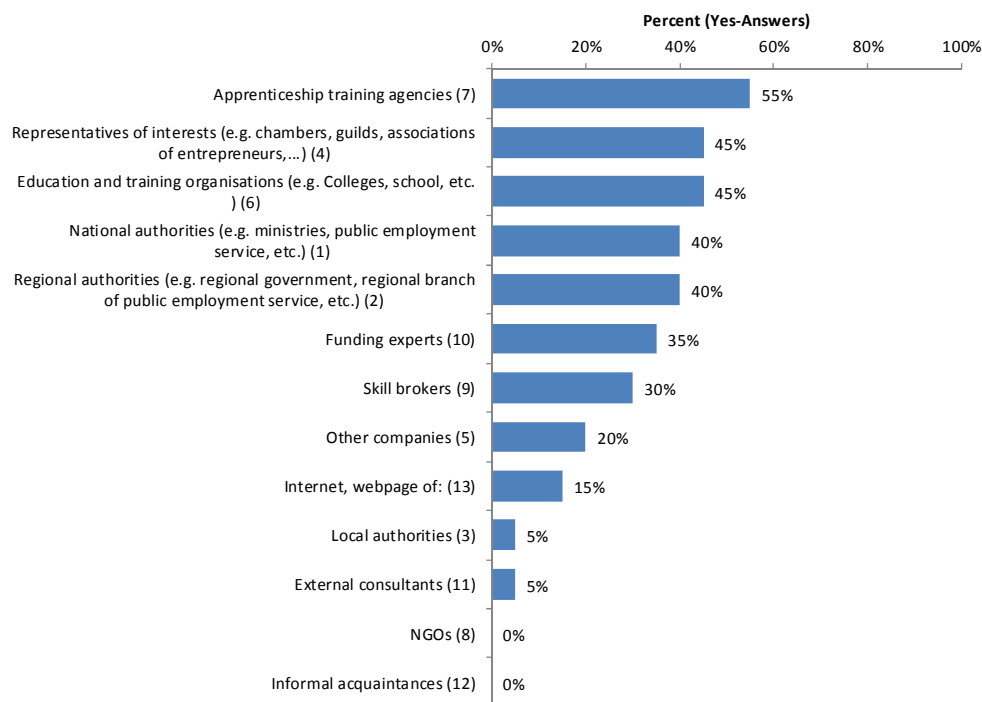


Source: SERFA-business survey (Austria: n=20 companies).

If companies are asked about who should offer support services in their opinion, their responses are interesting. In the opinion of the firms, the desired support services should, in particular, be provided by the apprenticeship offices (7). It is remarkable, however, that the most frequently requested support services actually represent the central task profile of the apprenticeship offices. Counselling in terms of financial support, general counselling, as well as information on the formal requirements are among the core tasks of the apprenticeship offices. This leaves two conclusions. Firstly, the enterprises do not know about the offer of apprenticeship offices. Secondly, the apprenticeships offices do not (as a matter of capacity) have the range of services as their official offers.



Figure 10: Support: And by whom



Source: SERFA-business survey (Austria: n=20 companies).

Increased support for the recruitment of apprentices is also desirable from their company interests (4). Already now, the economic chambers (as a legal occupational representation) operate, for example, professional information centres. Their services (occupational information, interest tests, placement of applicants, assistance with apprenticeship selection, etc.) can be used by companies in the context of the recruitment process. In addition to this, branch representations also organize joint recruiting activities in appealing formats suitable for adolescents (for example, apprenticeship casting for roofing, glazers and plumbers).

In addition, a number of companies would also like to see more support from national and regional authorities (in particular PES). In the context of the desired support services, this would mainly concern the placement of apprentices and general support in the recruitment of apprentices.

Specialized consultancy services or experts (10, 9, and 11) outside the already institutionalized support systems are mentioned less frequently by the companies. It should also be stressed that although information is frequently sought on the Internet, this is not necessarily the preferred tool for businesses. A possible interpretation would be that sufficient information material is already available electronically and is also used by the companies.



5 Conclusion

5.1 *In general*

The Austrian dual system is a well-established part of the Austrian system of vocational education. There is an elaborated legal framework and a rather complex system of governance. The involvement of social partner institution is one of the key factors of the high acceptance of the apprenticeship system. Furthermore, there is a differentiated system of subsidies and grants which gives incentives to companies to train apprentices.

The strength of the Austrian dual system (as well as the German or Swiss model) is the combination of two learning places: Vocational schools for the theoretical part of vocational education and general education and the companies for the practical training. In the apprenticeship system the apprentices learn how to work in a workplace setting and a work process. As the apprenticeship contract is both training and an employment contract, there is a smooth transition from education to employment. That is one of the reasons why youth unemployment is still rather low in Austria

Nevertheless, the number of applicants as well as apprenticeships offered is declining not only because of demographic reasons. On the one hand, the dual system has to compete with other forms of initial education (such as full-time vocational schools on different levels, schools of higher education and the tertiary educational institutions), the image of apprenticeship is declining, and fewer youngsters with high potentials decide to take up apprenticeship. On the other hand, those who go for apprenticeship sometimes lack basic competences which makes it difficult for companies to select apprentices. Furthermore, the quality management of apprenticeship needs improvement both on a systemic level and within the companies.

5.2 *For the aims and objectives of the project*

Public institutions (ministries, the Austrian Public Employment Service) as well as social partner institutions provide a great variety of support for training companies (both in regard to financial, organisational, legal and educational aspects) in order to keep up the level of apprenticeships offered as well as to raise the quality of training. Despite of the involvement of social partners, which take a vital role in developing training regulations, accreditation of training companies, final examination of apprentices and – last but not least – information and counselling of training companies and apprentices, especially small and medium –sized companies often are reluctant of taking part in dual training. This is partially due to a lack of information on the benefits of training apprentices and partially to a lack of direct guidance and counselling.

As well as some of the support measures and tools developed and implemented in the Austrian system could serve as a model for other countries (e.g. the variety of quality oriented subsidies) the Austrian system also needs innovative approaches to individual support for SMEs.

