

FRAMEWORK CURRICULUM

for the recognised training occupation of

Management assistant for retail services

Sales assistant for retail services

(Resolution of the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of 17 June 2004)

Part I: Preliminary remarks

This framework curriculum for occupation-related courses at vocational schools is the subject of a resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers and Senators of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Federal States (KMK).

The framework curriculum has been coordinated with the corresponding training regulation of the Federal government (adopted by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour, or another specialist ministry responsible for the process, in agreement with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research). The process of coordination is governed by the "Joint Memorandum of 30 May 1972". The framework curriculum describes minimum requirements and, as a matter of principle, builds on the basis of the lower secondary school leaving certificate.

In the case of occupations allocated to a specific occupational field, the framework curriculum is divided into occupational field related basic training and specialist continuation training.

The training regulation and the framework curriculum regulate the aims and content of the vocational education and training and form the basis of the final qualification in a recognised training occupation and lead, in conjunction with courses in further subjects, to completion of vocational school. This process creates essential prerequisites for qualified employment and for entering into school-based and vocational further and continuing training programmes.

The framework curriculum does not contain any methodological stipulations for the courses taught. Independent and responsible thinking and acting constitute overarching goals of the training and are preferably taught in forms of instruction which make them an integral part of the overall concept of teaching methodology. In principle, any methodological approach can help achieve this goal. Particularly suitable are methods which directly promote professional action competence, and these need to be afforded due consideration in the course planning process.

The Federal states either adopt the framework curriculum directly or implement its content in their own syllabuses. If the latter option is taken, they must ensure that the coordination of subject and time allocation which has been worked out between the framework curriculum and the respective training regulation is adhered to.

Part II: Educational mission of the vocational schools

Within the dual system of vocational education and training, vocational schools and companies providing training have a common educational mission.

The vocational schools are independent learning venues within this system. They operate as equal partners together with the other vocational education and training stakeholders. The task of the vocational school is to impart vocational and general learning content to the students whilst paying particular attention to the requirements of initial vocational education and training.

Vocational schools aim to extend the general schooling the students have already received by providing basic and specialist vocational training. They aim to enable the students to fulfil occupation-related tasks and to play their part in organising the world of work and society as a whole, as well as to equip them with a sense of social and ecological responsibility. Within this context, they act in accordance with the regulations governing this school type as stipulated in the school laws of the Federal states. A further basis of the occupation-related courses, in particular, is the federally enacted vocational regulatory framework that applies to every state-recognised training occupation:

- framework curriculum of the Standing Conference of the Ministers and Senators of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Federal States
- training regulations of the Federal government relating to in-company training.

According to the skeleton agreement on vocational schools (Resolution of the KMK of 15 March 1991), the objective of the vocational school is to

- "impart an occupational ability that combines specialist skills with general human and social abilities;
- develop occupational flexibility in order to meet the changing requirements of the world of work and society as a whole, including in terms of the ever closer European ties;
- encourage participation in further and continuing vocational education and training;
- support the ability and readiness of individuals to act in a responsible way in terms of organising their own lives and taking part in public life."

To achieve these aims, vocational schools need to

- adapt the courses to pedagogical principles specific to these objectives, with an emphasis on action orientation;
- impart qualifications that transcend individual occupations and occupational fields while giving due consideration to necessary vocational specialisation;
- provide differentiated and flexible educational opportunities that meet the demands posed by different abilities and talents and fulfil the requirements of both the world of work and society as a whole;
- give extensive support to the disabled and disadvantaged and promote the interests of these groups as far as possible;
- draw attention to the threats to the environment and danger of accidents associated with both professional and private life and demonstrate ways of avoiding or diminishing the risk of such occurrences.

In addition to this, vocational schools need to address key contemporary problems, both within general teaching and within vocationally related courses, insofar as the latter is possible. These issues include

- work and unemployment,
- peaceful co-existence of individuals, nations and cultures in one world while retaining cultural identity,
- sustaining the natural basis of life and
- guaranteeing human rights.

The objectives listed relate to the development of action competence. This is defined within this context as the willingness and ability of an individual to behave appropriately, thoughtfully and in an individually and socially responsible manner in social, professional and private situations.

Action competence unfolds in the dimensions of professional competence, personal competence and social competence.

Professional competence designates the willingness and ability to use specialist knowledge and proficiency as a basis for solving tasks and problems appropriately, methodically, independently and in a target-oriented way and for evaluating the results.

Personal competence designates the willingness and ability of an individual personality to clarify, think through and assess the opportunities for development, demands and restrictions arising within the family, at work and in public life, to develop his or her talents and to make and develop plans for life. Personal competence encompasses such personal characteristics as independence, critical faculties, self-confidence, reliability and a sense of responsibility and duty. In particular, it includes the development of well-considered personal values and the adherence to such values which define the individual.

Social competence designates the willingness and ability to experience and shape social relationships, to identify and understand affection and tensions and to deal and communicate with others in a rational and responsible manner. This includes in particular the development of social responsibility and solidarity.

Methodological competence and learning competence arise from balanced development of these three dimensions.

Competence refers to learning success in terms of the individual learner and his or her capability to act responsibly and autonomously in private, professional and social situations. Qualification, on the other hand, designates the learning success in terms of applicability, meaning from the point of view of demand in private, professional and social situations (cf. German Education Council, Recommendations of the educational commission on the reorganisation of upper secondary education).

Part III: Didactic principles

The objective of initial vocational education and training requires the courses to be in line with pedagogical principles specific to the tasks of the vocational school, putting emphasis on an action-oriented approach and enabling young people to plan, carry out and evaluate work-related tasks autonomously within the scope of their occupational activity.

Learning at vocational schools fundamentally takes place within the context of specific occupational activities and also includes a wide range of theoretical operations, including understanding the actions of others. This type of learning is mainly associated with reflecting the constituent parts of actions (the action plan, the process, the results). Applying this theoretical approach to occupational work creates the necessary conditions for learning while and from working. As far as the framework curriculum is concerned, this means that the description of objectives and selection of content are carried out in relation to the occupation.

A pragmatic approach to structuring action-oriented education based on instructional theory and didactic findings includes the following terms of reference:

- Situations which are significant for doing a job constitute didactic reference points (learning for actions).
- Learning starts with actions, carried out by the individual wherever possible or at least understood in theory (learning through actions).
- Actions need to be planned, carried out, monitored, corrected if necessary and finally evaluated by the learners as autonomously as possible.
- Actions should promote a holistic understanding of the realities of working life, including technical, safety, economic, legal, ecological and social aspects.
- Actions need to be integrated into the experiences of learners and reflected in terms of their social effects.
- Actions should also involve social processes such as declarations of interest or conflict management.

Action-oriented education is a didactic concept combining specialist and action-related systematic structures. It can be implemented using a variety of teaching methods.

The education provided at vocational schools is aimed at young people and adults who differ in terms of their education and cultural backgrounds and their experiences within the companies providing training. Vocational schools can only fulfil their educational mission if they take these differences into account and provide their students – including the disadvantaged or especially gifted – with the individual support they require.

Part IV: Occupation-related preliminary remarks

The present framework curriculum for vocational education and training in the occupations of management assistant for retail services and of sales assistant for retail services has been coordinated with the Ordinance Concerning Vocational Education and Training in the Retail Sector in the Occupations of Sales Assistant and Management Assistant for Retail Services (Verordnung über die Berufsausbildung im Einzelhandel in den Ausbildungsberufen Verkäufer/Verkäuferin und Kaufmann im Einzelhandel/Kauffrau im Einzelhandel) of 16 July 2004 (BGBl. I p. 1806).

The recognised training occupation is assigned to occupational field I, business and administration, with focus A: distributive trade and customer service, pursuant to the Basic Vocational Training Year Credit Transfer Ordinance (Berufsgrundbildungsjahr-Anrechnungs-Verordnung).

The framework curriculum for the recognised training occupation of management assistant for retail services (Resolution of the KMK of 3 March 1987) is superseded by the present framework curriculum.

The management assistant for retail services and the sales assistant for retail services are mainly at work in the sale of goods and offer their customers counselling and service. Furthermore, they may be involved with the checkout service area, procurement of goods, incoming goods, stock management, marketing, personnel management and accounting.

The learning fields with their statements of objectives are based on exemplary fields of action. They are to be implemented methodically and didactically in such a way that they lead to professional action competence. The statements of objectives describe the skills level after completion of the learning process. Supplemented by the content, they contain the minimum scope of skills to be imparted.

The statements of objectives combine specialist and action-related systematic contexts. They also integrate the use of current media, modern office communication and occupation-related software for information retrieval and information processing. A total of at least 80 hours of instruction is set aside for these topics in the framework curriculum. The foreign-language goals and content are integrated into the learning fields with 40 hours.

The arrangement of the learning fields follows the idea of separating the two training occupations of management assistant for retail services and sales assistant for retail services. The learning fields of the first year of training deal with the sale of goods and the customer orientation required for it. The learning fields that follow in the second year focus on supporting areas of action, namely on procurement, storage and data handling, and then return to customer orientation. The learning fields of the third year of training bring up advanced operational action situations corresponding to the training profile of a management assistant for retail services.

The necessary level of knowledge about the products depends on the range of goods and also on the sales model and retail format. Using a selection of products as examples, the vocational school teaches techniques of acquiring knowledge about products and thus the ability to become familiar with new ranges of goods. When it comes to developing action competence in the field of accounting, the framework curriculum consistently adheres to the shift of focus from the documentation function to a monitoring and control function.

The dimensions of sustainability – economy, ecology and the social sphere – extend to all areas of action in the retail sector and are integrated into the learning fields. They provide ample opportunity for including references to business and product ethics.

Part V: Learning fields

Overview of the learning fields for the recognised training occupation of management assistant for retail services, sales assistant for retail services

Learning fields		Suggested time allocation in hours		
No.		1st year	2nd year	3rd year
1	Representing the retail establishment	80		
2	Leading customer-oriented sales conversations	80		
3	Servicing customers in the checkout service area	80		
4	Presenting goods	40		
5	Advertising and promoting sales	40		
6	Procuring goods		60	
7	Receiving, storing and maintaining goods		60	
8	Recording and monitoring business processes		60	
9	Preparing and carrying out pricing policy measures		40	
10	Handling special sales situations		60	
11	Managing business processes with a focus on success			80
12	Winning and retaining customers using marketing concepts			60
13	Planning staff deployment and managing personnel			60
14	Managing and developing a retail establishment			80
	Total (880 hours overall)	320	280	280

**Learning field 1:
Representing the retail establishment**

**1st year of training
Suggested time allocation: 80 hours**

Statement of objectives:

The students present the training company. In view of their options of vocational activity and further development they describe the key services and fields of activity of their retail establishment. They explain the corporate mission statement, the economic and ecological objectives and the overall social responsibility of the enterprise. They autonomously obtain information in the training company and keep that information up-to-date. They develop a capability of obtaining generally accessible information about other enterprises as well. They assess the chosen retail format in connection with the range of goods and selling method utilised and compare their training companies in respect of that format. They describe the organisation of their enterprise and its place in the economy as a whole.

While creating the presentation they work on the tasks autonomously in the group and apply problem-solving strategies. During this process they reflect on staff cooperation in a retail establishment and become familiar with the legal provisions and the tasks, rights and duties of the people involved in the dual system of vocational education and training. Taking collective bargaining in the retail sector into account, the students assess the importance of wage agreements and the role of the social partners in negotiating them. They reflect on the regulations for co-determination. They recognise the need for social welfare and for private pension planning in the Federal Republic of Germany. The students present and document the results of their work in a structured and addressee-oriented manner using suitable media. They internalise customer orientation as a guideline for their professional actions.

Content:

methods of working and learning
simple circular flow of income
tasks and structure of the retail sector
industrial safety and environmental protection
business organisation and work flows
training contract
protection of young people at work
sustainability
presentation techniques

Learning field 2:
Leading customer-oriented sales conversations

1st year of training
Suggested time allocation: 80 hours

Statement of objectives:

Using their product, communications and sales skills, the students lead sales conversations to the satisfaction of the customers and the enterprise. They are proficient in important elements of communications and sales techniques and methods for acquiring core knowledge about products. They apply these skills in role-play scenarios and exhibit customer-oriented behaviour both verbally and non-verbally. If necessary, they provide simple information in a foreign language as the situation demands. During the sales conversation they use their knowledge about the products to develop persuasive sales arguments. They also incorporate services provided by the enterprise into the sales conversation and react adequately to customer objections. They propose alternative suggestions in order to promote the purchasing decision and secure a successful sale.

The students prepare sets of criteria for evaluating playing and training situations. They assess communication and sale situations and provide appropriate feedback. They use audio and video technology, among other things, as aids for that purpose.

Content:

presenting goods
consultative selling
price-performance relationship
supplementary offers
foreign-language terminology
typical foreign-language figures of speech

Learning field 3:
Servicing customers in the checkout service area

1st year of training
Suggested time allocation: 80 hours

Statement of objectives:

The students carry out tasks arising in the checkout area and serve the customers in a friendly and attentive manner.

They conclude sales contracts, taking legal and company regulations into consideration. They advise the customers of the use of STC if necessary. At the checkout point they offer services to the customer and suggest additional offers. The students inform the customer about typical methods of payment and their advantages and disadvantages. In doing this they arrange the methods of payment in order of their profitability for the enterprise. The students carry out cashier transactions under consideration of customer cards and vouchers and operate the cash register according to company provisions. They issue receipts and invoices in accordance with VAT regulations. They carry out cash accounting, create cash reports and evaluate them. For this purpose they employ known standard calculation methods. They use the checkout system as an instrument for collecting sales data in the inventory management system.

Content:

legal capacity
voidness and voidability
obligation and fulfilment transaction
freedom of contract
rule of three, calculation of percentages and mean values

**Learning field 4:
Presenting goods**

**1st year of training
Suggested time allocation: 40 hours**

Statement of objectives:

The students arrange and present goods in a way that is customer-friendly and sales-effective and makes economic sense. They prepare criteria for an attractive presentation of products. They develop concepts for product presentation, demonstrate these concepts and evaluate them on the basis of the prepared criteria.

The students give proper consideration to specific characteristics of the retail format, sales model and range of goods, to general rules of product presentation and arrangement and to findings of sales psychology.

Content:

store design
visual merchandising
shopping path analyses
merchandise fixtures
shelving zones
labelling of goods
price marking
shop windows

**Learning field 5:
Advertising and promoting sales**

**1st year of training
Suggested time allocation: 40 hours**

Statement of objectives:

The students create an advertising plan. They articulate their own personal values in it and they respect the personal values of others. They develop promotional activities, taking principles of marketing and the general legal conditions into consideration. They also use suitable software for designing advertising materials. They evaluate the use of promotional activities in everyday sales life. They take economic, legal and ethical boundaries of advertising into account and rate the success of the promotional activities. They compare the use of different types of advertising with regard to their effects on the consumers.

The students outline and assess typical sales promotion measures. They incorporate services as a means of customer retention. They select packaging materials and possibilities of goods delivery based on economic and ecological considerations.

Content:

advertising media
cooperative forms of advertising
direct marketing
Act Against Unfair Competition (UWG)
Packaging Ordinance
teamwork

**Learning field 6:
Procuring goods**

**2nd year of training
Suggested time allocation: 60 hours**

Statement of objectives:

The students procure goods and consider economic, legal and ecological aspects.

They plan the procurement process on the basis of inventory management data. For this purpose they research different suppliers, conditions and prices. They prepare sales contracts using various communication media and conclude them. They consider quantitative and qualitative aspects in the procurement decision process. For this purpose they utilise information technology systems, as well. They evaluate the data gathered and present their results as a basis for decision-making.

Content:

volume, time and price planning
forms of cooperation in purchasing
inquiry, quotation, order
purchase price computation
comparing quotations
inventory management system

**Learning field 7:
Receiving, storing and maintaining goods**

**2nd year of training
Suggested time allocation: 60 hours**

Statement of objectives:

The students inspect incoming goods and ensure proper storage. They recognize breaches of duty on the part of the supplier, document them and institute adequate measures to remedy them. The students communicate with suppliers with an orientation towards solving problems. They check the goods by means of document checks and register the products, in part by using information technology systems.

They store the goods and observe important storage principles in the main and/or reserve storage area. The students analyse key figures, carry out stock calculations, evaluate them and identify possibilities for optimisation. They consider economic, legal and ecological aspects in the storage area and in their handling of packaging materials.

Content:

material defect
notice of defects
delay in delivery
minimum stock level, reorder level
inventory turnover ratio, turnover period
stocktaking, inventory
storage organisation
storage and transportation regulations, warehouse safety
goods maintenance

**Learning field 8:
Recording and monitoring business processes**

**2nd year of training
Suggested time allocation: 60 hours**

Statement of objectives:

The students record the relationships of the enterprise with its customers and suppliers in terms of information, money and value flows and carry out evaluations. They process documents and systematically document the data resulting from company processes in compliance with the relevant legal provisions. With the aid of these records they describe the assets and financial position of the enterprise, determine the success and discuss key determinants of the success of a retail establishment.

The students perform statistical processing of the data resulting from profit and loss accounting in order to prepare decisions of the company. They control the recorded product data, determine key figures and analyse them in a comparison over time and between operations. For this purpose they apply commercial calculation methods and utilise suitable software as a documentation and information tool.

Content:

business processes
balance sheet
profit and loss statement
inventory management system
statistics
cost of sales, gross income, sales volume figures

**Learning field 9:
Preparing and carrying out pricing policy measures**

**2nd year of training
Suggested time allocation: 40 hours**

Statement of objectives:

The students prepare pricing policy measures of the retail establishment and carry them out. In doing this, they organise their learning processes autonomously and responsibly and use suitable software. The students work together effectively and cooperatively.

They know the importance of the retail price as a sales-policy instrument. They understand the place of pricing policy in the corporate objective of their training company. They determine internal and external influences on the company's pricing. In that context they differentiate between cost-oriented, demand-driven and competitive pricing schemes. The students calculate prices and utilise abbreviated calculation methods. They rate different pricing strategies. They describe reasons for different demand patterns, taking social/economic changes into account.

Content:

Price Indication Ordinance
progressive calculation
retrograde calculation
calculation factor
calculation surcharge, calculation discount
mark-up

**Learning field 10:
Handling special sales situations**

**2nd year of training
Suggested time allocation: 60 hours**

Statement of objectives:

Using the corporate philosophy as a point of reference, the actions of the students in special sales cases are professional and adapted to the situation.

They react adequately to the behaviour of their customers in different situations. They purposefully utilise verbal and non-verbal means of expression in such situations. The students give professional advice, if necessary under application of their foreign-language skills. When it comes to exchanges of goods or complaints, in particular, the students act in the best interest of both the enterprise and the customers and observe legal and company regulations. In the counselling situation they recognize possible conflicts, cope with stressful situations and contribute to resolving them by acting in a way appropriate to the situation. The students live up to the individual demands of their customers.

Content:

customer behaviour
selling in peak periods
accompanied customers
selling shortly before closing time
gift and errand shopping
warranty, guarantee, product liability
goodwill
shoplifting
sales disruptions
financed purchases
conflict resolution behaviour

**Learning field 11:
Managing business processes with a focus on success**

**3rd year of training
Suggested time allocation: 80 hours**

Statement of objectives:

The students analyse business processes in the retail establishment and apply instruments for improving the success of the enterprise. They record the movement of goods of the retail establishment. They prepare decisions on asset management and assess the profit situation of the enterprise. The students analyse the cost structure of retail establishments and calculate the cost application to operational subdivisions. They explain microeconomic cost-cutting measures to the decision-makers and relate them to effects at the macroeconomic level. The students utilise contribution margin accounting to determine sales prices and to successfully optimise the range of goods. In this process they observe the matter of mixed calculation. They ascertain the short-term operating profit and make suggestions for increasing profitability.

The students use data from different information systems to calculate key figures and utilise them for comparisons and assessments of situations. They create graphical representations of statistics, interpret the information contained in them and derive possible actions for optimising company processes. For this purpose they use suitable software.

Content:

procurement of goods, sale of goods
value-added tax
depreciation
types of costs, cost centres, distribution calculation
external costs
final costing
profitability ratios, economic viability
inventory management system
effects on the simple circular flow of income

**Learning field 12:
Winning and retaining customers using marketing concepts**

**3rd year of training
Suggested time allocation: 60 hours**

Statement of objectives:

The students gather information about marketing as a central strategy of an enterprise to win a market position and to expand it. The students become familiar with the public relations activities of their enterprise and assess their effectiveness.

The students utilise information technology systems to collect and evaluate market and customer information. They analyse sales-policy instruments and develop concepts for attaining existing marketing objectives. They consider the general economic conditions in that process. In order to implement the marketing concepts, they develop time and work schedules, assign responsibilities and document the progress of their work. They present the results of their work and reflect upon them.

The students understand goods-specific and customer-specific service needs as an important approach to creating and maintaining a unique market position. They introduce the service concepts of their training companies and analyse difficulties in their implementation. The students develop and justify further customer service policy measures with the objective of strengthening customer retention. They also assess the enterprise's complaint management in this context.

Using selected examples, they evaluate electronic services as trading platforms and customer retention tools.

Content:

marketing mix
customer relationship management
e-business
e-commerce

**Learning field 13:
Planning staff deployment and managing personnel**

**3rd year of training
Suggested time allocation: 60 hours**

Statement of objectives:

The students carry out tasks and activities relevant to the human resource management of a retail establishment, taking personnel management goals into consideration. They are aware of the differing vested interests of all those involved. In order to ensure the operational effectiveness of the enterprise, they analyse the workforce size and employee structure and contribute to calculating manpower needs and planning personnel placement. They apply various instruments of internal and external personnel recruitment and compile criteria for selecting applicants. They recognize the importance of employment contracts for the employment relationship and its termination. The students prepare payroll statements.

The students are familiar with various means of motivating employees and utilise these means to promote the professional conduct and willingness to perform of the staff.

Content:

conversation techniques
handling of conflicts
personnel development
data protection
establishment, maintenance and termination of employment relationships

**Learning field 14:
Managing and developing a retail establishment**

**3rd year of training
Suggested time allocation: 80 hours**

Statement of objectives:

The students think and act along business lines. They discover and acquire leadership skills, both in general terms and in view of their own career prospects. They collaborate in managing an enterprise and draw up concepts for the enterprise's further development. They explain different types of enterprises and assess them. The students select appropriate funding options. They distinguish different types of credit and describe credit securities by way of examples. In order to ensure liquidity, they monitor incoming payments and take measures in cases of delayed payment.

Content:

legal name, commercial register
sole proprietorship, private limited partnership (KG), limited liability company (GmbH)
franchising
supplier credit, overdraft credit, loan
simple retention of title, loan guarantee, transfer by way of security
legal dunning
bankruptcy