

Continuing professional education in Germany



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1 Definition

What is defined as continuing professional education?

- ▶ Any form of organised, occupationally related learning based on existing training;
- ▶ which consolidates, expands or updates knowledge, competencies, and skills;
- ▶ and which generally is completed by means of a certificate of participation or performance.

Continuation or resumption of professional learning following completion of an initial phase of education of varying duration.



2 Forms of continuing professional education

How does continuing professional education occur?

Formally

- ▶ Specific programmes supporting further technical and vocational development within the state education system
 - ▶ Master craftsperson, technician and Bachelor Professional classes
 - ▶ Courses in the context of retraining

Non-formally

- ▶ Training provision outside the formal curriculum to support personal and social education
 - ▶ Organised by the employer or on an individual basis
 - ▶ Classes and courses
 - ▶ Short-term events such as lectures, seminars, workshops, training courses, instruction
 - ▶ May take the form of specialist conferences / congresses / conferences

Informally

- ▶ Throughout our lives as a result of influences and sources originating from our own environment and from our day-to-day experiences
 - ▶ Everyday work, work colleagues
 - ▶ Private contacts, media, reading of specialist literature, etc.





3 Formal offers as part of upgrading training

DQR 5		DQR 6	
Specialised higher qualification	Upgrading training leading to a qualification at master craftsman level	Technical upgrading training	Commercial upgrading training
e.g. Certified professional specialist – IT specialist, service technician, dietary cook, service technician for wind turbine engineering, Interior design consultant (Chamber of Industry and Commerce, IHK)	e.g. Bachelor Professional*, agriculturalist (master craftsman), master chef, restaurant supervisor (master craftsman), electrician technician (master craftsman)	e.g. Bachelor Professional* agricultural engineering, technician, food technology technician, building systems engineering technician	e.g. Bachelor Professional*, agricultural business economist—accounting, certified senior business specialist, industry specialist, media and publishing specialist, accountant

* may be used exclusively or with previous designation since end of 2020.





3 Formal offers as part of upgrading training

DQR 7	
Advanced upgrading training	Academic course of study leading to a master's degree at a university / university of applied sciences
e.g. Master Professional*, Technical business management specialist, Commercial management business specialist, Certified vocational training specialist*	e.g. Master of Science (M. Sc.) Agricultural Engineering, M.Sc. Food Technology, M.Sc. Business Administration, M.Sc. Green Electronics

DQR 8
Doctorate at an institute of higher education
e.g. Doctor of Agricultural Sciences (Dr. agr.), Doctor of Economics (Dr. oec.), Doctor of Nutritional Science (Dr. oec. troph.), Doctor of Engineering (Dr. Ing.)

* may be used exclusively or with previous designation since end of 2020.



4 Other formal offers

DQR 3-6

Retraining: Training for an occupation other than the occupation previously trained for and practised

- ▶ for health or labour market-related reasons
- ▶ usually reduces the duration of training by one third

Obtaining school and vocational qualifications via the second-chance route

- ▶ alongside work or full time
- ▶ also possible to acquire higher education entrance qualification (= upper secondary school-leaving certificate)

Acquiring partial qualifications

- ▶ Possible to sit final examination with the Chamber following multiple partial qualifications

Academic continuing education at institutions of higher education and research institutions

- ▶ Follows on from an initial vocational qualification and a period of occupational practice
- ▶ Is targeted at employed persons and builds on professional experience



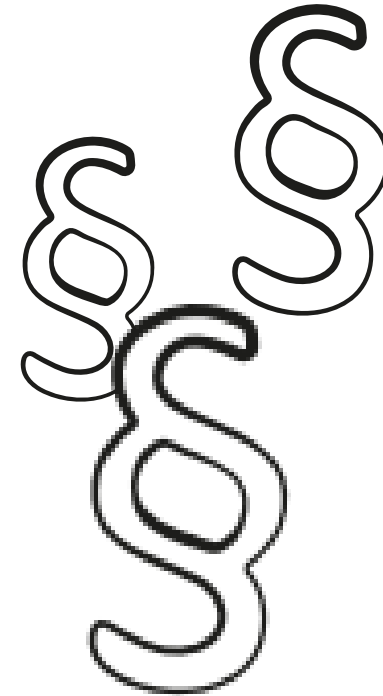


5 Statutory regulations

Vocational Training Act amendment (2020)

Introduction of more transparent further training levels:

- ▶ In order to achieve
 - ▶ **DQR 5:** Time frame of at least 400 hours, admission after achieving DQR 4
Evidence of consolidation/adding to existing competencies
 - ▶ **DQR 6:** Time frame of at least 1200 hours, admission after achieving DQR 4
Evidence of ability to take on leadership and management tasks
 - ▶ **DQR 7:** Time frame of at least 1600 hours, admission after achieving DQR 6
Evidence of ability to responsibly manage organisations, to handle new, complex tasks and problems, development of processes and products.
- ▶ Creation of examination provisions for vocational upskilling
- ▶ Referencing of relevant qualifications to the German qualification framework
- ▶ Comparability of vocational and academic qualifications



6 Financing

Costs and benefits of continuing professional education

Costs

- ▶ Since both individuals and businesses as well as government and society benefit, one third of the funding is provided by each of these stakeholders (mixed financing)
- ▶ Numerous government funding programmes, particularly in the area of new technologies.

Benefits to state and society

- ▶ Positive effects on economic growth, technical advancement and employment
- ▶ This leads to a rise in tax revenues and a fall in social expenditure
- ▶ Increase in international economic competitiveness, including against the background of the skilled worker shortage, demographic change and digitalisation.



6 Financing

Costs and benefits of continuing professional education

Benefits to businesses

- ▶ **Economic:** positive effects on economic performance of companies in terms of:
 - ▶ Productivity
 - ▶ Quality
 - ▶ Innovation in the workplace
 - ▶ Extent of employment
 - ▶ Future viability of the company with regard to technical progress and increasing globalisation
- ▶ **Social**
 - ▶ Greater employee satisfaction
 - ▶ Loyalty to the business

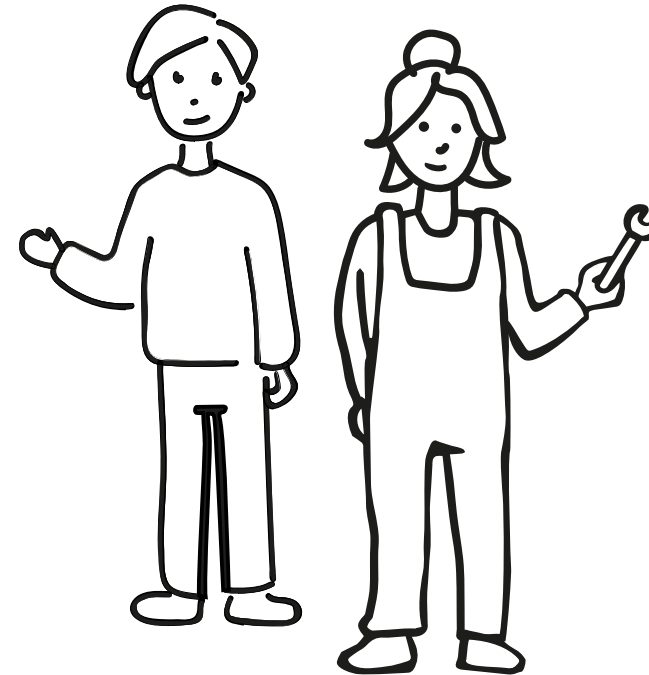


6 Financing

Costs and benefits of continuing professional education

Benefits to individuals/employees

- ▶ Positive effects on:
 - ▶ Income
 - ▶ Employment
 - ▶ Professional and personal development
 - ▶ Health
 - ▶ Work satisfaction and therefore life satisfaction
- ▶ Unlocking an individual's potential for professional development
- ▶ Staying employable



7 Non-formal continuing education: the provider market

Who is permitted to offer continuing education? Who provides the accreditation?

- ▶ Large companies organise over half of the continuing education events
- ▶ There are also more than 20,000 providers, e.g.:
 - ▶ Public providers
 - ▶ Universities and research institutes
 - ▶ Churches
 - ▶ Chambers
 - ▶ Trade unions
 - ▶ Employer associations
 - ▶ Foundations and welfare organisations
 - ▶ Commercial private training providers (28% in 2025)
- ▶ A distinction is made between public sector regulated and funded offers/public sector non-regulated, non-funded offers
- ▶ For offers in the funded sector, authorization by state institutions or Chambers is generally required (time-limited: providers 5 years, measures 3 years)
- ▶ Certification of the quality management system is generally not required, however is common, e.g. in accordance with ISO 9000 ff. or ISO 29990
- ▶ Examination and certification by private providers, in the case of ISO standards accredited by the Deutsche Akkreditierungsstelle, DAkKS (the national accreditation body of the Federal Republic of Germany)





8 Participation in continuing education

Numerous funding programmes
for the purpose of occupational
advancement

About **€ 1.08 billion** of funding for
occupational advancement in 2024 (approval)

In 2024, funding was approved for occupational
advancement for **189.691** people*



State
(Federal Government,
federal states, local
government authorities)

Expenses often cannot be clearly
distinguished

Funding for **320,216** enrolments in
continuing vocational training measures in
accordance with SGB II and SGB III in 2024

*<https://www-genesis.destatis.de/datenbank/online/statistic/21421/table/21421-0001>



8 Participation in continuing education

€ 46.4 bn = total investment by
business in 2022*

of which
€ 24,4 bn
was direct costs

of which
€ 22 bn
was indirect costs



Businesses

44% of German companies
participated in continuing education in
2024 (by covering the costs and/or
releasing employees)

In pandemic-impacted 2020 just 34%

97% of large businesses and
34% of micro businesses participated in 2024

29% of employees participated in
continuing education measures in
2022

* <https://www.iwkoeln.de/studien/susanne-seyda-sabine-koehne-finster-thomas-schleiermacher-investitionsvolumen-auf-hochststand.html>





8 Participation in continuing education

52% of the adult population
(18–64) participated in continuing education
in 2022



48% of the adult population participated in
company-based continuing education in 2022

The participation rate in individual
occupationally related continuing
education was **8%** in 2022

Individuals

Participation rises significantly in line
with school-leaving certificate or
training qualification

80,016 vocational upskilling
qualifications in 2024



Further information

This presentation, further presentations and information on German vocational education and training and international VET cooperation are all available on our website at:

www.govet.international

Sources

- ▶ BIBB Data Report ([link](#))
- ▶ VET Report BMBFSFJ ([link](#))
- ▶ KMK ([link](#))
- ▶ BMFTR Data Portal ([link](#))
- ▶ Destatis statistics on VET ([link](#))



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