GO:VET
German Office for International Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training

Certification, accreditation and recognition in the German vocational education and training system

VET in Germany

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German Office for International Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training

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Contents

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1. Definitions
2. Reasons for the certification of individuals
3. Certification in the German vocational education and training system
4. Relevance to German international VET cooperation (iBBZ)

1. Definitions

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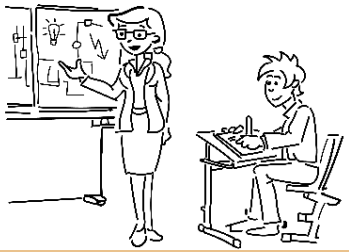
Certification

Individuals

- Checking and authentication of technical competencies and qualifications of individuals, ensuring conformity with the relevant underlying certification programme.



Measures

- Checking and confirming that training measures conform to a specified standard.

Organisations

- Checking and confirming that an organisation's structures and processes conform to a specified standard

- **In the context of initial VET the term is rarely used in Germany.**

1. Definitions

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Accreditation

- Approval, from an accreditation body, for organisations to carry out certifications (certification bodies)
- Germany's national accreditation body is the German Accreditation Body (DAkkS, see Home – DAkkS – Deutsche Akkreditierungsstelle). Since 1 January 2010, all EU member states have had to appoint a single national accreditation body.
- Accreditation confirms that certification bodies are able to carry out their work competently in accordance with the requirements of internationally applicable standards, legal principles and relevant regulations.
  It always refers to a specific scope of application".

DAkkS
Deutsche Akkreditierungsstelle

1. Definitions

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Recognition

- Establishing that a foreign professional qualification is legally equivalent to a German professional qualification.
- A recognition procedure is usually completed for the professional recognition of individual qualifications.
- The recognition process is always based on a specific German reference occupation.
- Some qualifications from specific countries are automatically recognised based on international agreements.

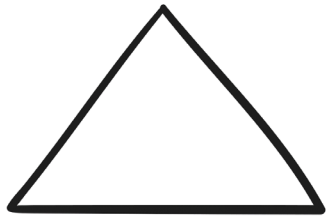
2. Reasons for the certification of individuals

Legal requirements

Government

Labour market

Employers



Employees

Ensuring quality

2. Reasons for the certification of individuals

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Legal requirements – examples

- Regulated professions
- Practising of a craft trade which requires a licence
- Specific technical activities in the craft trades
- Tasks undertaken by experts
- Immigration to Germany

2. Reasons for the certification of individuals

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Impacts on the labour market

- Transparency and mobility
- Opportunities for advancement
  - Salary category grouping in the public sector
  - Collective bargaining agreements
  - Individual company-based regulations
  - Opportunity for higher-level vocational education and training (upgrading training)

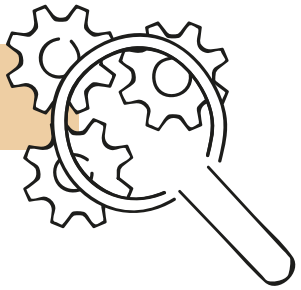
2. Reasons for the certification of individuals

Certification is a tool for increasing the quality of initial and continuing VET

Regulatory requirements

- Government standards
- Negotiated by policymakers
- Involvement of social partners
- Options for monitoring and intervention by stakeholders

Quality management systems



- Compulsory or voluntary
- Compliance with standards
- Transparency

Source: BIBB 2019

3. Certification in the German VET system

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Two basic procedures

3.1 Certification based on regulatory requirements

- State examinations
- Examination by the competent body based on legal/ statutory requirements

3.2 Certification by certified/accredited organisations in the context of quality management systems

- Based on legal requirements
- Based on market requirements
- Voluntarily

3. Certification in the German VET system

Two basic procedures

Certification

3.1

...based on regulatory requirements

- State examinations
- Examination by the competent body based on legal/statutory requirements

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… by certified/accredited organisations in the context of quality management systems

- Based on legal requirements
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- Voluntarily

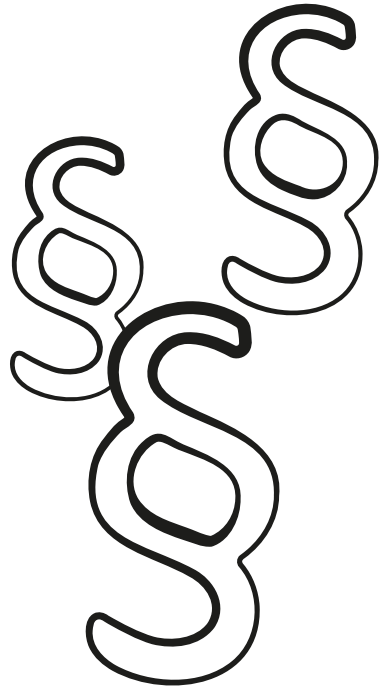
3. Certification in the German VET system

3.1 Certification based on regulatory requirements

This is the common approach in the German VET system for examinations in the context of initial training and upgrading training.
The examinations which take place are either state examinations or examinations through the “competent body”.

The following are determined by law or through regulation:

- Responsibility:
  - Examination regulation
  - Examination organisation
- Examination board
- Examination requirements and admissions
- Procedures and processes
- Best practices



3. Certification in the German VET system

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Examples of state examinations

Occupation	Training or further training	Regulatory requirements
General nurse	Initial VET	Law concerning nursing professions - Training and Examination Regulations for the Nursing Professions (PflAPrV)
Chemical technical assistant	Initial VET	Regulations in federal state law
State-certified technician	Advanced vocational training	Regulations in federal state law
State-certified business specialist	Advanced vocational training	Regulations in federal state law

3. Certification in the German VET system

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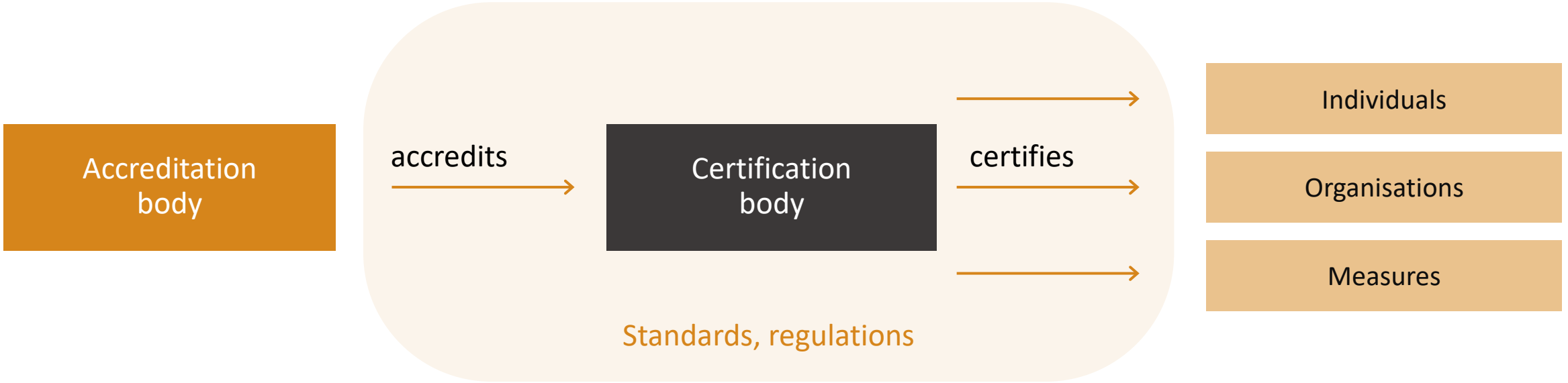
Examples of examinations conducted by the competent body

Occupation	Training or further training	Regulatory requirements
Vocational training in the dual system	Initial VET	Vocational Training Act (BBiG), Crafts and Trades Regulation Code (HwO), training regulations, Recommendations from the BIBB board Competent bodies: Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHK), Chambers of Crafts and Trades (HwK), other chambers establish examination boards
Master craftspersons	Advanced vocational training	Crafts and Trades Regulation Code, legal regulations of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK), master craftsperson examination boards are state examination authorities at the headquarters of the chambers of crafts and trades. The latter are consulted when the examination boards are established.
Business economist, IHK Business economist under the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code	Advanced vocational training	BBiG, HwO, Federal Office of Justice regulations

3. Certification in the German VET system

3.2 Certification by certified/accredited organisations in the context of quality management systems



3. Certification in the German VET system

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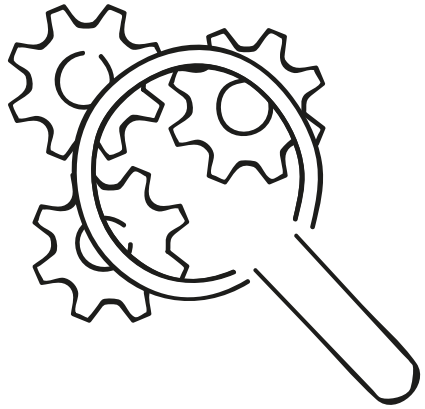
3.2 Certification by certified/accredited organisations in the context of quality management systems based on legal requirements

Examples:

- Accreditation and licensing ordinance for employment promotion (AZAV) of the Federal Employment Agency. Since 2012, the Deutsche Akkreditierungsstelle (Dakks) has accredited “expert bodies”. These first certify the provider in accordance with AZAV requirements and then the relevant individual measures.
- Due to building inspection regulations, welding work in steel construction must be carried out by certified companies and certified skilled workers. The basis for this is a comprehensive series of DIN-EN standards. In vehicle construction, these same standards are not binding but are demanded by the market.



3. Certification in the German vocational education and training system

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Voluntary certification by certified/accredited organisations in the context of quality management systems

For non-government funded continuing training offers, whose participants receive no financial support or non-cash benefits, there are no legally binding stipulations in terms of quality assurance.

Quality assurance certificates however remain an important marketing tool for providers and have become a criterion for those interested in continuing vocational education training when making their decisions.

- Quality management systems have also become accepted outside the publicly funded sector (2017 Continuing Training Monitor: 80 % with QM system, 52 % with certification)
- There are a large number of QM systems for continuing education and training
- Cost is the reason given for not using QM systems

Source: BIBB 2017 Continuing Training Monitor

4. Relevance to international VET cooperation (iBBZ)

- Use of best practice
- Choice of certification procedure
  - Legal requirements in the partner country
  - Certification with/without cooperation partner
  - Interests of the partner organisation
  - Costs and financing!
- Impact on graduate opportunities in the labour market
- Impact on potential labour migration
  - Germany:
    - Only qualifications recognised by the state in the partner country can go through the recognition procedure
    - In some circumstances, certificates from chambers of commerce abroad (AHKs) make residence permits possible.
  - Requirements of international employers

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