



Postsecondary Vocational Education and Training in Germany Strengths, Challenges and Recommendations

STRENGTHS

- The social partners are extensively engaged in the system.
- Policy leadership is strong with a clear division of responsibilities.
- Smooth school to work transition provides a strong basis for future upskilling.
- Labour market outcomes of advanced vocational examinations and Fachschule programmes are strong.
- The advanced vocational exams effectively link upskilling to recognition of prior learning.
- Fachschule programmes have a recognised place in the system, with a clear value both for students and employers.
- Postsecondary VET programmes are well-articulated with upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) providing avenues of progression attractive to students as well as meeting labour market demand.
- The government has been actively opening up avenues of progression from vocational to academic education.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Despite recent reforms, the route from postsecondary VET to academic higher education remains rarely travelled, and not all the obstacles on the route have yet been removed.
 - *Encourage credit transfer arrangements that facilitate the transition from postsecondary VET to academic higher education.*
- Weak information on the quality and price of preparatory courses for professional exams combined with very little external quality control means that student choice of preparatory courses is difficult, and incentives for providers to provide good courses at a modest cost are insufficient.
 - *Collect and disseminate better information from preparatory course providers on course quality and costs. Encourage industry self-regulation of preparatory courses to ensure high and consistent standards.*
- The regulation of exam quality varies greatly in Germany, and there is limited evidence of adherence to clear standards.
 - *Explore the option of a framework regulation and clear standards for all examinations, to support their quality.*
- Rapid changes in technology and labour market demand, and somewhat inflexible employment arrangements, make it challenging for *Fachschulen* to keep their workforce skills up-to-date.
 - *Länder should seek to allow Fachschulen the flexibility to employ more part-time teachers and trainers who also work in industry. Full-time teachers and trainers should be encouraged to spend some time in industry throughout their careers to sustain and update their knowledge and skills.*
- Workplace training is not extensively employed in *Fachschulen* despite its many potential advantages.
 - *Fachschulen should make some form of workplace training a mandatory part of their curriculum. This could be linked to students' project work. They should also develop a framework linking workplace experience to the school curriculum.*
- While *Fachschulen* provide qualifications of value, the evidence base on skills needs, and mechanisms to respond to that evidence, could be improved.
 - *Further strengthen the evidence on demand for Fachschule provision and encourage greater flexibility for Fachschulen to respond to that demand.*

FURTHER INFORMATION

Increasingly countries look beyond secondary school to more advanced qualifications to provide the skills needed in many of the fastest growing technical and professional jobs in OECD economies. The OECD study, *Skills beyond School*, is addressing the range of policy questions arising, including funding and governance, matching supply and demand, quality assurance and equity and access. The study will build on the success of the previous OECD study of vocational education and training *Learning for Jobs* which examined policy through 17 country reviews and a comparative report. The study also forms part of the horizontal OECD Skills Strategy (OECD, 2012).¹

Full country policy reviews are being conducted in Austria, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Israel, Korea, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (England), and the United States (with case studies of Florida, Maryland and Washington State). Shorter exercises leading to an OECD country commentary will be undertaken in Belgium (Flanders), Canada, Iceland, Romania, Spain, Sweden and in Northern Ireland and Scotland in the United Kingdom. Background reports will be prepared in all these countries, and in France and Hungary.

[A Skills beyond School Review of Germany](#), OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training (Fazekas, M. and S. Field) was published on 5 July 2013.

Further information about the policy review and reports on VET systems in other countries is available on the OECD website www.oecd.org/education/vet

1. OECD (2012), *Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives: A Strategic Approach to Skills Policies*, OECD Publishing. Doi: [10.1787/9789264177338-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264177338-en)