# *Austria*

**Vocational Education and Training (VET) for learners with special educational needs**

The Apprenticeship training (Lehre, Lehrlingsausbildung, DUAL VET or two places of learning) constitutes a particularly practice-oriented variant of VET where the apprentices spend some 80% of their apprenticeship at the company and 20% at the part-time vocational school for the relevant occupation. About 40% of young people in Austria are trained in a legally recognised apprenticeship trade, acquiring a full professional qualification in this way. Training in an apprenticeship trade is open to all young people who have completed their nine years of compulsory schooling. Depending on the apprenticeship trade chosen, the period of training is between two and four years.

The target groups of Integrative IVET (Integrative Berufsausbildung, IBA) are mostly young people with special pedagogical support needs at the end of compulsory school, young people with or without a negative lower secondary school qualification, as well as other young people who need special support to complete the specific apprenticeship training.

The total number of apprentices is 128.078, out of which 5.507 are in Integrative (inclusive) IVET (IBA):

* 4.000 are in the “prolonged apprenticeship period” pillar, i.e. the part-time vocational school curriculum and occupational-profile are the same as for the regular apprenticeship programme except that learners with SEN have more time to acquire the necessary skills and competences;
* 1.507 are in the “acquisition of a partial qualification” pillar, i.e. they are in special settings for both the occupational profile and the part-time vocational school curriculum.

**Source:**

Helmut Dornmayr, Berufseinmündung von AbsolventInnen der Integrativen Berufsausbildung. Eine Analyse der Beschäftigungsverläufe. ibw-Forschungsbericht Nr. 167, Wien, April 2012

**Transition from School to Employment in Austria**

Career planning is incorporated in the curriculum for students' grade 7 and 8. Key elements of career planning are offering crucial information and developing the students' individual, social, theoretical and practical competences regarding their future integration into employment. Co-operation with parents, external agencies and employers is highly taken into account.

Career planning is an overall principal in secondary education and it can be carried out by offering separate lectures or in integrated into different appropriate lectures.

A pre-vocational year for SEN – students can be established in special schools. The young people are prepared to meet the challenges of every day and working life by receiving in-depth general education as well as theoretical and practical education in order to develop their individual skills and cross competences. Pre-vocational education is based on the student's individual preconditions and it aims at increasing his/her individual and professional abilities, developing his/her creativity and the ability for decision making, making use of his/her knowledge and skills and facilitating his/her participation in a lifelong learning process.

Co-operation and collaboration of all key actors inside and outside school is given high priority.

General pre-vocational year: SEN – students may also attend an inclusive/integrative setting at general pre-vocational school (Polytechnische Schule). Up to date these classes are established on the basis of trial projects but they are supposed to get a legal framework in the near future. Usually SEN- students are taught according to the curriculum of the SEN – pre-vocational year. In many cases a kind of "individual curriculum" has to be developed which in general is a combination of the SEN and the general curriculum. These combined curricula may also be applied to students in special schools.

Counselling service for students: Counsellors are specially trained teachers whose task is supporting students, schools, parents and other key actors offering:

* General information on pathways of education and training - in schools, at parents' meetings…
* Individual counselling of students, parents and teachers during the transition period from school to employment
* Co-operation with other counselling services

Clearing is provided for SEN students by external services. It is a process that focuses on the identification of the individual student's abilities and needs concerning his/her future professional life. This process is carried out by experts in close co-operation with the student, his/her parents and the school. The main task of Clearing is to show realistic professional perspectives based on individual assessment, counselling and coaching.

In Austria, vocational training (apprenticeship) is provided in a dual form: adolescents work in companies and learn their occupation there practically and goal-oriented. In addition, they receive about 10 weeks of fundamental theoretical training at a vocational school.

Pupils with special educational needs can take the final training exam after a longer apprenticeship (prolonged by max. 2 years) or go for a partial qualification. In the case of a partial qualification, which means one to three years of training, adolescents learn parts of a skilled trade in their training company and at vocational school. The contents, goals and time of the partial qualification are individually defined.

This form of inclusive occupational training goes hand in hand with the inclusive occupational training assistance.

**Sources:**

<http://www.cisonline.at/index.php?id=81&L=1>

<http://www.european-agency.org/country-information/austria/>