

## Austrian apprenticeship training in a nutshell

- Apprenticeship training is part of the formal education system of Austria. It is a distinct education stream at upper secondary level and attracts around 40% of an age cohort. The average starting age is 16,9 years (minimum 15 years).
- Apprenticeship training is possible in around 200 occupational profiles in practically all branches of the economy. The occupational profiles are decreed by the Ministry of Labour and Economy based on an “advice” on the specific content negotiated between the “social partners” (trade unions, labour chambers representing the employee side and Economic chamber and Agriculture Chamber representing employers).
- These occupational profiles are national standards and as such binding for the training companies. They also form the basis for the curricula of the vocational schools that apprentices attend part-time.
- The training period is between 2-4 years, depending on the occupation.
- The apprenticeship is based on a contract between the apprentice/the parents and the training company. The payment of apprentices depends on the occupation and the branch and is part of collective wage bargaining.
- Apprenticeship training is also referred to as the “dual system”.

First, because there are two places of learning: the training company, where apprentices spend around 80% of their time and the vocational school which accounts for around 20% (either one day a week or “blocked”, depending on the occupation).

The second aspect of “duality” refers to the governance of the system: there is an institutionalised cooperation between the government and the world of work, represented by the social partners. The regional apprenticeship offices of the Economic Chambers accredit training companies, organise the final exam and award the certificates. In doing so, they act on the basis of delegated authority from the Ministry of Labour and Economy.
- ibw Austria, a research and development institute with links to the Economic Chambers, acts as a “back-office”: it monitors apprenticeship training through empirical research and reporting. At system level, it supports the social partners in the development of occupational profiles and contributes to the quality assurance of the final exams. Furthermore, ibw offers a range of services to companies including training guidelines for different apprenticeship profiles or aptitude tests that help companies in the recruitment of suitable apprentices.