



## National context report

Germany



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**TourX CoVE for the Tourism Industry**



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## VET System in Germany

The vocational education and training process in Germany is flexible and offers a wide range of entry, training and further education opportunities. Trainees, mostly in the dual vocational training system, and students pursuing an academic degree at universities can enter the system depending on their level of education and professional interests and obtain their professional qualifications through various examinations and certifications. These enable direct entry into the labour market, but also numerous further training pathways to develop professionally and reach higher positions.

### 1. Structure of vocational training in the dual system in Germany

Dual vocational training in the hotel and hospitality industry in Germany is a practice- orientated system that combines theory and practice. It offers trainees the opportunity to acquire the necessary specialised knowledge both in the company (practice) and at vocational school (theory).

Here is an overview of the structure:

#### Training locations/ mentoring:

Dual training in Germany essentially involves **2 places of learning**. The company is responsible for imparting the practical learning content and the vocational school for acquiring the theoretical knowledge.

**The company** is responsible for the practical, job-specific training. All necessary skills and knowledge are taught in order to develop the ability to act professionally and to gain initial practical experience. In the companies, the trainers are responsible for training the trainees. In order to be employed as a trainer in Germany, it is obligatory to complete an additional qualification, which is examined by the relevant chambers. This increases the quality of the training and confirms suitability as a trainer.

**The vocational school provides** the theoretical knowledge that is specifically tailored to the training occupation and is specified by the framework curriculum. The framework curriculum of the vocational schools is drawn up in close coordination with the vocational training framework curriculum. The lessons cover vocational and general educational content and are taught by specialised teachers.

#### Vocational training framework curriculum

**The vocational training framework curriculum** is defined by the responsible federal ministries for each occupational profile. It serves as a guide for trainers and trainees and describes the training content. The vocational training framework curriculum lists all the knowledge, skills and abilities that trainees are expected to acquire during their training.

#### Duration of vocational training

Initial training in the hospitality industry comprises **2 or 3-year vocational training programmes** in Germany and varies depending on the desired occupational profile. The exact duration of the respective training occupation is defined in the vocational training framework curriculum, which is applied throughout Germany.

#### Examination

After about half of the training period, the level of knowledge is tested in an **intermediate examination** organised by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce or the Chamber of Crafts.

Vocational training ends with a **final examination** organised and conducted by the relevant chambers (Chamber of Industry and Commerce or Chamber of Crafts). The examination includes a practical and a theoretical part. After passing the examination, the trainees receive a recognised vocational qualification.

#### Involved institutions

##### The training company

The **training company** is the central location for practical training. Here, the trainees are directly involved in the company's work processes, carry out activities in the workplace under various conditions and learn the necessary skills.

##### Qualified trainers

In the companies, **qualified trainers** are responsible for imparting skills and knowledge. They instruct trainees and teach them the necessary practical skills. The trainer plans the implementation of the training in the company, supervises and supports the trainee, coordinates with the vocational school and the chambers and evaluates the practical performance of the trainees.

##### Vocational trainees

**Trainees** benefit from the cooperation between the companies and the vocational schools and learn the necessary professional and theoretical knowledge. Their duties include taking part in practical training in the company and theoretical training at the vocational school. They are actively involved in the company and acquire skills under the guidance of trainers. They keep a report booklet to document their learning progress, which must be submitted to the relevant chamber.

##### Vocational school

The **vocational school** teaches the theoretical basics required for the chosen training occupation and supplements the practical training in the company. Subject-related and general educational content is taught. The learning content is specified by the framework curriculum. Lessons take place either as block lessons (block of lessons lasting several weeks) or on fixed days per week.

##### Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHK) and Chambers of Crafts (HWK)

The **chambers** have a supervisory and regulatory function in vocational training. They ensure that training is carried out properly and that training standards are adhered to. The IHK is responsible for commercial and technical professions and the HWK for skilled trades, e.g. in the kitchen or bakery

sector. The agreed training contracts are registered by the companies with the relevant chamber. Their tasks include advising training companies and trainees and monitoring the quality of training. The chambers organise and conduct the examinations and issue the final certificates.

### Professional organisations and guilds

**Professional associations and guilds** represent the interests of the respective industry and often support and promote vocational training. In co-operation with the chambers, they develop and update training content and examination requirements in order to meet the current requirements of the respective sectors. They support training companies through regular training courses and information events.

### **Qualification levels**

In vocational training in Germany, there are different **qualification levels** that can be achieved depending on the training and further vocational training after the vocational training programme. These qualifications are based on the **German Qualifications Framework (DQR)**, which comprises eight levels.

Levels 3 to 7 are particularly relevant for dual vocational training:

#### **Level 3:**

- completion of a two-year vocational training programme - for simple jobs (e.g. skilled worker in the hospitality industry).

#### **Level 4:**

- Completion of a three-year vocational training programme - the standard qualification in most occupations (e.g. cook, hotel management assistant, tourism management assistant).

#### **Level 5:**

- Professional specialist through initial further vocational training - specialisation in specific fields (e.g. hospitality industry specialist).

#### **Level 6:**

- Master hotel specialist, business administrator or business administrator (IHK/HWK) - higher qualifications with management tasks, equivalent to a Bachelor's degree (e.g. certified master hospitality, Bachelor Professional)

#### **Level 7:**

- Certified business economist or technician - highest professional further training, comparable to a Master's degree, often in management positions.

#### **Level 8:**

- Academic training (doctorate) - doctoral degree at universities and universities of applied sciences, unusual in vocational training and mainly relates to academic careers.

### **Governing bodies**

The system of **governing bodies** in vocational training in Germany consists of several players who work together to ensure the quality and organisation of training. This close co-operation results in practical and high-quality training.

The following bodies are involved in supervision:

#### Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHK) and Chambers of Crafts (HWK)

They monitor training, register training contracts, organise examinations, advise companies and trainees and offer further training courses.

#### Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)

The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training develops and updates training regulations. The institution works on a statutory basis within the framework of the Federal Government's education policy and co-operates closely with the Federal Government, the Länder and the social partners. In order to strengthen vocational education and training, the Federal Institute conducts vocational education and training research and advises politicians and industry.

#### Vocational schools and school supervisory authorities

Vocational schools teach the theoretical part of vocational training. The school supervisory authorities monitor the implementation of the curricula and ensure the quality of teaching. In co-operation with ministries and chambers, they are involved in the development of curricula and support the further training of teachers.

#### Social partners (employers' organisations and trade unions)

The social partners are involved in the co-design of training regulations and participate in examination boards. They negotiate collective agreements that include training allowances and working conditions for trainees.

#### Professional organisations and guilds

They represent the interests of specific sectors and trades. As part of vocational training, they promote industry-specific training quality, advise companies and organise examinations in cooperation with the chambers.

### **Process of vocational education and training in Germany**

In Germany, a wide variety of vocational education and training programmes are available. The vocational education and training system in Germany offers various options depending on school-leaving qualifications, individual interests and personal requirements.

As a first step, careers guidance enables pupils to familiarise themselves with different job profiles during their time at school. Internships in companies, careers counselling services and careers information days present training opportunities and help young people to choose an occupation.

#### Overview of vocational training programmes:

**Vocational training** combines practical training in a company with theoretical training at a vocational school. Trainees obtain a recognised vocational qualification at DQR level 3 and 4.

**Full-time school-based vocational training** is often used in social, artistic and medical professions. There is no in-company training, only internships are used to apply what has been learnt. Students complete their training with a state-recognised vocational qualification.

The **dual study programme** offers a combination of university studies and practical work experience. It follows the approaches of vocational training and enables an academic degree with practical experience (level DQR 6)

**Academic education** aims to achieve a qualification at DQR 6 - 8 level by studying at a university of applied sciences or a university.

#### The vocational training programme:

Entry into vocational training starts with an **application process**. The young people apply to the desired companies that offer training in the respective occupation. In a selection process, the companies decide which person is a good match for the requirements of the job profile and the level of training content. After a successful selection, a **training contract** is concluded between the company and the trainee. The training contract regulates the **most important legal framework conditions** for the training relationship. The most important points are the duration of the training, the training location, the name of the vocational school, the probationary period, the amount of the training allowance, the regular working hours and the holidays entitlement. The **obligations of the trainee and the trainer** are also listed as well as notice periods, registration for intermediate and final examinations and other regulations. The contract is submitted to the relevant chamber, checked and registered.

A trainee must fulfil certain obligations in a training relationship in order to achieve the required training objectives.

These include in particular:

- a learning obligation
- Mandatory participation in vocational school lessons, examinations and training programmes
- protection of company secrets
- compliance with company regulations
- a duty of care
- and keeping a written training report

During the training period, training takes place **in the company and at the vocational school**. Trainees attend the vocational school either in **block courses** or on **fixed days** of the week. In the case of block training, theoretical knowledge is taught at the vocational school for several consecutive weeks. In the case of training on fixed days of the week, trainees generally attend vocational school two days a week and complete the practical part of their training at the company three days a week. This gives the trainee a balanced basic vocational training with theoretical and practical knowledge.

After about half of the training period, the level of knowledge is tested in an **intermediate examination**.

The vocational training programme ends with a **final examination**. The examination consists of a practical and a theoretical part. The relevant chamber is responsible for organising and conducting the examination.

After successfully completing their training, trainees receive their **state-recognised vocational qualification**, which also includes the certificate from the vocational school and the examination certificate.

After successfully completing their training, graduates can **enter the labour market directly** or take advantage of **further training opportunities**.

### **Career entry or further training opportunities**

After completing their vocational training, graduates have several options:

#### Direct professional entry

Many graduates decide to enter the labour market directly after their training and work in the profession they have learned. Vocational training is strongly practice-orientated and optimally prepares graduates for the demands of everyday working life.

#### Further training and specialisation

There are numerous advanced training programmes under the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) that build on vocational training and provide higher professional qualifications, e.g. business administrator, business economist or master craftsman.

If you want to develop your skills further, you can acquire the title of business administrator, master craftsman or state-certified technician through further vocational training. These qualifications are focussed on specific professional areas and qualify for managerial positions.

#### Dual study programme

After the apprenticeship, there is also the option of completing a dual study programme. This combines academic study content at a university with practical work in a company. The end result is a Bachelor's degree and, in some cases, a vocational qualification. This training programme is also available to learners for initial training.

#### Technical colleges and advanced training programmes

Technical colleges offer advanced training programmes that are particularly suitable for experienced professionals. These courses end with a state-recognised qualification, e.g. as a state-certified technician or state-recognised educator.

## **Market needs in tourism sector in Germany**

The tourism industry in Germany is a central part of the economy and offers a large number of jobs in various sectors such as catering, hotels, transport, leisure and recreation and event management. The tourism labour market has undergone significant changes in recent years due to technological developments, demographic change and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is also influencing the demand for certain skills and qualifications in the federal state of Brandenburg.

## 1. Current demand for skills and qualifications

- Hospitality and service skills

Employees with experience in guest services are particularly welcome, as demand has increased in many regions of Brandenburg due to the rise in domestic and nature tourism.

- Digital expertise and technical know-how

With increasing digitalisation, digital skills are more in demand than ever in the tourism industry. Tourism companies need professionals who are familiar with booking systems, data analyses, online marketing and social media. The trend towards digital platforms, automated processes and virtual experiences has increased the demand for experts in IT and e-commerce.

- Sustainability and environmental management

The trend towards sustainable travel is strong in Germany. Companies are therefore increasingly looking for specialists with knowledge of sustainable

tourism management. They need to be able to develop environmentally friendly business strategies, design sustainable travel offers and optimise the carbon footprint of tourism.

- Language and intercultural skills

As Germany is an international tourism hotspot, foreign language skills are essential, especially in English, but also in other languages such as Polish (which is especially in demand in Brandenburg), Spanish, French, Russian and Chinese. Intercultural competence is also important in order to meet the needs of a global clientele.

- Management and leadership skills

Managers in tourism need sound knowledge of business administration and specific tourism topics in order to master the challenges of a globalised and technology-driven industry.

## 2. Shortage of skilled labour in key areas

- Gastronomy and hotel industry

There is a particularly noticeable shortage of skilled workers in the gastronomy and hotel industry. Especially during and after the pandemic, many workers left these professions due to insecure working conditions and low pay. The shortage of skilled labour is particularly evident in service, kitchen, hotel management and cleaning positions.

The difficult working conditions, shift work and irregular working hours have contributed to the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract and retain qualified professionals.

- Event and leisure management

With the increasing demand for individual and customised experiences in the field of leisure and event management, a shortage of skilled workers has



developed, especially for specialised event planners and project managers who can implement innovative and large-scale events.

### 3. New opportunities and trends

- Experience-orientated offers and niche market

Customised travel experiences and adventure tourism are also on the rise. There is a high demand for specialists who plan and offer customised trips for specific target groups, such as adventure, cultural or eco-tourists.

- Nature and camping tourism

Increased job opportunities are emerging in this segment as camping and outdoor tourism continue to be in high demand. The demand for specialised service staff and employees for the organisation and maintenance of camping facilities has increased.

- Environmental protection and sustainable tourism

The growing importance of sustainable travel is creating new job profiles in the field of environmental management and sustainable tourism. The qualifications include knowledge of environmental and climate protection measures, environmentally friendly infrastructure and sustainable resource utilisation in

tourism facilities

- Health tourism

The growing focus on wellness and health has led to health tourism gaining in importance. This opens up new opportunities for professionals working in the fields of spa and wellness management, fitness, medical care and prevention.

### 4. Conclusion

The tourism labour market in Germany is facing considerable challenges, but also offers great opportunities for qualified workers. Demand is primarily focused on digital and sustainable skills, while at the same time the shortage of skilled workers in the catering and hotel industry persists. New opportunities are emerging, particularly in nature and health tourism and in niche areas such as adventure tourism, where innovative concepts and specialised services are in demand.

In order to minimise the staff shortage, the industry is focusing on further training measures, the promotion of career changers and the recruitment of international specialists. Brandenburg's tourism strategy also provides for measures to improve working conditions, such as the introduction of flexible working hours and a better work-life balance, in order to increase the attractiveness of the industry in the long term

The tourism industry in Brandenburg therefore faces the challenge of not only closing the gaps, but also creating the qualifications and conditions to fulfil the growing demand for high-quality, service-oriented and sustainable tourism.

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