

3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence

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Policy Framework

Young people's entrepreneurial skills are developed in the context of formal education as well as non-formal education by means of a variety of public programmes and initiatives, but also by the private sector. The aim is to assist young people to develop entrepreneurial skills from an early age at school, in vocational training and at university. This is Germany's response to the [Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan](#) of the European Commission, which seeks to strengthen entrepreneurship education for young people.

Several documents by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder ([Kultusministerkonferenz](#)) provide a framework to foster young people's entrepreneurship competence in education. These include:

- Agreement on types of school and courses of education at lower secondary level ([Vereinbarung über die Schularten und Bildungsgänge im Sekundarbereich I](#)) dated 2 June 2006 . It says that preparation for employment and the working world is mandatory for all educational pathways.
- Framework agreement on vocational colleges ([Rahmenvereinbarung über die Berufsschule](#)) dated 20 September 2019. It says that one aim for vocational colleges is to offer an overview of educational and vocational development prospects including entrepreneurial independence and to support pupils in

planning their careers and future lives independently.

Formal learning

Incorporation of entrepreneurship competence into curricula

There is no national strategy for the development of entrepreneurship competence among young people. In the formal learning environment, entrepreneurial skills and business education are generally embedded in certain school subjects such as economics, politics, social science and labour studies. Due to the legislative powers of the federal states in the field of education, the situation varies from state to state. Examples:

- Economics/politics syllabus for [upper secondary level \(Sekundarstufe II\) pupils in Schleswig-Holstein](#)
- Economics/law syllabus for “[community schools](#)” in Thuringia (Thüringer Gemeinschaftsschule)
- [Economics syllabus for grammar schools \(Gymnasium\) in Baden-Württemberg](#)

Business education is also taught as part of [school projects](#) or programmes and competitions which are not part of regular classes.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research ([Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung](#), BMBF) funds the national Youth Start-Ups ([Jugend gründet](#)) competition. The competition is for school pupils and apprentices. They develop a business plan and guide their simulated business to success. The competition can be offered in schools as part of the curriculum (economics, career orientation, social studies, seminars). However, students may choose to participate in the competition outside of school. Since 2015, Jugend gründet and WHU – Otto Beisheim School of Management have run a [Startup Academy](#) that gives pupils a platform to learn the basics of starting a business from real business founders. BMBF also supports the economy quiz Competing on Economic Knowledge ([Wirtschaftswissen im Wettbewerb](#)) run by the [Junior Chamber International Germany](#) (Wirtschaftsjunioren Deutschland) in schools across Germany.

The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy ([Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie](#), BMWi) promotes a range of programmes to strengthen entrepreneurial skills of pupils, e.g.

- Entrepreneurial Spirit in Schools ([Unternehmergeist in die Schulen](#)). This programme helps strengthen entrepreneurial thinking and action among young people. Pupils can gain some practical experience in business projects and take responsibility for their own student companies. They are also offered information on initiatives that assist them in implementing business projects at school.
- The [programme JUNIOR – Wirtschaft erleben](#) gives upper and lower secondary school pupils across Germany a legal and organisational framework for founding student companies. It offers career guidance, helps pupils to gain key skills, promotes vocational training readiness and career opportunities among young people, and teaches business knowledge.

Start-up [BW@School](#) is a sub-project of the [Baden Württemberg campaign Start-up BW](#) that started in 2017. Activities include classes preparing for an interview with an entrepreneur together with their teacher. The project is supported by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Housing (Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Wohnungsbau Baden-Württemberg) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend und Sport).

An overview of how business education is embedded in specific school subjects can be found in the report on economic education at schools providing general education ([Wirtschaftliche Bildung an allgemein bildenden Schulen](#)) by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs

(Kultusministerkonferenz).

For more information on the state of play in entrepreneurship education in Germany, see the country report for Germany 2018/19 ([Länderbericht Deutschland 2018/19](#)) of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor.

In the field of vocational training, depending on the profession in question the curricula covers business administration, entrepreneurship and the basics of starting a business (e.g., in the [curriculum for retail service occupations](#)).

Higher education

Courses offered by universities also include entrepreneurship. In July 2017, there were 133 entrepreneurship professorships in Germany at public and private universities, especially in [North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria and Lower Saxony](#). Universities with study courses and programmes relating to entrepreneurship (education):

- TUM Entrepreneurship Education at TU Munich University ([Technische Universität München](#)),
- Research and Teaching Centre for Entrepreneurial Thinking and Behavior ([Forschungs- und Lehrzentrum für unternehmerisches Denken und Handeln](#)) at the University of Kassel with their Innovation! ideas workshop that provides an opportunity for students to build on their own ideas and plan and test them.
- Courses for student teachers at the chair of entrepreneurship and business education ([Lehrstuhl Entrepreneurship und Ökonomische Bildung](#)) at TU Dortmund University,
- Lectures in startup management and entrepreneurship at the Endowed Chair of Entrepreneurship ([Stiftungsprofessur Entrepreneurship](#)) at Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg
- [Courses in entrepreneurship education at Freie Universität Berlin and Charité university hospital Berlin](#)
- Master of Arts in Entrepreneurship at [SRH Berlin University of Applied Sciences](#)
- Master of Science in Entrepreneurship and SME Management at the University of Siegen ([Universität Siegen](#)),
- Master of Arts in Innopreneurship ([Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#)) at the University of Duisburg-Essen

In 2017, Bavaria introduced a programme to fund entrepreneurship education with a focus on digitalisation at several Bavarian universities. [The total budget](#) for the next years runs to 8.4 million euros.

See also the portal www.exist.de with further information about university- and research-based start-ups.

Assessment of learning outcomes

School pupils are generally given a report card (Zeugnis) after the first and second half of the school year documenting the level of skills and knowledge acquired. Often the report cards make mention of their learning style and social skills. Learning outcomes for school subjects in upper secondary education are defined in terms of standardised requirements for Abitur exams (Abitur = German upper secondary school diploma qualifying holders for university admission) (Einheitliche Prüfungsanforderungen in der Abiturprüfung) that are adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz). This also applies to subjects in the field of entrepreneurship and business education, such as [economics](#) or [social sciences and politics](#).

The recommendation of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs

(Kultusministerkonferenz) on recognising and grading non-formal learning achievements gained at lower secondary level ([Empfehlung zur Anerkennung und Bewertung einer außerunterrichtlich erbrachten Lernleistung in der Sekundarstufe I](#)) proposes that extracurricular activities and commitments, in particular traineeships and competition entries, can be recognised as equivalent to formal education if the activity or commitment is shown to have resulted in a learning achievement.

Apprentices and university students also receive a final certificate when finishing their vocational training (apprenticeship) or degree course.

Some universities offer certificates to students who have successfully completed business- and/or entrepreneurship-related courses, e.g.

- the certificate [uniENTREPRENEUR](#) at the University of Freiburg
- a [Business and Management certificate](#) at the University of Tübingen
- an [entrepreneurship certificate](#) at Saarland University ,
- a [workshop certificate and the CEDUS startup certificate](#) (CEDUS-Gründungszertifikat) at the Center for Entrepreneurship at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf.

Partnerships/Networks

Business and entrepreneurship education also happens through the [cooperation with partners outside of school](#) involving enterprises, youth services organisations or public authorities and others.

Networks such as [SCHULEWIRTSCHAFT](#) promote collaboration between schools and businesses across all school types and industries.

The cross-industry Young Entrepreneurs network (DIE JUNGEN UNTERNEHMER) running the Pupils in the Director's Chair ([Schüler im Chefsessel](#)) project since 1980. It gives school pupils a realistic insight into being an entrepreneur. The project is a competition for pupils at comprehensive schools, grammar schools and vocational colleges aged 15 and over. They spend a day shadowing an entrepreneur at their place of business. Pupils get to know the company and the employees, take part in consultations and customer meetings, and then write an essay on their experiences. The essays are rated by a regional panel of judges.

The project [startup@school](#) is carried out in several federal states ([BadenWürttemberg](#), [Rheinhausen](#), [Berlin](#)). The Innovations in Education association (Innovationen in der Bildung e.V.) cooperates with various partners such as the Chambers of Industry and Commerce (Industrie- und Handelskammern) in Saxony (Chemnitz), Rhineland-Palatinate ([Rheinhausen](#)) and Lower Saxony (Lüneburg-Wolfsburg). The aim is to teach the basics of economics and business administration.

Non-formal and informal learning

Outside of formal education, associations, initiatives and foundations aim to teach entrepreneurial skills. Non-school-based youth education (Jugendbildung), including science and technology education, helps to encourage young people to develop entrepreneurial and employment skills. Organisations in this respect include the state associations for science and technology-based youth education (Landesverbände für naturwissenschaftlich-technische Jugendbildung) and Technische Jugendfreizeit- und Bildungsgesellschaft (tjfbg) gGmbH, a non-profit organisation.

The consortium of junior-led organisations in Germany ([Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Juniorenfirmen Deutschland e.V.](#)

) teaches school pupils and apprentices about entrepreneurship and self-employment.

For more information on the role of youth work in entrepreneurial learning in Germany, cf. the European Union publication “[Taking the future into their own hands. Youth work and entrepreneurial learning](#)”

Recognition

To date, there is no nationwide system for recognising personal learning outcomes achieved in informal and non-formal settings. The most widely known qualitative portfolio system in Germany is ProfilPASS <https://www.profilpass.de/>. It helps document both formal qualifications from school and vocational training as well as competencies and skills gained in non-formal and informal learning environments. The ProfilPass for young people ([ProfilPass für junge Menschen](#)) website is aimed specifically at young people.

The [Valikom initiative](#) was funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung) from 2015 to 2018. The initiative aims to develop standards to determine vocational skills gained in the workplace and in non-formal settings by individuals with no formal vocational qualifications. [Funding \(2018-2020\)](#): approx. 10 million euros. The resulting validation system was introduced in November 2018 in 30 chambers of arts and crafts, trade and industry, and agriculture across Germany under the ValiKom Transfer project. By the end of 2019, 271 validation processes had been concluded.

The Action Alliance for International Recognition ([Aktionsbündnis Anerkennung International](#)) works to ensure the recognition by society of skills gained by young people during an international activity (youth exchanges, volunteer programmes, etc.). It brings together various bodies from civil society, social partners, educational institutions, the federal government, federal states and local authorities, education and youth policy agencies and industry as a single alliance. The Alliance supports exchanges and networking through campaigns and events and advertises the potential of international and European youth work for young people and society at large.

[Youthpass](#) is the European recognition tool for non-formal and informal learning under the Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme and the European Solidarity Corps (ESC). Young people and youth work experts use Youthpass to document and advertise the competences they gain by participating in youth mobility projects funded under the Erasmus+ programme and ESC. Youthpass is based around the [eight key competences for lifelong learning](#) that are uniform across Europe. In [2019 a total of 158,618 Youthpass certificates were issued to individuals working in 8,452 projects run by 4,866 organisations](#). Young people benefit in particular from developing social, foreign language and intercultural skills, as well as from learning personal initiative and gaining entrepreneurial experience. Youthpass is continuously monitored and developed on the basis of feedback so that participants can learn to become better judges of their own abilities. As a result, the Youthpass process encourages participants to take responsibility for their own learning and personal development – which also makes it a key tool for developing professional competences, too.

For more information on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning achievements in Germany, cf. also the country report for Germany, part of the [European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning](#).

The subject of non-formal and informal learning achievements is also covered in the Youth Wiki chapter on Education and Training, specifically the section “Validation of non-formal and informal learning”.

Educators support in entrepreneurship education

Target groups: Teachers at mainstream and vocational schools and colleges, vocational instructors, non-formal education providers, youth work experts

Access to continuing professional development

In Germany, continuing professional development (CPD) and adult education are regulated by law. The federal states are responsible for providing the necessary framework. Since the federal states carry responsibility for education, basic and advanced training for teachers is also regulated at the state level. Advanced teacher training is provided by advanced teacher training colleges in the federal states (Institute der Bundesländer zur Lehrerfortbildung). Teachers and vocational instructors can use a certain number of training days each year for CPD so as to keep their skills up to date.

Educational leave (Bildungsurlaub) is a specific form of CPD that can be career-related or focus on civic education.

Depending on the company and industry, the individuals responsible for teaching apprentices in a company must have passed an appropriate aptitude test (Ausbildungseignungstest) or Meisterprüfung ([master craftsman examination](#)).

Providers of CPD in the field of entrepreneurship education

- [Teacher training institutes in the federal states](#): CPD training in a range of areas including economics and business-related subjects.
- Training institutes of the employer and industry associations in all Länder belonging to the consortium of training institutes in German industry ([Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Bildungswerke der Deutschen Wirtschaft, ADBW](#)): CPD courses relating to entrepreneurship education.
- Members of the [SCHULEWIRTSCHAFT](#) network: CPD for teachers on economics.
- Entrepreneurial Spirit in Schools initiative ([Unternehmergeist in die Schulen](#)): E-training courses for teachers on entrepreneurship education.
- Training by the team behind the Youth Start-Ups ([Jugend gründet](#)) school competition scheme in the form of webinars to be integrated into classroom teaching.
- Adult education centres (Volkshochschulen): CPD training on entrepreneurial skills.
- Joachim Herz foundation ([Joachim-Herz-Stiftung](#)): Projects for learners, teachers and researchers on economics subjects and CPD courses for teachers on entrepreneurship.

For more information on teacher training at universities and colleges, see also “Higher education”.

Examples of websites, manuals etc. on entrepreneurship education

- Multimedia teaching pack “60 years of the social market system” (60 Jahre Soziale Marktwirtschaft) by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, BMWi) in cooperation with [Zeitbild](#) publishing house to help teachers prepare lesson plans
- Encouraging personal initiative and the motivation to learn with entrepreneurial teaching: a practical guide for CPD for teachers (Eigeninitiative und Lernmotivation fördern mit Entrepreneurial Teaching. Ein Praxishandbuch für die Lehrerfortbildung). German Children and Youth Foundation ([Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung](#))
- Guide to Entrepreneurship Education: Generating enthusiasm and discovering talent ([Leitfaden Entrepreneurship Education - Begeisterung wecken, Talente entdecken](#)) by BMWi and other partners

- Learning module on entrepreneurship (Lernmodule Unternehmerisch Denken und Handeln) for use in economics lessons by the Institute for Economic Education (Institut für ökonomische Bildung, IÖB) in cooperation with the Joachim Herz foundation ([Joachim-Herz-Stiftung](#))
- Economy and society ([Ökonomie und Gesellschaft](#)), anthology published as part of the Federal Agency for Civic Education's (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb) Themen und Materialien series. Collection of articles on economically driven political and societal problems, prepared for educational use from heterodox sociological, political science and economic perspectives.