

3.11 Current debates and reforms

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Forthcoming policy developments

According to the 2020 Report on vocational education and training ([Berufsbildungsbericht 2020](#)), current challenges for the vocational training field include:

- the situation on the vocational training market
- the decline in the number of individuals undergoing dual apprenticeships
- vocational training in the fields of healthcare, education and social services
- better matching of supply and demand
- an increase in the number of terminated contracts
- factors influencing career choices
- companies' contribution towards vocational training
- the number of adults without a vocational qualification.

In June 2019 the federal government discussed a draft bill to modernise and strengthen vocational education and training ([Gesetzentwurf zur Modernisierung und Stärkung der beruflichen Bildung](#)). It seeks to modernise and strengthen Germany's dual system of vocational training by, amongst other things, introducing minimum pay for apprentices. The major intended changes include:

- Minimum pay for apprentices under the Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz, BBiG)
- Strengthening and developing vocational training schemes leading to higher qualifications by offering transparent, modular vocational courses and recognisable, attractive qualification names
- More flexible deployment of graders in final exams
- Greater permeability within the vocational training system as a whole; e.g., possibility to waive examination requirements if candidates have relevant formal vocational experience

- More part-time vocational training schemes.

Ongoing debates

In connection with the recognition of skills gained by young people in non-formal and informal learning environments, an informal group of writers from across various organisations has published a white paper entitled Recognising young people's competencies – promoting career entry ([Kompetenzen junger Menschen anerkennen – den Berufseinstieg fördern](#)). The paper offers basic benchmarks for recognising the non-formal and informal competencies gained by young people as they work to gain a qualification. It contributes to the discussion on developing the German Qualifications Framework ([Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen](#), DQR) with a special focus on recognising non-formal and informal skills gained by young people who are transitioning from school to work.

The Coronavirus pandemic continues to impact heavily on Germany. The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, BMAS) has adopted a large number of measures to mitigate that impact, including adjustments to short-time worker pay (Kurzarbeitergeld) and easier access to basic income (Grundsicherung) to help bridge the gap until the situation improves.

With the Act to promote CPD ([Gesetz zur Förderung der beruflichen Weiterbildung im Strukturwandel und zur Weiterentwicklung der Ausbildungsförderung](#), known for short as the *Arbeit-von-morgen-Gesetz*), BMAS has stepped up its efforts in this area, continuing to align its CPD support activities with the changes resulting from Germany's demographic development, continuing digitalisation and sustainability.