

10.5 Youth workers

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Status in national legislation

Definition of Youth Workers

A youth worker is a **professionally qualified person who works full-time or volunteers in extra-curricular child and youth work**. This definition of youth workers is provided on the website 'Youth Work in Austria' ([Jugendarbeit in Österreich](#)). In Austria, different terms are used for people working in child and youth work, such as: specialist in open child and youth work (Fachkraft der Offenen Kinder- und Jugendarbeit), youth information worker (JugendinformationsarbeiterIn), youth worker (JugendarbeiterIn, JugendbetreuerIn), youth leader (JugendleiterIn), and child and youth group leader (Kinder- und JugendgruppenleiterIn).

The **qualifications required** for youth workers **differ according to the setting and nature of their respective jobs**. The underlying competences are presented in the '**Competence framework for child and youth work**' ([Kompetenzrahmen für Kinder- und Jugendarbeit](#)). The competence framework for child and youth work systematically presents and describes at different levels how people act competently in their work in extracurricular child and youth work. It is further detailed in [Chapter 10.4](#) under Quality assurance - aufZAQ.

It **covers both open youth work as well as children and youth associations in Austria**. The Competence Framework is a translation tool from qualifications of child and youth work to the [National Qualifications Framework \(NQF\)](#). The NQF **makes qualifications visible and comparable** by the European Qualifications Framework **across Europe**. For people in and outside the field, the framework **makes clear what people active in youth work do and what quality standards they have**. It stimulates the development of key competences which benefits children and young people and motivates the increase of quality of the range of education. People inside the working field are encouraged to networking, co-operations, development and mutual recognition of education.

The **principles of youth work and requirements for receiving federal grants** are set by the **Federal Youth Promotion Act** ([Bundes-Jugendförderungsgesetz](#)), in force since 2000.

Nationwide network and website "Health-competent Youth Work" ([Gesundheitskompetente Jugendarbeit](#))

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The network "Health-competent Youth Work" was founded in 2016 by bOJA with the aim of networking, exchange and mutual learning. Professionals from the health and youth work area, from adjacent areas of activity such as child and youth welfare, the school, community work, in labour market policy projects and interested parties exchange in regular meetings on various youth-related health issues with different priorities.

The "Healthy Youth Work" ([Gesunde Jugendarbeit](#)) website, launched by bOJA in 2019, is a service platform that provides knowledge, good practice, a calendar of events and information on advanced networks and partner organisations for employees in extracurricular youth work.

Education, training and skills recognition

There is **no statutory training** for this profession.

Courses of study at Universities of Applied Sciences

All federal states have **universities of applied sciences** (Fachhochschulen), where the **course of studies 'social work'** is offered on the level of a **bachelor and/or master degree**. Some offer **special courses on social youth work**.

- [University of Applied Sciences Burgenland](#) ([Fachhochschule Burgenland](#))
- [University of Applied Sciences Carinthia](#) ([Fachhochschule Kärnten](#))
- [University of Applied Sciences St Pölten](#), Lower Austria ([Fachhochschule St. Pölten](#), Niederösterreich)
- [University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria](#) ([Fachhochschule Oberösterreich](#))
- [University of Applied Sciences Salzburg](#) ([Fachhochschule Salzburg](#))
- [University of Applied Sciences Joanneum](#), Styria ([Fachhochschule Joanneum](#), Steiermark)
- [MCI - Management Center Innsbruck](#), Tyrol ([MCI - Management Center Innsbruck](#), Tirol)
- [University of Applied Sciences Vorarlberg](#) ([Fachhochschule Vorarlberg](#))
- [University of Applied Sciences Campus Wien](#) ([Fachhochschule Campus Wien](#))

Short trainings

The required knowledge and skills are often acquired in the context of **short training**, for example:

- ifp – Institute for Leisure Education ([ifp – Institut für Freizeit für Freizeitpädagogik](#)) (together with the youth leader school of the Viennese Youth association wienXtra): '**Basic Course Youth Work**' with a duration of 207 lessons.
- "[Alpenverein-Akademie](#)" of the Österreichischer Alpenverein (Austrian Alpine Association): '**Basic Course: Mountain Experience**' with a duration of 52 lessons.
- "[Naturfreundejugend](#)" (friends of nature youth) "KiJu-LeiterIN Alpin" (**Alpine child and youth leaders**) with a duration of 2 weekends.

Furthermore, the ifp offers **specially developed courses for selected areas of youth work**. In these courses **relevant, current topics** are dealt with intensively and comprehensively from both a theoretical and practical perspective for youth work.

Courses at a glance

- Basic course youth work ([Grundkurs Jugendarbeit](#))
- Advanced training youth work ([Aufbaulehrgang Jugendarbeit](#))
- Preparatory course ([Vorbereitungslehrgang](#))
- Short course pedagogy of play ([Kurzlehrgang Spielpädagogik](#))
- Violence prevention ([Gewaltprävention](#))
- Team leader in youth work ([Teamleitung in der Jugendarbeit](#))

Symposium and education programme

In addition to these courses a **symposium** ([ifp- Fachtagung](#)) in youth work related topics takes place and an **education programme** ([Bildungsprogramm](#)) is offered.

The symposium of the open youth work ([bOJA-Fachtagung](#)) is a conference that takes place each year in a different federal state and on changing relevant topics related to youth work.

[aufZAQ](#) – Certified quality of non-formal education in youth work (aufZAQ – Zertifizierte AusbildungsQualität für die Kinder – und Jugendarbeit)

aufZAQ is a **certification of non-formal education and training courses for people active in youth work**, provided by the [Department of Families and Youth at the Federal Chancellery](#), the Youth Departments of the Federal States, and the Youth Work Department of the Autonomous Italian Province of Bozen/Bolzano – South Tyrol. aufZAQ has been certifying the quality of trainings since 2003 and has thus been **actively contributing to the recognition of non-formal education** in the field of youth work. For course participants, the aufZAQ certification is **proof of the high quality of educational courses**

. For employers and institutions of child and youth work, aufZAQ guarantees that the respective course is a high-quality vocational education and training that is strongly oriented towards professional practice. aufZAQ is further detailed in [Chapter 10.4](#).

aufZAQ developed the **Competence Framework for Children and Youth Work**. This competence model shows how people act competently in their work in children and youth work. It covers both the open youth work and children and youth work in youth organisations. The Competence Framework ([Kompetenzrahmen](#)) is a **translation tool from qualifications of children and youth work to the Austrian National Qualifications Framework** (NQF). In turn, the NQF **makes qualifications visible and comparable** through the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) across Europe. In particular, the competence framework is part of the aufZAQ certification.

Mobility of youth workers

Youth work institutions provide exchange opportunities and e.g. job shadowing within and outside their networks.

Membership in European Networks

Within the framework of 'ERASMUS + Youth in Action' youth workers have the possibility of **attending various training and further education measures**. The training calendar ([Trainingskalender](#)) can be found online.

As the Centre of Competence for Professional Open Children and Youth Work's ([Bundesweites Netzwerk Offene Jugendarbeit, bOJA](#)) work is also part of the **poywe network** (Professional Open Youth Work in Europe) and **ECYC** (European Confederation of Youthclubs), **international exchanges, study visits of professionals and youth meetings** are possible for youth workers in open youth work.

The Federal Network of Austrian Youth Information Centres (Bundesnetzwerk Österreichische Jugendinfos) is part of the [ERYICA Network](#) and thus, **training and events** are provided for youth workers in youth information.

The National Youth Council ([Bundesjugendvertretung](#)) is an active member of the **European Youth Forum** and additionally provides [offers](#) for young people in youth work.

Networking in Vienna

ifp – Institute for Leisure Education ([ifp – Institut für Freizeit für Freizeitpädagogik](#)) also offers **training and networking on an international level**. Expert networking in the area of youth work is provided beyond the borders of Vienna. **Study excursions** allow Viennese experts to continue their education, exchange ideas, get to know other approaches and perspectives, and continue these discussions in Vienna. **Viennese youth work is presented in an international context**, at delegations and at conferences. **(Inter)national delegations are welcomed** to visit

Vienna Youth Facilities. Child and youth exchange activities are organised and carried out.

SHERYICA - series of good practice in youth information

The [Good Practice Booklet](#) is a **collection of successful stories from the network** in order to **learn, inspire, generate and develop new projects and ideas**.