

Recommendation of the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training

Guidelines for improving the transition from school to work

Establishing individual support and consistent pathways for the transition from school to training and the world of work

Preamble

Good training is the best guarantee for being able to achieve success on the labour market. Anyone who has completed good training is less likely to be unemployed and is better able to adapt to new requirements in later life and to pursue continuing training in an active manner. Germany will have a growing need for well trained skilled workers in the future. Demographic developments are resulting in a reduction in the number of school leavers and are leading to predictable bottlenecks in the case of applications for company-based training places within the dual system of vocational education and training. This is beginning to make itself felt in some areas and is bringing considerable implications for the securing of up-and-coming skilled workers in its wake. Individual branches are already complaining about an acute shortage of skilled workers.

There is a requirement to focus on the resources and talents of all young people and to provide youngsters with better individual support. Consistent and transparent pathways for the transition from school to training and work need to be created. The aim of facilitating fully qualifying vocational education and training and a VET qualification for all young people has not yet been achieved despite considerable commitment of resources and intensified development of dualisation and of a greater degree of proximity to practice in measures relating to the transition from school to work.

The Board is of the view that the direct transition from school to company-based training must be strengthened in a more successful manner. The effectiveness of provision aimed at fostering training and employment opportunities within the scope of the transition from school to VET needs to be aligned in such a way so as to reduce the number of young people who progress to replacement measures not leading to a qualification. The Board thus urges the Federal Government and the federal states to undertake a joint review of the diversity of provision which exists at the transition between school and vocational education and training with the objective of reducing and bundling such provision, of creating better harmonisation and of making existing instruments more effective. Within this process, an especial focus needs to be placed on embedding existing provision within a meaningful structure and on integrating the various stakeholders into regional networks in particular in order to establish transitions to training which display more consistency.

Networking and cooperation models which facilitate reliable and improved provision for young people progressing to the world of work and which enable differentiated support to be given to those who start out from a disadvantaged position are achieving increasing penetration. The aim of the structuring of transitional management going forwards needs to be to consolidate this trend and to

offer all young people provision which leads to fully qualifying vocational education and training. In order for this to take place, transitional management needs to be organised in a continuous, stable, reliable, coherent and transparent manner. We call upon all stakeholders involved to assist in this process within the scope of their various main spheres of responsibility – in particular institutions (federal ministries, state ministries, the Federal Employment Agency and Job Centres) which make financing and funding available. With regard to the provisions contained within German Social Security Code (SGB III and SGB II), it is important that support is made available in a standardised and non-stigmatising manner in each judicial area. Transitional measures should fundamentally be targeted at disadvantaged young people, the aim being for these measures to lead to vocational education and training which offers a recognised qualification.

We need to acquire further companies to provide training. Young people require opportunities to enter vocational training and working life. This applies to all young people seeking a training place and is of particular relevance to those who start out from a disadvantaged position. In order to achieve the smoothest possible transition to training, the prerequisites for acceptance into training need to be secured at school. More systematic use should be made of socio-pedagogical support within company-based training.

The view of the Board is that transitional management should be aligned to the following guidelines.

1. Early preparation for a successful transition

In general schools, action is particularly required in the field of the prevention of deficits in basic education. Such deficits make it more difficult for young people to make the transition to vocational education and training. The fostering of lower-ability young people in particular needs to be addressed at an early a stage as possible. For this reason, the Board appeals to the federal states to secure timely and individual diagnostic procedures and support for pupils as part of their commitment to improve quality in general schools. This is the only way of increasing strengths and reducing weaknesses. It is also important to impart competences which will help young people to shape their further educational and employment pathways. There is an especial requirement for well-founded vocational orientation which is a firmly established part of the school programme and which involves cooperation between schools and external partners from the regional environment in particular. The vocational orientation concepts which are already in place in many schools need to be expanded further on a nationwide and compulsory basis in accordance with comparable quality yardsticks and be coordinated with the relevant vocational guidance services provided by the Federal Employment Agency and with other regional stakeholders.

More successful action with regard to the securing of individual entry requirements for the transition from school to vocational education and training necessitates assumption of responsibility by the schools for early-stage competence assessment, competence development and analysis of potential. The approaches thus far developed should be expanded.

2. Individual fostering and support of young people, guidance

Individual and practically related vocational orientation and support for career choice processes are required. The Board is appealing for disadvantaged young people in particular to be provided with the greatest possible degree of individual support as they make the transition from school to training and work. Appropriate career entry support is an ongoing process and is based on the individual competences, strengths and interests of young people. Such support makes a major contribution to the continuity of young people's occupational biography and personal development processes. The aim is the development of realisable educational and training aims. This process begins with an analysis of potential as part of vocational orientation provision at school. This is in particular supplemented by vocational guidance services and company contacts (work experience placements, visits). Other provision such as mentor or personal support programmes are also involved. During these processes, any drop-outs at the individual stages of education need to be avoided.

An individual and practically related form of vocational orientation which enables career pathway planning must be firmly established at the school. Together with comprehensive guidance and career choice support, this needs to be compulsory in all general schools and should not begin later than Year 7. Such an approach must also be accorded greater consideration in initial and advanced teacher training.

3. Proximity to occupational and company practice

In order to be able to realise practical relevance and company localisation of provision, integration of trade and industry and company practice into the regional networks and cooperation agreements within transitional management are of crucial importance. The combination of work and learning within an everyday company environment enables young people to experience that their endeavours bring a direct benefit. Teams which include a mix of ages and generations provide particular assistance in gaining a sense of responsibility and in supporting personal development, and company-based experience paves the way for vocational training and occupational activity. Especially against the background of the easing of the situation on the training places market and in the light of demographic developments, the instruments and provision which transitional management encompasses should be primarily aligned towards company-based training and to the acquisition of vocational qualifications which can be exploited on the labour market. To this extent, school-based training provision delivered by the federal states which was helpful in the past should be reviewed and reduced to a level which is necessary.

Transitional management provision for which the companies are responsible, such as introductory training, should be retained and used extensively. Such provision should be made available as a priority measure for disadvantaged young people and should in this case take precedence over school-based and extra-company training. Within the scope of introductory training, companies take responsibility for the preparation and initiation of regular training. It needs to be clear, however, that introductory training does not constitute a replacement for regular training.

4. Regional coordination and management, role of the stakeholders

In order to enable young people to progress from school to training and work via pathways which are consistent and transparent, reliable responsibility structures need to be created or expanded

at a regional level and transparency needs to be established in respect of provision, stakeholders and areas of responsibility (see Annex for examples). Regional stakeholders should be given the tasks of bringing together the partners required for this purpose within their regional sphere of responsibility, of coordinating cooperation via one partner and of ensuring that target-oriented management is in place. The focus during this process should be on the development of coherent and coordinated financing and funding strategies. Clear definitions of tasks and clear remits within the regional context are necessary for this purpose. Process evaluation in the individual networks which facilitate ex-post management is also of crucial significance in this regard. The statutory areas of responsibility of the individual stakeholders will remain unchanged during these cooperation projects.

The shift away from working in individual projects and towards work which takes place as part of an overall general regional provision of “transitional management” requires new approaches from the local stakeholders. Depending on task and field of activity, these may include competence assessment and analysis of potential, assistance with career entry support and recognition and avoidance of disadvantages as well as extending to encompass active participation in regional cooperation projects in the field of transition from school to work. Continuing training provision should be in place locally to support stakeholders in the fulfilment of these requirements, some of which are new.

5. Transparency and connectivity

The stakeholders responsible at the local level should ensure wherever possible that the provision aimed at guiding young people towards vocational education and training uses nationally standardised training elements aligned towards training regulations, such as training and qualification modules. It is necessary for learning outcomes and learning achievements to be carefully documented. The aim of the documentation of learning outcomes and learning achievements is to ensure that measures and provision actually have an impact on the transition to fully qualifying vocational education and training and on the obtaining of a VET qualification.

6. Evaluation of the programmes and measures

All measures and programmes relating to the structuring of the transition from school to work should be documented via process monitoring evaluation and an impact analysis in order to ascertain which experiences are gained with, for example, certain forms of cooperation and funding conditions, which successes are achieved with particular support approaches, which measures are categorised as successful, any training needs which may arise and which strategies need to be developed and implemented to consolidate transitional management.

Ongoing assessment

The Board will use a reporting system on a bi-annual basis in order to evaluate the extent to which these guidelines are being implemented and to record and evaluate progress with the further struc-

turing of the transitional management system and in particular with the prevention and reduction of disadvantage.

Annex

Examples of regional approaches (German language resources)

Cooperative Transitional Management School to Work, Rhein-Neckar Metropolitan Region (KÜM) <http://www.m-r-n.com/start/regionalplanung-entwicklung/gemeinschaftliche-regionalentwicklung/arbeitsmarkt/kuem.html>

Specialist Agency for Transitional Management/Vocational Support for Young People, City of Hamm <http://www.hamm.de/9588.html>

Regional Transitional Management Projects from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) Programme

“Vocational Qualification Perspectives”
<http://www.perspektive-berufsabschluss.de/de/184.php>

Hamburg Education Campaign: Framework Concept for the Reform of the Transitional System School–Work
<http://www.hamburg.de/contentblob/1131284/data/rahmenkonzept.pdf>

Vocational Pathways Support Project, Offenbach Council
<http://www.kreis-offenbach.de/index.phtml?NavID=1856.162>

“One Pot” Pilot Project, Siegen-Wittgenstein Council
http://www.gib.nrw.de/service/downloads/GIB.INFO_1_2008_Ein-Topf.pdf/view

Lower Secondary School Pupils: the elite in practice – Saxony
<http://www.sachsen-macht-schule.de/schule/7065.htm>

OloV – Optimisation of local placement work in the creation and filling of training places in Hessen
<http://www.olov-hessen.de/>

Vocational start Plus in Thuringia
<http://www.berufsstartplus-thueringen.de>

Work Alliance Project for Young People – Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS)/ Federal Employment Agency (BA)
http://rmhserver2.netestate.de/koop_jsa/media/raw/BA_Konzept_Arbeitsbuendnis_Jugend_Beruf_1010_1.pdf