



► **2.2.386 – Systematic observation of the change in competence requirements for the structuring of initial and advanced training occupations (referred to in abbreviated form as Monitoring)**

Research project – 2022 Annual Research Programme

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Key points in brief

Current information on new and shifting task requirements placed on skilled workers and on the competence changes arising as a result is of crucial significance to both VET policy and practice. Long-term observation of skills and competence needs is therefore one of the essential tasks of vocational education and training research.

Digitalisation, sustainability, structural change and increasing academisation all constitute major developments in vocational education and training. Demographic change and migration (BAMF 2015) are also exerting an impact on the skilled worker situation and on training. They therefore pose regulatory issues in respect of the structure, governance and design of VET. The key question in this regard centres on the theoretical, methodological and instrumental foundation for shaping continuing development of regulatory vehicles in vocational education and training.

The aim of the present research project is to help arrive at a response to this core issue. The intention within the scope of the project is to investigate how early recognition of altering competence and skills requirements can be further developed via a regulatory-related long-term observation of occupations. An exploratory and inductive approach will be adopted towards identifying indicators which will act within the context of a systematic long-term observation to show changes in competence and skills needs at initial and advanced level and will thus be able to support systematic early recognition of competence and skills changes of relevance to regulation.

A multi-layered procedure will be deployed to identify indicators of regulatory relevance in an iterative way. The cause variables of these indicators will then be analysed and determined. We will draw on indicators which, as a result of academic research carried out in previous projects, have been identified within the context of early recognition of competence and skills changes in vocational education and training. These indicators will then be scrutinised with regard to their relevance to our own objective. Identification of suitable indicators or of indicators which have already been validated will be conducted within the framework of a documentary and literature analysis. A further aim is that this stage of the analysis should look beyond regulatory-related indicators to identify trends and developments which may potentially influence skills and qualifications needs and act as a context for the indicators.

There will also be a retrospective case study of new regulations and of reasons for the creation or discontinuation of existing qualifications. This will encompass an investigation of the meaningfulness of the indicators identified and the identification of new indicators. The objective is that this approach will facilitate the recognition and naming of factors which influence the indicators and which may alter their significance.

Further to this, project applications for adaptation of training regulations will be analysed with an initial view to arriving at general indications of the need for curricular change and to ascertaining suitable procedures and examples for case reconstruction (instruction analysis). This methodological stage is intended to allow an investigation of the regulatory-related impact of the indicators identified, because they will be identified in a way which correlates directly with curricular adjustments.

In a parallel process and with regard to factors of relevance to VET, an impact analysis will be conducted to observe possible effects of various trends such as measures undertaken to achieve climate protection objectives (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear

Safety, BMU, 2019). The aims here are to investigate the significance of indicators already identified and to identify any other possible additional indicators.

Insofar as possible, the project will look at existing analytical instruments for early recognition in vocational education and training and will accord due consideration to these where this is useful. Findings obtained will be integrated into our own investigation and will be supplemented via further surveys and analyses if needed.

The methodological building blocks provided by the documentary analysis, the instruction analysis and the impact analysis will be complemented by expert discussions with specialists in the fields of academic research and practice. These “Future Talks” will debate and reflect upon relevant trends and their impacts and ponder the results which have been drawn up.

The whole process will receive support from a project council, which will be made up of representatives of the social partners and the area of policy making alongside experts from the fields of practice and research.

An additional objective is for the methodological design and the set of instruments derived for the early recognition of competence and skills requirements in vocational education to be presented to and debated with the academic research community (e.g. at symposia, at meetings, at university conferences or in academic journals).

The overall aim of the project is to identify indicators which can be used regularly or continuously to arrive at early recognition of changes to competence and skills requirements at initial and advanced training level. Our wish is that the indicators should be viewed as an informative guide for all stakeholders involved in VET rather than being seen as a “traffic light system” which triggers a knock-on effect virtually automatically. Going forwards, the social partners will need to judge, discuss and decide which further stages should be derived from the findings.