

Vocational education and training – a stepping stone to successful career pathways



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This part looks at transitions at the so-called “second threshold”, i.e. transitions from initial training to working life. This threshold is certainly a valid object of debate in itself. VET research into the consequences of digitalisation has shown that change processes are gaining in momentum and that new requirements are constantly bringing about realignments in people’s working lives. The articles included here also take account of this development.

Initial and continuing VET can create a dynamic world of work

The low current rate of youth unemployment in Germany is frequently interpreted as a sign of successful transitions at the second threshold. Nevertheless, closer consideration of the figures reveals that entry to the labour market is often precarious. Fixed-term contracts of employment are sometimes the norm, and it can be difficult to secure an adequate income. Initial and continuing VET is shown to be a good route for reducing the risk of long-term precarious employment.

Seen in a wider context, dual training forms part of an array of provision which is becoming ever more differentiated and also encompasses academic education programmes. We need to remember, however, that systematic integration into company life is a particularly promising characteristic in terms of delivering successful training. Practice-related training provides targeted preparation for skilled employment in the German labour market and also enables workers to switch to related or completely different occupations.

Conducting systematic research into training pathways and decision-making patterns

In order to strengthen the potential offered by vocational education and training, especially in times when dynamic changes are occurring on the labour market, we have to focus on expanding findings which relate to vocational orientation and career choice processes and to company decision-making patterns.

BIBB is also pursuing this objective by realigning its strategic research planning into thematic clusters. Three of these clusters are firmly dedicated to investigating future VET re-

quirements in order to provide people with a compass that will lead to success and fulfilment in a world of work undergoing change.

The cluster “Vocational orientation and transitions – integration into training and work” is, for example, investigating the issue of how VET can continue to help create stable and secure routes into and within working life and facilitate societal participation. The “Digital transformations – the future of vocational training and work” cluster is studying the impacts of digitalisation on a labour market that has its basis in vocationalism and is seeking to identify the requirements for sustainable VET in a systematic way. The cluster “Company decision making and action – factors influencing company training and recruitment” is correlating various theoretical approaches in order to provide a better explanation of company decision-making behaviour and to assess the consequences for training patterns.

In conducting this research work arranged in clusters, BIBB is making an important contribution towards ensuring that vocational education and training in Germany can continue in future to operate on a solid basis which has its foundations in sound academic research. ◀

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