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# Ländermonitor berufliche Bildung 2015

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# Abstract

## About the report

The report on vocational training in Germany compares the vocational training systems of the country's 16 federal states in terms of performance and equality of opportunity. It aims to provide policymakers with relevant information to help improve state vocational training systems.

The report adds to existing information on vocational training in Germany in two ways:

1. In addition to analysing data on dual vocational training, it looks at school-based vocational training as well as preparatory courses for vocational training to gain a more holistic overview of the outright system.
2. It is the first report to compare vocational training systems in Germany at the state level. This allows for useful comparison between states while also contextualising data for the vocational training systems with other relevant information, such as demographics or the performance and structure of the respective state's economy.

The report looks at a set of indicators for the two dimensions being compared: performance and equality of opportunity. In terms of performance, it looks to see whether the vocational training system manages to provide young people and the state economy with enough training placements and qualified workers. The question regarding equal opportunity explores whether the vocational training system is able to provide equal opportunities to all social groups.

The indicators are based exclusively on data provided by the federal and state bureaus of statistics as well as Germany's Federal Employment Agency.

## Main findings

The number of young people and employers who participate in dual vocational training has declined across the country. Between 2007 and 2013, the number of applicants for a dual apprenticeship decreased by 19 percent, from 756,000 to 613,000. The number of apprenticeships offered by employers also went down during this same period, though to a lesser extent (13 percent). Thus, the ratio between supply and demand on the apprenticeship market is more favourable to applicants than it was a few years ago.

The situation is significantly different at the state level. The decline in participation in apprenticeships is particularly salient in the five so-called “new” federal states, that is, those in areas once belonging to the German Democratic Republic (AKA East Germany). Between 2007 and 2013, the number of applicants decreased by 47 percent while the number of training placements declined by some 40 percent. Small businesses (i.e. those with up to 50 employees) are the main ones offering fewer training places.

Even though the ratio between applicants and training placements is now more favourable than it was a few years ago, there have been no significant improvements in the participation rates of early school leavers or those with a degree from the lower secondary school (Hauptschule), the lowest level of the three-tier school system in Germany. In 2005, only 48 percent of this group managed to secure a training placement immediately after leaving school. By 2013, this number had only slightly increased, to 51 percent. In addition, there are great differences between the states. Whereas 71 percent manage to immediately secure a placement in Bavaria, only 37 percent do so in Schleswig-Holstein. Young people who do not immediately secure a training placement attend training courses in the transition system between school and vocational training. The courses in the transition system are designed to prepare attendees for vocational education. However, they do not result in a vocational qualification.

Young people without German citizenship (non-Germans) generally have less access to vocational training than young people with German citizenship do, though this varies by state. Non-German applicants have the best access to vocational training in the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, as 89 percent of them immediately find a placement there, which is slightly higher than the figure for German applicants (84%). However, in the city-state of Bremen, non-German applicants have considerably less access to vocational training, as only 41 percent of them manage to immediately secure a placement compared to a rate of 71 percent for German applicants.

Furthermore, the gap between Germans and non-Germans in terms of access to vocational training grows wider the lower the attainment in general education is. Germans and non-Germans with a university-entrance diploma (Abitur) manage to secure training placements in almost equal numbers, whereas 54 percent of Germans with lower secondary education secure training placements compared to only 37 percent of non-Germans.

The group least likely to secure an apprenticeship is made up of young people without German citizenship with at best a lower-secondary-school qualification. Throughout Germany, only 37 percent of these young people manage to secure an apprenticeship position after leaving school.

In addition, more and more apprenticeship contracts in Germany are being terminated prematurely. This was true for 25 percent of all apprenticeship contracts in 2013, as compared to 21 percent in 2008. In some states and areas of vocational training, almost half of all apprenticeship contracts are terminated by either the company or the apprentice before the apprenticeship has come to its scheduled conclusion. Granted, a terminated apprenticeship contract is not equivalent to a failed apprenticeship, since many apprentices continue at another company or in a different profession. But prematurely terminated contracts nevertheless incur costs in terms of both time and resources for the companies and the individuals involved.